DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A RISING ISSUE

Dr. Aisharya De

Assistant Professor, Chandraketugarh Sahidullah Smriti Mahavidyalaya E-mail : aisharyade@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence has become a global issue. Domestic violence is defined as the systematic pattern of abusive behaviors in a relationship that are used to gain and /or maintain control and power over another person. (Domestic Abuse project, 2016). It is a social construction based on a societal consensus about the rules and rights of men and women. (Krahe Barbara, 2017). Domestic violence affects all who are exposed to it, whether perpetrators, victims and child. Especially during the period, when India was facing disastrous impact of corona virus, there was an exponential rise in the domestic violence against women causing serious threats to human rights, including the health rights of women and children. This systematic review helps to present an analysis of the adverse physical, psychological and psychosocial impacts of domestic violence on children who witness it using literature review. This study also summarizes current research to highlight the adverse gender impact, right now India is facing. However more research on therapeutic intervention is required in this direction.

KEY WORDS: - domestic violence, gender, inequalities, children, lockdown, women, therapeutic interventions.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence includes actual abuse or the threats of abuse. It is not only a law and order problem, rather a deep routed socio cultural problem. It has a far reaching effect on family life and life of children. Children who are exposed to domestic violence are considered to be at a higher risk for problems for their holistic development. Usually by domestic violence we understand domestic aggression towards women and girls. (Sheela Saravanan, 2000), because of gender relations which assume men to be superior to women and causes domestic violence against women. Especially during this period of lockdown, the traditional gender biased roles of women as primary care giver puts them at higher risk when they are sharing same space and periphery with their perpetrators. This pandemic has caused an exponential rise in the violence against women. The present study will examine the causes and consequences of domestic violence on social structure and will aim at suggesting few therapeutic measures keeping in view the present pandemic situation to sensitize the whole society.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

The present article aims:

- At studying various non fatal adverse physical, psychological and psycho social effects of domestic violence on child.
- At studying the reasons behind an increasing number of domestic violence incidents during the time of pandemic.
- At studying different suitable therapeutic interventions during the period of crisis

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Violence is widespread within the family. This is a myth that physical violence occurs rarely in the family. Rather the fact is more often domestic violence occurs between family

members than between any others. One of the myths that are furthest from the actual state of affairs is what we call the myth of family non violence, even if it is the little recognized fact of life. (Steinmetz and Straus, 1973). Gelles (1974) pointed out that there is a sharp contrast to the picture of the family as the source of love, sympathy, understanding, an unlimited support as well as a source of assaults, violence and murder. On the contrary to the fact that family is harmonious and supportive institution, family displays a varying degree of violent acts ranging from the punishment of children to slapping, hitting, throwing objects and sometimes homicidal assaults by on member of the family on another. However the semi sacred nature of the family has always led its members to believe that physical and emotional conflicts do not constitute violence. In reality, home is a place where the women are most vulnerable. Especially during this present time of pandemic, women were at grave dangers when they were locked with their abuser with little or restricted mobility. From this perspective the above study is very significant to analyze the present gender discrimination, inequalities, oppressions and the adverse impacts of child brought about by deep routed gender disparities.

METHODOLOGY

The chosen method for this study is systematic review. Systematic review is the critical assessment and evaluation of all research studies that address a particular issue. (As per the Agency for Healthcare research and Quality through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). This method uses a set of specific criterion and locates, assembles and evaluates a body of literature such as books notes, magazines, articles and results of previous studies on a particular topic. It is an organized method. This method uses databases to search for relevant articles, documents, online

accessible journals and review articles to gather a broader understanding and depth of knowledge surrounding the topic covering the following thematic areas, as:

- Concept of domestic violence and why is it interlinked with violence against women.
- What are the adverse physical.
 Psychological and psychosocial impacts of domestic violence on child who witness it.
- How and why the causes of domestic violence have been increased during recent pandemic situation.
- What are few therapeutic care services that can be provided to the victims so that she can feel safe, respected and qualitatively informed.

