

Domestic Violence against Women

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I. INTRODUCTION

Domestic Violence is thus the most prevalent, and yet the least reported crime in society. It is very unfortunate that we have to keep reminding everyone that violence against women is increasing. Battered women are only too often reluctant to report that they have been beaten up because of social stigma, guilt, shame and loyalty. They may lose the economic support of their husband on harness their career. Also, battered women do not report their problems to the police because they usually get a negative response (Ekelaar, 1991).

The discrimination on the ground of sex has been responsible in depriving Indian women from education, economic independence and personal freedom for centuries.

In India as in all countries the world over, the situation is no different. The astronomical number of wife murders, more popularly known as “dowry deaths” that occur every year are an enduring cause for national shame. Wife beating is perhaps prevalent form of violence against women.

In India where almost half of the population are women they have always been ill treated and deprived of their rights to life and personal liberty as provided under the constitution of India.

Women in India as a group are more vulnerable than men to the extremes of exploitation and subjugation. The discrimination being a females are obvious in Indian society, such as the lower expectancy, minimum education, poorly paid jobs, lower status expectations and very few rewards than men in comparable situations, sex role differentiation and ideological assumptions about “Women’s place” is linked to the equal distribution of resources, rewards, rights and authority between men and women which in turn influence patterns of family and workplace.

The cultural traditions the world over historically granted men permission to beat their wives, and even kill them in certain circumstances. In India wife’s position was no different as the code of man decreed that she be considered of no more importance than the chattel of the husband. A wife was regarded as subordinate to and the property. She could not sue, she had no legal status apart from her husband. There are certain special limitations due to India’s cultural and familial background the social, economic and political conditions are also responsible for women’s oppressions. They are the victims of the circumstances which have been created due to gender discrimination which persists in India from cradle to grave. This phenomenon, however takes its rise from the decline of the religion.

Domestic violence is a serious human rights threat to women in every society rich and poor, developed and industrialized, particularly in patriarchal societies, it is used as a weapon for subjugating women and suppressing their rights as equal partners in the family structure. Domestic violence is widespread and cuts across caste, greed, class and all educational

levels. Around the world, on an average, one in every three women has experienced violence in an intimate relationship. It strikes in various forms :-

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Psychological abuse

It is not only damaging to women but causes deep psychological effects on their children too, because of constant fear of humiliation they live with. Because the wife is treated as husband property and there is a social acceptance of his rights to chastise her, it she has displaced or disobeyed him in anyway, however minor.

Any act of gender based violence that result in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private live”.

When domestic violence take physical forms and results in torture, beating, causing physical and mental tensions to women so that they get tired of their life’s.

The women are denied food and good place to sleep etc. It is not restricted to a particular area or type of people. Its tentacles are spreading in every area. However the gravitation of violence against women in rural areas are more prevalent as compared to cities. The interesting feature of this is that it is found even among educated religious minded people as well. Such a horrible situation causes havoc and makes life of women miserable.

Emotional, psychological abuse includes any acts intended to denigrate, isolate or dominate a partner. Emotional abuse is intended to control victims sense of self worth, competence, and value. Emotional maltreatment can include verbal abuse, such as insults, criticisms, ridicule, name calling, discounting and discrediting isolation of the victim; control of social and family contacts denial of access to finances of transportation; demonstration of extreme jealousy and possessiveness ; the monitoring of behavior; accusations of infidelity; and damage to or destruction of personal property. (Health care, mental health, and legal researchers).

National Institution of Justice as a course of conduct directed at specific person that involves repeated visual or physical proximity, non consensual communication, or verbal, written implied threats or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person fear”. For examples include behavior such as following the victim, conducting surveillance, threatening the victim or victims , family, harassing the victim through phone calls on letters, appearing at the victims home or place of business, or breaking into the victims home. Although high profile cases of celebrity stalking have attracted media and public interest.

Abuse may include one or more of the following types of mistreatment physical, sexual and emotional/psychological. These kind of abuse occur in every race, class and educational background from doctors to truck drivers. It is extremely prevalent with 3 to 4 million women being battered each year in the United States.

It is common misconception that domestic violence is prevalent only the lower sections of society. The fact is that domestic violence is a malaise that can strike any household, irrespective of caste, religion or financial status. When domestic violence is targeted only at the partner, it is referred to as spousal abuse.

