**Domestic Violence against Married Women in India : Analysis**

**from a Socio-Cultural & legal Perspective**

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**Introduction :**

Domestic violence, or [intimate partner violence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intimate_partner_violence" \o "Intimate partner violence) (IPV) as it is sometimes called, is a worldwide problem. Traditionally, domestic violence (DV) was mostly associated with physical violence. For instance, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary definition, domestic violence is **: “**the inflicting of physical injury by one family or household member on another; also : a repeated/ habitual pattern of such behavior**”.** Domestic Violence is now more broadly defined to include **“**all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence**”** that may be committed by a person who is a family member or a person that has been an intimate partner or spouse, irrespective of whether they lived together. In 1993, The United Nation Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women identified domestic violence as one of three contexts in which violence against women occurs, describing it as : **“**physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation**”.** The Domestic Violence is conceptualized as, “one intimate partner’s (spouse) attempt to control, dominate and humiliate the other partner through a variety of means; physical, sexual, psychological, economic and spiritual abuse. Domestic violence goes beyond individual acts of aggression to encompass an overall pattern of behavior aimed at maintaining full control over the partner”(‘Psycho-Social Aspects of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE’ by- Dr.Sushma Pandey). The National Research Council(1993) defined, “Domestic Violence is the intentional infliction of harm or injury by one intimate partner on another”(National Research Council, 1993).

Domestic violence against women is an old age phenomenon. Women were always considered vulnerable and in a position to be exploited. Violence has long been accepted as something that happened to women. Family which was perceived as an arena of love affection, gentleness and center of solidarity and warmth has now become a center of exploitation, and violence ranging from slapping, hitting, homicidal assault by one member of the family on the other, husband and in-laws harassment for dowry or another reason, dowry deaths, wife bettering, female child abuse and abuse of elderly female in the family are also included in domestic violence. Among the many manifestations of the violation, the fundamental rights of women, domestic violence is one of the most vicious circle. It takes place behind the close doors, the very door which are meant to protect women from the hazards of the outside world. It is nothing short of a form of a custodial violence and must be recognized. Domestic violence must come out of the closet and be addressed.

**The incidence of Domestic Violence (DV) in India :**

D.V. against women is both a worldwide and national crisis and has appeared at alarming threshold throughout the world. According to UNICEF Study Report(2000) 20-50% of women population of the world are victims of women population of the world are victims of domestic violence. Domestic Violence is a worldwide phenomenon and is also epidemic in Indian society. According to United Nation (UN) population fund report, as many as 70% of married Women in India between the age of 15-49 are victims of beating, rape or coerced sex. The National Crime Record Bureau reveal a shocking 71.5% in case of torture and dowry deaths during the period from 1991 to1995 may reflect increased reporting of violence. In 1995 torture of women constituted 29.2% of all reported crimes against women. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) of India in 2006 estimated the lifetime prevalence of sexual violence among women aged 15-49, including instances of marital rape in India. The study sampled 83,703 women nationwide, and determined that 8.5% of women in the 15-49 age group had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime. This survey found that 85% of women who suffered sexual violence, in or outside of marriage, never sought help, and only 1% report it to the police. [Renuka Chowdhury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renuka_Chowdhury" \o "Renuka Chowdhury), former Union minister for Women and Child Development, stated in 2006, that around 70% of women in India are victims of domestic violence. However her statistics were disputed by [Save Indian Family Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Save_Indian_Family_Foundation" \o "Save Indian Family Foundation), stating that [Renuka Chowdhury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renuka_Chowdhury" \o "Renuka Chowdhury) talked about the reported dowry death cases and deliberately avoided mentioning the actual convictions in “dowry death trials” after false cases are dismissed in the courts. Apart from this, India has one of the highest rates of violence during pregnancy. The Washington - based International Centre for Research on Women in collaboration with independent researchers has some alarming statistics to confirm this trend; 50% of women interviewed, reported to being kicked, beaten or hit when pregnant, 75% of those who reported repeated violence have attempted to commit suicide(‘Domestic Violence against Women’ by- Dr. preeti Mishra)

**SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**

According to UNICEF’s Global Report Card on Adolescents 2012, 57% of boys and 53%of girls in India think a husband is justified in hitting or bitting his wife.

