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## Violence against Women in marital relationships post pandemic: A Social Work Perspective

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### KEYWORDS

COVID-19, Cohesive society, Domestic Violence, Lockdown, Justice, Pandemic, Social Work.

### ABSTRACT

In the present situation, when entire country was facing the unabated spread of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), domestic violence against women remains unaddressed as it was before. This pandemic triggered this attitude. This paper will try to address the plight of victims who are facing violence within closed doors of 'safe home'. The unexpected physical, mental and financial worries and anxieties fuelled domestic violence against women. During this pandemic, there is an alarming rise in the number of registered cases of domestic violence according to recent statistics. During pandemic period, women were locked with their perpetrators which intensified the occurrences of domestic violence. Victims are not in a position to access most avenues for help which are non-functional due to the outbreak of the pandemic. The main objectives of the study were to identify the victims and their perception about rise in occurrences of domestic violence in this pandemic. Through interviews of victims, professionals, community people etc., the researcher will try to understand the factors aggravating domestic violence during the pandemic and also the role of professional Social Work to establish justice for the victims. To develop a cohesive society, it is pertinent to understand the perception of society in general, and victims in particular regarding domestic violence.

### Introduction

Domestic violence can be defined as different forms of torture or cruelty carried out by one person in a relationship to control another person within the boundaries of a home. It is the institution of dominance and terror in a relationship through belligerence and other forms of abuse. Domestic violence can occur intermittently, periodically and persistently. It impedes the development of copious sectors of the societal framework and affects the progress of any nation with respect to health care, law enforcement, lost labour etc. Besides, domestic violence against women is such an issue due to which women are suffering regardless of income and socio-cultural profile. Moreover, based on a report published by World Health Organisation entitled "Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence" published in 2013, 35 % of women globally have witnessed either bodily and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual aggression by a non-partner (not counting sexual harassment) at some point in their life cycle. In addition, domestic violence has long lasting and overwhelming impact on the victim's health. Children, family, acquaintances, colleagues and commune of the victims also suffer from the negative impacts of domestic violence. Kids in homes where domestic violence exists may be observer to exploitation, may themselves be battered, and may experience harm "incidental" to the household assertiveness. Therefore, understanding the factors for domestic violence of women is critical to suggest measures to control and reduce the incidence of violent behaviour against women. There are diverse factors at an assortment of levels that affect the domestic violence against women. The factors at the individual level comprise of the executor being abused as a kid or witnessing conjugal hostility in the residence, having an absent or rejecting father and regular use of alcohol. On family level, male control of money, decision-making power within the relations and nuptial disagreement act as sturdy indicators of domestic violence

against women. Besides, commune level women's segregation and scarce societal support, in conjunction with male peer groups which disregard and legalize men's brutality, envisage elevated rates of violent behaviour against women. Furthermore, it is observed globally that domestic violence against women is widespread in those societies where gender roles are strictly distinct and imposed and where the idea of maleness is correlated to roughness, male reputation, or supremacy. Tolerance of physical punishment of women, approval of antipathy as a way of settling interpersonal disputes, and the perceptiveness that men possess women are other cultural norms linked to domestic abuse. Therefore, it is imperative to analyze assorted factors which are affecting the domestic violence of women, especially during this pandemic.

The UN's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the COVID-19 Crisis warns that "COVID-19 Pandemic is far more than a health crisis". It is affecting societies and economies at their core. Though it is noteworthy to mention that the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty, unemployment and inequalities at a global scale. Overall this pandemic grievously impacted all the dimensions of society. This pandemic has grievous and harsh impact upon socio-economic aspects of all societies. India is the worst sufferer due to its enormous population size and lack of proper infrastructure to deal with the immediate crisis. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has raised awareness about the recent outbreak and has taken necessary actions to control the spread of COVID-19. The nationwide lockdown since March, 2020 not only created havoc physically but also impacted mental and emotional health of the population. This lockdown impeded the socio-economic status of the whole nation.