Abuse: This is first stage in Domestic Violence cycle the abuser will display some form of violent or aggressive behavior towards his victims. Abuse is not always physical. Some abusers drive greater pleasure form mentally torturing their victims rather than actual physical pain. This could involve insulting the victim or damaging her self esteem. In all forms of domestic violence, the abuse is a type of power struggle. The abuser seeks to control victim or demonstrate who incharge of the relationship is.

Guilt:- An abusive session is almost always followed by feeling of guilt. In the case of an abuser, this guilt is usually not because of the harm her has caused. It is more out of fear that authorities may apprehend him and he will have to face the consequences of his action.

Even victims experience feeling of guilt these feelings are largely related to thoughts like "what wrong have I done?" or "why cant I do things correctly". This is classic behavior displayed by a victim. She will usually try o put the blame for the abuse on herself rather than her abuser. This is especially true for situation where the victim is financially dependent or her abuser.

Excuses: This is third stage of the cycle. To assure his feelings of guilt, the abuser will try to rationalize his behavior. He will make all sorts of excuses to himself and to his victim. The most common excuse is to blame the victim for making him resort to abuse. The abuser does not want to believe that he is responsible for his own behavior. He prefers to think that his actions are in response to a situation than left him no other alternative.

Pretence: The next stage is to fall in to a 'normal' behavior. The abuser will pretend as if nothing has happened and will go about his daily routine. This behavior is largely to allow the abuser to regain some control over his emotions. This is also to reassure the victim that an abusive incident will not happen again.

Planning: This stage occurs simultaneously with the "Pretence" stage. Even while abuse is pretending to be a good person, he is busy planning his next attack.

Setup:- Once a plan is ready, the abuser sets in motion. Based on his plan, the abuser will seek to create a situation where his victim will make a mistake. Once this occurs, he can then pounce on her mistake and use it as a reason to attack her. A victim must remember that an act of violence is usually premeditated, No matter how hard she tries to avoid making a is take , abuser is not going to let her go.

Socio-religious norms have affected the women's status which has become another by another causative factor in right form the past Vedic era down to the modern times, the religious, practice, rituals, socio pictures, scriptures , precepts , historical

force which have created for women their existing secondary status in Indian Society. The chief apologist for lowering the status of women was Manu. As psychologists suggest our Beliefs and Values conditions our behavior.

Women experience violence more sharply than men because social definitions of their biological equipment assign them to a special secondary descriptor as a limitation of their social status at every level in a given social hierarchy.

Dowry, a common phenomenon relevant in all over India was initially a kind of presorted inheritance of daughters in parental property. Which was given at the time of marriage ceremony for better status at the in-laws house? This social evil has plagued the society since ancient times as chatterjee (1971) has mentioned. Hindu religious scripture provide evidences that Lord Shiva and Rama received valuable items such as jewels, gold , horses, elephants, vehicles, cows etc. as dowry. During the Moghal period to the Aine-Akbar (1977) has traced the evil of dowry.

The worst part of the problem is that women today are not feeling safe and secured even in the family. The concept of home is taking many changes, so far any women who suffer violence against women need cooperation from the society, voluntary organizations, and governmental agencies. Such a burning problem of violence against women needs a multidisciplinary conceptual analysis.

Domestic violence contributes to a member of long term consequences physical and emotional psychological, innumerable chronic physical conditions along with mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide may result. There is evidence that one tactic women frequently are the first time and only professional to whom victims turn for help.

The one best plan women should be able to feel safe and secure is in own house. Women should be able to have control over her own life, choices and decisions. In an abusive relationship women are not able to do this and in effect self respect, self esteem, self worth often making women believe her are a nothing and therefore don't deserve to be treated better.

Domestic violence is traditionally associated with cases of physical violence occurring within intimate relationship and in a domestic setting. It is most commonly perpetrated by a male against a female partner. But it also includes married, defaults and separated socialization process for violence. But the psychological process for violence. But the psychological attributes alone cannot explain the phenomenon as it also depicts a form of behavior. As women become more self conscious and we began to explore our experience with each other, we also began to question the assumptions about the women in traditional disciplines. Domestic violence also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, family violence and intimate partner violence. It can be broadly define as patterns of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship. Such as marriage, dating family, friends or cohabitation the term used to describe this exploiting problem of violence within our homes is Domestic Violence. This violence is towards someone who we are in relationship with, be it a life husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent or any other family member. It can be males or females atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. This violence has a

tendency to explore in various forms such as physical, sexual or emotional.