The following factors plays an important role in domestic violence -

1. **Dowry System and lower status of women :**

Domestic Violence often happens as a result of dowry demands. Dowry payments are manifestation of patriarchal structure. There are strong link between domestic violence and dowry, a cultural practice deeply noted in many Indian communities, which is the money, goods or property the women’s family brings to a marriage to now become under the ownership of the husband. The dangers include not only common physical and emotional abuse such as hitting and continual degradation , but to some extents, cases of dowry death and bride burning evolved as a result of husbands and his family’s dissatisfaction with the dowry payments.

Dowry system impoverishes those who pay dowry and degrades those who receive it. Moreover, it lowers the status of women. The boy thinks himself a dignified individual and views the girl as a subjugated entity with an inferior and degraded status. Bride burning cases too have been increasing every year in different parts of our country due to facture on giving the expected dowry. In 2012, the dowry harassments cases increases according to data of National Crime Record Bureau. Total no. Of dowry death increases from 8618 in 2011 to 9100 in 2012. The National Crime Record Bureau reveal a shocking 71.5% in case of torture and dowry deaths during the period from 1991 to1995 may reflect increased reporting of violence. According to Indian National Crime Record Bureau, in 2012, 8,233 dowry death cases were reported across India, or dowry issues cause 1.4 deaths per year per 100,000 women in India. For contextual reference, the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations" \o "United Nations) reports a worldwide average female homicide rate of 3.6 per 100,000 women, and an average of 1.6 homicides per 100,000 women for [Northern Europe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Europe" \o "Northern Europe) in 2012. Although India's dowry death rate per 100,000 is lower than equivalent rate for Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is a significant social issue in India.

**Motivations in Dowry :**

**Social Custom:** One of the cause of prevailing dowry system in Indian society is that giving dowry is a social custom and it is very difficult to change custom all of sudden. The feeling is that existing customs generates and strengthens solidarity and cohesiveness among people. Many people gives and takes dowry only because of their parents and ancestors had been practicing it. Take the instance, the case of ‘Sati’ system. Dr. Srimati Basu in her book ‘She Comes to Take Her Rights: Indian Women, Property and Propriety’ (SUNY Press, 1999), shows that in Indian patriarchal society, women’s right to property is systematically denied. The Hindu Succession Act was passed in India in 1956 theoretically giving Indian women the right to equal inheritance of their parents self-acquired property, but in the year since, its provisions have scarcely been utilized. Through her study, she explores that the socio-cultural determinants which is liable for the deprivation of women from the right to equal inheritance of their parents property is that traditional practice of ‘Dahej Pratha’ or dowry system. “Ladki Walo Ko To Dahej Dena Hi Padta Hai ” , she shows that , Indian society internalized this traditional patriarchal mentality and this is the root cause of exploitation of women from the right to equal inheritance and also the domestic violence in her marital home. In present days , there were many people who stand against this system ; yet they could not dare to raise their voice against it because of the fear of their parents, kin and the caste to which they belonged.

**Pressures of Caste System :** Among Hindus, marriage in the same caste and sub-caste has been prescribed by the social and religious practices with the result that choice of selecting a mate is always restricted. This result in the paucity of young boys, who have high salaried jobs or promising career in the profession. They become ‘scare commodities’ and their parents demand huge amount of money from the girl’s parents to accept her as their daughter-in-law, as if girls are chattel for which the bargain has to be made. Nevertheless, their scarcity is exacerbated and aggravated by the custom of marriage in the same caste.

**False Notion of Social Status :** A few people give more dowry just to exhibit their high social and economic status. Jains and Rajputs, e.g., spend lakhs of rupees in the marriage of their daughters just to show their high status or keep their prestige in the society even, if they have to borrow money.

