

RESEARCH ARTICLE



VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

MANJU

Visiting faculty at Delhi College of Arts And Commerce, New Delhi



MANJU

Article Info:

Article Received:27/02/2014

Revised on:19/3/2014

Accepted for Publication:20/03/2014

ABSTRACT

Violence against women is not a problem of today; it is rooted decades before. It is present all over the world .The condition is getting worse day by day. It is crossing all the borders and races. Violence against women is a very serious and sensitive issue as it is pervasive of human rights violation denying fundamental rights to almost half of population (females and girls).Domestic violence is much more drastic than violence outside because home is a place where individual seeks love, security, safety and shelter but we can't deny the fact that it is also a place that imperils lives. Violence includes harassment, maltreatment, brutality, cruelty, physical injury or attempting to place a woman in fear of injury or psychological violence. Impact of physical violence may be more visible than psychological violence but repeated humiliation restricted social mobility and denial of economic resources is more subtle and insidious forms of violence ; makes a woman mentally destabilized and powerless . In India patriarchy and gender discrimination are the main reasons of violence perpetrated against women and girls. Violence against women is a global issue; it's a stigma on civilized society which is compelling intellectuals to focus on this alarming situation. So many laws are introduced day by day to eradicate the problem but it is not so easy to overcome it without awakening of society. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyze the causes and its impact on victim.

Keywords: Violence, Discrimination, Patriarchal values**@ Copyright KY Publications**

Throughout the world, India is known as a country of Gods and Goddesses where women are highly esteemed. But violence against women is drastic in India .It's not a current problem, violence against women too remained in the era of Ramayana and Mahabharata. Today also the situation remains the same as the legacy of past being transferred to future. The women condition day by day is getting worse as they are ill-treated deprived of their right to life, personal liberty and self-identity which are

provided to them under constitution of India. It is very difficult to define violence. It is present in various forms in our society. Violence not only includes physical torture and injury but also verbal insult, eve teasing, rebuke ,sexual harassment, rape, threats, deprivations, restrictions, discriminations, obstructions, confinement and many more. According to the declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against

women 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” (Patil.137).

Violence against women starts at conception and carries on through their entire life. Since their birth girls remain neglected in families, they are provided with inadequate food; burdened with house hold works and responsibility of looking after their siblings. Family’s only focus is to make them docile daughters and the effect remain lifelong in their persona. Even eve teasing is viewed as reaction and not as an action by society in large. The reason which we frequently hear about eve teasing is that Eve-teasing occurs only when girls provoke other by their actions and dresses. There are various boundations imposed on her by her father before marriage like what to dress, how to dress, where to go etc. Violence against women is mainly due to gender discrimination and impact of patriarchal values, they are taken to be ‘non-person’ and as ‘sex object’. Women in our Indian society are dependent on a male, during childhood her father, in adulthood her brother, after marriage husband and during old age her son.

The condition of single woman like unmarried, divorced, widowed and deserted from any corner is more drastic. Away from patriarchal families these women are considered as easily available soft targets. They are more prone to rape and economic exploitation. Violence is used as a weapon to exert power over others. It’s a misconception that violence against female is generated by males only. In reality it is of both types inter-sex and intra-sex. Even mother who bears equal labor pains during birth of her children discriminates between her son and daughter.

In India where domestic violence persists in want of dowry females also play their role in victimizing women. Husband is not the only accused in bride burning cases participation of females like mother-in-law and sister-in-law are also included. Another great cause of domestic violence in India is want of male child. Researches indicate that 30%of the abuse starts during pregnancy; during which a woman needs special care and attention; they are

deprived of basic amenities like medicines and healthy diet even during pregnancy. Nearly about two third of females are anaemic which leads to death of mother or child during child birth. Early marriages, forced marriages, honor killing , acid throwing, trafficking, rape, sexual abuse, female foeticide and female infanticide , neglect of women health problems , compelling and humiliating women, alcoholism of the husband are some of the other forms of violence against women in India. Forced prostitution due to poverty is also very common in some Indian states. Husband’s infidelity is also a major cause of psychological violence in most of the cases. Wife battering is very common and there are so minute reasons behind it. Sometimes husband’s own frustration or his own failure becomes the cause. So many cases remain unreported due to hesitation, ignorance, unawareness or due to cultural norms.