THEMATIC AREA 1: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence has been defined as "all actions by the family against one of its members that threatens the life, body, Psychological integrity or liberty of the member. (Anthony & Miller, cited in Adriana Gomez, 1996). Glass defined domestic violence as "anything that is experienced as fearful, controlling and threatening when used by those with power (invariably men) against those without power. " (Mainly women and children). (Ravindran, 1991). Kaur, R and Garg, S. (2008) pointed out that domestic violence is common across culture, religion, class and ethnicity. Domestic violence can be described as the power misused by one adult in a relationship to control another. This violence can take the form of physical assault, psychological abuses, social abuse, financial abuse or sexual assault.

Domestic violence includes not only inter spousal violence, but also violence perpetrated by other family members. (Karlekar, 1995). Therefore, domestic violence is not exclusive to physical violence only, but includes other

form of abuse, such as, sexual, social, psychological, economic and spiritual. (Mouzos & Makkai, 2004). 6. Within a family, these expressions of violence take place in a man woman relationship. Usually by domestic violence we understand domestic aggression towards women and girls due to various reasons. (Sheela Saravanan, 2000).

I. WHY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS INTERLINKED WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Generally unequal gender power relations and discrimination against women and girls are the root causes of violence against women. (UN Women, forth coming, UN Women, 2018, our Watch et. al; 2015). In almost all societies around the world, men have greater access to power, status, opportunities and resources than women and people of other genders. (World Economic Forum, 2014). Research suggests that in many countries physical violence is accepted as a form of discipline for women who do not fulfill their roles of being obedient, faithful, fertile and performing household chores. (UN Women, forthcoming, SPC, 2010, Hassan, 1995, Jejeebhoy, 1998, Schuler et al; 2011). Gender biased family level power dynamics and gender roles in the households agree with the statement that a women's most important role is to take care of her home and cook for her family. (Fulu et. al; 2013, The Asia Founation, 2016). So, with this highly traditional gender expectation, when women take on new role, such as paid employment outside the home, their risk of experiencing violence from their husband or partner increases. (The Asia Foundation, 2016; Gibbs et. al; 2017; Bastagli et. al; 2016; Atkinson et. al; 2015; Macmillan and Gartner, 1999; Cools and Kotsadah, 2015). When men holds harmful notions of masculinity and believe in rigid gender roles, this increases the risk of violence against women and girls. Pattern of behavior associated with harmful models of masculinity therefore reinforce gender inequality and facilitate violence against women. (Knight and Sims- Knight, 2003, The Asia Foundation, 2016).

Adult women account for 51% of all human trafficking victims detected globally. Nearly three out of every four trafficked woman and girls are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. At least 200 million women and girls alive today have undergone female genital mutilation In 30 countries with representative data on prevalence (UN Women, 2017). Early and forced marriage is a prevalent form of gender based Violence experienced by girls across world. It is exacerbated by several other risk factors; including poverty, conflict and natural disasters. (Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) and Plan U.K. 2013).

Several studies argue that in India despite significant gains in women's independence, education and employment, women are still regarded as an economic burden and unmet dowry demands often lead to violence against women. (Bradley & Pallikadavath, 2013; Chowdhury, 2015). Working women's risk of violence may also be higher in relationships where the man is unemployed. (Fulu & Heise, 2015).

Domestic violence also includes' Intimate Partner Violence'. (IPV), which refers to violence between two people involved in an intimate relationship, and it exists in all countries, cultures and societies. (Ellsberg et. al; 2014). The World Health Organization (2010) defines IPV as "behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, and psychological abuses and controlling behavior." Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is defined as "an intentional control or victimization of a person with whom the abuser

has had or is currently in an intimate, romantic or spousal relationship." (Cook & Nash, 2017). IPV and domestic violence are terms often used interchangeably. However IPV is a form of domestic violence that occurs between two people engaged in a close personal, emotional or sexual relationship (Smith et. al; 2017). According to WHO (2017) one in there women throughout the world will experience physical and/ or sexual violence by an intimate partner or sexual violence by a non partner. The exposure to violence is the reflection of the structural and institutional inequality that is a reality for most women in India. (Manjoo Rashida, 2013).

