

Social Problem of Domestic Violence in India: Causes, Consequences and Remedies

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Abstract

This research paper tells about the social problem of domestic violence in India “Bride tortured to death for dowry”, “School going kid succumbs to his injuries after beaten by father”, “A seventy year old man killed over property dispute”, “Harassment of men in Chandigarh” All these and what not, turn to any newspaper at random and you would find the reports of such kind of violence all over the country. These are all what we come to know through different forms of media. There are more such cases which go unreported every day. In fact, include the cases which we self-indulge in, or the ones which we witness in the neighborhood but are hesitant in taking even a single step to reduce their occurrences. Domestic violence against women is widely recognized as important public health problem, owing to its substantial consequences for women's physical, mental and reproductive health. This study tried to assess the frequency and patterns of domestic violence against women experienced by attendees of Domestic Violence counseling centre Department of Psychiatry, MY Hospital, Indore. Aims & Objective: To study the nature and causes of domestic violence. Material and Methods: Cross sectional study using a pre designed pre tested semi structured questionnaire was carried out and the data were analyzed using MS excel. Results: Most common type of domestic violence faced is physical (80%) followed by mental (8%), social (8%) and sexual (4%). Monetary issues (26%) and alcoholism (22%) are the two most important causes of domestic violence, other causes being extra marital affair (6%), Family conflicts (6%) and dowry (6%). 64% victims were either illiterate or primary pass; 34% were skilled workers; 56% victims had their per capita income, between `980 and 2935; 76% had their modified Kuppaswami score between 5-10. 56% victims face domestic violence daily. Conclusion: Monetary problems, alcoholism, illiteracy, extramarital affairs and dowry are the major causes of domestic violence. The victims most commonly face physical violence by their partners daily. There is an urgent need of more and more domestic violence counseling centers throughout the country.

KEYWORDS: violence, media, cases, occurrences, reports

Introduction

In our society, violence is bursting. It is present almost everywhere and nowhere is this eruption more intense than right behind the doors of our homes. Behind closed doors of homes all across our country, people are being tortured, beaten and killed. It is happening in rural areas, towns, cities and in metropolitans as well. It is crossing all social classes, genders, racial lines and age groups. It is becoming a legacy being passed on from one generation to another. The term used to describe this exploding problem of violence within our homes is Domestic Violence. This violence is towards someone who we are in a relationship with, be it a wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent or any other family member. It can be a male's or a female's atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. This violence has a tendency to explode in various forms such as physical, sexual or emotional. Since times immemorial, domestic violence has been an intrinsic part of the society we are living in. The contributing factors could be the desire to gain control over another family member, the desire to exploit someone for personal benefits, the flare to be in a commanding position all the time showcasing one's supremacy so on and so forth. On various occasions, psychological problems and social influence also add to the vehemence. The present essay deals with the various forms of domestic violence prevalent in India. Their causes of occurrence in households have been analyzed categorically. The variation in the intensity of the forms with change in the geographical location and culture has also been addressed. The aftereffects of different kinds of domestic violence and the possible remedies have been highlighted. Finally, a conclusion has been drawn after the complete analysis of the topic with the juxtaposition of facts and figures at hand. "Bride tortured to death for dowry", "School going kid succumbs to his injuries after beaten by father", "A seventy year old man killed over property dispute", "Harassment of men in Chandigarh..." All these and what not, turn to any newspaper at random and you would find the reports of such kind of violence all over the country. These are all what we come to know through different forms of media. There are more such cases which go unreported every day. In fact, include the cases which we self-indulge in, or the ones which we witness in the neighborhood but are hesitant in taking even a single step to reduce their occurrences. In our society, violence is bursting. It is present almost everywhere and nowhere is this eruption more intense than right behind the doors of our homes. Behind closed doors of homes all across our country, people are being tortured, beaten and killed. It is happening in rural areas, towns, cities and in metropolitans as well. It is crossing all social classes, genders, racial lines and age groups. It is becoming a legacy being passed on from one generation to another. The term used to describe this exploding problem of violence within our homes is Domestic Violence. This violence is towards someone who we are in a relationship with, be it a wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent or any other family member. It can be a male's or a female's atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. This violence has a tendency to explode in various forms such as physical, sexual or emotional. Since times immemorial, domestic violence has been an intrinsic part of the society we are living in. The contributing factors could

