

# Domestic Violence on Educated Women in India: Some Case Studies

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## Abstract

Indian society is still a male dominated society despite of all progress, special laws and rights for women and encouragement to women education. Indian women from elite to lower classes suffer domestic violence in one form or the other many times in their lives. There is still culture of silence with respect to domestic violence and women suffer in silence. They do not raise voice against their fathers, brothers, husband and any other male treating them badly in the household. Their silence further worsens the situation.

**Key Words: Domestic Violence, Women, Culture of Silence, Case Study**

Domestic violence is of several types such as physical assault in the form of beating and causing injury, insulting and abusing, emotional exploitation, financial exploitation, not providing with basic needs, confinement within home or a room, not communicating and not letting communicate with anybody etc., restriction on movement anywhere, denying freedom to do anything which the girl or woman wants to do, getting too much work done without taking rest and giving proper food, too much or unnatural sex etc.

Causes of domestic violence are mainly addictions such as alcohol and drugs. Poverty and unemployment add to it. Illicit relationships is also a big reason. Inferiority complex due to any reason also leads to domestic violence. Clash of egos play an important role in it.

Impact of domestic violence is very bad. Women or girls facing domestic violence become anemic, silent, socially withdrawn, poor in studies, weak mentally and emotionally and lose confidence in themselves. Many of them go into depression and develop suicidal tendencies also.

Many Bollywood movies are based on the problem of domestic violence suffered by women. Results are many fold leading to suicides, murders, divorces and polices cases etc.

Present research paper is based on five case studies of the women who suffered domestic violence for years. Names have been changed for the sake of confidentiality.

1<sup>st</sup> Case Study is of Manju who is 60 years old now. She belongs to a lower middle class. Her husband who was a chronic alcoholic worked as a forest officer. She was married off to him at the age of 18 years while he was 10 years older to her. She is only matric pass. From the very beginning of her married life, she suffered a lot of domestic violence. He generally came drunk and beat her over small matters such as why she has not kept the food ready. When she kept the food ready and he came late, she would be accused of serving him

stale food. Most of the times, he did not pay money, neither brought needed groceries at home. She would be beaten on not keeping the kitchen full of his favourite food items. She could not complain to her mother in law as the old lady was an illiterate from a rural background who treated the beating of wife as a normal thing for women. For years, many times Manju slept without eating food as she was not provided with anything. The husband brought eggs, meat and wine for himself which she could not consume. She gave birth to one boy child who also suffered a lot because of his father's drinking habit and being violent with his mother. The child on growing up became silent and socially withdrawn. He did not develop into a healthy child. She told that many times she came back to her maternal home and told her parents about her husband's behavior. They could not help in anyway and told her to adjust to her circumstances as they have to look after her younger siblings also. Somehow her boy did his graduation and started doing odd jobs to support himself and his mother. The father kept on drinking more and more. One day he died in his sleep. The son, got job in his place in the forest department. Now the mother and son live happily after years of suffering in silence.

2<sup>nd</sup> Case Study is of Poonam who is 32 years old at present. Her father got married to a boy who lived nearby their home. The boy was into a private job. Poonam was also working in a private school. There was Poonam's father in law, mother in law, brother in law and Poonam's husband who was younger of the two brothers. All three males in the family were into drinking habit. Poonam had to do all household chores, buy all household daily needs, go to her job and suffer insult inflicted on her by her husband for not bringing enough dowry in marriage. She bought everything they wanted like A.C., Car, furniture, washing machine from her salary. After drinking, her husband usually beat her on small excuses such as why she came late from her job, why she talked with her parents and brother over phone, why she wore a certain dress etc. When she became pregnant with her first child, even then the beatings continued. In her 8<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy she fell badly due to beating, somehow she and the child survived. Once the husband broke a wine bottle of glass on her head, for which she got many stitches. Her parents talked to her in laws who promised to take care but the conditions never improved. They gave her jewellery to the new bride when the other brother got married. Poonam never got her jewellery back. She gave birth to a boy who is six years old now. They did not let her feed the boy and asked to go back and join her job after few days of delivery. She kept on suffering in silence now for the sake of child until one day she found that her husband is in illicit relationship with his brother's wife. When she protested, she was beaten badly by the brother in law and mother in law. Now, she left their home and filed case for divorce. Unfortunately her parents do not support her decision, but now she is determined to get divorce and start her life again on a fresh note.