According to several researches, despite new measures and impacts are introduced like especially quarantine, its effects on many people's usual activities, routines or livelihoods is devastating.

Across the world, different countries including China, United States,

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United Kingdom, Brazil, France, Australia etc., have reported cases of increased domestic violence and intimate partner violence. India, extremely infamous for domestic violence (ranked 4th worst country for gender equality) is showing similar trends. Furthermore, looking beyond these numbers shows that Covid-19 has affected families, relationships and societies in unprecedented ways, leading to acute economic crisis. One significant impact that is currently being noticed is the alarming increase in domestic violence cases during the pandemic.

#### **Statement of the Research Problem**

The principle of forecasting miserably failed while predicting this Covid-19 Pandemic. The socio-economic disturbances caused by the pandemic are tremendously upsetting. It resulted in unrestrained loss of human life and also challenged different other aspects like daily life, unprecedented poverty and off course domestic violence. This pandemic generated substantial effects on life of women residing behind closed doors. National Commission of Women enumerated 100% rise in domestic violence cases. There are many other organizations in India as well as worldwide which ascertain the fact that incidents of domestic violence against women exponentially increased worldwide since the lockdown were implemented.

It is widely accepted fact that women tend to face greater risks during emergencies, including health disasters such as pandemics. According to different studies it has been identified that mandatory stay-at-home rules, physical distancing, economic uncertainties and anxieties caused by the pandemic, domestic violence has increased globally. Due to extreme economic hardships, there is an increase in violent, abusive and controlling and aggressive behaviour. Rise in Domestic Violence during any natural disaster is multifaceted. There are many factors which may aggravate domestic violence against women. Factors like stress due to physical confinement, economic disruption, unemployment of female as well as male counterpart, limited social support etc. could be attributed to rise in domestic violence against women. But it will be not judicious if we confine our argument on the above factors, then we are actually bypassing the actual cause of occurrences of domestic violence against women. This violence is knotted with patriarchy and gender inequality. Gender inequality within the patriarchal family results in initiation of unequal power relationships between the powerful (generally males) and the powerless (generally females). This ideology is deeply ingrained within the mindset of Indian society which often triggers domestic violence against the weak. The physical and mental health of the victim women are grossly affected due to this violence. Apart from the dominating patriarchal attitude of men, there are many other reasons which instigates domestic violence like dowry, ego-conflict, alcoholism of husband etc.

It is generally believed that domestic violence has always existed in almost all the societies. This form of violence will not disappear as long as socio-economic and cultural factors combine to keep one of the spouses (generally, the wife) submissive to the dominance of the other (generally, the husband). In spite of the spread of modern education, continuous effort is taking place towards development of women. Along with that societal perception, opinions about role of women towards family values are also changing. But domestic violence is present in the society till date and it is tolerated and justified also (Sankaran, 1995, pp. 89-90).

Domestic violence against women is not always inflicted only by the men but also by females due to the patriarchal structure of the society which has tremendous influence upon the individual including women. It is seen that even the women victims often accept the male dominance in their family. For many women, socialised in patriarchal culture, domination of the husband is quite natural and domestic violence to some extent is not unusual. This attitude of women of Indian society is due to the impact of societal perception about domestic violence upon the mindset of Indian married women.

The present study will specifically focus on the domestic violence inflicted on married women in Indian Society. It is the need of the hour that Professional Social Work must give due emphasis upon these

serious issues and take proper initiative to build a cohesive society where welfare and justice prevails for all including the victims of Domestic Violence. Social workers need to work unitedly with active community support to help women victims of domestic violence and also to work upon the ideologies of the community about this hidden but extremely serious crime. It is the collective responsibility of professionals, people, State machineries and all major institutions of the society at large to understand this situation and work collectively towards a common good. Due to Covid-19 pandemic situation, the sources of help are often unavailable which has aggravated occurrences of domestic violence against women. But since time immemorial, Domestic Violence against Women has been hidden within the patriarchal and male dominated mindset of the society which need to be addressed. Covid-19 and consequent lockdown has a major consequence upon increasing Domestic Violence but the perception of the society towards women remain unaddressed which has nothing to do with the ongoing pandemic.