**The Changing Face of Dowry :** The conflicting perspectives on dowry need to be grounded in the fact that present daydowry, including gifts not just to the bride, but to the groom, the in-laws, hisrelatives as well as furniture, household goods, bears very little resemblance totraditional *stridhan.*Contemporary dowry is more like an investment by the bride’s family for makingpowerful connections and increasing opportunities to make money. Marrying adaughter into a well-connected family, which demands and accepts dowry, couldmean upward mobility for her natal family, especially brothers, who hope to securebenefits through this connection. Perhaps the only components of dowry that stillretains similarity to traditional *stridhan* could be the bride’s trousseau, gold jewellery,household goods and any property her parents may put in her name. “It is not

uncommon for a groom’s family to keep a part of this dowry for their daughter’s wedding or treat the household goods as offerings to the family, rather than just the bride,” said Kishwar (Strategies for Combating the Culture of Dowry and Domestic Violence in India*).* The extent and volume of dowry has come to hinge on the status-income andconnections of the groom’s family - higher the income, more powerful the connections, greater is the demand for dowry. The groom’s parents perceive dowry as a way of making good the investments they have made in their son’s education. An apprehension of insecurity that the son, following his marriage, may not look after them in old age tends to be yet another incentive. Liberalization, by opening up new employment avenues, has paved the way for greater upward mobility among educated middle and upper classes. A fast rising income graph has made the grooms much sought after by the brides’ families who want to enter into matrimonial alliance with families of a status higher than their own.(‘MARCHING TOGETHER...Resisting Dowry in India’ - author JAGORI : July 2009, Compiled & Edited by : Monobina Gupta)

**Legislation :** The government of majority of states passed anti-dowry legislation. At the central level, the Dowry Prohibition Act was enacted on1961. This is an Umbrella Act. Which deals with various provision of dowry protections. But still this act fails to protect women from dowry harassment by their in-laws in marital home because the notion of dahej pratha is internalized in Indian society which is never abolished just by an enactment and enforcement of an legal mechanism.

1. **Patriarchal Household Structure and Domestic Violence :**

In Indian family, the man enjoys absolute authority, power and privileges and makes every decision as the undisputed “head of family”. He is addressed and elevated to the position of the “annadata”(giver of grains) and “grihakarta”(household authority). The well-known 19th century social reformer from Bengal, ‘Raja Ram Mohan Roy’ remarked, “ At marriage, the wife is recognized as half of her husband, but in conduct they are treated worse than inferior animals.” Roy’s sympathetic observation was a reaction to the prevalent social attitudes of the time which was demeaning to women. To control women at every stage of their existence is an accepted act of manliness (‘Psycho-Social Aspects of DOMESTIC VIOLENCE’ by Dr. Sushma Pandey,)

**Patriarchal Capitalism:** In Indian society, the main contributing factors of domestic violence is patriarchal ideology which is the root cause of all kind of violence(eg. dowry harassment, dowry death, sex selective abortion, marital rape etc.) against women at their marital home. There are three main aspects of the patriarchal household structure in India that affect women’s agency of marriage, marital or extramarital discrimination and diminished women’s agency through limited economic opportunity. There is a clear relationship between strong patriarchal family structures and limited capabilities. patriarchal household structure in Which ‘patriarchy’ and ‘capitalism’ is link together and play a role to diminished women**’**s agency through limited economic opportunity **;**  by using this tool society control women**’**s role in reproduction or child bearing**.** There is a strong relationship between patriarchal family structure and limited capabilities**.** These factors are strongly correlated with causal factors for domestic violence such as gender disparities in nutritional deprivation and a lack of women’s role in reproductive decisions.

In Indian society, patriarchal capitalism plays its politics through the sacred institutions, that is ‘marriage’ and ‘family’. To the sexually correct feminist, marriage oppresses women and the family breeds patriarchy. Both result from capitalism. Happily married women are considered pathological and traitorous. To justify this blast of enmity, they point to the soaring rate of domestic violence, even though violence against women -- as measured by the murder rate -- has not increased except in proportion to population growth. Although the gender feminist view of marriage borders on the absurd --e.g. housework as 'surplus value' -- it is key to understanding the depth of hatred they aim at heterosexual sex and men. The fight over the family and marriage is an ideological one. When conservatives and gender feminists view the same institutions, they draw dramatically different conclusions. Conservatives see a natural and smooth functioning unit, whose negative characteristics -- such as domestic violence -- are aberrations. Gender feminists look at families and see ‘Diary of a Mad Housewife’. Abuses, such as domestic violence, are considered to be unfiltered expressions of the married state.

