

# **A Study on Gender Based Violence and Gender Discrimination: Evidences from a Study Among Women from Gujarat**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Indian women have been cornered and deeply exploited in different areas like customs, religions, and prejudices. Women have been neglected because of less participation in education, economic dependency on family, neighborhood, society and down head acceptance of gender based violence. They don't have access to justice because of ignorance of their basic rights. In recent times, issues related to gender discrimination and violence against women have been covered and discussed globally. The future of women in India seems to be gloomy and the sun will rise and abolish the darkness created against women by the society with the enactment of numerous laws like Domestic Violence Act, 2005 , reformation of legal processes and various provisions which are legally acceptable to the needy and also use of various provisions of Public Interest Litigation, family courts, naari adalat and other counseling centers will definitely cut the long route to abolish the rigid mindset of the society towards women.

**Key Words:** Gender discrimination, Child preference, Gender based violence.

## **Introduction:**

Gender Based Violence is a major consequence of gender inequality and is a world-wide phenomenon. In ancient times, there were many types of practices and customs which revealed gender based violence and gender based discrimination in addition to day-to-day harassment being faced by the women. The opponents of these customs have also failed to get the desired response.

It is a harsh reality that India being a male dominated society, women here, have been ill-treated since ages. She is confined within the four walls of her own house and is not allowed earn an independent identity and is looked upon as a liability. She is robbed of her dignity and also becomes a victim of cruelty by way of seduction by the men and her saviors. However, this does not end here, it may even go up to the extent of forcing her to commit suicide or she may be burnt to death for various reasons including that of dowry. This type of violence is prevalent in almost all societies and breaks the boundaries of caste, class, region or religion.

## Review of Literature

In the developing countries like Antigua, Barbados, Columbia, Chile, Ecuador, Srilanka and other many countries data shows existence of physical and sexual abuse on women. In a study of 796 women, form Japan carried out by domestic violence group. In the 1993, 58% reported for the physical abuse, 66% registered for the emotional abuse and 60% reported sexual abuse. In the Studies from African countries like Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania's data shows that 42% women face physical abuse at their homes. In China study reveals that there were 57% registered cases for the wife battering. (Joshi 2002)

The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW) and the universal declaration of human rights developed certain special rights and privileges for women. But it is totally strange that only 44 countries make rights and laws against domestic violence. In Only 17 countries made laws regarding material rape a criminal offence and only 27 countries have passed laws against sexual harassment. (Amin 2002)

According to the police provided reported cases of crimes against women but most of them violence goes unreported. According to the police data during 90's reveals that in 1999 crimes against women increased over the year 1989. In absolute terms it increase more and more of 68,699 cases reported during the decade. According to the last 3 years of cases registered under Indian Penal Code and under special laws such as Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and Indecent Representation of Women (Prevention) Act. Among the crimes against women, while the incidence of rape increased by 69% followed by molestation 24% and the torture recorded as high as 278%. In 1997, the supreme court of India laid down 5 factors that qualify as sexual harassment. These are physical contact or advances, a demand or request for sexual favors, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography and other unwelcome physical, and verbal or non-verbal sexual conduct. Recently the supreme court has recorded its strong disapproval against the practice of doctors in government hospitals especially in rural areas, not to examine rape victims unless the police forwarded the case to them. It has been observed that this attitude of doctors delays examination of the victim resulting in the evidence being either washed away or lost. (Satyasundaram 2002)

As per the national crime records, bureau report 1998, 2371 cases of suicide were related to dowry disputes. A study of dowry victims in Delhi reports that in a sample of 150 dowry victims, more than half (61%) were thrown out of their husband's house after a long drawn period of harassment and torture and 1/4<sup>th</sup> of them were murdered or driven to commit suicide. The study, reports dowry related killings, to follow two patterns: 1.) There were 18.4% young brides who were either murdered or forced to commit suicide when their parents refused to admit to continuing demands of dowry and, 2.) The murders were committed on the grounds of 'complex family relations' or extra-marital relations (52.6%). (Nigam 2002)

An evaluative analysis reveals that the crime situation has sunk over the years but a large number of cases that are registered reflects that the hesitation regarding reporting these crimes is breaking down. Maybe today more women are raising voices to report cases of crime against themselves and seeking redressal. The number of crimes per 1,00,000 population for crimes against women reported to the police worked out to be 13.8 during 1999. The crime in India report 1999, itself acknowledges that this crime rate should be reviewed with caution, as considerable crimes against women go unreported due to the social stigma attached and the lengthy court procedures. According to a report of every 100 rape cases in India, only 10 are reported and only 5 offenders are convicted. (Vasudev 2002)

According to another report in 1999, everyday in India 42 women were raped, 18 cases of dowry deaths occurred every hour, 5 women faced cruelty at home and 4 molestation cases were reported. (Vishwanath 2002)

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Objectives of the study**

- 1.) To know about gender based discrimination in their family.
- 2.) To know the awareness level of respondents on gender based violence and acts related to.
- 3.) To find the different types of violence experienced by the respondents.
- 4.) To suggest possible approach for future intervention.

#### **Hypothesis**

Lower the level of respondent's education level, higher will be the level of gender based violence in their family and community at large.

#### **Universe, Sample size and Sampling method**

The universe of this study was women of age-group between 18-70 years from Sayla district of Surendranagar, Gujarat, India, and the sample size was 125 women out of 2178 women. Snow Ball Non-Random Sampling method was used for data collection with the help of interview schedule adopted along with personal interview technique for the collection of primary data in which women were interviewed and asked about their experiences on discrimination as well perceptions of violence and also regarding their level of awareness on the rights and related acts.