Therefore the term violence or domestic violence is often interlinked with gender violence as it involves use of force or coercion with intent of perpetuating and promoting hierarchical gender relations. (Apwld, 1990; Schuler, 1992). It encompasses many form of violence, including violence by an intimate partner, rape, sexual assault and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated by someone other than a partner, child sexual abuse, forced prostitution, trafficking of women as well as harmful traditional practices such as early forced marriage, female genital mutilation and honor killing . (Garcia- Moreno et. al; 2015). Women status in most of the cases is portraved as subordinate and so gender violence is considered as normal and enjoys social sanction. The concept of domestic violence is therefore often added with gender dimension where manifestation of violence acts is often perpetrated on women because they are women and because of the society's concept of women as a property and dependent of the male protector. (Coomaraswamy, 1992). violence against women and girls has accelerated with an alarming rate of increase. Therefore, now it is viewed as a global public health and clinical problem of epidemic proportions. (Garcia- Moreno et. al; 2015). So, the home which is actually our refugee, in reality a place where women are most vulnerable.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL AND PHYSICAL IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON CHILD

The impact of domestic violence on children is far reaching. Children's Fund (2006) suggested that across the world 275 million children witness domestic violence on average in a year. The impact of domestic violence on children who witness these events can be devastating and puts these children at a greater risk of being abused themselves. (Chamberlain. 2001). A child witnesses a domestic violence has unending impacts on his/ her social, emotional as well as on psychological and physical development. Research has shown that before a child is born, this impact can begin because of the distress the mother of the child experiences. (Howell, Barnes, Miller & Graham-Bermann, 2016). Previous studies have shown that children who are exposed to domestic violence experience irritability, sleep problem, fear of being alone, immaturity, poor language development, poor concentration, aggressiveness, anti social behavior, anxiety, depression, low frustration tolerance, problems eating and being passive or withdrawn. (Mcgee, 2000; Elderson, 1999; Holt, 2015). There are numerous psychological effects for the children who witness this domestic abuse. Children are experiencing delays in cognitive and emotional development, extreme withdrawal aggressiveness, anxiety disorders as well as internalizing and externalizing behavior problems. (Antle, Barbee, Yankeelov & Bledsoe, 2010). Research shows that domestic violence exposure has been associated with poor child functioning and problems in psychological functioning as aggressive and disruptive behavior. It also results in internalizing problems, like symptoms of

anxiety and depression. (David, K; Leblanc, M; & Self Brown, S, 2015). Children with parents who are perpetrators of violence as well as severe mental problems can think of suicide. (Garcia & Schneider, 2017). Several studies continue to show that children affected by violence are more likely to experience higher levels of depression and anxiety, symptoms of trauma and behavioral and cognitive problems. (Zerk et. al; 2009).

From psycho social aspects, at preschool age, children who witness domestic violence commonly show withdrawn social behavior. They have heightened anxiety and are more fearful. (Hornor, 2005). When they reach school age, the effects of witnessing domestic violence can have serious impact on their educational abilities. (Hornor, 2005). According to social learning theory, children who witness parental violence, are more likely to experience violence among themselves and go on to violent acts towards others. (Temple et. al; 2013). Boys learn how to become abuser and girls learn about victimization. (Payne & Gainey, 2009). According to Lawson, (2001), family violence is a major social problem for those who are witnessing violence and those who are physically abused. The impact of domestic violence on behavioral symptoms include aggressiveness, hyper arousal, anti social behavior, fearfulness, withdrawn behavior, avoidant behavior, inhibited behaviors and developmental regression in children who have been exposed to domestic violence. (Dutton, 2000). Many children who witness domestic violence struggle in academic fields. They have difficulties in making friends, and struggle with the problem of concentration which is a part of their trauma, while others are tired because of the stressors of home life. (Chanmugam & Teasley, 2014). psychosocial outcomes of children who are exposed to domestic violence have significantly worse outcomes compared to those who have not experienced any form of domestic violence. (Meltzer et. al; 2009). The impact of witnessing domestic violence can have many developmental impacts on children and those can start as early as conception and carry on through adulthood depending on the severity of the trauma. (Curran, 2013).

