



21ST CENTURY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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Abstract :

In the today's rapidly growing society, woman plays an important role in all aspect of life-like: family, workplace, and society. However, the prevailing mindset from years believes that woman is physically and emotionally weaker than the men and thus the position of women are exploited. Indian culture is changing and rapid admiration for the western culture and life-style has consequently transformed the overall socio-cultural atmosphere of Indian society. The domestic violence is based on some traditional practices prevailing in the Indian society as well as due to adoption of western culture. It should be noted that, changing cultural norms and beliefs has influenced the domestic violence and gender inequality. This paper presents an argument in the impact and causes of domestic violence in the background of prevalent culture.

Keywords: Indian culture, domestic violence, changing cultural norms and beliefs

Introduction :

In the 21st century, there is a paradigm shift in the culture and lifestyle. More and more advancement in the technology, changing working pattern and open world has resulted into a change in the human behavior and attitude. Further, traditional customs and practices are still prevailing in the society. There is a significant relationship between customs and practices as well as changing culture and lifestyle with the change in attitude of person, family, and society.

In the today's rapidly growing society, woman plays an important role in all aspect of their lives like family, workplace, and in society. However, the mindset prevailing from years is that woman is physically and emotionally weaker than the men and thus the place of women is exploited. In the modern times, Indian culture is changing rapidly. It admires the western style of living, so the overall socio-cultural part of the society has undergone tremendous change. The Indian culture is traditionally based on some customs and values linked with the religious and ethnic practices. It is a fact that, some customs and ethnic practices places restriction on women while in some aspects they have given equal importance to family as well as their own career.

The culture and social norms prevailing in the society shaped the behaviors of people and a change in these norms results into a changed in the behaviors. The change in the socio-cultural norms is the result of various factors that affect the overall society right

from adapting to new culture or style of living etc. However in the context of Indian culture it is observed that, it has now shifted to western culture of living and working which has significantly affected the behavior of the people, so there is an increase in Domestic violence. The domestic violence is based on some traditional practices prevailing in the Indian society as well as due to adoption of western culture. It should be noted that, changing cultural norms and beliefs has influenced on the domestic violence and gender inequality. “Domestic violence may be physical, sexual or psychological, but all three can be present. What is subjectively defined and identified as "domestic violence" by victims can be strongly mediated by cultural beliefs, values and previous experience of abuse and may not coincide with standard clinical or research definitions.” (Ashbury J, Atkinson J, Duke J.E., Eastal.P, Kurrle S, Tait P. and TurnerJ) various forms of domestic violence are being presented in the following diagram.

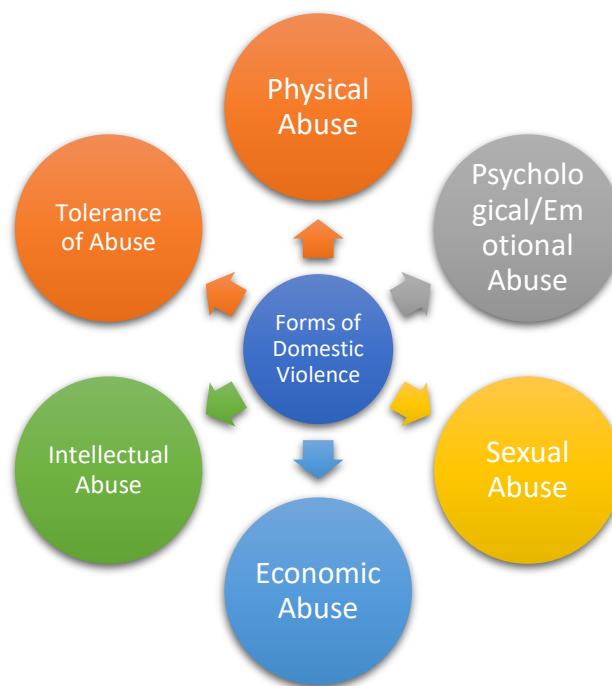


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Other Forms of Domestic Violence include jealousy because of progress and financial status of other family, dispute over property, conflict arising during a religious ceremony, inter-caste marriage and ill-treatment of servants and maids in households etc.

