

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: HOME, “SAFEST PLACE” FOR WOMEN IS NOT SAFE ANYMORE IN INDIA

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Abstract

Domestic violence is one of those evils which is proven to be an absolute hindrance for women empowerment. It is hard to believe that we are living in an age where we witnessed so much evolution in terms of law and human ideology but the fact that dealing with issues like domestic violence is still a huge problem for most of the countries.

Acts of violence against women is a direct violation of their basic human rights. It is no more considered as a problem or an issue between four walls. It directly attacks the very pillars of an ideal society such as equality, peace and development. In this paper we tried to define what is domestic violence, and the current legislations that are dealing with domestic violence in India and identified the major issues that lead to domestic violation and the implications of it at large. We tried to connect domestic violence and history to the growth of it.’

Followed by it we focused on how constant domestic violence against women will make them more vulnerable and mentally weak. Then we highlighted the issue on covid-19 pandemic and how it led to rampant rise in domestic violence cases across the world. We finally concluded how important it is to curb this social evil and what are the steps to be taken to actually curb it in the first place rather than acting after the damage has happened.

Keywords: Domestic relationship, Unequal Power, Serious global affair, untaught background, Husband’s alcoholism, Displacement theory, Sense of masculinity, Social evil, Interpersonal violence, Gender stereotypes.

Introduction

Violence is a cruel act which directly infringes one's dignity and self-respect. It does not make doer right even if it is the reaction of someone's wrong. The act of violence has become more common when it is the case of women, it does not mean that men do not face violence. It is very much undeniable that the ratio of violence upon women is much higher than upon men. Violence is violence and it is equally wrong irrespective of one's gender.

In India one out of every three women is facing violence at least once in her life, it could be of any form such as female infanticide, child abuse, incest, rape, sexual harassment, abuse, intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence and this violence has been addressed at different places be it her own home, or workplace or a public bus, road, street, colleges, school and where not.

We have numerous set of examples pertaining to violence in India starting from Delhi gang rape, unnao rape case to hathras rape case and many other daily abuse cases, assaults, eve teasing which goes unreported mostly. These acts violence on women create a huge impact in the life of that individual and her family at large.

According to UN, Violence against women “ is an act of gender based violence that results in, or likely to result in, physical sexual or mental harm or suffering to women , including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life”. ¹ Violence against women is not something which emerged in today's era, it has been suffered by women from very beginning and has been unrecognised. The fact for being unrecognised is because of the alleged societal norms which every now and then taught women to be silent to save so-called family's respect and dignity. The cost of family's respect has been paid by infringing that girl's or women's respect and dignity. This silence of women has turned into liberty for men to dominate or abuse other girls/ women. Further this silence has become the gravitating reason behind the increased number of violence because it has been taken as an “accepted behaviour” for doing violence.

But there has been a positive shift in the perception of few people in society in this modern era where people are taught to treat everyone equally. In many households as compared to before, girls are being treated equally with boys, people are raising their voice against any form of violence or wrong against women. But this shift has been seen mostly few parts of the country, but there are still lot of people in villages and many households even in urban areas where people are living with same old mind set where they have been normalizing the acts of violence against women.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is a violence done by a person who has a domestic relationship with the victim, it can be parents, siblings, husband, in-laws or any other person who has a relationship by means

¹United Nation. Declaration on the elimination of violence against women. New York: UN, 1993

of consanguinity, marriage, adoption or family member living together in the joint family. Here, violence constitute any kind of harm , injury, harassment, coercion, or endangered to the body, life, limb or well-being of the victim and it also include physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse or economic abuse.

It is just not an argument, but it is a way of dominating the other person in a relationship by means of threatening, coercion, shouting, insulting, physically or sexually abusing or depriving someone economically to get their way. This domestic violence leaves a greater impact on a woman's life because violence not only breaks them emotionally but also makes them believe that they are not even getting respect in their own home which is supposed to be known for most loving and secured place for oneself.

