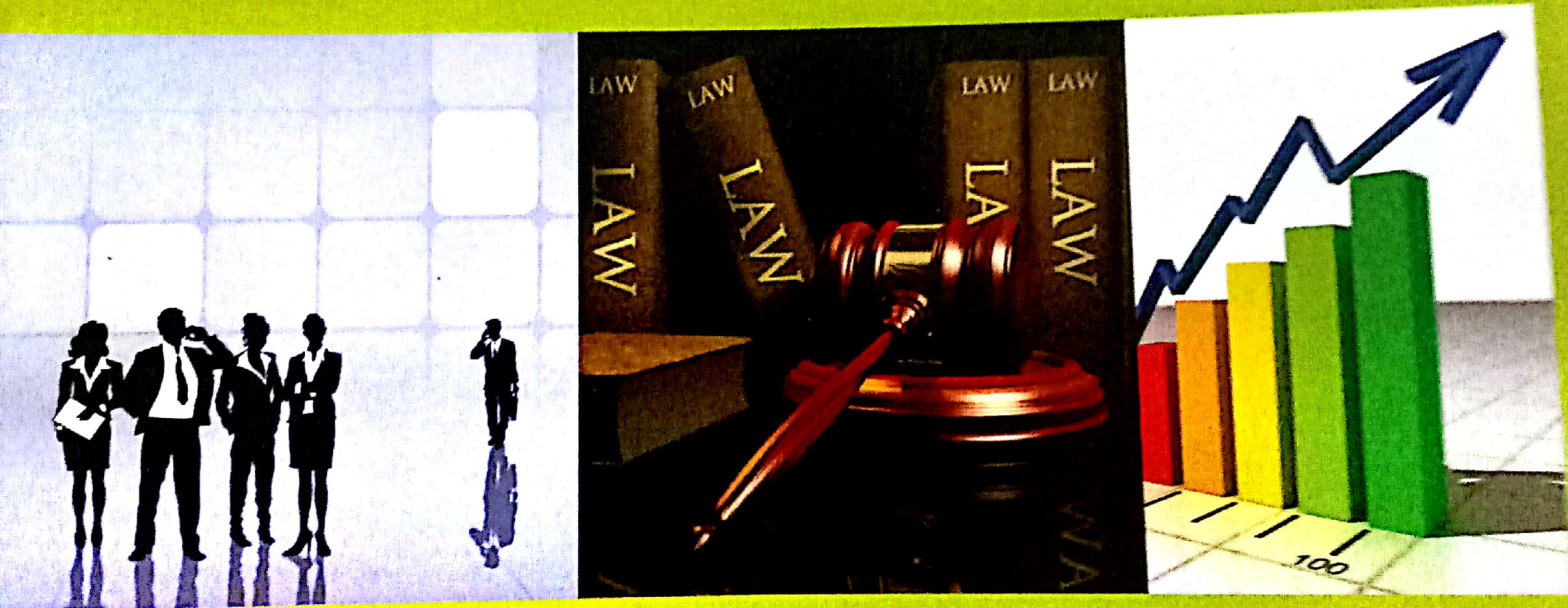


# IJELSS

Vol. I, Issue 6, June 2014

## International Journal of Economics, law and Social sciences





ISSN: 2348-165X

**International Journal of  
Economics, Law and Social Sciences  
(IJELSS)**

**Vol. I, Issue 6, June 2014**

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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN : A SERIOUS PROBLEM IN MODERN INDIA

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### Introduction

Domestic violence is one of the crimes against women which is linked to their disadvantageous position in the society. Domestic violence refers to violence against women especially in matrimonial homes. Therefore domestic violence is recognized as the significant barriers of the empowerment of women, with consequences of women's health, their health seeking behavior and their adoption of small family norm. However an attempt has been made to study whether ever married women of reproductive age group in India view wife-beating as justified. Domestic violence that is any act of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, inflicted against a woman by a person intimately connected to her through marriage, family relation, or acquaintanceship is universal and has its root in the socio-cultural set up of the society. Violence in the home is a subject of increasingly public concern. According to Davis in the Encyclopedia of Social Work, "The most affected victims, physically and psychologically, are women, including single and married women and women separated or divorced from their partners" (Davis, 1995, p.789). For years violence against women has been excluded from everyday conversations for many reasons. Women of all races and social levels are victims of violence in the home. There are many theories as to why this problem has been ignored for centuries with no focused attention. Violence is clearly a problem. Most agree that the solution to violence against women is to prevent it completely from ever occurring through measures which include harsher laws such as policies and procedures. Domestic Violence against women reaches all socioeconomic levels. Domestic Violence is not prejudice. However, most women whom suffer from domestic violence have come from a life of poverty and little or no education. There are many factors that play in part for a woman to become a victim of domestic violence.

