



## REVIEW ARTICLE ON CAUSES AND NATURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INDIA

Uzma eram

Assistant professor in the Department of Community Medicine, J.N.M.C.H, A.M.U., Aligarh

**ABSTRACT** Domestic violence in India includes any form of violence suffered by a person from a biological relative, but typically is the violence suffered by a woman by male members of her family or relatives. Domestic abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual violence of any form. Many researchers come out with findings that alcoholism promotes men to commit domestic violence. Another study among Uttar Pradesh men by Gerstein (2000) is of the view that low educational level and poverty are important reasons for domestic violence. Joint family and less duration of marriage are important parameters of domestic violence. Illiteracy seems to be one of the most prominent causes of Domestic violence. The three most common reasons of domestic violence include: monetary reasons, alcohol and Extra marital affair. Besides this, the role of inter spouse relationship, sex of the children, ownership of property, dowry, working status, autonomy, religion and caste of the person can't be ignored.

**KEYWORDS :** domestic violence, causes, nature, review article

**Introduction**

**Domestic violence in India** includes any form of violence suffered by a person from a biological relative, but typically is the violence suffered by a woman by male members of her family or relatives.<sup>[12]</sup> According to a National Family and Health Survey in 2005, total lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was 33.5% and 8.5% for sexual violence among women aged 15–49.<sup>[3]</sup> The 2012 National Crime Records Bureau report of India states a reported crime rate of 46 per 100,000, rape rate of 2 per 100,000, dowry homicide rate of 0.7 per 100,000 and the rate of domestic cruelty by husband or his relatives as 5.9 per 100,000.<sup>[4]</sup> Domestic violence, or intimate partner violence (IPV) as it is sometimes called, is a worldwide problem.<sup>[5]</sup> Domestic abuse includes physical, emotional and sexual violence of any form. Domestic violence is currently defined in India by the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005. According to Section 3 of the Act, “any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence in case it:”<sup>[6]</sup>

1. 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
2. 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; or
3. has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her by any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b); or
4. otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.”

Jammu and Kashmir, which has its own laws, has enacted in 2010 the Jammu and Kashmir Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2010.<sup>[7]</sup>

**2006 NFHS survey report on domestic sexual violence**

The National Family Health Survey of India in 2006 estimated the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence among women aged 15–49, including instances of marital rape in India. The study included in its definition of “sexual violence” all instances of a woman experiencing her husband “physically forcing her to have sexual intercourse with him even when she did not want to; and, forcing her to perform any sexual acts she did not want to”.<sup>[8]</sup> The study sampled 83,703 women nationwide, and determined that 8.5% of women in the 15-49 age group had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>[9]</sup> This figure includes all forms of forced sexual activity by husband on wife, during their married life, but not recognised as marital rape by Indian law.

The 2006 NFHS study reported sexual violence to be lowest against women in the 15-19 age group, and urban women reporting 6% lifetime prevalence rate of sexual violence, while 10% of rural women reported experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>[10]</sup> Women with ten years of education experienced sharply less sexual violence,

compared to women with less education.<sup>[10]</sup>

By religion, Buddhist and Jain women reported the lowest prevalence of sexual violence in their lifetime (3 and 4 percent), while 5% of Sikh women, 6% of Christian women and 8% of Hindu women reported experiencing sexual violence. The highest prevalence rate (11%) of lifetime sexual violence was reported by Muslim women.<sup>[9]</sup>

A 2014 study in *The Lancet* states, “Whereas an 8.5% prevalence of sexual violence in the country [India] is among the lowest in the world, it is estimated to affect 27.5 million women in India [given India's large population]”. Further, the 2006 survey found that 85% of women who suffered sexual violence, in or outside of marriage, never sought help, and only 1% report it to the police.<sup>[11,12]</sup>

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A community-based study by Leela Visaria<sup>13</sup> (Violence against Women in India: Evidence from Rural Gujarat) was carried out in five villages in Kheda district of central Gujarat between May 1993 and January 1997. Two-thirds of the women surveyed reported some form of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse. Of the total sample, 42 percent experience physical beatings or sexual assault. An additional 23 percent suffer abusive language, belittlement, and threats.