The truly radical assault on the family began with Kate Millett's book ‘Sexual Politics’ (1970). Millett attacked the entire structure of power in society; that is, patriarchy. Marriage was the agency that maintained the traditional pattern of man's power over woman. Gender feminist Catharine MacKinnon described the shift from liberalism to the anti-marriage point of view. This was a change from desiring equality to demanding equity: "Then [after liberal feminism], there was a women's movement that criticized...war as male ejaculation. It criticized marriage and the family as institutional crucibles of male privilege....Some criticized sex, including the institution of intercourse, as a strategy and practice in subordination." The ideological message was clear: the personal is political, marriage is legalized prostitution; heterosexual intercourse is rape; men are the enemy; families are prisons.

Both ‘wifehood’ and ‘motherhood’ became glorified in the patriarchal system. These roles are granted social sanctions and at the same time are also eulogized in local folklore, in literature, and religion so that women do actively engage themselves in playing their social roles and thus themselves contributes and perpetuate the patriarchal social order. Men control women’s productivity both within the household and outside, in paid work. Within the household women provide all kinds of services to the husbands, children and other members of the family throughout their lives. Feminist writer Sylvia Walby calls this as the “patriarchal mode of production” where women’s labour is expropriated by men, husbands and others who live there. She calls housewives is not considered as work at all and housewife become dependent on their husbands. Men also control women’s reproductive power. In Indian society, women have no control over the reproductive capacities. They cannot decide how many children they want, whether to use contraceptives, or a decision to terminate pregnancy. Even after pregnancy she is forced by her husband and in-laws to abort her female fetuses. In present day, the tendency of female feticide or sex selective abortion is very high. Census report of India reveals that, in 1961 the sex ratio (female/1000 males) was 941; in 1971 it decrease in 930; in 1981 it was 934; in 1991 it decrease in 926; in 2001 it was 933 and in 2011 it was 940. This data reveals that during 1961-2011, the sex ratio is very low, and the main cause behind this low sex ratio is that ‘son’ preference in society. The sex selective abortion of female fetuses is most common in areas where cultural norms value male children over female children for a variety of social and economic reasons. A son is often preferred as an "asset" since he can earn and support the family; a daughter is a "liability" since she will be married off to another family, and so will not contribute financially to her parents. Female feticide then, is a continuation in a different form, of a practice of [female infanticide](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_infanticide" \o "Female infanticide) or withholding of postnatal health care for girls in certain households. Furthermore, in some cultures sons are expected to take care of their parents in their old age. So, the patriarchal capitalist ideology plays its politics in every aspect of society to diminish women’s agency.

1. **In-Laws as ‘Patriarchal Agent’ and Criticism of ‘Global Sisterhood’ :**

This paper criticize the radical feminist**’**s statement of organizing **‘**global sisterhood**’** among women**,** through the analysis of Indian society how in most of the cases of Domestic Violence**, ‘**in-laws**’** play the role of **‘**patriarchal agent**’** to hold the family power and practicing this power over their daughter in-laws to discriminate them, and through this, they generate and reinstated the ‘gender discrimination’ and ‘gender oppression’. Some empirical findings shows that main provokers of domestic violence in most of the cases is ‘in-laws’, mainly mother-in-law and sister-in-law. In recent statistics of domestic violence reveals that, in 39% of the cases of domestic violence, husband plays the role of perpetrators ; in 22% cases, the main provokers is mother-in-law ; sister-in-law as perpetrator in 16% cases ; and brother-in-law, father-in-law, relatives of husband as perpetrator in domestic violence is 9% ,8%,6% respectively.