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Different Forms of Domestic Violence in India and their Causes

Domestic Violence against Women

This form of domestic violence is most common of all. One of the reasons for it being so prevalent is the orthodox and idiotic mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males. Though women today have proved themselves in almost every field of life affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against them are much larger in number than against men. The possible reasons are many and are diversified over the length and breadth of the country. According to United Nation Population Fund Report, around two-third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence and as many as 70 per cent of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49 are victims of beating, rape or forced sex. In India, more than 55 percent of the women suffer from domestic violence, especially in the states of Bihar, U.P., M.P. and other northern states. The most common causes for women stalking and battering include dissatisfaction with the dowry and exploiting women for more of it, arguing with the partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children, going out of home without telling the partner, not cooking properly or on time, indulging in extra marital affairs, not looking after in-laws 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 suspicion 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 woman being killed and then burnt in a Tandoor by his husband. This incidence was an outcome of suspicion of extra marital affairs of Naina Sahni which led to marital discord and domestic violence against her.

Domestic Violence against Men

There is no question that domestic violence directed against women is a serious and bigger problem, but domestic violence against men is also increasing gradually in India. The supremacy of men in the society

makes one believe that they are not vulnerable to domestic violence. Battering of men by their spouse and family members has become a concerned issue and is another form of domestic violence under purview of judiciary. In India, compared to violence against women, violence against men is less frequent but it has already taken a deadly shape in many of the western countries by now.

Males have reported incidences of assault against them like pushing, shoving, slapping, grabbing, hitting which are intended to harm them and also take their lives on many occasions. Recently, hundreds of husbands gathered in Chandigarh and Shimla to voice their opinion for men's rights and protection against domestic violence subjected to them by their wives and other family members. It reflects the need for a special law for curbing domestic violence against men in present times.

Consequences of Domestic Violence

There are varied consequences of domestic violence depending on the victim, the age group, the intensity of the violence and frequency of the torment they are subjected to. Living under a constant fear, threat and humiliation are some of the feelings developed in the minds of the victims as a consequence of an atrocious violence. The consequences of the domestic violence in detail can be broadly categorized under – the Effect on the victim himself/herself and the family, Effect on the society and the Effect on nation's growth and productivity. The 'Effect on the victim' has been further subcategorized for women, men, children and olds.

Consequences of Violence against Men

The consequences against violence against men in India, is largely emotional and psychological in nature. The physical harassment resulting from domestic violence, also affects their lives and productivity but it is still more inclined towards the emotional problems which men face in India. It is largely because many such cases go unreported, as compared to cases of physical assault of women. An emotionally harassed and depressed man may lose interest in the occupation he is associated with. If he is the only bread-earning person in the family, the family may find it difficult to survive. There has been a spate of farmers' suicide in recent years in Karnataka. Several farmers have committed suicide not only because of indebtedness but also because of discord in family and depression resulting out of it. According to statistics of Save India Family Foundation (an NGO), around 1.2 lacs harassed husbands have committed suicide in the country in the last four years.

Effect 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 where it acts as an inspiration and ray of hope for other suffering women, on the

other 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 imitate what others indulge in irrespective of it being good or bad for the family.

Effect on the productivity

As mentioned earlier, domestic violence affects the productivity level of the victim negatively. Men and women lose interest in household activities. If they are employed they fail to work with full capabilities in workplace. Children are found to concentrate less on studies. They drop out of school and do not get the education which otherwise

they might have got if they were not tormented and thus the country loses a productive asset. Therefore, the nation's productivity altogether gets affected because of domestic violence in homes. When old people are tortured and physically abused, they separate themselves from family members and their daily activities are restricted to themselves. The guardianship they can provide out of their experience, the moral values which they can instill in the grandchildren are all not done as they are unwanted in their own homes. People need to spend their part of income for medication when they are met with worse forms of domestic violence which again leads to loss in productive use of a family's income. The cumulative effect of the domestic violence at all levels and across all regions is the country's hindered development and slow economic growth.