*About 36-38 percent of women in a Tamil Nadu study and 42-48 percent of women in an Uttar Pradesh study reported violence<sup>(14)</sup>. In one village in Punjab, 75 percent of the women from scheduled caste households reported regular beatings<sup>(15)</sup>.*

During the in-depth interviews, some women commented that once the initial inhibition was broken, it was not difficult for men to beat their wives. Most women remembered the first argument with their husbands. In most cases, the problems started within the first year of marriage and before the birth of any children. Women reported that after having children, the violence did not decrease but their husbands became accustomed to abusing them. Many also felt that if they listened quietly, their husbands abuse might die down. If instead a woman defended herself or responded angrily, the confrontation usually worsened and could escalate to physical violence. The most widespread violence was reported among women from the Thakore and Baraiya castes (80 percent), other low castes (75 percent), and scheduled castes (74 percent). Though relatively less, large numbers of Muslim women (56 percent) and high caste women (45 percent) also indicated abuse from their husbands. Reported violence declined with the increasing education of both men and women. Violence also varied with living arrangements – 53 percent of women in joint families reported abuse compared to 73 percent of women in nuclear families. Contrary to some expectations that violence might subside with age, adult children, and adjustments, women who suffer abuse early on continue to experience it throughout their marriage. As one respondent who had been married for several years remarked, “The frequency or intensity of beating or quarrels have not really decreased. It should have with the passage of time, but nothing of that sort has happened.” The data suggest that as women age and have been married

longer, forms of violence actually shift towards more physical violence. The precipitating factors were :not preparing meals on time (66 percent), not cooking meals properly (51 percent), not caring for the children properly (48 percent), and economic stress (48 percent). Though marital violence in India is often equated with dowry violence, just one percent stated that inadequate dowry precipitated the abuse. The most frequently reported types of violence against a woman include abusive language (80 percent), beatings (63 percent), forcing her back to her parental home (52 percent), and threats to throw her out (51 percent). Other types of abuse include refusing to give money to manage the household, protracted criticism, and getting angry with the children. Two-thirds of the women who were abused reported physical violence. Of the women who reported physical violence, the most frequent forms are slaps (100 percent), having objects thrown at them (63 percent), and beatings with a stick (58 percent)

**Another study of Central India**<sup>[16]</sup> reported that 46% victims had marriage of  $\leq 10$  years of duration. Most common age-group of victims is between 26-35 years. The type of family of victims of domestic violence is in the ratio 60% Joint family: 40% nuclear. 64% victims had urban residence; 64% were either illiterate or primary pass. 56% victims face domestic violence daily and in 20%, 10% and 14% cases. Frequency of domestic violence was weekly, monthly and occasionally respectively. Most common type of domestic violence faced is physical (80%) followed by mental (8%), social (8%) and sexual (4%). 52% victims have regarded the domestic violence as severe. Monetary issues (26%) and alcohol (22%) are the two most important causes of domestic violence, other causes being extra marital affair (6%), Family conflicts (6%) and dowry (6%).

Many researchers come out with findings that alcoholism promotes men to commit domestic violence<sup>[17,18,19,20]</sup>. Another study among Uttar Pradesh men by Gerstein (2000) is of the view that low educational level and poverty are important reasons for domestic violence.<sup>[21]</sup>

Joint family and less duration of marriage are important parameters of domestic violence.<sup>[22-25]</sup>

Illiteracy seems to be one of the most prominent causes of Domestic violence.<sup>[26-27]</sup>

The three most common reasons of domestic violence include: monetary reasons (26%), alcohol (11%), and Extra marital affair (16%).<sup>[28-31]</sup>

Besides this, the role of inter spousal relationship, sex of the children, ownership of property, dowry, working status, autonomy, religion and caste of the person can't be ignored.<sup>[32-34]</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Domestic violence can be reduced through awareness generation and sensitization of different stakeholders like Judiciary, Government, Police personnel, NGOs, Health care support provider, counsellors, service provider and protection officers by creating a strong network among them. Education can accelerate the process of change in attitudes and thereby in behaviours of males towards females. Collaboration among different Government agencies and NGOs should be encouraged in order to prevent duplication of services, ensure better utilization of scarce resources, and increase the information dissemination. Social network support is also crucial in reducing domestic violence. Support structures could be from both contexts within the family and from NGOs, women's Self Help Groups.

•Creation of the local helpline or crisis referral services can take calls from women or family members or concerned neighbors regarding incidence of any violence and enquiry about legal, medical or psychological services. The government should implement projects, programmes to encourage community driven initiatives to address the needs of the victims of gender based violence. While attempts should be made to strengthen women's economic capabilities by improving women's access and control over income and assets.

Anganwadis can be engaged in Domestic Violence Counseling Center or similar services so that the most affected class are benefitted. There should be an easy reporting system so that illiterate women from remote areas can easily inform and get proper support and counseling.

Social workers should provide therapy to victims of domestic violence while they are in a shelter or living in their community. Social workers should also serve as executive directors of domestic violence. There is an urgent need of more and more domestic violence counselling centers throughout the country.