Tracing Indian history of Domestic violence

Indian history in relation with women has a great significance in understanding the present day scenario of violence against women and its legal position. When we look back Indian women were nevertheless treated as objects who were only existing to occupy themselves in kitchens, to raise 10 or even more kids and to look after her husband who would be 30-40 years older than her. The most saddening part was in the name of the culture women grew up in a manner that they are not supposed to raise their voice at any cause, be it against her own brother, father, husband or for that matter any male individual. Women speaking up or questioning something is treated as an act of sin in those days. Age old practices like child marriage, *sati sahagamana* (practice of burning a widow on her husband's funeral)², *dasipratha* (Devadasi is a girl dedicated to worship and service of a deity or a temple for the rest of her life)³, *pardha* system (practice that was inaugurated by Muslims and later adopted by various Hindus, especially in India, and that involves the seclusion of women from public observation by means of concealing clothing and by the use of high-walled enclosures, screens, and curtains within the home)⁴ are few examples from which we can lay a connection on how psychologically women were always suppressed and subconsciously in the name of culture made them believe that they are no good to the society and to act according to what their parents say when they were young and later act according to what their husbands say after their marriage. Those practices had fostered mind sets like women are weak, men are powerful, women should stay at home, women cannot question her husband, women should

²Kallie Szczepanski, Introduction to custom of sati, ThoughtCo., <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-sati-195389>, visited on 29/3/2021

³ Devadasi tradition in Hinduism, Islam and Hinduism, <https://www.islam-hinduism.com/devadasi-in-hinduism/>, visited on 29/3/2021

⁴The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, purdah, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/purdah>, visited on 29/3/2021

patiently bear everything, women cannot speak up and give out their opinions etc. and which ultimately led to a patriarchal society.

In the 19th century many new reforms took place with respect to women and their place in the society. There was an anti-sati campaign led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal, the widow remarriage movement in the Bombay presidency where Rande was one of the leading reformers, Joytibaphule's simultaneous attack on caste and gender oppression, and the social reform movement in Islam led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan etc. which acted as strong foundation for the future of women and their rights.

After the independence, women's issues are existing in the form of violence against women, rape of women in police custody, sexual abuse, killing of female foeticide, dowry murders, sexual exploitation of women in work place, domestic violence etc. Legally there have been quite a significant amount of developments that were taking place since independence with respect to women issues and their rights in India. Legislations like, The Special Marriage Act, 1954, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005, Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995), Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 have created some impact with respect to women's rights in India.

Legislation and organisation that governs Domestic Violence

There are various legislations in India which governs domestic violence such as Domestic violence Act, 2005, section 498A OF Indian Penal Code, The dowry prohibition Act. And there are many other empowering legislations, which redress the violence against women that has been provided to give an equal legal and social status to women such as Hindu Succession Act, The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, is a parliamentary legislation that has been enacted to tackle the problem faced by women in their domestic relationship. It identifies different forms of abuses such as economical, verbal, emotional, physical and sexual and so on which are extensively explained under the Act. This Act provides protection from husband and her in-laws and right to married women to continue living in their husband's home even after claiming maintenance, custody of children or compensation. Further this Act even extends the scope of domestic relationship to the people who are not married and are in live in relationship. Under this Act and section 125 of Indian Penal Code, the woman can claim maintenance from her husband even if she has not filed for or not obtained divorce from her husband.

In a place like India where most of the societal norms are influenced by patriarchal setup abuse or any violence against women has become some sort of common and acceptable behaviour. This Act has played a vital role in protecting women from all forms of abuse which are faced not only

in her husband's home but also in their natal home and gave a boost to women to unveil their abuse stories that happened long time ago and were silent about it all these days. This act provides protection order, monetary reliefs, temporary custody order, shelter homes, compensation for emotional distress, a coordinated implementation mechanism and so on to the women who have faced domestic violence in the form of relief that are mandated to provide better access to justice and other supportive service.⁵

