

A Systematic Appraisal of Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women in India

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women particularly domestic violence is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, equity, justice, development and peace. The worst result of domestic violence is the loss of life. It is also a serious social issue and a “shameful” violation of human rights. The World Health Organization (WHO) and member countries have acknowledged violence against women not only a social issue but also a serious public health issue. Domestic violence occurs when one person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person. The impact of domestic violence on personal life of the victims adversely affects their physical and mental health. India has been a victim of this form of crime since very long. The reports released by National Crime Records Bureau of India have show increasing inclination in domestic violence cases against women in India which is a serious concern. Keeping the above stated statement in forefront this research paper highlights various types of domestic violence. At the same time examines and investigates various causes that perpetuate various forms of violence against women in India. After making extensive review of various sources the present study reveals that intensity of domestic violence against women in India is increasing day by day. Finally it is important to make drastic measures that could resist the extent of this reprehensible crime in Indian society. This paper provides some of the suggestions and remedies that could resist this crime from further expansion.

Keywords: Domestic violence, India, Prevalence, Women.

I.INTRODUCTION

The research studies reveal that violence against women is universal health problem, which oblige economic, social, and health cost to a community at large [1]. The darkest legacies of south Asia is the violence against women by Intimate family members. In India forty percent of all sexual abuse cases are about incest. A report from OXFAM International has revealed that “domestic violence is now outlawed in 125 countries but, globally, 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not considered a crime. The home is often the most dangerous place for women and many live in daily fear of violence. One in three women will experience physical or sexual violence from men, usually someone known to them, in their lifetime [2]. The Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines Violence Against Women as “any act of gender based violence against women that results in or is likely to result in

physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private spaces” [3]. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 defines domestic violence as, harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security [4]. Domestic violence is a universal phenomenon irrespective of whether a country is poor or rich, developed or underdeveloped spousal violence is persistent. Statistical evidence available about the actual prevalence of domestic violence is inadequate in India and the only large scale survey carried out by the National Crimes Record Bureau relating to the crimes against women reveals that a record 71.5 per cent increases in cases of touchier and dowry deaths during 1991 to 1995. Number of studies conducted by independent social scientists indicates that physical abuse of Indian Women is pretty high [5]. Thus in India the problem of domestic violence against women has become serious issue and has assumed the form of a social problem.

II.VARIOUS FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Infact India has number of laws, legal and constitutional provisions which secure women from number of violence acts. One of these major legal statues is the statue of ‘Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005’ but still domestic violence is a serious social problem. Infact the major scale of violence that a woman is subjected to in India is linked with the area of domesticity [6]. There are various forms of violence and abuse against women all over the world. Most specifically the research reports of UNICEF (2017) has revealed major areas where girls and women are being abused the vital among these include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological which are elaborated below:

2.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes hitting, slapping, punching, choking, pushing, burning and other types of contact that result in physical injury to the victim. Physical abuse is abuse involving contact intended to cause feelings of intimidation, pain, injury, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. If a person is suffering from any physical harm then they are experiencing physical abuse. This pain can be experienced on any level [7]. It is evident from various researches that physical violence is usually accompanied by psychological abuse and in many cases by sexual assault.

2.2 Sexual Abuse and Rape in Intimate Relationships

Coercing a person to engage in sexual activity against their will, even if that person is a spouse or intimate partner with whom consensual sex has occurred, is an act of aggression and violence. Sexual abuse and rape by an intimate partner is not considered a crime in most countries, and women in many societies do not consider forced sex as rape if they are married to, or cohabiting with, the perpetrator. The supposition is that once a woman enters into a contract of marriage, the husband has the right to unlimited sexual access to his wife [8]. in a similar recently the supreme court of India has passed a judgment that sexual intercourse with a minor wife is rape and can be punished under section 376 of Indian Penal Code [9].

2.3 Psychological Abuse

The psychological abuse comprises the behavior that is anticipated to threaten and pursue, and takes the form of threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation [10]. This type of abuse creates a close correlation between domestic violence and suicide.

2.4 Forced Prostitution

This is another form of abuse where women are tricked or forced by their husbands and relatives for money by prostitution. Forced Prostitution or other kinds of commercial exploitation by husband or parents is worst kind of violence against women reported worldwide. The practice of Devadasi exists in India where young women and girls are donated to serve a temple and very often end up being prostituted [11]. This kind of violence may lead to death and infertility, and long-term psychological trauma combined with extreme physical suffering.

Thus besides above stated forms of domestic violence there are various other abuses some of which include femicide, traditional and cultural practices affecting the health and lives of women, sex-selective abortions, female infanticide and differential access to food and medical care and many more. The following given table will clear our understanding concerning forms of domestic violence against women:

Table-1: Violence against Women throughout Life Cycle

Types of Violence Against Women: A Life-Cycle Approach	
Infancy	Female infanticide; emotional, sexual and physical abuse; differential access to food and medical care.
Girlhood	Child marriage; female genital mutilation; sexual and psychological abuse by relatives or strangers; differential access to food and medical care; child prostitution and pornography.
Adolescence	Dating and courtship violence; economically coerced sex; incest; sexual abuse in the workplace; sexual harassment; rape, marital rape; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking; forced pregnancy.
Reproductive Age	Abuse by intimate male partners, marital rape; dowry abuse and murder; partner homicide; psychological abuse; sexual abuse in the workplace; sexual harassment; rape; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking; abuse of women

	with disabilities.
Elderly	Sexual, psychological and physical abuse.