#### **Review of related literature**

According to several experts, domestic violence always tries to control the powerless so that the interest of powerful is protected (Austin & Sootsman-Eicher, 2004; retrieved on 07.01.2018 from <http://www.domesticviolence.org/>). The main factor which instigates domestic violence by men upon women is the uneven relationships of power (Smith, 1990, pp. 39-58). The term domestic violence refers to an act that is unlawful and results in negative consequences on the victim, and in most cases the victims are married women (Austin & Sootsman-Eicher, 2004 cited in Jura & Bukaliya, 2015, pp. 62-72). There are innumerable definitions of domestic violence against women specifying about more or less the same concept.

According to International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), the idea of Domestic violence is broad and includes physical, mental, financial and sexual abuse inflicted upon a woman by any member of the family directly or indirectly. Hence, domestic violence is defined as physical, emotional, sexual and financial abuse experienced by an adult woman within her home (International Center for Research on Women, 2005, pp. 1-2).

It is not enough to make an idea about domestic violence from the definitions. Identifying domestic violence is more challenging. Domestic violence is not only about frequent or occasional physical violence that a married woman faces. In marital relationship, when the husband attempts to dominate and control the activity of the wife in an aggressive manner can also be termed as domestic violence. According to Schechter and Edelson, "Domestic Violence is not simply an argument. It is a pattern of coercive controls that one-person exercises over another. Abusers use physical & sexual violence, threats, emotional insults & economic deprivation as a way to dominate their victims & get their way" (Schechter & Edelson, 1999, pp. 122-123).

It was observed from several researches that cultural belief system often influences the perception and understanding of domestic violence. (Torres, 1991, pp. 113-131).

Most of the respondents conceptualised physical beating as domestic violence. On the other hand, if a married woman is criticised by her husband through using slangs or name-calling, then it is not desirable to call in domestic violence. In other words, psychological acts of abuse are more blurred as equated to physical acts of violence (EDK Associates, 1997 cited in Family Violence Prevention Fund, 1999, pp. 1-2).

The perception about domestic violence also varies from one gender to another. More of less similar type of study was conducted on 125 medial students in an Industrial township of Pune, Maharashtra to study the perception of the students about domestic violence against women. The findings show that female respondents had more clear perception regarding domestic violence as compared to male respondents (Agrawal and Banerjee; 2010, pp. 90-93). Similar conclusion has been reacted by other researchers. A similar study, conducted among medical and nursing students in India, reported that girl students were more apprehensive about the outcome of the violence (Majumdar, 2004, pp.

354-364).

Domestic violence is closely linked to domination over women by men. So, it is necessary to look at how the society, particularly women, view male domination. A study conducted in Vietnam tried to understand the women's attitude towards male domination. It was revealed that 27% of the women said that they support the statement "a good wife obeys her husband even if she disagrees". In the rural setting, 32.7% women supported the statement and only 14.7% of women in urban environment supported the statement. Women's attitude also varies in respect of their education. A considerable number of women who are illiterate and never went to school supported the above statement. Several women were asked to give their opinion whether "the wife has the obligation to have sex with her husband even if she does not feel like it". It is found that 19.7% of the respondents put their positive nod with the statement.

As per research work, there is not any single factor to account for violence perpetrated against women in domestic sphere. Several interlinked factors, both social and cultural, have made women vulnerable to domestic violence. Most of the factors that are associated with domestic violence demonstrate unequal power association between men and women. There are various factors that contribute to these unequal power relations. They include—the structure of the family where power discrimination resides, the desire to control female sexuality, unshakable belief in the supremacy of males and finally the justice delivery mechanisms which are largely biased towards patriarchy. Women are denied of their rights and status also due to the cultural sanctions of male superiority.

