

Causes of Domestic Violence Against Women : A Study

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Abstract

Inflicting and experiencing violence in many subtle forms causing and suffering mental pain in day-to-day life has become ways of our world in inter-personal relationships. The cruelty, the hate that exists in ourselves is expressed in the exploitation of the weak by the powerful and the cunning (Krishnamurthy, 1977).

The worst part of the problem is that women today are not feeling safe and secured even in the Indian Society. The concept of home, sweet home is no more, so far many women, who suffer violence against themselves by the members of the family. There are so many causes behind the scene. The causes of domestic violence vary from society to society, region to region, state to state and time to time. The culture of respective society also counts. This paper will examine the causes of domestic violence which are occurring in the Indian family.

Key words: *Inter-personal relationships, Dowry, love affairs before marriage, extra marital relations, resistance for sexual abuse, unemployed husband, alcoholism, tension, experiencing violence, Indian family, patriarchal family.*

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Intrduction:

The lexicon meaning of the violence refers to any physical force or any damage or injury to person or property. According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Webster, 1961), violence means "exertion of any physical force for instance: (a) violent treatment or procedure, (b) profanation infringement, outrage, assault, (c) strength, energy, activity displayed or exerted, vehement, forcible or destructive action or force, (d) vehemence in feeling, passion, order, furry, fervor.

According to Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice (1983), in a broad sense, "violence is a general term referring to all types of behavior either threatened or actual that result in the damage or destruction of property or the injury or death of an individual". In a limited sense, violence means "all types of illegal behavior, either threatened or actual that results in damage or destruction of property, or in the injury or death of an individual". In general, the definition covers that behavior, generally considered as violent including such crimes as criminal homicide, forcible rape, child abuse, aggravated assault and most kinds of collective violence.

According to Black's Law Dictionary (1999), "violence means unjust or unwarranted use of force usually accompanied by fury, vehemence, or outrage, physical force unlawfully exercised with the intent to harm".

L.B. Curzon's Dictionary of Law defines violence as "any conduct so that it includes violent conduct towards property as well as towards persons, and it is not restricted to conduct causing or intended to cause injury or damage but includes any other violent conduct" (Curzon, 1994).

If we take 'violence' as conduct which incurs the formal pronouncements of the moral condemnation of the community, or the deviation from conduct norms of the normative groups, the scope of cases of 'violence against women' becomes too broad. Narrowly, the term 'violence' has been applied to "physically striking an individual (Kempe et.al. 1982) and causing injury", (Gill, 1970) to "the act of striking a person with the intent of causing harm or injury but not actually causing it", (Gelles & Straus, 1979) to "acts where there is the high potential of causing injury", (Straus, et.al., 1980) and to "acts which may not involve actual hitting, but may involve verbal abuse or psychological stress and suffering". Megargee has defined violence as the "overtly threatened or overtly accomplished application of force which results in the injury or destruction of persons or their reputation" (Edwin, 1982).

Domestic violence is more than physical abuse, hitting or an occasional argument. It is a pattern of controlling and aggressive behaviours directed towards a woman in an intimate relationship by a man. Ahuja described wife battering as 'willfully striking of wife by husband with or without injury'. Intimate partner violence includes

a range of sexually, psychologically and physically coercive acts used against women by an intimate partner. Violence against women can be conceptualized as an act of omission or commission that causes harm to women or keep her in a subordinate position. The United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women, 1993 has maintained that a manifestation of historically unequal power relationship between men and women is the violence against women. World Health Organization has defined violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 defined domestic violence as any act, omission or commission or conduct that 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 an includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse.

Research Method :

The present paper is based on a major research study, supported by UGC. The study is dependent on exploratory and descriptive designs of research. The study is based on mainly primary data collected through field survey. The study has been conducted in four states viz., Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. The states have been divided on the basis of the rating of crime against women.

Thus, four states and 20 districts have been covered in the sample. A random sample of 2975 victims have been drawn from the universe at the rate of 150 victims in each district and 750 victims in each selected state. The sample represents the victims from upper class, middle class and lower class of the society. In order to conduct field survey, interview schedules were prepared. The interview schedule pertained relevant research questions, points and scales of view perception related to the causes of Domestic Violence etc. The filled in interview schedules have been thoroughly checked and processed in computer using some relevant statistical tools and techniques. The schedules and collected data from field survey have been edited and checked for ambiguities and inconsistencies. Data has been analyzed, discussed and interpreted while pertinent literature has been reviewed.