Apart from psychological and social effects, children who witness domestic abuse often are physically abused. (Antle et. al; 2010). Children, who witness domestic violence, are more likely to suffer from health problems. (Chamberlain, 2001). Chronic stress in young children can lead to physiological responses that can lead to stress related symptoms. (Herman- Smith, 2013). The infants who are undergoing continuous stress are more likely to be highly sensitive and do not learn self soothing behavior as they develop. (Herman-Smith, 2013). So, emotional impacts of children who witness violence is almost the same as psychological trauma of children who are victims of violence. (Vidyavathi, 2015). As per the reports of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, In homes where violence occurs between partners, there is 45% to 60% chance of co occurring child abuse, a rate 15 times higher than the average. (Blake Griffin Edwards, 2019). This is because, those women who experience violence, more than 50 % have children in their care. Consequently, these cause physical, emotional and social harm to the children and young people as low self esteem and emotional distress. In the school they may be aggressive towards their friends and school mates. They may face problems in building positive relationship with others and can struggle with going to school and doing school work. They may feel guilt and develop phobias and insomnia. They may also show bullying behavior or become a target of bullying. On the basis of different literature studies, it can be said that children who witness domestic violence may

have difficulty in concentration and focus, which badly affect their learning. They manifest limited social skills. They become violent, risky and delinquent as they grow older. They can feel isolated from their friends and others and an exhibit poor trait in making friends as undergo through social discomfort or confusion. Because of improper development of brain and impair growth of cognitive and sensory system, children exhibit behavioral problems as excessive irritability, sleep problems, emotional distress, fear of being alone, toilet training problem and language development problem. They can suffer from psychosomatic illness, depression and may also tend to commit suicide. Immense amount of physical problems, coupled with emotional and behavioral state of despair are often exhibited by a child exposed to domestic violence. Younger children may have complain of tummyaches or can start to wet their beds. They may suffer from sleep disorders, temper tantrums and start to behave as if they are much younger than they are. (Royal College of Psychiatrists, 2017).

Thus any one can understand that domestic violence results in many nonfatal adverse physical, emotional and social effects for a child who witness domestic violence. Koenig, 2006 remarked that witnessing of violence between parents by a child emerge as a strong predictor of subsequent domestic violence. Children are more likely to abuse their partners if they have grown up watching their mother being abused. If women are growing up with domestic violence in their maternal home, they will be less resistant to it in their own conjugal relationship after marriage. Various other studies have shown that sons of violent parents who have grown up in a family that encourages traditional patriarchal structure and gender roles are more likely to abuse their intimate partner. (Sahoo et. al; 2007). So, domestic violence causes misery not only to the victims, but also to their families. Domestic violence is a burden of society worldwide and is a very bad indicator for any country's development. Despite this reality, the development and propagation of violent behavior is deep routed in our culture and society. Within a family the members are socialized to accept hierarchical relationships expressed in unequal division of labor between sexes and power. The home which is supposed to be the most secure place is actually a place where in most cases women are exposed to violence. Situation had become worst when in the recent pandemic; families were forced to stay at home, which had definitely enhanced the risk of interpersonal violence.

THEMATIC AREA 2: DOEMSTIC VIOLENCE DURING COVID-19

The West Bengal commission for Women had reported an increase in domestic violence during the ongoing pandemic. 162 cases of crimes against women had recorded, out of which 38 complaints included domestic violence. (Santanu Chowdhury, The Indian Express, Kolkata, June, 19, 2020). A city based Women's Rights Organization, Swayam showed a steeper rise in domestic violence across the state and received almost 1100 complaints of domestic violence in April and May from women aged between 11 and 80 years (Santanu Chowdhury, The Indian Express, Kolkata, June 19, 2020). The cases included four types of domestic violence, physical, emotional, sexual and economical.