So, in Indian society, we see that, not only men but also the women are the provokers of domestic violence. In India, the patriarchal structure of the family imposes a hierarchical relationship between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law is similar to a relationship between a superior and a sub-ordinate. It bears repeating that this power is generally bestowed upon women by male members of the family. In Indian patriarchal joint family, where older women are dependent on the head of the household for financial and emotional sustenance, they tend to become agents of the male members in ‘supervising’ the younger females in the family. This supervision sometimes takes the form of harassments of beatings. Although, being ‘agents’ of male power in the hierarchical family structure carries stigma of its own (prominent among which is the vilification of the figure of mother-in-law), using this limited power can prove to be very useful for women in dealing with violence. Through this discussion, the notion of ‘Global Sisterhood’ of radical feminism can be criticized. The radical feminist’s views that, as a social class, women are oppressed by men. Patriarchy is made possible by the unpaid domestic service of women in the home and by the exploitation of women’s bodies throughout marriage, sexual slavery, pornography, reproduction and rape. In their belief that ‘sisterhood is global’ , radical feminists stress that any women in the world has more in common with another women – regardless of class, race, ethnicity, nationality – than she has with another men. These women, radical feminists indicate that, come together for consciousness rising against male oppression and try to discover a way of emancipation for resisting gender discrimination. But, this paper criticizes this kind of view of radical feminism. If we see the Indian social structure of gender oppression, women (mother-in-law and sister-in-law) plays the most important role of ‘patriarchal agents’ to regulate, control and discriminate their daughter-in-law. In India women are not similar by their nature, because some of them internalized patriarchal norms and values and abuse each other to possess family power. So, how it is possible for women come together for consciousness rising against male oppression??. There is no scope for organizing global sisterhood among all women in India.

1. **‘Intersectionality’ - Effect of Caste and Class on Domestic Violence :**

There is a feminist discourse of intersectionality in the study of Domestic Violence to see the tendency of Violence is much higher in the group of women who belonging to low socio-economic status (in terms of caste & class) than the other**.** Before starting the analysis, we need to know what is ‘intersectionality’? Since the 1970s, scholars of women’s studies have taken [post-modern](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-modern" \o "Post-modern) approaches to understanding gender as it intersects with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, age, and (dis)ability to produce and maintain power structures within society; intersectioality takes into account of all the factors of gender related power structure of the society and shows that all these factors link together and strengthen gender discrimination and oppression. This paper focus on the intersectionality reading of domestic violence among Sc./Dalit women and the women who belong from low socio-economic status (lower class) .

Dalit women, who belong from low-socio-economic status, face more violence (in public as well as private sphere) every day, and they will continue to do so until society changes and accepts them as equals. In ‘Dalit Women Speak Out : Caste, Class and Gender Violence in India’ (National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights, New Delhi, March 2006), Aloysius Irudayam s.j., Jayshree P. Mangubhai, Joel G. Lee, represent an empirical study; This study presents an analytical overview of the complexities of systemic violence that Dalit women face through an analysis of 500 Dalit women’s narratives across four states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu/Pondicherry and Uttar Pradesh). – shows that 215 Dalit women (out of 500) have recorded regular incidents of domestic violence that span several years of married life. This violence often manifests itself in verbal abuse of the woman, accompanied by physical assault, but also entails sexual abuse including marital rape. Several cases of inter-caste marriages ending in domestic violence reveal caste and gender discrimination against the Dalit wife leading to violence. In most cases where a Dalit husband is concerned, the violence takes on a strong patriarchal dimension: women are tortured within the home for not bringing enough dowry, for not bearing male children, for being supposedly ugly, or too beautiful, or allegedly unfaithful, for talking back to her husband, etc. Alcoholism among (Dalit and low class) husbands is also a strong contributing factor to this domestic violence. Domestic violence resulted in some women being deserted by their husbands, or being forced to leave their marital home. For the majority of women, however, the social norms and pressures of married life and “duties” of wives to their husbands ensure that they continue to endure this violence.Female feticide and infanticide were not recorded as widespread among the Dalit women in this study, with only two women revealing the occurrence of this violence. By comparison, child sexual abusein terms of particularly early child marriages and sexual relations with minor Dalit girls below the age of 16 years is more common. Otherwise, four cases of sexual violence from a brother, father-in-law, brother-in-law and fathers also emerged. While only 23 girls had experienced child sexual abuse within the past five years, this must be viewed in the light of the fact that 282 women, or 72.2% of the total women in this study, were married below the legal age of marriage of 18 years, of which 39.7% were married below the age of 15 years. These early marriages indicate that the majority of women participating in the study would probably have been legally minors at the age of their first sexual encounter with their husband.