Review of Literature:

Ravneet Kaur and Suneela Garg (2008) pointed out that domestic violence is a burden on numerous sectors of the social system and quietly, yet dramatically, affects the development of a nation. The article published on *www.marshall.edu* pointed out that, further *Amy Pan et al. (2006)* observed domestic violence affects women across all racial, national, social, and economic groups of societal and cultural factors contribute to perpetuating violent relationships. *Tanisha Khandelwal (2019)* observed that, Violence against Women in India is systematic and occurs in public as well as private spheres. It is underpinned by the patriarchal

social-norms and inter and intra gender hierarchies. The research of Duncan McDuie-Ra (2012) highlighted that, in India Violence against women is commonly attributed to an overarching multicultural patriarchal framework. Focusing on this national culture of violence obscures the experiences of violence against women among ethnic minority women. *Dwivedi N; Sachdeva S. (2019)* the lower status of women increases and perpetuates gender-based violence, including female feticide, infanticide, gender discrimination. *Oni-Ojo, E. E., et. Al (2014)* Domestic abuse not only impacts on the well-being of women, but it affects the financial strength and success of the companies for which they work, Abu Agaba (2017) The major effect of domestic violence against women includes psychological or mental health effects, physical health effects and financial consequences and affected agricultural production which results in shortage of food and income. The research paper of *Vimal Vidushy and Gagandeep Sethi (2016)* observed that, the management of domestic violence essentially requires combined effort of law enforcement, social welfare and health care services. It is further observed by *Johnson C (1997)* states that women may not speak out against the abuser or press charges because they depend upon the man for economic support and their cultural identity. The research of *Kasturirangan, A., Krishnan, S., & Riger, S. (2004)* addressed that there is an influence of culture and ethnic background on women's experience of domestic violence and studied that women's experience of domestic violence, considering family structure, immigration, and acculturation, oppression, and community response. The research of *Ram A, Victor CP, Christy H, Hembrom S, Cherian AG, Mohan VR (2019)* the high prevalence of domestic violence in our community needs to be addressed as it has tacit implications on socioeconomic well-being, physical and mental health of a woman, her family, and thereby, society as a whole.

Causes of Domestic Violence :

There are a number of reasons that cause domestic violence. The societal, psychological and cultural influences include causes like ferociousness, financial status and adversity, variance in social position, directing psyche, addiction, psychological volatility etc. Abandonment of marital duties also contributes to domestic violence.

Primordial Influences : The reason for male dominance could be traced back to the ancient system of patriarchy and a sense of supremacy that has constituted the male dominance for centuries among men.

Religious Influences : The ancient literature like *Manusmruti* and other dominating religious practices also contributed towards preaching a subtle indirect system of dominion on women. A few religious practices like the *Sati Pratha* also contributed to enactment of domestic violence against women.

Cultural Reflections : Indian society since Vedic Era has been patriarchal society. The desire for a male child for instance has repercussions in violence against women. This fascination indicates lack of awareness and intrinsic male dominance and instigates domestic violence against women.

Dowry System : Dowry is a form of socio-cultural factor. But, it becomes important to

separately mention it because of the rampant domestic violence cases resulting from illegal demand of dowry. In Indian culture the dowry system is prevailing since ages and is still prevalent in modern times in a different form. The men and his family continuously harassed the women for bringing more and more from her family. This was realised by the Parliament also because dowry- related domestic violence has been made a separate head in the scope of abuse resulting in domestic violence under the Domestic Violence Act.

Sexual Harassment : It is observed that refusing to have sex also causes violence and brutal harassments. The World Health Organization defines sexual violence as:

‘Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work’(2). Coercion can encompass: • varying degrees of force; • psychological intimidation; • blackmail; or • threats (of physical harm or of not obtaining a job/grade etc.). In addition, sexual violence may also take place when someone is not able to give consent – for instance, while intoxicated, drugged, asleep or mentally incapacitated.’