Source: unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/monee6/chap-5

III. PREVALENT CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Violence against women and girls is a worldwide phenomenon which extends all social classes and age groups. The main cause is the power gap between men and women and relations between men and women are closing bound up with political and economic structures. Majority of the poor worldwide are female [12]. Less access to resources draw a big status difference among men and women either in rural or urban areas. This has resulted in various causes which perpetuate domestic violence against women and girls. Some of the common causes which construct the problem of violence against women in domestic sphere are enlisted below:

3.1 Patriarchy

Patriarchy can be defined as a social system in which men are placed above women and which is often the most commonly referenced cause of violence against women in India. This being so, group mentality and social practices follow suit, often resulting in the oppression and exploitation of women [13]. The family under patriarchy is often seen as the key institution dominating women in society. The ascendancy over women has been justified by patriarchal ideology as a system of controlling women and property.

3.2 Dowry

As per Dowry Prohibition Act both taking and giving dowry are considered as criminal offence. In spite of this Act in sections of the society taking and giving of dowry occurred frequently. It seems that prevalence of different types of domestic violence is higher in those families who had taken dowry during marriage than those who not taken. The incidents of married women have been murdered by husband or in-laws because her parents could not satisfy their lust for dowry has become the common words for Indian news papers [14].

3.3 Poverty

The most profound background risk factor for violence against children and women is poverty. It is common myth that domestic Violence only happens to poor women, in fact it occurs in all kinds of families and relationships. Poverty has been identified as both a contributing factor and as a consequence for interpersonal violence [15]. Low economic status of the household is not necessarily a casual factor; it is generally assumed to significantly increase the risk of domestic violence.

3.4 Lack of Legal Protection and Awareness

Until recently, the public and personal distinction that has ruled most legal systems has been a major obstruction to women rights. Lack of legal protection, particularly within the sanctity of the home, is a strong factor in

perpetuating violence against women. However, States are seen as responsible for protecting the rights of women even in connection with offences committed within the home. In many countries violence against women is exacerbated by legislation, law enforcement and judicial systems that do not recognize domestic violence as a crime [16]. India too has such laws and legal structures which protect women from number of violence inside and outside home. But the actual intensity of these crimes is at verge.

There are number of other causes that perpetuate violence against women but vary from country to country. The above mentioned reasons are almost present in numerous countries of the world. Let's look at the model of Heise et al. (1994) which will direct our concentration on more specific causes of violence against women:

Table-2: Various factors that Perpetuate Domestic Violence

Factors That Perpetuate Domestic Violence	
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-specific socialization • Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles • Expectations of roles within relationships • Belief in the inherent superiority of males • Values that give men proprietary rights over women and girls • Notion of the family as the private sphere and under male control • Customs of marriage (bride price/dowry) • Acceptability of violence as a means to resolve conflict
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's economic dependence on men • Limited access to cash and credit • Discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights, use of communal lands, and maintenance after divorce or widowhood • Limited access to employment in formal and informal sectors • Limited access to education and training for women
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser legal status of women either by written law and/or by practice • Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance • Legal definitions of rape and domestic abuse

Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low levels of legal literacy among women • Insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-representation of women in power, politics, the media and in the legal and medical professions • Domestic violence not taken seriously • Notions of family being private and beyond control of the state • Risk of challenge to status quo/religious laws • Limited organization of women as a political force • Limited participation of women in organized political system

Source: Heise et al. (1994)

IV MATERIALS AND METHOD

4.1 Research Question

Violence against women and the threat of violence are main barriers to women's empowerment and equal participation in society. Particularly domestic violence is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, equity, justice, sustainable development and peace. The nature and intensity of violence against women is increasing day by day. The perpetuation of domestic violence in India is at verge. This paper tries to bring out the forms, factors and possible solution that may resist the expansion of violence against women.

V OBJECTIVES

The versatile nature of violence against women cannot be neglected while framing the objective and aims for the present study. This is such a vast area that particular set of objectives cannot define the versatility of this social problem. But keeping the pace and intensity of domestic violence against women in India in consideration this paper rests on the following broad objectives:

1. To examine and highlight the various forms of domestic violence in general.
2. To investigate the causes and factors that perpetuates violence against women.
3. To provide some suggestions which may help in resisting the violence against women in large.