Between March 25 and May 31, this 68 days period recorded 1,477 complaints of domestic violence, more than those received between March and May in the previous ten years. (Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Sumant Sen and Naresh Singaravelu, the Hindu, June 22, 2020). A Hindustan Times analysis of cases recorded across the country reveals the fact that whereas some states have reported a decline in the

number of domestic violence complaints, others have reported a spike in the call being received by the help lines, which indicates that the incidents of domestic violence during that lockdown were mainly dependent on the ability of the victims to make complaints. (Hindustan Times, Dhamini Ratnam, April 26, 2020). The National Commission for Women (NCW) had received 250 domestic violence complaints between March 25 and April 22. (Hindustan Times, Dhamini Ratnam, April 26, 2020). According to the report of Economic Times, April 20, 2020, the NGO, All India Council of Human Rights, Liberties and Social Justice (AICHLS) had claimed an increasing number of domestic violence incidents since the nation was put under lockdown and sought an urgent intervention by the court. The National Commission for Women had reported a rise of 94% in complaint cases where women had been abused in their homes during lockdown. (Shalu Nigam, 14th May, 2020, South Asia Journal). Globally too, in U.S. U.K. France, Spain and several other western nations reported continuous large number of cases of domestic violence. In South Africa alone, the first week of the lockdown witnessed 90,000 reports of violence against women. (Girija Shivakumar, The Wire, 16th April, 2020).

Ironically, women's role has always been portrayed as a primary care giver. During this time of pandemic this role had put them at higher risk when they were sharing same space and periphery with their abuser. This pandemic had forced families to stay at home. In a small space, families were cooped together which definitely enhanced the risk of interpersonal violence. In an intimate relationship, men were often found to release the tensions or frustrations of loosing job by turning violent towards their female counterpart. Given the lockdown, the victims could not seek for temporary housing and emotional support from

their friends and families. Living with an abusive partner in a same place during lockdown also increased the possibility of physical and sexual violence on account of refusing sex. During that crisis, reporting violence might be a challenge which had made victims more traumatized, thus making situation worst.

Situation had further become more dangerous after the opening of liquor shops. This had definitely raised the revenue of the government as well as the incidents of domestic violence as women's movement has always given evidences that consumption of liquor by men is proportional to the increase in the incidents of abuse. Alcohol consumption and alcoholism often act as a catalyst for domestic violence. It can cause drunken behavior, unemployment and a strain on household finances. (Koenig, 2006). Alcohol abuse or mental illness, as individual characteristics do not, on their own cause men to be violent, but they interact with other factors to increase the likelihood of man using violence. (UN Women, 2018).

During lockdown home was no more recognized as a safest place to be. All people did not have the luxury of the home. Many of them could not even maintain social distance in a small room with many people. In a slum, people wre facing worst conditions of survival because of paucity of space and other resources. Obviously such irritation would give rise to domestic violence. During that lockdown many were being compelled to walk along with their children for miles. Many women at the advance stage of pregnancy were being compelled to deliver babies on road. Patriarchy clubbed with gender insensitivity had increased the rate of domestic violence. Women were at grave dangers in a situation of restricted mobility where they were locked with their abuser. Abusers were getting more advantage of

unleashing their violence. This pandemic had brought about the discrimination, inequalities, oppressions, privileges and patriarchal violence. During that pandemic, the quality of the women was being judged by the quality of the domestic work theywere performing with little or no contribution from the men. The victims could not always seek for medical help or psychosocial support, because of their restricted mobility during this time. So, a situation, where the abusers knew that women could not get easy support and access from their near and dear ones, the violence against women had naturally been increased.