Section 498A of India Penal Code which was inserted by The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act, 1983. This provision provides protection with respect to cruelty against women or fundamentally married women done by her husband or in-laws. The cruelty by woman's husband and her in-laws has a wide scope under this section, it includes cruelty by vexatious litigation, deprivation and wasteful habits, persistent demand, non- acceptance of baby girl, taking away her child, false attacks on chastity, extra marital relation, or harassment for dowry. The significance of this provision is even for the fact that marital rape is not criminalised in India, but forced sex done by a husband to her wife is regarded as cruelty under this section.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, under this legislation the practice of providing and accepting dowry has been abolished. This act also provides punishment for giving, accepting or even demanding for dowry. In India it is a form of ritual where the girl is supposed to bring certain money or property to the husband's home in the form of dowry and if the dowry demand is not being fulfilled by the woman's family, it becomes very difficult for the woman in that house to survive because of daily taunting, mental torture, physical abuse by her husband's family and sometimes it may end up in the death of woman by committing suicide.

Legislations that have empowered women to be respected equally in her parents' home and husband's home:

Whenever any violence has been done on women, it not only injures her body or mental state, but it injures her self-respect and dignity. Article 21 of the Constitution of India, also includes the right to life with human dignity and respect. It says in any case no person's dignity or respect should be harmed by any other person.

Under Hindu Succession Act, after the amendment in 2005, a new provision has been inserted which recognises equal right of daughter in ancestral property. So after 2005, son has no overarching rights than daughter, both will be having equal rights with regards to ancestral property. Otherwise all these days it was a kind of norm that all the ancestral property will be named under the son of the family but not the daughter, and if asked by daughter for the same she used to be denied this just because she is a girl. But now, daughters can ask it as a statutory right for her share in the ancestral property.

⁵ Initial report submitted by India under Article 35 of the Convention Due in 2011 (CRPD/ C/ IND/ 1), 6 October 2017

The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, provides that there should be no discrimination by employers on the ground of sex when it comes to paying their employees. Added to this it also provides a provision where no employer should discriminate with respect to appointment on the basis of sex unless the employment of women for the job in question is prohibited by law.

These provisions encourage women to work, which makes her confident and equally capable as her husband in case of married women or her brother. Since it has been seen that most of the time the core reason behind acts of violence in home is money or economic issues faced by husband and wife and when a girl or a woman has got an equal chance in employment on par with man this wouldn't be a case.

It is undeniable that, the fact most of the humans see a working individual, be it in a government job or private or business or any small work where a person is getting paid with more respect than otherwise. People don't see housewives or a girl who is taking care of household work with the same respect just because it is not considered a job and she is paid for it. So these are all psychological norms made by humans who believed it to be fair but which are actually not. And in such a society where norms like these play an important role, regulations which help and encourage women to be independent plays a significant role.

International Initiatives as to Violence against Women

Domestic violence against women is very much alive in every nook of the world. Among all the existing forms of violence against women, domestic violence is often silenced and disregarded. "Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women" ⁶The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, General Assembly Resolution, December 1993. We need to understand the fact that it is not just women from a few states who are facing these kinds of problems, it is not anymore a local problem. Domestic violence against women is much of a serious global affair which needs more global attention and discussions.

In 1990s, we saw the collective efforts from the part of the world community to regulate and mainstream the issue of violence against women. There are few international instruments which brought legal developments in order to crackdown violence against women. The Vienna

⁶Reporting on violence against women and girls: a handbook for journalists, reliefweb, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/reporting-violence-against-women-and-girls-handbook-journalists#:~:text=%E2%80%9CRecognizing%20that%20violence%20against%20women,Elimination%20of%20Violence%20against%20Women%2C>, visited on 29/3/2021

Declaration, 1993 calls for action to integrate the equal status human rights of women. It urges States to fight violence against women in line with its provisions.