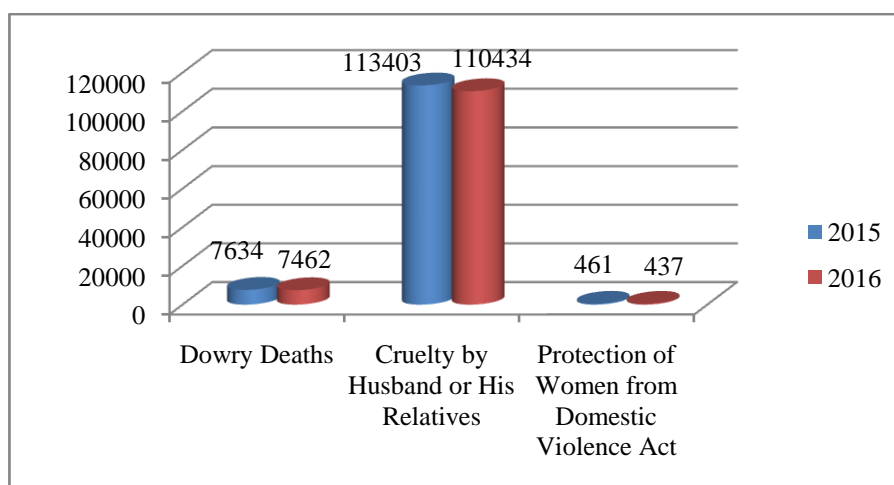
VI METHODOLOGY

In the present study a systematized review of published articles, books, research papers, government reports and international organizations reports was performed about violence against women in electronic databases and selected libraries. The qualitative approach used for collection of data in the current study is secondary in nature. Hence, the research technique used for analysis of data in this paper is descriptive research method.

VII RESULTS

In 1993 the UN General Assembly adopted the landmark Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which is considered a major expression of political will towards addressing violence against women. India has also been the signatory of this conviction to address the deteriorating condition of women in domestic sphere [17]. After the analysis of various government and non government reports about violence against women in India it is revealed that the intensity and prevalence of domestic violence against women in India is more frequently increasing day by day. The report of National Crimes Record Bureau of India has given the statistical data about the violence of women in India. The latest report released by the NCRB is in 2017 of year 2016. This report reveals slight decrease in domestic violence cases against women in India which can be observed from the following given figure:

Figure-1: Cases Registered in Given Areas during 2015 and 2016



Source: NCRB report 2016, Chapter-3A

As per the NCRB report 2016 the percentage variation between the areas of dowry deaths, cruelty by husband and his relatives and Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 has been slightly down by -2.2, -2.6, and -5.6 percents respectively, which is further elaborated under the following table:

Table-3: Percentage Variation of Crime against Women during 2015-2016

Crime Head	Year		% Variation In 2016 over 2015
	2015	2016	
Dowry Deaths	7634	7462	-2.2

Cruelty By Husband and his Relatives	113403	110434	-2.6
Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act	461	437	-5.2
Total Crime Against Women	329243	338954	2.9

Source: NCRB report 2016, Chapter-3A

Thus the statistical data released by NCRB in 2017 shows overall increase in crimes against women in India. Under the cartage of cruelty of husband and his relatives the highest number of cases are registered from West Bengal 19302 followed by Rajasthan 13811 and Uttar Pradesh 11156. While analyzing the data it is observed that crimes against women whether in general or domestic are increase day by day. Strict policies and programmes from both public as well as private segments are needed to coup and resist the expansion of domestic violence against women. The world is in transaction, India too is experiencing the developmental change since last decade. But the problem of violence against women in India, particularly domestic violence, is to a large degree “invisible” – unrecognized, unmeasured and unaddressed. The need of hour is to bring a firm change in the legal structure concerning protection of women. The following measure may help in addressing the issues of violence against women to a large extent:

1. Introducing violence against women in a legal framework needs to be followed by enforcement and active support from authorities. Particularly domestic violence acts and laws need to be followed in true spirit and nature.
2. Women are to be made financially sound and sufficient so that poverty does not become the cause of violence. By availing financial support from government women may develop their own business ventures.
3. Seminars, conferences, mock shows and various programmes are to organized so that women may get the sufficient awareness about the violence related law. Most of the domestic violence’s are culturally approved regarding which need is to develop a platform where from women may get guidance how to tackle these issues.
4. Separate national helpline is to be created so that women from every corner of the country may frequently report the domestic violence.
5. Women organizations which work in partnership with government must be promoted and the range of their services must be strengthened.

VIII CONCLUSION

One of the broadest violations of human rights in the contemporary world and a substantial barrier to women’s equality is violence against women. There are various forms of violence and abuse against women all over the

world. Most specifically the research reports of UNICEF (2017) has revealed major areas where girls and women are being abused the vital among these include physical, sexual, emotional and psychological. India is also experiencing such type of violence's against women. In this paper, major causes responsible for violence against women such as patriarchy, dowry, poverty and lack of legal awareness is also mention at length. Besides these causes there are certain factors that perpetuate violence against women are also discussed at extent. By the above stated causes it is analyzed that violence against women is mainly the outcome of culturally approved practices and conservative nature towards potential of women. By the analysis of data available from NCRB reports it is revealed that highest numbers of cases are registered in cruelty by husband and his relative's crime head. Finally some effort from authorities and general public is needed to promptly deal with the issue of domestic violence, else this problem will assume a cruel shape of social problem. This may resist the social progress of country.

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