Heise (1994) has identified certain factors which perpetuate domestic violence against women. One of them is culture. Culture is very important as it shapes socialization. In many cultures, domestic violence is quite common and expected part of a married life. Culture frequently defines sex roles, its expectations within different relationships and also reinforces existing belief system about male superiority. The researcher also talked about the economic factors contributing to domestic violence, e.g., lack of women's economic independence, financial dependence upon husband, lack of employment opportunities for women etc. That apart, there are legal factors as well. They include unequal legal status of women in law, lack of gender sensitivity among police and other law enforcement bodies and most importantly inadequate legal awareness among women especially women from lower income group. Political factors like very limited political participation among women, which obstructs their empowerment and gives them a lower position in the power equation compared to men also plays a significant role (Heise et. al., 1994, pp. 1165-1179).

Different researchers have also found that those women having no one to stand beside her in her crisis days, are often left with no other option but to stay in the violent relationship. If women actively participate in community networks, they may expect some support of the neighbourhood women in time of any need. Sometimes lack of assistance in the local community, traditional and rigid societal values, economic dependency upon the perpetrators etc. instigates domestic violence. It is also being pointed out by researchers that physically abusing one's wife is deeply rooted in the cultural norms and values of the immediate family and of the larger society (Jejeebhoy S., 1998, pp. 855-862). Ghosh claims that in Indian familial setting, dowry is the most probable cause of domestic violence against married women. Domestic violence remains unexposed and under reported because it occurs within the family (Ghosh, 2010, pp. 1-17).

The researchers have found that other causes of domestic violence against women as well. Ptacek (1988) finds that distinguishable psychopathology occurs among the violent husbands and they may suffer from various personality problems which give rise to domestic violence against women (Ptacek, 1998 cited in Dobash & Dobash, 2001, p. 8).

The researcher also studied the impact of Covid-19 upon occurrences of domestic violence against women in India and abroad. It was observed that very limited published literatures are available in this field. But

worldwide, this pandemic created horrible situation and it also impacted domestic violence against women across all countries. Due to different reasons, like of loss of income for males along with increased consumption of alcohol, loss of social bonding due to nationwide lockdown forced the victims of violence to being locked up with perpetrators which in turn indulge the victims into violence at home. Several researches also confirmed that sexual violence is also likely to increase during lockdown. It was also well documented that Domestic Violence have increased in different countries like Germany, Italy, Brazil, China, USA, UK and India. One study termed Covid-19 and Domestic violence against women as 'twin public health emergencies'. It was also ascertained that the effect of family violence is more adverse on psychological health as compared to physical health. It was also discussed extensively in different researches that unfortunately cases of domestic violence against women are underreported across the world which increases in times of global emergencies like Covid-19. Since earlier times, pandemic provide for an enabling environment of fear and uncertainty that may exacerbate diverse forms of violence against women, domestic violence is one of them.

Different researches tried to identify the cause of this evident spike. Most of the studies are of the similar opinion that reporting amidst a pandemic decreases due to restricted movement, handicapped medium of communication, reduced contact with natal family, unavailability of formal support system etc.

Many studies also highlighted that before Covid-19, came along, Domestic Violence against Women was already present and was considered as one of the most significant human rights violations. Due to the outbreak of this pandemic, undoubtedly, the contact of external world with the victims deteriorated but in patriarchal societies, women internalise gender-based violence. According to the UN Chief Antonio Guterres, 'the Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated what we all know, years of patriarchy has led to a male-dominated world and culture which has damaged everyone.'

#### **Objectives of the study**

The main aim of the study is to identify women victims of domestic violence from different strata of society and understand the impact of Covid-19 pandemic upon occurrences of domestic violence. The study also tries to demarcate the probable factors which influences the causation of domestic violence. The present research will also try to study the perception of women victims based on their experience of facing violence in their life. The researcher also tried to highlight the problem faced by the respondents to adopt different strategies during this pandemic period. Finally, the researcher tried to explore the role of Social Workers as professionals towards mitigating the problem and transform the present society into a cohesive one.