Remedies for Domestic Violence

Fighting the 'Domestic Violence' Evil

A recent study has concluded that violence against women is the fastest-growing crime in India. According to a latest report prepared by India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a crime has been recorded against women in every three minutes in India. Every 60 minutes, two women are raped in this country. Every six hours, a young married woman is found beaten to death, burnt or driven to suicide.

The response to the phenomenon of domestic violence is a typical combination of effort between law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, the courts and corrections/probation agencies. The role of all these has progressed over last few decades, and brought their activities in public view. Domestic violence is now being viewed as a public health problem of epidemic proportion all over the world – and many public, private and governmental agencies are seen making huge efforts to control it in India. There are several organizations all over the world — government and non government — actively working to fight the problems generated by domestic violence to the human community.

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Objectives

- To Study have to Where to get information related burden of intimate partner, domestic, societal violence and its effects on health of women.
- Complainants of sexual assaults should be provided with legal representation. The victim's advocate should not only assist her in filing the complaint but also guide her in getting other kinds of assistance like psychiatric and medical treatment
- Legal assistance should be provided at the police station and in view of the distressed state of mind of the victim.
- Police should be under duty to inform the victim of the right to get representation before asking her questions and the police report should state that she was so informed.
- A list of advocates should be prepared who were willing to act in these cases.
- These advocates should be appointed by the Court, but to avoid delay advocates might be authorized to act in police station before permission from the court had been obtained.

Review

In this research paper more than five review article Persistent lobbying by women's rights groups in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the introduction of amendments to the IPC, the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), and the **Evidence Act (Pande, 2002)**. Although women's organizations with political affiliations took up the issue of violence against women, autonomous groups, with their radical and pragmatic approaches, took the initiative in bringing about legal reforms (Katzenstein, 1989). The first change occurred in 1983 through amendments to the IPC (Sections 498A and 304B). Section 498A makes it a punishable crime when a husband and/or his relatives commit cruelty against the bride, which includes driving a married woman to commit suicide. Singh (1991, p. 49) comments that suicide due to dowry harassments shows "the hollow social structure" of the Indian society. According to Section 304B, if an unnatural death of a woman occurs within 7 years of marriage, and if it is shown that she was harassed for

dowry prior to her death, the offender could receive a sentence between 7 years and life imprisonment. In addition, the Evidence Act shifted the burden of proof in such cases from prosecution to the accused (Viswanathan, 2000). The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961, p. 4) defines *dowry* as “any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly by one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage.” The groom’s family seeks dowry at, before, or after the marriage. The giving or taking of dowry is punishable by a minimal term of 5 years and a fine of Rs.15,000 (about US\$350) or an amount equivalent to the value of the dowry received, whichever is higher. If presents or gifts are given to the bride at the time of the marriage by any person related to the bride that are of customary nature and the value of such gifts is not excessive, then the court will not consider such gifts as dowry. In addition to punishing those who receive dowry, the Act punishes any person who demands dowry by imposing 6 months (or more) of imprisonment and a fine of Rs.10,000 (roughly US\$250). Furthermore, offenses under the Act are considered cognizable (felony) and Nonbailable, and the burden of proof rests with the defendant. More recent legislation, for example, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Rules (2006), recognizes domestic violence as a human rights issue and provides remedies under civil law (Arora, 2007a, 2007b). These remedies are intended to protect women from becoming victims of domestic violence. Under the Act, domestic violence includes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or economic abuse. It also includes harassment in the form of demanding a dowry from a woman or her relatives (Arora, 2007a, pp. 3-4). A condensed analysis and typology of the organization case studies is reviewed below. First, the range of existing responses in both state and non-governmental sectors is presented and classified according to type and approach to domestic violence. Second, the most common types of responses to domestic violence are described and briefly analyzed. Finally, the particular strategies and effectiveness of certain non-governmental organizations are described and assessed.

Conclusion

Having looked at a sensitive topic of “Domestic Violence in India”, we can sense the importance of discussion of such a topic. The varying causes which can spark the violence within the four walls of homes need to be analysed carefully and a wise study of the factors causing the violence may prevent a family to suffer from the menace of domestic violence. The domestic violence may have a far wider and deeper impact in real life than what has been covered in this essay. What is required is to see closely the association of the factors provoking a particular form of domestic violence. If these factors can be controlled then more than one form of violence can be prevented from harming an individual or our society and India would be a much better place to live in.

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