## References

- Martin, Sandra; Amy Tsui; Kuhu Maitra; Ruth Marinshaw (1999). "Domestic Violence in Northern India". *American Journal of Epidemiology*: 150.
- Ellsberg, Mary, PhD. "Intimate Partner Violence and Women's Physical and Mental Health in the WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence: An Observational Study." *The Lancet* 371 (2008). 17 Mar. 2013.
- "Women's Empowerment in India" (PDF). National Family and Health Survey. Retrieved 2015. Check date values in: |access-date= (help)
- National Crimes Record Bureau, Crime in India 2012 - Statistics Archived June 20, 2014, at the Wayback Machine. Government of India (May 2013)
- Rosenthal, Elizabeth (6 October 2006). "Domestic violence plagues women worldwide, study says - SF Gate". *The San Francisco Chronicle*.
- India, Parliament in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Republic of India, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Act. No. 43 OF 2005.
- <http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/jammu-kashmir/crime/4-157-booked-in-2-009-domestic-violence-cases-in-five-years/57598.html>
- National Family Health Survey 3 - Domestic Violence pp. 494-495
- National Family Health Survey 3 - Domestic Violence pp. 501
- National Family Health Survey 3 - Domestic Violence pp. 500-501
- National Family Health Survey 3 - Domestic Violence pp. 522-524
- Sexual violence and rape in India *The Lancet*, Vol 383, March 8, 2014, p. 865
- A Summary Report of Three Studies September 1999. Copyright© 1999 International Center for Research on Women and The Centre for Development and Population Activities.
- Jejeebhoy, Shireen. 1998. "Wife beating in rural India: A husband's right? Evidence from survey data." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33(15): 855-862.
- Mahajan, A. 1990. "Instigators of wife battering." In Sushama Sood, ed., *Violence against Women*. Jaipur: Arihant Publishers.
- Dixit Sanjay, AK Puranik , Satish Saroshe et al. A STUDY OF THE NATURE AND CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG THE ATTENDEES OF A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COUNSELLING CENTER OF A TERTIARY LEVEL HOSPITAL OF A CITY OF CENTRAL INDIA. *International Journal of Medical Science and Public Health* [2013] Vol 2 | Issue 3
- Leonard KE, Blane HT. Alcohol and Marital Aggression in a National Sample of Young men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 1992;7(1):19-30.
- McKenry PC, Julian TW, Gavazzi SM. Toward a Biopsychosocial Model of Domestic Violence. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 1995;57:307-20.
- Rao V. Wife-beating in Rural South India: A Qualitative and Econometric Analysis. *Soc Sci Med* 1997;44(8):1169-80.
- Bhatt RV. Domestic Violence and Substance Abuse. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*. 1998;63(Suppl. 1):S25-31.
- Gerstein L. In India, Poverty and Lack of Education are Associated with Men's Physical and Sexual abuse of their Wives. *International Family Planning Perspectives* 2000;26(1):44-5.
- Golding JM, Taylor DL. Sexual Assault History and Premenstrual Distress in two General Population Samples. *Journal of Women's Health* 1996;5(2):143-52.
- Hamberger LK, Lore JM, Bongue D, Tolin DF. An Empirical Classification for Motivations for Domestic Violence. *Violence Against Women* 1997;3(4):401-23.
- Heise L, Ellsberg M, Gottemoeller M. Ending Violence Against Women. *Population Reports*, Series L, No. 11. Baltimore, John Hopkins University School of Public Health, Population Information Program, December. 1999.
- Hindin JM. Who is at risk? Factors Associated with Intimate Partner Violence in the Philippines. *Social Science and Medicine*. 2002;55:1385-99.
- International Institute for Population Sciences. 1998-99. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2) India. Mumbai. 2000.
- Jaswal S. Health Records and Domestic Violence in Thane District, Maharashtra', in *Domestic Violence in India 2: A Summary Report of Four Record Studies*. Washington DC: International Centre for Research on Women and The Centre for Development and Population Activities. 2000.
- Mishra J. *Women and Human Rights*. New Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi. 2000.
- Mitra N. Best Practices Among Responses to Domestic Violence in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh', in *Domestic Violence in India 1: A Summary Report of Three Studies*. Washington DC: International Centre for Research on Women and The Centre for Development and Population Activities. 1999.
- Stark E, Flintcraft A, Frazier W. Medicine and Patriarchal Violence: The Social Construction of Private Event. *International Journal of Health Services* 1979;9:461-93.
- Straus MA, Gelles RJ, Steinmetz S. *Behind Closed Doors: Violence in the American Family*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press. 1980.
- Travers J. Domestic Violence in Cultural Context: A Response to Frederick Schiavone. Department of History, Stony Brook University. 1997.
- United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef). Domestic Violence against Women and Girls. Innocenti Digest Number 6. Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy. 2000.
- Visaria L. Violence against Women in India: Evidence from Rural Gujarat', in *Domestic Violence in India 1: A Summary Report of Three Studies*. Washington DC: International Centre for Research on Women and The Centre for Development and Population Activities. 1999.