Discussion of Result:

Causes of domestic violence are shown in Table-1. Most of the causes of domestic violence were found related with economic, societal, psychological matters and sex. A larger proportion of the respondents reported that the main cause of domestic violence is the fewer dowries or refusing to bring money from patriarchal

family. It was found more pronouncing in the state of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. 79.39% respondent revealed that the main causes of violence no dowry or less dowry which they bring from the their maternal family 27.29% also revealed that due to love affairs before marriage, they experienced domestic violence. It is found more in Bihar 35.13% than other state, In Madhya Pradesh it causes only 19.01%, In Uttar Pradesh this scene around 1/4th Similarly, around 25.55 per cent respondents revealed that due to extra marital relations, there is case against domestic violence against them. Resistance against sexual abuse was also reported one of the significant reasons of the domestic violence. It was found more pronouncing in the state of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Interestingly, less than 60 per cent respondents reported the main cause of domestic violence as husband's alcoholism. It was found predominantly high in the state of Bihar (75.39 per cent). We think that viewing this significant causes of domestic violence Bihar government enacted the rule on alcoholism.

Table: 1
Causes of Violence

Causes	Bihar	Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan	Uttar Pradesh	Total
No dowry/less dowry	643	568	524	627	2362
(%)	84.61	80.00	73.29	79.37	79.39
Refuse to bring money from patriarchal family	324	168	276	342	1110
(%)	42.63	23.66	38.60	43.29	37.31
Partial fulfillment or no fulfillment of promises given and comments made at the time of settlement of marriage	375	244	214	267	1100
(%)	49.34	34.37	29.93	33.80	36.97
Love affairs before marriage	267	135	216	194	812
(%)	35.13	19.01	30.21	24.56	27.29
Extra marital relations	124	176	214	246	760
(%)	16.32	24.79	29.93	31.14	25.55
Resistance for sexual abuse	346	349	324	216	1235
(%)	45.53	49.15	45.31	27.34	41.51
Medically unfit for child repeatedly	197	135	138	124	594
(%)	25.92	19.01	19.30	15.70	19.97
Giving birth to a girl child repeatedly	140	172	146	135	593
(%)	18.42	24.23	20.42	17.09	19.93
Unemployed husband	516	467	467	462	1912
(%)	67.89	65.77	65.31	58.48	64.27
Husband's alcoholism	573	358	428	359	1718
(%)	75.39	50.42	59.86	45.44	57.75
Husband constantly under tension due to problems at work place	273	237	276	294	1080
(%)	35.92	33.38	38.60	37.22	36.30

Others	61	32	167	127	387
(%)	8.03	4.51	23.36	16.08	13.01
Total	760	710	715	790	2975

Source: Field Survey.

Conclusion :

- Most of the respondents reported that their spouses are alcoholic/ drug addicted. Even more than half of the respondents reported that their spouses are unemployed. Around 67 per cent respondents further revealed that their husbands are under mental stress.
- The main causes of violence are reported to be refused to bring money from patriarchal society, partial fulfillment or no fulfillment of promises made at the time of settlement of marriage, extra-marital relations, and resistance for sexual abuse, medically unfit for bearing child, dowry, etc. However, the prominent factors of domestic violence were reported to be unemployed status of their husbands.

Suggestion :

There are some recommendation or suggestions to check and control the domestic violence cases which are as follows:-

- In order to bridge the gap between legislations and their implementations, a multi-sectoral approach is needed that tackles various levels concurrently. Improving the legal and institutional framework for the protection of women and girls is crucial to preventing and combating gender-based violence effectively.
- Domestic violence needs a coordinated and systematic response from the justice system. While Sector 498A has been one of the most significant criminal law reforms protecting women's rights, this reform is not enough. Therefore, stepping of measures for better policing is imperative to have a civil law which addresses domestic violence. We need to look towards a coordinated legal approach to protect women facing domestic violence.
- Changes in patriarchal value system of our society through education, awareness and empowerment in all spheres need to be emphasized. This can be possible if traditional attitudes, beliefs and values are replaced by progressive, objective, scientific orientation and human values.
- Women must be made aware about legislations, legal provisions, rights and entitlements while equal social rights of women in at family and community level is suggested. State must actively intervene to protect women's social, political, economic and cultural rights and withdraw restrictive legal and

administrative provisions, which tend to weaken their rights in practice.

- Women need to be provided access and control of the sources. They should be provided adequate education, skills for availing the economic opportunities. The delayed marriages can play an important role in decreasing women's sense of powerlessness and in protecting them from marital violence.

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