

Domestic Violence on Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women has always existed in human society, be it the Vedic era or the 21st century. If we analyze the condition of women in India leaving aside the special examples of some periods, then we will find that the experience of equal rights and freedom equal to men is still a pleasant dream for Indian women. The two main reasons that promote this type of exploitation and domestic violence against women in Indian society are the patriarchal society and the tendency towards male preference. Even according to Friedman, the husband's violence against the wife should be seen as a confirmation of the social order in the society and not in terms of violence or as disintegration of the social order. This paper reveals various aspects of domestic violence in Indian scenario.

Keywords: *Domestic Violence, Women, Dowry, Abetment of Suicide*

Any kind of violence that is done on another person within the confines of the home comes under domestic violence. Most of the victims of domestic violence are women and children of the house. Apart from this, in some cases, domestic servants and elderly women can be victims of various types of domestic violence. But our aim is to present a detailed description of domestic violence against women in this research paper. Since our target population is women domestic violence has been defined as -Physical, mental or emotional abuse done to any woman comes under the ambit of domestic violence. On expanding this definition further, it also includes physical abuse, verbal and psychological abuse. It should be noted here that the person who is doing the violence must have any kind of family relationship with the woman.

Definition of victim under domestic violence - Here the victim is a woman who is abused by another member of the household. Because the Government of India has passed one rule in 2005 to liberate women from domestic violence and here the person causing the pain is in a domestic relationship with the woman, so it is necessary to present the exact definition of domestic kinship (Fig. 1), here the relation of a woman to the male causing pain can be as follows-

Blood relations which include sons, parents, daughters, brothers, sisters, etc.

Matrimonial relationship – husband- wife, mother-in-law- father-in-law, father-in-law- daughter-in-law, sister-in-law & sister-in-law's family; in relation to a widow other members of the widow's family

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Adoption relationship where the woman is adopted by someone like adopted daughter and father.

Relationships like marriage, other relationships like live-in relationship, invalid marriage from legal point of view, in which the husband gets married for the second time while being married or there is any kind of blood relation between the husband and wife, in which the marriage will be illegal, but these relationships are included under domestic kinship.

It is not necessary that the abuser and the victim should be living under the same roof at present in case of domestic kinship. Even if the wife has been thrown out of the house by the husband, it is within the ambit of domestic kinship.