The right to equality regardless of gender and caste is a fundamental right in India. However, the Indian government has acknowledged that institutional forces arraigned against this right are powerful and shape people’s mindsets to accept pervasive gender and caste inequality. This is no more apparent than when one visits Dalit women living in their caste-segregated localities. Vulnerably positioned at the bottom of India’s gender, caste and class hierarchies, Dalit women experience the outcome of severely imbalanced social, economic and political power equations in terms of endemic caste-class-gender discrimination and violence.

1. **Socio-Legal Barriers to Staying in the Abusive Relationship:**

The increasing rate of violence behind close doors, is a matter of serious concern. The cases of cruelty committed by the husband and family members are identified in plenty. However, women concerned constitute only a small fraction of the cases involving such cruelty. Due to these reasons the Indian Penal Code viz.; the Code of Criminal Procedure,1973 and the Evidence Act, 1972 were amended suitably to deal effectively not only with cases of dowry deaths but also cases of cruelty to married women by their husband and in-laws. However, the Vienna Acord of 1994, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action,1995 acknowledged that domestic violence is undoubtedly a human rights issue and serious deterrent in development of society. The ‘United Nations Committee on Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women’(CEDAW) has recommended that State parties should act to protect women against violence of any kind, especially happening within family by husband or family members.

Educated women aware of their rights; they are no longer willing to follow commands blindly. When they ask questions, it causes conflicts, which, in turn, leads to violence. In many Indian states, working women asked to handover their paycheck to the husband and have no control over their finances. So, if they stop doing so or start asserting their right, there is bound to be friction. In 1983, domestic violence was recognized as a specific criminal offence by the introduction of section 498-A into the Indian Penal Code. This action deals with cruelty by a husband or his family towards married women. Four types of cruelty are dealt with by this law:

* Conduct that is likely to drive a women to suicide,
* Conduct which is likely to cause grave injury to the life, limb or health of the women,
* Harassment with the purpose of forcing the women or her relatives to give some property,
* Harassment because the women or her relatives are unable to yield to demands for more money or does not give some property.

The punishment is imprisonment for up to three years and a fine. The complaint against cruelty need not be lodged by this person herself. Any relative may also make the complaint on her behalf. Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code covers dowry-related harassment. The IPC also addresses dowry deaths in section 304-B. If a woman dies of “unnatural causes” within seven years of marriage and has been harassed for dowry before her death, the Courts will assume that it is a case of dowry death. The husband or in-laws will then have to prove that their harassment was not the cause of her death. A dowry death is punishable by imprisonment of at least seven years. On 23rd June 2005 the cabinet approved the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill, after which it received assent from parliament. This approval brings to a new civil law on domestic violence, which provides immediate emergency remedies for women facing violence. These include: protection orders; non-molestation orders; and the right to reside in the shared household.

However different kind of laws exist in the field of domestic violence for prevention mechanism, but still, in Indian society there is half of women of Indian population who experiences such type of domestic violence and harassments in their marital home; and after the incident of violence they don’t want to tell anyone about it, they think it is a matter of shame or sometimes they think that there is negative reaction comes from society and stigmatized them. There is also such type of women who justified wife beating. In India, There are many many different reasons why women decide to stay involved with an abusive person. Even though an outsider looking in asks, “why on earth would she stay with the person? I would just pack my stuff and leave!” . But, it is not always that easy. The reasons can range from having to stay because of money issues to staying, because they feel they have no other choice. Let’s examine some of the main reasons why women stay:

* **Financial Dependency:** Some women are full time housewives and have no other income to depend on except their husband's or partner's. They will completely occupy themselves cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children and will not have time for any other type of formal training or education. Therefore, they are simply stuck depending on their partner's income to get by. How are they going to make it if they leave? They don't have anything to fall back on to take care of their children. So they grin and bear it, thinking there is no hope but to endure for the sake of their own and their children's survival.
* **Psychological Dependence**: When you live with a constant barrage of threats of violence you become terrified. What if you leave this person and they kill themselves? What if they come after you and kill you or your family? These threats are enough to make anyone afraid to leave, especially if they hear it all the time. The problem is that when these threats are made and a woman tries to leave, sometime she is killed. These types of situations are on the news every day. The women that are in these relationships really have no choice but to stay in their mind.
* **Family Values and Social Acceptance: in Indian society,** women are not supposed to leave their homes. When some women leave because of domestic violence, they suffer a social stigma from their peers as being irresponsible. In order to avoid the feeling of being an outcast, they simply stay in the relationship. Even women who is the victims of D.V. internalized patriarchal norms and that’s why they never go for the divorce; “Pati Parameswar Hote Hain”, “Hindu Narir Biye Ekbar E Hoy” ,“Jo Vi Hain, Jaise Vi Hain, Wo Mere Pati Hain” – this kind of mentality is responsible for the growing rate of violence in traditional Indian society.
* **Role of police:** we find in the national survey is a more accurate reflection of the extent of physical abuse while levels in the police records are seriously underreported. Additionally, cultures of enumeration and the role of the police is sometime responsible for victim’s unwillingness to report to the police station; when women try to file first information reports (FIRs) they are often told that it is a private matter and their injuries are dismissed as minor. States such as Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Orissa, UP, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh that have some of the largest reporting disparities particularly for severe violence perhaps have the worst institutional conditions for encouraging police reporting.
* **Lack of Information:** Unfortunately there are too many women who do not know about national laws related to prevention mechanism and also the wonderful organizations available to help them better their lives. It is for this reason they continue to stay. The lack of information can be combined with any of the other reasons to make the woman feel completely and utterly stuck. Perhaps abuse is all they have ever known and think it is OK.

Battered women in general face a number of interrelated and intricate barriers that complicate their pursuit of safety. Women struggle with, among other factors, embarrassment and shame about disclosing abuse and seeking help from social service or criminal justice agencies; emotional connection to and economic dependency on batterers; reluctance to break up families; and fear of myriad forms of violence, control, and retaliation by abusers and their communities. Many women struggle with their decision to leave an abusive relationship. Some women may still love their partner, despite the violence that exists within the relationship. Others may hope that their partner will change and believe the promises made by their loved one for a different life. In Indian society, there is a greater pressure outside of the family unit to return to one’s batterer. For many women, they fear what their lives will be like without their partner. These fears may include how they will support themselves (and their children), the possibility that future relationships will have similar results, and even fear of loneliness. A key to successfully leaving an abusive relationship is the victim’s belief that she will be better off without her batterer and have the confidence to make a new life free from violence.

**CONCLUSION:**

The foregoing analysis reveals not only widespread prevalence of domestic violence in India but also analyze how dowry system and patriarchal family structure play a role to diminished women**’**s agency through limited economic opportunity and how women also participate in violence as perpetrators. In addition to this, it is noteworthy to mention that a lot of variables like age, education of women, age at first marriage, different types of caste and class categories(socio-economic status), women’s autonomy, exposure to mass media, work status of women and standard of living besides place of residence contribute significantly to the prevalence of domestic violence.

The experience of violence undermines the empowerment women and certainly is a barrier to the socio-economic and demographic development of the country. In view of the prevalence of the problem, it is suggested to have programmes that take into account involvement of the community and especially the males for effective as well as fruitful amelioration of the issue. It can again be suggested that education of the girls should be encouraged, which will undoubtedly work as deterrent to domestic violence. National laws for prevention mechanism of domestic violence, giving more rights to the women will always be beneficial to curb the issue. As it is found to be deep rooted in the socio-cultural practices and both the perpetrator as well as victim takes it granted, there is need of major transformation in the socio cultural milieu. In order to address the problem, social norms and values towards gender roles should be transformed to facilitate the implementation of appropriate and meaningful responses to domestic violence and ultimately to prevent it from happening altogether.

What measure should be adopted to prevent women’s abuse and to reduce violence against women in our society? The suggestion is that improving the general status of women through education, effective legislative measures, providing training and employment opportunities will reduce domestic violence. Change in parents’ attitudes is also necessary in women’s cases. Why do parents force their daughters who are frequently beaten by their husbands or ill treated by their in-laws to live their husband’s house against their own wishes? Why should women submit to oppression? Women have to learn to be assertive and accept new roles for themselves. They have to develop an optimistic and hopeful approach to life.

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