#### **Discussion**

This study was conceptualized to find out the gender based discrimination and violence experiences of women of rural areas. At the same time it aimed to find out their awareness level. This study also aimed to study women's experiences of violence as a victim or as a witness and to access how that may be associated with their perception of different type of violence.

**Table 1: Preference for Decision Making In The Family**

| Respondents | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Males       | 54        | 43.2       |
| Females     | 18        | 14.4       |
| Both        | 53        | 42.4       |
| Total       | 125       | 100        |

The above table shows that in rural areas, most of the decisions are taken by the males in comparison to the females. Table shows that, 42.4 of respondents take decisions together with their spouse while, the remaining 43.2% of the respondents say that the decision making in their family is only inclined towards the male members of the family. Only 14.4% females have the right to take decisions in the family and which needs to be improved.

**Table 2: Gender Preference for Birth**

| Child Preference | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Boy child        | 45        | 36         |
| Girl child       | 18        | 14.4       |
| Both             | 62        | 49.6       |
| Total            | 125       | 100        |

The table shows that 49.6% of the respondents say that they don't have any type of preferences for girl child or boy child, while 36% of the respondents have the preference of having a boy child and it's a good sign that 14.4% respondent's first preference is the girl child.

**Table 3: Awareness Regarding their Act and Rights**

| Level of awareness | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes                | 48        | 38.4       |
| Little bit         | 29        | 23.2       |
| No                 | 48        | 38.4       |
| Total              | 125       | 100        |

Above table shows that the awareness level of women's for their rights and act, 38.4% respondents says that they know about the act and the other 23.2% respondents says that they have little bit idea of the act and is negative sign that 38.4% respondents don't know that there is any right or act for their safety.

**Table 4: Respondent's opinions on the Existence of Gender Based Violence in their Community**

| Awareness  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes        | 101       | 80.8       |
| No         | 18        | 14.4       |
| Don't know | 6         | 4.8        |
| Total      | 125       | 100        |

Above table shows that existence of gender based violence in their community in that 80.8% respondents says yes its happening and the 14.4% respondents says that there is no cases of violence and the rest 4.8% respondents are says that they don't have any idea about this topic.

**Table 5: Victims of GBV**

| Answers | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| Yes     | 36        | 28.8       |
| No      | 89        | 71.2       |
| Total   | 125       | 100        |

Above table shows that there are 28.8% of people who are the victims of gender based violence and 71.2% of people are not the victims of gender based violence. It is positive sign that 71.1% are not facing any kind of gender based violence and also negative sign that 28.8% are also facing domestic violence.

**Table 6: Types of Violence the Respondent's face**

| Types of violence     | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Physical violence     | 3         | 2.4        |
| Mental harassment     | 18        | 14.4       |
| Verbal abuse          | 9         | 7.2        |
| All of the above      | 6         | 4.8        |
| No, i am not a victim | 89        | 71.2       |
| Total                 | 125       | 100        |

Above table shows that 14.4% of respondents face mental harassment and the 7.2% face verbal abuse , the 4.8% respondents face this all the types of violence and the rest 2.4% respondents face physical violence .

**Table 7: Types of Initiatives taken by the Victims of GBV**

| Types of initiatives                        | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| I informed my parents, friends or relatives | 15        | 12         |
| Did nothing                                 | 21        | 16.8       |
| No, i am not a victim                       | 89        | 71.2       |
| Total                                       | 125       | 100        |

Above table shows that what type of initiative respondents take after facing domestic violence. Then 71.2% respondents says that they are not victim and the 12% respondents inform to their friend and family members about what they face and the rest 16.8% respondents don't take any kind of step .

**Table 8: Education level of victims**

| Education level of victims | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Illiterate                 | 6         | 16.7       |
| Primary                    | 1         | 2.8        |
| Secondary                  | 2         | 5.5        |
| S.S.C                      | 12        | 33.3       |
| H.S.C                      | 6         | 16.7       |
| Graduate                   | 9         | 25         |
| Total                      | 36        | 100        |

Above table shows that higher the level of education, the victims face more violence. As per the above table, 16.7% of victims are illiterate, 2.8% of victims have taken primary education, 5.5% of victims have taken secondary education, 33.3% of victims have completed their S.S.C education, 17.7% of victims have done their H.S.C, while 25% of victims have completed their graduation. This study shows that, the victims who face gender based violence are literate and also some of them have even completed their graduation but still they are facing domestic violence and they don't take any further steps of raise their voice to stop this kind of violence.

### Conclusion:

Within the research and literature around violence against women, it seems that all roads eventually lead to the need to read just structural power imbalances to alleviate the gender privileges men have. However, the lack of clear and definite conclusions about which aspects of this power and how it drives perpetrators of violence indicates that more research is needed into the board, societal level factors that underlie violence against woman. Observations around the persistence of gender hierarchies that accord men greater status despite extensive social changes must be understood. Consideration of the relative social status of the genders has implications for prevention of violence against women strategies and policies at all levels of the ecological model including educational programming and service delivery.

The goal of prevention, reduction and elimination of intimate partner and domestic violence are currently being approached with a focus on achieving gender equality but more research is needed to understand exactly what this means and how it can best be implemented at the societal level. Incorporating sociological perspectives that enhance our understanding of which aspects of gender based discrimination have the most impact on violence against women will be beneficial for informing the policy around this important area of work.

In education and programming to reduce gender based violence and understanding of gender based discrimination and its relationship to status must inform education and programming to ensure self-esteem and respect for differences between socially constructed groupings. Constructs of masculinity and femininity, so defined by cultures and social norms, need work to accommodate a masculinity that does not include violence and that incorporates attitudes of mutual respect between the genders. The evidence base around how to do this is currently expanding. Organizational change could incorporate policies and work practices that acknowledge the impacts of gender difference and attitude towards the difference in order to challenge traditional norms around gender social roles.

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