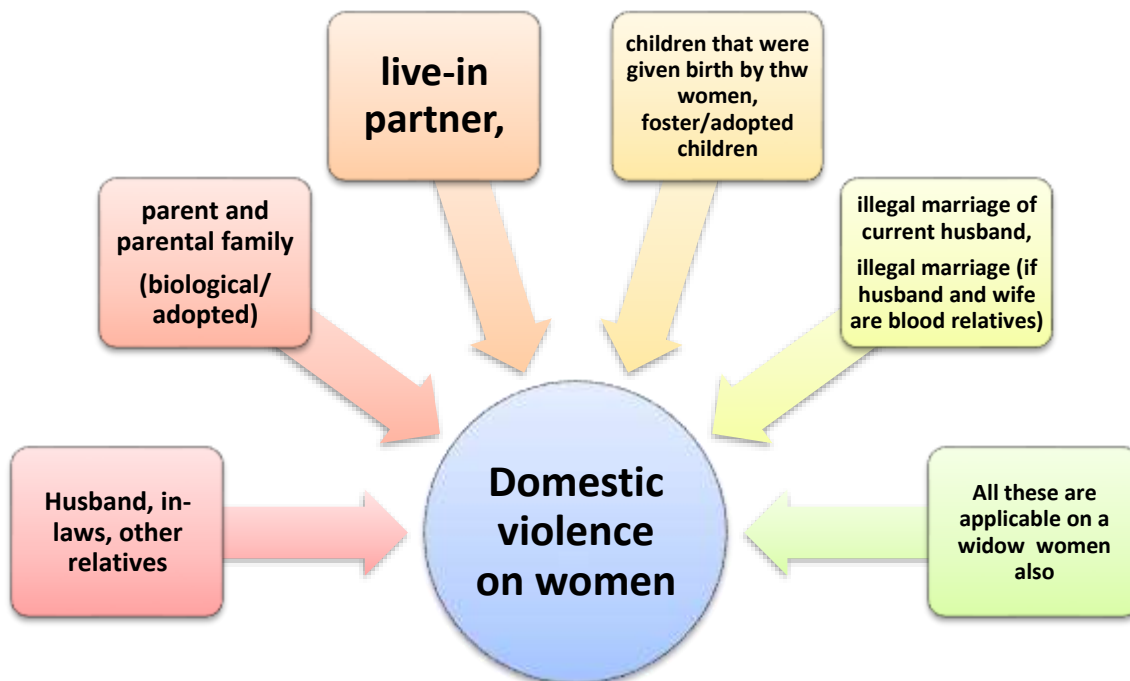


Fig. 1- People who are mostly associated in doing domestic violence on females

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the United Nations, domestic violence on women can happen in public or private life and domestic violence is an all-encompassing social health problem, which is possible to be solve, but no special effort to eradicate it has ever been made by any great man/ movement/ or public mind in any period. Some kinds of domestic violence in ancient times in India include practices of Sati, Devdasi etc. (Sharma & Kumar, 2023). In the Indian society, even a pregnant woman is not exempted from the cases of domestic violence, but even then there are many types of physical and verbal harassment, harassment is very common. If seen from the point of view of health, it can also prove fatal for the health and safety of both the mother and the fetus. The prevalence of domestic violence in India is 37% (Garg & Singh, 2013), according to the general data, which can be similar in different states. Many women of reproductive age die from a variety of diseases, including malaria, cancer, traffic injuries, or the effects of war. The combined figure for all these is also less than the number of deaths among pregnant women due to domestic violence (Mahapatro et al., 2011).

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A nationwide health survey in India was conducted during 2005-2006 covering all states and found that a large proportion of married women confirm that they have been physically or sexually abused by their husbands, with approximately 32.7% experiencing post-marital violence².

MATERIAL AND METHOD

the most authorized source of data on which domestic violence in India gets reported is the one that is handled by National crime records bureau (NCRB)³. However, in our study which is the secondary type of exploratory research work we have considered information and data present in various research papers including this one and another which is based on domestic violence crime on pregnant female of Delhi. NCRB reports are often blamed for under reporting of many types of heinous injury to the victim of domestic violence (Raban et al., 201). But it is still the most comprehensive longitudinal source of data prevailing in India.

Brief case study

According to a survey conducted in Delhi's Ghazipur area, if we look at the statistics, it will be found that the incidence of domestic violence is 2.4 times higher in those families where pregnant women have a head of the family who is uneducated (Priya et al., 2019). Those families where the husband is addicted to any kind of drugs, ganja, alcohol, etc. incidents of domestic violence in them are 3.2 times more. Women who have had abortions for some reason in the past and are pregnant again have about three percent more incidents of domestic violence. According to the same research paper, 60 percent of women have reported being victims of domestic violence (Priya et al., 2019) and it has been seen that even though there has been a slight decrease in verbal violence during pregnancy, but the figure of physical and physical violence has remained almost the same (Peedicayil, 2004). Here the decrease in verbal violence is also reported because most of the women consider it better to forget the things heard and do not report such things quickly even after a lot of encouragement and provocation because somewhere they are afraid that if it if the matter is revealed, there can be bitterness in their married life and relations with mother-in-law and father-in-law can get spoiled. At the same time, it is also important to know that in Indian society, women are considered inferior and their mentality also becomes like this that tolerating all this is both their life and destiny and no change is possible for them, they have to live such a life, life is the definition of their life, beyond this they do not think and do not even want to go.

Domestic violence is also not disclosed by women because they are afraid of their privacy being exposed and embarrassment, abuse, involvement of police, stigma etc⁴.

There is no very deep and specific relation of women's educational level with domestic violence, which has been established globally, because many types of domestic violence cases have happened to educated women of all civilized societies. No is being given. Famous actress Karisma Kapoor's divorce from her husband Sanjay Kapoor and Bihar case of domestic violence by a famous political family on their daughter-in-law also comes under the domestic violence cases. It is clear from these two examples that even status, money and

²Fact Sheet: National Family Health Survey NFHSIII 2005-06. Delhi: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India

³National Crime Records Bureau. <http://ncrb.gov.in/>

⁴International Center for Research on Women.: Domestic Violence in India 1: a Summary Report of Three Studies. ICRW; 1999.

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social prestige cannot stop the pique and irate men of the society from doing violence on their women⁵.

Even though the cases of domestic violence among educated women are slightly less than in rural areas, but it is definitely there in every area, in every city and state. If compared to other countries, it will be found that in the rural areas of Bangladesh, there were few incidents of domestic violence with women who had at least 6 years of education experience (Bates et al., 2004). According to the same study (Priya et al., 2019), the contribution of education has not proved to be very effective in reducing domestic violence. Even though education has contributed to the economic progress of women and uplift of the home environment and status, but when it comes to determining the respect of women in the family, all statistics and education collapse.