The Beijing conference, 1995 provided a platform for concentration on some of the key issues identified as fundamental obstacles to the advancement of the majority of women in the world. It centred on issues like discrimination against women, violence against women, poverty, health care, education etc.⁷

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 5, states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.⁸ The United Nations has organized four world conferences on women. These took place in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. The last was followed by a series of five-year reviews. The Fourth in Beijing marked a significant turning point for the global agenda for gender equality. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.⁹

The Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1981 to which 166 countries are members. It is a landmark document because it identified violence against women within the framework of human rights. It further recognized women as the primary risk factor for violence and broadened the definition of gender violence (to include all aspects of women's life). The United Nations General Assembly resolution endorsed the urgent need for the universal application of women's rights of equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity. Article 55 and 56 of the United Nations charter cast a legal obligation on the United Nations organization to promote respect for equality and human rights.¹⁰

Under the new Optional Protocol to CEDAW, adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 1999, ratifying States recognize the authority of the Committee to receive and consider complaints from individuals or groups within that State's jurisdiction.¹¹ On the basis of such complaints, the

⁷The Beijing 12 critical areas, UN women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw59/feature-stories>, visited on 29/3/2021

⁸Article 5 of UDHR, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights#:~:text=Article%205,or%20degrading%20treatment%20or%20punishment>, visited on 10/4/2021

⁹ World conferences on women, UN Women <https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/intergovernmental-support/world-conferences-on-women#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20has%20orga>, visited on 10/4/2021

¹⁰Convention on the elimination against all forms of discrimination against women New York, United Nations human rights office of the high

commissioner, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>, visited on 10/4/2021

¹¹Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, UN Women, <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/protocol/#:~:text=By%20ratifying%20the%20Optional%20Protocol,o> r%20groups%20within%20its%20jurisdiction, visited on 10/4/2021

Committee can then conduct confidential investigations and issue urgent requests for a government to take action to protect victims from harm, bringing the Convention into line with other human rights instruments such as the Convention against Torture.

It is good that there were steps taken by the international community and recognised the issue of violence against women but one has to realise that this is never enough. With changing times international community should take this as a serious global issue and make more effective regulations and deliberations on this matter.

Causes for domestic violence on women

There are quite a lot of reasons behind domestic violence on women, but the very root cause for every such savage conduct is patriarchy. The society and the families they grew up in made them subconsciously believe that men are dominant players and women are inferior to them.

In Indian mythology women are depicted as Shakti which means power but ironically it is sad to see women in a vulnerable state of mind especially when it comes to domestic violence. Further it is important to note how in India physical violence has been normalized by the families all these days. Very often children grow up watching their parents physically abusing each other and end up being their parents when they grow older.

In India dowry is the most significant cause for domestic violence. Also in many households despite of the fact whether they come from an educated background or from an untaught background most of the women after their marriage are being subjected to torture from the groom's family for not bringing enough money from the women's household and threatening them to pay extra dowry every now and then. Here we need to understand the fact that how a newly married woman is emotionally choked from both the sides, she can neither share these problems with her parents and ask them for money nor she can speak up against her husband and take some serious action against him and his family in the beginning itself.

The second and very serious cause for domestic violence is having love affairs before marriage. It is not funny that in India most of the men often expects his marrying wife to be a virgin, if unfortunately it turned out that she had any love affair with a boy before the marriage then no doubt that she will have a very disturbed marital life with the amount of mental torture that the husband is going to inflict on her. She will be doubted if she is on call with someone or if she steps out of the house or if she didn't cook nicely for dinner etc., for every single action she gets blamed and suspected. It is hard to imagine the mental stress the women have to go through in such situations. If women silently bears everything then in future the amount of mental torture gradually gets increased and often gives rise to physical violence such as hitting, beating up, harming her and sexually abusing etc.

Next important cause for domestic violence is if the wife repeatedly gives birth to a girl child. Most of the families in India wish to have a boy child instead of a girl child because they believe that raising a girl child is an added burden to them. And the families take pride in telling their relatives that they have a grandson/son but not the same in the case of having a granddaughter/daughter. It is not obviously in the hands of women to give birth to only a boy child. That is why in India killing of female foeticide is a huge problem. Husband and his family inflict lot of pressure on the wife from day one of their marriage to have boy child but if it turns out that she is not bearing a boy child for the 2nd or 3rd time of her pregnancy then the husband starts abusing her and many times there are cases where husbands father/mother end up physically assaulting her.