3<sup>rd</sup> Case Study is of Renu who came as a young and beautiful wife to a well settled boy. He was working in airlines. Renu came into an extended family of Elder brother in law and sister in law and their children staying together in a house in South Delhi. She was a simple small town girl, happy to come to Delhi as her new home. Few months passed in happiness till she began to realize that her husband gives too much importance to his sister in law in whose home they were staying. His elder brother generally was on foreign tours as they had home and business abroad also. On further observation, she found that the importance was beyond respect given to the lady. Sometimes it became so obvious that she began doubting that they were in romantic relationship. And it came out to be true. She was too simple to discuss it with her husband openly. It must have developed when he was staying with them before marriage when they were alone during her husband's long foreign trip. The elder sister in law controlled his money also, ordered him to pay for all household needs like groceries and also ordered gifts for her including under clothes. Renu felt it very offensive but she could not speak anything and suffered silently. Both, her husband and sister in law were happy together. Her happiness of married life went away. After two years of marriage, they purchased their own house, even though it was quite near to the present house. Still she heaved a sigh of relief as she did not have to see the drama of their closeness on daily basis. But, the husband kept on visiting the sister in law and obey her orders.

During course of five years, Renu gave birth to a boy and a girl, both beautiful and healthy children. Children were loved and looked after very well by Renu and her husband. But the negligence of her husband towards her made her sad and introvert. The other lady had spoiled her life. Although she has adjusted to her life now, but the love and respect for her husband is nowhere. She does her duties towards her family and husband like a robot, sans emotions. The other lady who spoiled her life never felt guilty for it and never realized what Renu went through.

4<sup>th</sup> Case study is of a girl Rani, now a woman who suffered long period of domestic violence from the hands of her father, husband and son because of their drinking habits. She says that she is the survivor of alcohol abuse done by others. She was born as a first child to her parents who got love married. Her early childhood was the only happy phase of her life, which she faintly remembers. Then her father fell into the habit of drinking. Her mother suffered a lot of domestic violence because of it. Her mother was often beaten and abused after her father got drunk. She and her two younger sisters have seen this for long period and suffered a lot as a children. She became socially withdrawn and lacked self confidence. She could not face audience if asked to speak in the school. She felt like crying on every little challenge which she was unable to face. They lived as tenants in other's houses, which needed to be changed quite frequently due to their father's drinking habit and fights thereafter. The mother and three girls had to face evil eyes of bad characters. Anyhow, after schooling she got married to a boy who was well settled. It was love cum arranged marriage. She got married early as she wanted to get rid of an abusive home. After few years of happy married life and becoming mother of two sweet children, she was satisfied with her life. She began her studies again and got many higher degrees. She got a good job. Unfortunately, her husband got addicted to alcohol. He began drinking heavily and neglecting his duties towards family. She took charge of every household responsibility and educating children etc. The husband started living in his own world of alcohol. She tried to make him sober by all possible ways. She was never listened to, rather insulted for being daughter of an alcoholic father. He was put into de-addiction centre twice but of no use. Due to heavy drinking, he suffered sudden heart attack and died at the age of sixty years. The story does not end here. Now it was the turn of son who while in college, began to use various intoxicating substances. He was not taken care of by his father. How could father keep him in control, when he was himself in the trap of addiction. The son became an addict and began to insult his mother and sister. Both of the ladies suffered a lot and tried to make him sober with love, but of no use. He was also put in a de-addiction centre for five months. After coming back, he became more abusive and violent. His liver is badly affected by alcohol, still he does not stop. The mother and sister suffer in silence for the crime which they have never committed. They pray for the boys well being. There is no escape from this emotional relationship about which they are unable to do anything. There is no happiness at home.

Case Study 5 is of a mother in law, Mitali, who suffered a lot of domestic violence from the hands of her daughter in law. It is very strange story of domestic violence and black mailing. The parents of a well settled boy who is a single child, married him off with a well educated girl. All were very happy. After the marriage ceremonies were over and the guests and relatives left, the newly married daughter in law put a question to the parents in law, "When will you leave for your home?" It was a strange question for the old parents who lived with their only son and were looking forward to their retired life as the son had settled down. They replied that they are not going anywhere and they will live together happily. But the new bride said that she was not habitual of crowd, if they want their son to be happy in his marriage, they need to leave. The old couple also found that the new bride was habitual of drinking expensive wines and partying. They and their son had never touched drinks or smoking either. It was a shocking situation for them. They wanted their son to be happy so left for their village. They thought that time will improve the things as the son would make her understand the culture of her family with love. But the things worsened as the mother of the bride, who was also a drunkard, came to stay with her as she said that her daughter cannot take care of herself. Both the mother and the

daughter made the life of the boy, a hell. He called back his parents from the village saying that he does not have control over the ladies. The daughter in law threatened the mother in law that she would trap her in legal action that she is asking her for dowry. The things became worse as all the income and saving was going in the drinking and shopping of the girl and her mother. After years of suffering, they filed a divorce case. She tried to accuse them making false allegations and asked for heavy amount in lieu of divorce. After a long trial, the divorce was finally given. The family, especially the old lady suffered a lot of blackmail and domestic violence from her daughter in law for no fault of hers.

From the above case studies we come to the conclusion that domestic violence is inflicted by the close relatives by birth or through marriage. It is generally due to bad habits like addiction of one of the family members. It leaves a lot of bad memories and nightmares. Generally action is not taken against the culprits as they are our own. But it needs to be definitely voiced against and stopped for the happiness of the family members.

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