Domestic violence India is a holy land full of gods, priests, culture and mythology. This is the land where females are worshipped but it is also the land where Females are mal-treated, abused, beaten, harassed and even made to lose their life. The talks/debates/campaigns of female empowerment and feminism are merely an ear-candy. In most of the situations even in the 21st century the scenario remains the same. Relationship abuse involves power imbalance and a person mostly sometimes a group of person trying to control another individual. Although domestic violence can be done by individual of any gender on a person of opposite/same gender. But it is more frequently talked about in the sense of female gender and mostly in cases of married females where domestic violence is acted on her either from the husband only or sometimes other relatives get involved. Thus, the new definition of domestic violence includes violence in intimate partners of both homo and heterosexual type.

Aspects of Domestic Violence in India

Domestic violence includes various aspects of physical violence, mental trauma, financial burden, harming the self-respect of the victim etc (Fig. 2). It also includes preventing the victim which in context of this paper is a female to work, study, meet friends and family members etc. It restricts the female the way to financial freedom including how she spends the money, what type of medicines she should take, and what type of clothes she should wear. Acting with a feeling of possessiveness or jealousy perpetrator starts threatening the victim with violence or weapon, misbehaves under the effect of alcohol/ drugs/ otherwise; forceful sexual activity, unnecessary blaming the female that the violent behavior is because she deserves it - all are included under domestic violence for female. Domestic violence act conducted on trans-genders and same sex relationship are beyond the scope of this paper the main focus is domestic violence on women. In India even pregnant female are not spared when it comes to performing acts of domestic violence; rather in some cases it is seen that it increases during the time of pregnancy (particularly if the female has still not given birth to a male child/or has no child due to previous miscarriages). Domestic violence in some circumstances can be fatal to the health of the mother and the fetus and the danger continues after the childbirth particularly in cases when the female gives birth to a female child. A family that practices domestic violence on its female is one of the worst situations that should ever be encountered by a child or children even if the children are not involved in it. It is a great mental disturbance and trauma for them to be raised in such a family; they have behavior issues and they question their identity. In many cases children reared in such

⁵<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/pune/domestic-violence-cases-in-india-increased-53-between-2001-and-2018-study-7893930/>

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families start considering abuse as a normal part of a male female relationship. Millions of females in India do not reveal the truth (Bates et al., 2004) because of the fear that it will endanger the relationship with their children and it will take away the shelter of husband and in-laws home that they are currently having. They also fear that if their own biological parents will not own them then they have no other place on earth to go (particularly those females who are dependent on their husband/ partner). But the point to be noted down here is that seeking and asking for help is the best way to protect the female, her children, and her very own life.

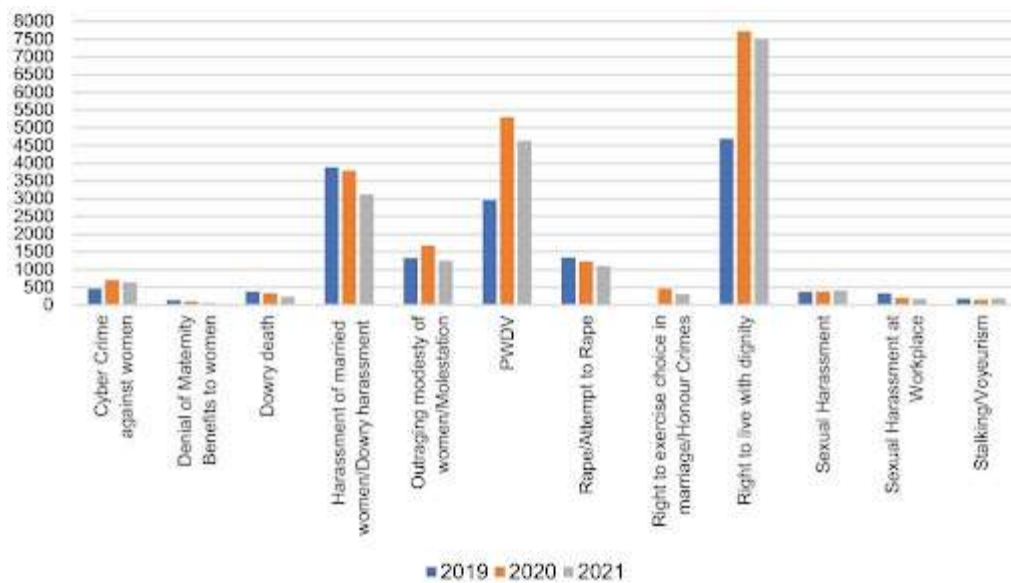


Fig. 2- Commonly occurring aspects of domestic violence on women in India*

*(Source: National Commission for Women (as of September 2021)