#### **Methodology adopted**

The present research has been carried out in Durgapur, which is located in the Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal. Durgapur is an industrial city with a cosmopolitan culture that includes people from different socio-economic backgrounds. A research in Durgapur has the potential to understand how domestic violence takes place in different sections of the society.

This research has adopted cross-sectional research design to collect data from different sections of the society at the same time. Due to unwillingness of many respondents to share their personal views, the researcher opted for the snowball sampling keeping in mind to cover the maximum number of willing respondents to take part in this research from every section of society. The researcher selected 40 women respondents who have faced domestic violence in their life of one form or the other. The respondents were selected from different economic, religious, caste, residence, and age, educational and occupational backgrounds. Attempts have also been made to understand if there exists any relationship between the occurrences of domestic violence and the Covid-19 pandemic.

For data collection, flexible approach has been adopted. With the help of semi-structured interview schedule, information was collected from the

respondents through telephonic interaction mostly due to the pandemic situation. The researcher also conducted two offline FGDs with 5 respondents each. Interviews of different professionals who are specialised in the field of dealing with domestic violence cases was also taken.

### Case Studies

The narratives of the respondents have been studied in great details to understand different issues associated with domestic violence post pandemic. Therefore, it can be comprehended that here in this research work, focused group discussions are used to identify the issues to be included in the interview schedule and the issues to be discussed in details with the victim for case studies. The researcher tried to highlight the victim's and other professional's perception about domestic violence and how Covid-19 is affecting the victim's current status. The researcher conducted 10 detailed case studies. Due to limitation of words, the researcher will try to narrate the plight of 4 victims (2 victims each from higher and lower income group).

#### Case Study No. 1

Malati (Name changed) is the lady of 28 years old. She belongs to a lower income group before marriage. At the tender age of 15 years, she got married by her parents due to extreme poverty and cultural stigma in their locality. Now, she is working as a domestic help and have four children. She said during interview, after 5 years of marriage, Malati came to know that her husband is having an extra-marital relation with her widow sister-in-law. Malati was beaten up severely by her husband and in-laws. Malati said her perpetrators are always instigated by her widow sister-in-law.

#### Case Study No.2

Bimala (name changed) is the lady of 50 years old. She also belongs from a poor family. She got married at 19 years of age. During her marriage her parents gave dowry as demanded by her in-law's family. She said after 6 months of her marriage, she was always tortured both physically and mentally by her mother-in-law to bring more money from her parental house and help her husband in business. Bimala did the same for first 4 to 5 years but after her father's death, her mother faced extreme poverty and unable to give money to Bimala as dowry demand. After this, the torture took an enormous high and her husband married again and threw Bimala out of her matrimonial home with her two children. With the help of a local NGO, she got a job of a lady security guard in a local jewellery shop. Now, she is staying alone with her son. Daughter was married early.

The researcher took the interview of two women from lower income group and identified the factors instigating domestic violence against them. In the first case the factor was extra-marital affair of husband and in the second case demand for dowry. The researcher asked both of them about their perception regarding their plight. Both of them are of the common view that it was normal to get tortured in the hands of their husband and in-laws after marriage. In fact, they also said after birth, they were being always taught by their parental family that the main purpose of women birth is to serve their matrimonial home and to keep every member happy and satisfied. They must learn to develop patience, calmness and tolerance. While asking them about impact of Covid-19 upon their life, they said it is just a situation. Since long time back, they are suffering both physically and psychologically. Covid-19 worsened their situation due to certain factors but domestic abuse is a reality in the life of every poor women.