### Methodology :-

The present research paper is based on secondary data. Which is collected from the books, Journals, news paper, websites, Internet , etc.

### Objective:-

To study the nature, extent and incidence of domestic violence against women.

### Violence against women:-

The Semantic meaning of violence against women is direct or indirect physical or mental cruelty to women. Crimes which are directed specifically against women and in which only women are victims are characterized as Crime Against Women".

The United Nations defined "Violence against Women" in 1993 in Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It defines it as any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

Not only is gender-based violence on the rise, it has also taken on insidious forms that are justified in the name of faith, community, even development. In India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) 2005 Crime Clock, there is:

1 crime committed against women every three minutes

1 molestation case every 15 minutes

1 sexual harassment case every 53 minutes

1 kidnapping and abduction case every 23 minutes

1 rape case every 29 minutes

And those are only the reported and recorded statistics. What's more:

Four out of 10 women in India have experienced violence in the home.



45% of women have suffered at least one incident of physical or psychological violence in their life. 26% have experienced at least one moderate form of physical violence. More than 50% of pregnant women have experienced severe violent physical injuries.

According to the NCRB, approximately 6,000 women are killed in India every year because of dowry. Unofficial estimates are as high as 15,000 deaths a year. In other words, between 16 and 40 women die every day because of dowry.

Shocking as these figures are, they are actually a gross underestimation of the actual situation, because crimes against women are highly under-reported. In India, there are 496,514,346 (2001 Census of India) girls and women. If all of them experience sexual harassment just once a year, and report it, the figure would be staggering.

### **Domestic violence and women:-**

The term, domestic violence, it seems has been derived to express the condition of women in the world of patriarchy. It is exclusively attached to women because 80 to 90% victims of domestic violence are women. domestic violence is defined as physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse experienced by an adult woman within her home. In recent years, there has been a greater understanding of the problem of domestic violence, its causes and consequences, and an international consensus has developed on the need to deal with the issue.

There are certain rights guaranteed to women under article 14, 15 and 21 of Indian Constitution based on which an act was introduced titled Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. According to this act Domestic violence means any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute violence if it, i. Harms or injures or endangers the healthy safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical of aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or ii. Harasses, harms, injuries 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 iii. 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 iv. Otherwise injuries or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to be aggrieved person.

### **Causes of Domestic Violence:-**

There are a number of causes of domestic violence against women. These causes range from the trivial to bizarre and include mainly the following –

1. Not doing house-work properly
2. Dressing fashionably
3. Jealousy of husband
4. Husband's alcoholism
5. Dowry Demands
6. Husband's mistress
7. High tone during dialogue
8. Refusal to bring money from parent's house
9. Partial fulfillment or non-fulfillment of promises made at the time of marriage.
10. Doubt of love affairs before marriage.
11. Doubt of extra-marital relations
12. Resistance for abnormal sexual behaviour of the husband
13. No child bearing capability
14. Birth of girl child repeatedly
15. Husband economically dependent on parents
16. Husband has problems at work place.
17. Sexual difficulties
18. Attitude towards women in society
19. Gender discrimination
20. Faulty Customs and Traditions
21. Ill-health or lack of beauty.
22. Uneducated or illiteracy among women

In addition to the reasons listed above there may also be a long list of reasons which are not identified or reported by the victims of domestic violence.

**Different Forms of Domestic Violence:-**

Domestic violence is not only about physical injury to a spouse or partner. The physical aspect is just one type of violent behavior that an individual encounters. The primary aim of an abuser is to dominate his victim. He will seek to accomplish this in whatever way possible. Domestic violence (DV) against women is a global problem without cultural, geographic, religious, social, economic or national boundaries. Gender-based violence is considered one of the most serious violations of human rights and is a widespread phenomenon which does not discriminate based on race, religion, ethnicity or language. Violence against women as a social problem -mostly within close/immediate social settings – has serious consequences affecting not only female victims' physical and emotional health, and social well-being, but has considerable effects on children, family and society as whole. Therefore, domestic violence can also be emotional, sexual, financial, etc. in nature.