The most common causes for women staking and battering include dissatisfaction with the dowry and exploiting women for more of dowry, arguing with partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children's going out of home without telling the partner, not cooking properly or one time, indulging in extra marital affairs, not looking after in-law's etc. In some cases infertility in females also leads to their assault by the family members. The greed for dowry desire for a male child and alcoholism of the spouse are major factors of domestic violence against women in rural areas.

There have been gruesome reports of young bride being burnt alive or subjected to continuous harassment for not bringing home the amount of demanded dowry. Women in India also admit to hitting or beating because of their suspicious about the husband's sexual involvement with other women. The Tandoor Murder case of Naina Sahni in New Delhi in the year 1995 is one such dreadful incident of a women being killed and then burnt in a Tandoor by her husband. This incidence was an outcome of suspicious of extra marital affairs of Naina Sahni which led to marital discord and domestic violence against her.

In urban areas there are many more factors which lead to differences in the beginning and later take the shape of domestic violence. These include more income of working women than her partner, her absence in the house till late night, abusing and neglecting in-laws, being more forward socially etc. Working women are quite often subjected to assaults and coercion sex employees of organization. All times, it could be voluntary for a better pay and designation in the office. Violence against young widows has also been on a rise in India. Most often they are cursed for their husbands death and are deprived of proper food and clothing. They are not allowed or encouraged for remarriage in most of the homes, especially in rural areas. These have been cases of males taken and rape attempts of women by other family members in nuclear families or someone in the neighbor. At times, women's are even sexually coerced by their partners themselves against their will.

They are brutally beaten and tortured ripping of women's womb for killing the female fetus when she disagree for abortion have also come to light especially in rural areas. Female feticide and female infanticide continue to be a rising concern. A common Indian house wife has a tendency to bear the harassment. She is subjected to by her husband and the family. One reason could be to prevent the children from undergoing the hardships if she separates from the spouse. Also the traditional and orthodox mindset makes them bear the sufferings without any protest.

Other forms of physical abuse against women include slapping, punching, grabbing, burdening them with drudgery, public humiliation and the neglect of their health problems. Some of the other forms of psychological torment against them could be curtailment of their rights to self expression and curbing the freedom to associate with the natal family and friends.

II. EFFECTS ON THE VICTIM AND THE FAMILY

Consequences of violence against women. Battered women have tendency to remain quiet agonized and emotionally

disturbed after the occurrence of the torment. A psychological set back and trauma because of domestic violence affects women's productivity in all forms of life. The suicide case of such victimized women is also a deadly consequence and the number of such cases is increasing.

One of the sexual effects of domestic violence against women is its effect on her children. It natures phenomenon that a child generally has a greater attachment towards the mother for she is the one who given birth. As long as the violence subjected to the mother is hidden from the child. She/he may behave normally at home. The day when mother's grief and suffering is revealed. A child may become upset about the happening deeply, children may not even comprehend the severity of the problem. They may turn silent, reserved and express solace to the mother. When the violence against women is openly done in front of them since their childhood, it may have a deeper and gruesome impact in their mind set. They get used to such happenings at home, and have a tendency to reciprocate the same in their lives. Its common in especially in rural homes in India which are victimized by the evil of domestic violence.

III. EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE SOCIETY

All the different forms of violence discussed in this essay adversely affect the society, violence against women may keep them locked in homes succumbing to the torture they face. If they come out in open and reveal the wrong done to them for help and rescue. It influences the society both positively and negatively. At one hand it also spoils the atmosphere of the society. When something of this kind happens in the society, few families may witness the evil of domestic violence knocking their door steps. Some families try to initiate what others indulge in irrespective of it being good or bad for the family.

Police play a major role in tackling domestic violence cases. They need to sensitize to treat domestic violence cases as seriously as any other crime. Special training to handle domestic violence cases should be important to police force. There should be a separate wing of police dealing with women issues.

Authorities should take steps to recognize Domestic Violence as a public health issue. A crisis support call needs to be established in all major government and private hospitals with trained medical social worker for provide appropriate services. Training programmes must be organized for health professionals in order to develop their skills to provide basic support for abused people.

Conclusion having looked at sensitive topic of "Domestic Violence in India", we can sense the importance of discussion Domestic Violence. The every case which can spark the violence within the forum walls of homes need to be analyzed carefully and a wise study of the factors causing the violence may prevent families to suffer from the means of Domestic Violence. A nodal agency should also be setup for the annual consolidation of documented work and publish the same for wider publicity among the public for increasing awareness.

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