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/domestic-violence-and-womens-health-in-india-insights-from-nfhs-4/>

According to WHO estimate in 2018 there were more than 35% cases of domestic violence in South Asian region including India (WHO, 2021). This is double the global rate of suicidal death that occur among women in India (Dandona et al., 2018). As majority of the women are housewife the reason for suicide is given as either social or personal (Dandona et al., 2017). It was in 2005 when domestic violence was recognized as a punishment offence in India and an act was passed by the name Protection of women from Domestic Violence Act⁶ (Anitha et al., 2018). Majority of female suicide and death in India is related to dowry which means transfer of goods/ money/ and property from the family of the female to the family of the boy to which the girl is getting married (Ravikant, 2000). The custom of dowry give/ take is very prevalent in India and has always remain a means to extract property and favor in form of cash and kind from the family of the female⁶. Earlier sections of Indian penal code stated that dowry related violence is crime but the act passed in 2005 gives it a abroad horizon and effective protection to women who are victim of any kind of violence occurring within a family⁷.

DISCUSSION

Various type of crimes that fall under the umbrella of domestic violence in India now include dowry death, cruelty by husband and associated relatives, abetment of suicide of women and various other cases of social/ physical/ verbal/ and emotional assault. The major

⁶Government of India: Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. In: 2005.

⁷Marriage Markets and the Rise of Dowry in India. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3590730>

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limitation of reports executed by NCRB is that they are based on principal offence rule which indicates that despite of a number of offences under which any domestic violence case registered it can only be reported under the most heinous crime heading by the NCRB⁸. Other limitations of NCRB data include that they do not mention the age of the victim and also do not provide individual level data. In the study conducted by (Dandona, et al., 2022) the results revealed horrifying reality where it was observed that cruelty by husband and relatives was 35.8% in years 2014 to 18 which was only 18.5% in 2001 and 28% in 2018 per 100,000 women under age category of 15 to 49 years which clearly indicates 53% enhancement in this period. Extreme variations across various Indian states was observed and cruelty by husband and was lowest in Sikkim and highest in Assam.

There was reported more than 150% increase in this particular crime in 18 years period of 2001 to 2018 in States of Delhi Bengal Meghalaya Assam Jammu and Kashmir etc. Another States described remain relatively stable. There was a surprising decrease in the number of people arrested under this crime in India which was 2.2 in 2001 which came down to 1.1 in 2018 and the numbers remained constant in various states classified on the basis of socio demographic index. When looking at the figures of abatement of suicide of women no doubt it were reported as nill from states like Nagaland, Mizoram, Sikkim; there was also observed a decrease in death from Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. More than 22,000 cases were reported from 2014 to 2018 under the heading of abatement of suicide of women and the average crime rate for this category was 1.27% per 100,000 of women of 15-49 years of age. Such kind of deaths increased in Tamil Nadu by 450% from 2014-18 and the hype achieved in West Bengal and Gujarat was 100%, while in Telangana it reduced by 31% (Dandona, et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

Women are generally found to be calm, cool, powerful, sensible and determined. Many such examples are present in the society where a woman after losing her husband took up the responsibilities of her family on her own and brought up and educated her children but on the other hand if a man loses his wife then in most of the cases by his own will or by the pressure of the society he settles his household again very soon. A woman may well cover up all her feelings, sorrow, love, pain, sex, but a man is more verbal and assertive in every case, if he is angry, he will demonstrate, if he is strong, he will still do, if sex is desire, he will still acquire it by whatever possible means.

Very knowledgeable and intellectual people of the enlightened class also want that the woman who comes under their purview must be obedient, dumb, submissive and tolerant. The current status of women is still to keep herself submissive/obedient and dutiful towards her husband, in-laws, children, keep dancing to their tune, keeping a gentle smile on the face while silently bearing it. In this situation there is not much scope for improvement in the periphery of vision at the moment and it will not happen until the male section of the society starts to understand and respect that woman is also a gift of God like him, a part of the society. At the end only this needs to be said that a women should be considered as a living organism and nothing less than that, if the basis of physical fitness is sidelined for some time, then a woman is more than a man.

⁸Crime in India. <http://nrcb.gov.in>.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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