#### Case Study No. 3

Chandrima (name changed) aged 33 years belongs from an economically well-off family. She is a lady hailing from a family of doctors. She was married to a renowned doctor through arrange marriage. Chandrima was an educated lady and socialized in a good culture. Before marriage, she used to work in a private school as teacher. It was previously settled before marriage that Chandrima will do job after marriage. But situation turned upside down after her marriage. She wants to prepare herself for banking services through coaching. But her in-laws said Chandrima and her husband is earning good amount of money. So, there was no

requirement to go outside and take coaching for banking examinations. Her in-laws along with her husband was of the view that woman should go outside to earn only when it was financially required. Otherwise, they should stay home and look after her family responsibilities. It was very important here to mention that Chandrima was never physically abused by her in-laws or husband. But while taking narrative, the researcher observed how much mental torture she suffered due to the members of her matrimonial home. While asking about the impact of Covid-19, Chandrima said to some extent it affects the intensity of the violence due to lack of support from outside.

Case Study No. 4: Sulekha (name changed) aged 46 years and she herself is a professor by profession. She also suffered extreme violence (both physical and mental) in the hands of her in-laws and husband. She undergone love marriage with lots of hope and expectations. But while talking about her situation, she said the behaviour of her husband (mainly) changed after 2 years of marriage. Her husband is a Government administrative professional. Sulekha is a PhD holder individual and staying separately with her husband after marriage. So, directly no interference from in-laws were there. But her husband wants that there is no point of continuing job after marriage. Her husband's said after the birth of first child, she will face extreme challenge to rear her children properly. Sulekha must give more attention to her children and family as compared to her job. It was also very surprising that Sulekha's parents and in-laws were also of the same opinion. Sulekha also accepted that she faced sexual violence from her husband. Finally, she left her job and now she is a housewife and her whole day pass to do her household chores and rearing her children and fulfilling the requirement of her husband. While asking about her perception, she blamed herself and her parents for her present situation. During interview, she became extremely emotional and spoke about her frustration. She said due to patriarchal society, women are adjusting with domestic violence and maintaining culture of 'silence'. While asking about impact of Covid-19, she totally denied its relevance with the increasing rate of domestic violence against women in society.

### Discussion

Domestic Violence against women not specific to any particular community or to any particular country. It is a widespread problem found all around the world. In Indian society, there are different forms of Domestic Violence, for example— the physical, mental and financial torture. The torture is generally inflicted by husband, in-laws or any other member staying in the matrimonial home. This type of violence generally affects the women both physically and psychologically. Often, her closed people too suffer as a result of violence, e.g., the children. Domestic violence is a particular type of violence, which is gendered in nature and it occurs within the context of patriarchal environment and within the family. This defines its complex nature i.e., 'culture of silence'. As it is committed within the four walls of the matrimonial family, the domestic violence remains often unacknowledged. Patriarchal deep-rooted power dynamics are deeply ingrained in family values and that contributes to the problem. The 'hidden' and 'private' nature of the problem obstructs the reporting of the crime. It is often considered 'normal' as society is conditioned in that manner. At the broader level, the main reason behind domestic violence is the traditional and patriarchal mindset of the society which nurtures the issue of gender inequality and subordinate status of women. The perception of gender inequality is supported by the community and by the several agents of socialisation.

### Conclusion

This study shows domestic violence is present in every section of the society— among the rich as well as among the poor. Women belong to different castes, tribes, religion are suffering from domestic violence. The victims of violence include the illiterate, as well as highly educated women, irrespective of cultural background it is persisting in society. There are different factors for domestic violence such as demand for dowry, alcoholism of husbands, incompatibility between the victim and husband, extra-marital relationship, ego conflict, unsatisfied sexual



relations, patriarchal domination (disrespect for women), frustration of husband due to unemployment, expectation of husband/in-laws not fulfilled by the married women and birth of girl child. The study finds, that in the study area, physical violence is quite common, but other types of violence, e.g., mental and financial are no less important, particularly for the educated women. More importantly, a large number of victims suffer from violence on a regular basis but many women tolerate violence fearing lack of social support if she protests beyond a point.