THEMATIC AREA 3: PERSONAL, LEGAL AND THERAPEUTIC MEASURES TO GET RID OF THIS VIOLENCE

Under no circumstances, violence is acceptable. First of all the victims should stop blaming herself and making excuses for the actions of the perpetrators. It is important for the victim to know the laws prevailing against domestic violence like:

- A. 'Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005- is a civil law which recognizes woman's right to live in a violence free home and to obtain protection order form the court to prevent domestic violence.
- B. 'Indian Penal Code 1860'- section 498 A of the code is for the protection of married women especially from the cruelty by their husbands and husband's family. (Amnesty International, India, 2nd May. 2020).

A health sector can play a vital role in providing health services to the victims including early identification of abuse, provision for necessary treatments and reference to appropriate cases. A comprehensive health sector response is necessary so that victims can feel safe, respected and qualitatively informed. (Ravneet Kaur & Suneela Garg, 2008). A

successful result of the treatment of domestic violence rests on a good alliance between therapist and client. Therapist and the client must work collaboratively to explore client's own perception of violent behavior as well as client's partner's experience of the violence. One should talk about the experience of violence bravely since it is a tabooed topic.

The victim must empower herself in order to change the way people treat her. The following helps can be sought for by a victim to get rid of the situation. Like

- Comprehensive financial self help guide to give victims financial tips about how to keep their financial documents safe, how to inventory her assets and debts, how to start setting aside some money of her own, how to start an online business, how to get online work from home jobs and how to become an insurance agent to earn from home etc. All these tips will help the victims to be financially independent and will reduce the chance of domestic violence as financial abuse is often used by the perpetrators as a tool to keep financially dpendent victim in his control.
- Free online counseling services to provide emotional self care to the victims is another support services, where the victim can talk about anything personal and professional with the counselor with 100% confidence and security. Counselor can counsel a woman "With regard to the course of action which she can take including joint counseling/ meditation with her spouse/husband or her family members/ in laws." (Priya Florence Shah, 3rd November, 2015). An emotional self care will help the women to overcome the habit of learned helplessness to change the traditional beliefs of the family and society regarding their roles. Counseling will help woman to break the stereotyped gender specific roles and can achieve greater autonomy and freedom, she

deserves. Emotional self care will help the victim to escape from the belief of powerless and helpless situation, rather she will start believing that she has the power to change, she can extricate herself from bad situations and from negative people who hold her back and abuse. In nutshell, emotional self care will help a woman to develop her inner resources.

• There are various legal steps a woman can apply to get out of this situation. At the time of violence, either she can make written complaints to the police station, or can dial 100 to proceed with the legal action. She can get the medical report done as the evidence. A complaint of mental and physical violence can be filed in court after listing each and every facts and incidence of abuse and torture.

Further it is required to record everything in smart phone. It is not desirable to delete any abusive texts, e mail, or anything, because these texts can be used as evidence later on in court. Courts now can resolve out the cases with the help of NGOs, counselors and police. The violated women can consult with a counselor to learn about how to file a domestic violence complaints case and what are the legal punishments for domestic violence in India. Thus it is important to address the physical, mental issues relating to domestic violence against women. It is urgent to provide health support

services to the women irrespective of their class/ other variables. The rights and dignity of women must be restored. In order to create a violence free world, poverty and patriarchy must be sent to isolation. Economic, social and political empowerment in a more accelerated rate calls for immediate attention.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is a human rights violation and requires creating a support network to give confidence to the victim that she is not alone. By strengthening the mechanism or authority for working to prevent domestic violence, it is possible to stop a specific incidence from happening thereby reducing the risk of violence escalation. One should not feel that domestic violence is a private family affair. so there may be no need to interfere. The Government, NGOs, local Women's Rights Organization- all should come forward. The community should not look at the cases of domestic violence with a negative outlook, otherwise victim will leave to be re victimized and feel shame. We have to break the code of silence on domestic violence and have to generate continuous public awareness. . It is important to maintain social distancing with misogynist ideas. Our stereotyped collective imagination to the idea of women as second class citizens should go for eternal isolation. It is the high time to lock the notions and ideas of a violence free gender equal world.

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December, 2021- June, 2022 (42) Volume 8

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