The root cause behind violence against women is lack of education particularly in rural areas. Dr. Niroj Sinah here quoted the words of Richard Gelles, “the lesser education the husband had received, the greater was the likelihood that he would physically abuse his wife with the kind of life she expects or deserves.” (Sinha75). Economic dependence is another major cause. Financial hardship brings feeling of inadequacy which leads to violent behavior. Very low participation of females in administration and in legislature is also a reason for violence against women. Female participation should be in every walk of life. Gandhi Ji advised us rightly on the question of social injustice to women. He opined,

She has the right to participate in the minute details of the activities of man and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere as man is in his. (Gandhi 4.)

Violence certainly has adverse effects on victim’s physical and mental health. Here, victim is not only the woman but also her parents and her kids. When violence is perpetrated on a woman her parents and her kids also suffers the same agony. Women may undergo mental illness due to continuous worries and lack of attention towards the health which affects their performance inside and outside home.

Abnormal and mentally retarded children are consequences of violence against pregnant ladies. Verbal abuse, rebukes, threats, deprivations, obstructions and restrictions may destroy her self-concept and she might attempt or even commit suicide. The condition gets worse with working ladies which forces them to be on the back foot in their professional life whereas it has been proved in all fields that when they get pleasant environment they excel and also overcome their male counter parts. The physical violence can make woman disabled and she may lose her earning capacity which makes her more dependent and prone to violence. The sufferer of domestic violence can't pay attention towards her kid's health and education which hinders their capacity to accept challenges in their life. Violence against women draws negative image of males in women mind; they lose women's faith and trust. For sustaining human life on earth it's necessary for both to live in harmony. Both are incomplete without each other. They are supplement to each other.

In India there are so many legal provisions to eradicate violence against women:

- Factories Act 1948
- Maternity Benefit Act 1961
- The Equal Remuneration Act of 1976
- The Child Marriage Restrain Act of 1976
- Indian Penal Code: Section 354 and 509 safeguards the interest of women.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act,1961
- The Amendment of Criminal Law 1983
- The National Commission for Women Act 1990
- The protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and
- Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

Despite of these constitutional rights and legal provisions, the programmes adopted for betterment of women didn't bring any drastic change in women plight. Attention should be paid towards female higher education especially in rural areas. NGOs and women's organizations are working well in urban areas but they should also focus on rural areas. The growing awareness of this problem in our society is a point of satisfaction. In addition to these legal provisions an attitudinal change in society is needed

for that there is strict need to change the child rearing practices. Since their puberty boys spend much time with their mothers so she can play a vital role in a boy's psychological development. Every mother should tell her son that in future when you will get married you have to keep in mind these things: here is a girl who is as much educated as you are; who is earning as much as you do. She also has dreams as aspirations just as you have because she is as human as you are. You should not expect her to be perfect in every field of life as she was also busy in studies and competing in a system that gives no special concession to girls for their house hold works. She also has lived and loved her parents and siblings just like you but she has bravely agreed to leave behind all that to adopt your home, your family, your ways and even your family name. Every girl does her level best to make this most important relationship in her entire life a grand success. She just needs; only a little help and trust from her husband. She just wants your generous support, your sensitivity and most importantly your understanding. Such teachings will certainly bring a change in a boy's attitude; will make him polite and kind towards his wife. The child rearing practice in India needs to be changed on priority basis. Education will also help to bring awareness among women about their legal rights. Women should try to become economically independent to cope up with domestic violence. In addition to all these remedies, a woman should take initiative step to combat this heinous crime.

REFERENCES

- Sinha.Niroj. "Profile of Marital Violence". *Women and Violence* Ed. Niroj Sinha.New Delhi: Vikas Publication, 1989.
- Gandhi.M.K. *Women And Social Injustice*. Ahmedabad: Navjivan Publishing House, 1970.
- Patil.L.Santosh. "Domestic Violence Against Women in India". *Domestic Violence Against Women In India*. Ed. Gurappa.Y. Naidu. New Delhi: Serial Publications, 2011.