These are all factors which instigate domestic violence. But the true fact is that in patriarchal societies, women accept domestic violence. During interviews with professionals, they are also of similar opinion that women were unable to perceive their husband's violent behaviour as a violation, instead they believe that it was their right. Domestic violence is deeply interlinked with dominance, power and abuse of authority and due to any calamity or pandemic, pre-existing gendered structural inequalities and power hierarchies will remain unaffected. On the offset, it is also true that Covid-19 put women in more vulnerable condition fuelling impunity for the perpetrators. Patriarchy perpetuates that girl and women are of less value.

### Suggestions

The researcher would like to state that Domestic Violence against Women is not a 'women-centric' problem, rather it is a larger public problem. Hence social work intervention is highly suggested. So, the solution needs involvement of public bodies along with change in the societal mindset. This problem not only affect women (daughter, sister, mother, and wife) but it also affects her male relatives—her children, father, brother etc. In fact, domestic violence makes the family environment uncomfortable for all and the relatives of both sides suffer from the adverse consequence of domestic violence. Covid-19 pandemic created a havoc in the society and undoubtedly restricted the victims of domestic violence to reach support system, but the way society look towards women and domestic violence need to be changed. This is a typical patriarchal ideology which is permanently staying in Indian society and has nothing to do with the ongoing pandemic.

Therefore, it is an urgent need to change the way of thinking of the people. This is the time to rebuild equal, inclusive and resilient societies. Educational institutions should teach that both men and women are equally important parts of society. Awareness at individual level, group level and the entire community level are required. To formulate preventive measures for domestic violence, along with victim and general women, men should also participate in all such programmes. Domestic Violence is often considered 'normal' in many instances in patriarchal society. Through awareness and gender sensitization, change in the mindset of the people should be brought. Apart from that, proper socialisation of children, since childhood, is required which should not be patriarchy oriented. The socialisation process should be based on the principle of equality, the boys should learn to respect the dignity of women.

There is also the need to give emphasis on empowerment-oriented education. Skill development is necessary for the boys as well as for the girls. Along with education, girl child needs congenial environment where there is love and happiness among father and mother and among other members of the family. During the interview, it was found that some victims had encountered violence in their childhood which affected their perception also. They themselves admit that they lack courage for taking action against the culprits of domestic violence. On the other hand, the boys who grew up in the culture of violence at home sometimes become aggressive in their nature. They saw their fathers to torture their mothers and they do the same with their wives. So, the campaigners should also focus on encouraging people to make peaceful family environment.

As domestic violence is also a legal issue, so involvement of legal bodies is essentially required. As immediate help, when the consequence

of domestic violence is grievous, the law enforcement machineries should ensure strict action against the perpetrators. Police should be more efficient and women cells should be made more effective in dealing with the sensitive issue of domestic violence.

In addition to that, awareness campaigns on the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 should be increased. The Act should function more effectively to provide immediate relief to the victims.

Finally, the Professional Social Workers, possessing skilled knowledge about human behaviour and several operational methods of social work, have an important role to play. They should intervene to change the patriarchal mindset of the entire society. The NGOs and several other women organisations should try to fulfill the gap between the police and the general public. Blaming the police or other authorities would not do any good. Everyone should make effort to stop domestic violence.

Professional Social Workers are assumed to be 'skilled' people and are expected to deal with the problems of domestic violence with professionalism. They are trained to generate coordinated support from a whole range of agencies. Social workers can shape strong networks with other agencies and to arrange better services for the victims. The primary methods of Social Work mainly Case Work is of great use to deal with victim's problems. They should use their special ability and methods to include the larger community population towards building their positive vision about women through various gender sensitization programs and through media participation. The overall perception of people at viewing women needs to be changed. Social Cohesion describes a cohesive society as one which strives towards the welfare of all of its members by minimising disparities, fighting exclusion and marginalisation, creating a sense of belonging, promoting trust and collaboration. Social workers have a central role in promoting social cohesion through collective action that involves collective responsibility for betterment of all with human values and rights.

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