According to W.H.O. the root causes of sexual violence are caused by individual, relationship, community and societal, is helpful in understanding the interaction between factors and across levels.

Extra Marital Affairs : It is seen that in the modern working culture the chances of developing a relationship has increased. The extra marital affairs of both cause and disturbance of family and thus women get affected mostly.

Psychological Disorders : A convict may try to impress this in order to control their spouse because of low self-confidence, life-threatening suspiciousness, complications in adapting anger and other resilient sentiments, or when they sense mediocre to the partner in education and social as well as financial issues.

A companion’s dominion may take the form of emotive, bodily or sexual exploitation. Studies propose that vicious conduct often is instigated by a contact of situational and distinct influences. It indicates that addicts acquire violent conduct from their domestic atmosphere, individuals in their community and other cultural effects during their growing up years. They have either witnessed violence frequently or are victims themselves. The other causes are not looking after in-laws, husband’s sexual involvement with other women, more income of a working woman than her partner, Violence against young widows

Apart from these there are a number of other social, individual reasons that cause domestic violence. There are various causes of domestic violence due to change in the culture and societal norms some of them have been listed below:

Impact of Domestic Violence :

Domestic violence creates impact upon various factors: urban and rural religion, age

group, the intensity of the violence and frequency of the torment. Further the violence has an impact not on the woman but also on her family members, society, and nation's growth. It is also fact that, the domestic violence has been continuously rising and it cost to many things to the victims. Some of the impacts of domestic violence has been shown in the below graph.

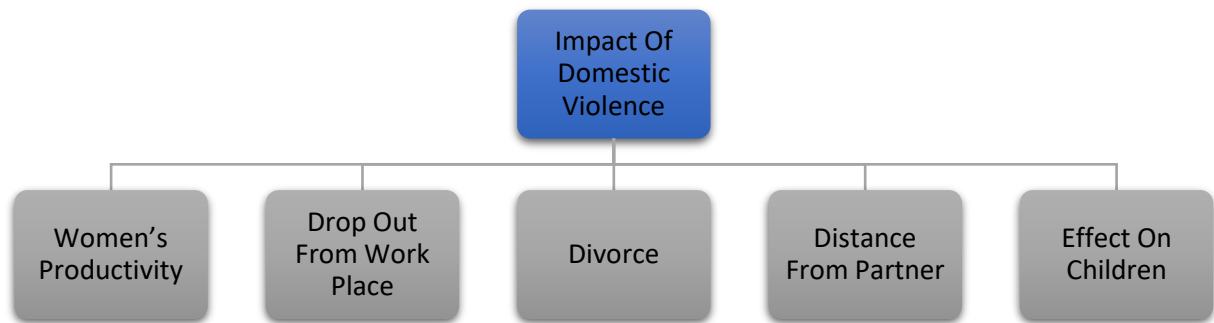


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Women's Productivity : Women experience physical violence from intimate partner and results in work-related losses and lost productivity including difficulty on concentrating work tasks and inability to do their job duties.

Dropouts from Workplace : Due to domestic abuse most of the victim women doesn't attend the job and prevent her from going to work place. The women employees missed the work or being late for work or leaving early as a result of the abuse.

Divorce and Distance from the partner : It is also observed that, the domestic violence also resulted in divorce or separation.

Effect on children : Women who experience violence from their partners are less able to care for their children.

Conclusion :

There should be more awareness and stringent laws to curb domestic violence, not only for the victims but also for the betterment of society. Further the process of justice should be fast so that ongoing struggle of victims can be stopped and better situation can be developed. The domestic violence shall be treated as a public health problem and need positive efforts in controlling it in India. These types of violence need single and separate law so that no one will misuse the law. The NGO's can play an important role in protecting the victims by conducting awareness and various camps with the support of police and other healthcare service providers. The changing nature of today's culture may have wider impact due to factors provoking in a changing culture, social norms and lifestyle particularly social participation, opportunities and quality of life of women have affected most.

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