**Physical Abuse:-**

Domestic violence is usually synonymous with physical abuse because it is the most common form of violence. It is also the most obvious. In this case, the abuser physically attacks his spouse or partner from time to time. This kind of abuse also builds up over time. What initially starts as slapping and punching may escalate into a situation where there is a threat to the victim's life. There are a broad range of behaviors that come under the heading of physical abuse including action such as punching; hitting; biting; pinching hair out; pushing ;shoving; burning and strangling. An attacker may also be inclined to use weapons to assault his spouse.

**Emotional Abuse :-**

Emotional or psychological abuse is another way for an abuser to gain control over his victim. The abuser may indulge in verbal abuse such as name calling, shouting, shaming, and blaming the victim for something she did not do. The non-verbal aspect involves isolation, humiliation, intimidation, etc. The abuser aims to make his partner lose her independence and self-esteem. Many abuse women define the psychological effects of domestic abuse as having a 'more profound effect on their lives-even where there have been life-threatening or disabling physical violence. Despite this, there is almost always pressure to define domestic abuse in terms of actual or threatened, physical violence.

**Sexual Abuse :-**

Rape and sexual abuse is common in abusive relationships a women's right to consent is likely to be ignored. In fact evidence suggests that 45% of all rape is committed by current partners and these incidents are less likely to come to the attention of the police than those committed by strangers.

Sexual abuse refers to a situation in which one partner is forced to take part in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activity. Sexual abuse is considered the hidden form of abuse since victims rarely speak up. Research also indicates that women who are raped by their husbands or partners are likely to suffer severe psychological affects because of the prolonged level of fear they are likely to experience .

**Financial Abuse:-**

Financial abuse may also be a part of the abusive behavior pattern. In this type of abuse, the abuser retains control of the entire financial situation in the household. The abuser will often give the victim a small amount of money as an allowance and make her account for the entire amount. At times, he may refuse to give his partner any money at all. This could eventually lead to a stage where the abuser denies his victim necessities like food, clothing, shelter, and medical aid.

Financial abuse also encompasses those cases where a partner is prevented from working or the abuser constantly tries to sabotage her career. Abusers may even steal money from their victim's accounts or use assets of the victim without her consent.

**Various legislation for safeguarding the women:-**

There are various legislation has been incorporated regarding the safeguarding of the women. Various Legislation for safeguarding crime against women, classified under two categories:

**The Crime under Indian Penal Code (IPC):**

- i. Rape (Section 376 IPC)
- ii. Kidnapping and abduction for specified purpose (Section 363-373 IPC)
- iii. Homicide for dowry, Dowry death or their attempts. (Sec. 302/304-B IPC)
- iv. Torture both mental and physical (Sec.498-A –IPC)



- v. Sexual Harassment (Sec. 509 IPC)
- vi. Importation of girls (Up to 21 years of age ) (Sec. 366-B IPC)

#### The Crimes under the Special and local Laws (SLL)- Gender specific laws

- i. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.
- ii. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- iii. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.
- iv. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.

#### Approach towards safety of women:-

**To increase reporting of rape and assault cases:** To increase the reporting of such cases at first we need to empower the women and children. They must be educate on their rights and encourage them to come forward to register the cases. There are many violent cases but due to stigma in the society very few are reported.

**Law enforcement agencies:** Law enforces should be well trained to react swiftly and with sensitivity towards the women and children cases.

**Exemplary punishment:** Punishment of every culprit need to be exemplary. Campaigning of "Zero- tolerance" of sex offenders. More and more fast track court should establish.

**Proper planning of the city:** Every city should be planned in a very specific manner. According to Ranjana Kumari, director of Delhi 's Centre for Social Research, only 37% of the city was ever planned. "The rest is . . . slums, villages, with no proper lighting or development," she said last week. "There are many pockets of crime."

**Indian Police system:** Neither the Centre nor States have been proactive in improving the quality of Policing. Official records shows that only 14 states have either enacted the New Police Act or amended their existing laws to incorporate SC's suggestion.

#### Conclusion:-

Domestic Violence against women in India is becoming more frequent and is alarmingly on the increase. A heavy responsibility falls on the shoulders of our social workers. But the biggest responsibility will be that of the women themselves. They must organise themselves. They have borne the tyranny of man far too long. The time has come for a crusade.

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