Another reason for domestic violence is if the husband is unemployed. As it is previously mentioned that women grew up in a manner that they are not supposed to question anything. At times if they take up all the courage and start questioning about the unemployment of the husband, their ego gets hurt and with all the insecurities they have been carrying all these days will be taken on the women by physically abusing her. Sometimes it is also a case where both husband and wife get into an argument regarding the finances and the husband end up physically assaulting her because of the stress accumulated in his mind.

The 5th major cause for domestic violence is husband's alcoholism. Alcohol affects the part of our brain that controls our emotions so it gives us exaggerated emotions like elation, anger and sadness. This puts us (and the people around us who are drinking) at risk of getting into arguments and becoming aggressive or violent.¹² Drinking too much at a time makes them lose control of their 'normal' social behaviour. Their thought processes are affected so they are no longer able to use good judgement or think clearly. That is why they reach a point where they will start hitting and brutally injuring women under the control of alcohol.

Husband's work tension that he is carrying to home from the office is also one of the main causes for domestic violence. According to the displacement theory from psychology, a person redirects his impulse (usually aggression) onto a powerless substitute target.¹³ Here in this case this husband instead of shouting at his boss he will come back home and displace his anger and start abusing his wife.

Sometimes it may so happen that the wife is medically unable or unfit to bear a child, in such a condition the primary duty of the husband is to give mental support to the wife but unfortunately it is not the same with many families in India. She will get criticized by society and from her

¹²How does alcohol affect the brain and body, FASS, Alcohol Support Service, <https://www.fassaction.org.uk/alcohol-support-self-help-effects/>, visited on 29/3/2021

¹³ Dr. Saul McLeod, Defense Mechanisms, Simple psychology, <https://www.simplypsychology.org/defense-mechanisms.html>, visited on 29/3/2021

husband's family for the health condition which is not in her hands. It is very sad to see that the husband instead of acting as a strong pillar to her wife starts assaulting and hurting her.

Impact of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence does not only impact women alone but family at large, it has been observed that children and parents of women and even in few cases husband's parents are exceedingly affected with such un-happening events.

Women who suffer with domestic violence face physical, emotional, reproductive, mental, psychological, social injury. So whenever this sort of practice is faced by the women from their husbands, her mental breakdown affects a lot of other things. Like if the victim is a working woman, she may lose her focus from the work or might skip the job for a few days because of her injury which will impact productivity at the workplace which ultimately leads to removal from her job. And many times if the infliction of violence is severe it will lead to serious gynecological health implications. It has also been observed by gynecologists that women who face domestic violence by their husbands have more gynecological health implications than that of women who don't face such violence.

A person acting violently is a behavioral aspect of him, and it may transfer from generation to generation which means when family members especially children/ brothers of perpetrator see such kind of violence they get the same sense of masculinity and will absorb the similar kind of behavior and act the same with their spouse in future. And this has been specially observed in the case of children, where when the son becomes husband and does the same act with her wife. And in cases where it is a daughter she may form a preconceived notion regarding marriage, that every woman is supposed to go through this pain and silently bears everything.

The repercussions of domestic violence on children are huge, they will get mentally traumatized when they get to see their parents physically and verbally abusing each other. So this ultimately may result in children deviating their focus from studies, or showing aggressive behavior to their fellow classmates at schools, or indulging in some bad practices like smoking, taking drugs and alcohol. In cases where parents are getting divorce it is the children on whom the great impact will be upon the separation of parents. Because they will be very vulnerable at that age and they won't be ready to deal with the situation and understand it.

Victims of domestic violence often end up having a lot of mental health problems. There are many instances where they stop reacting to things, their brain becomes numb and cannot feel any emotions. Some of the victims will get depression after going through so much and may have suicidal tendencies too. Reports also say that victims of domestic violence are prone to having anxiety, fear and inferiority complex issues.

Domestic violence against women is a social evil. It has a greater impact on society at large. Existence of domestic violence means society is indirectly encouraging patriarchy which is a root problem to many of the social issues that we are dealing with in the current times. As Mr. Gandhi says “I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.”

Domestic violence amidst Covid-19

With the world hit by covid-19 crisis, India was one among the other countries which had a complete lockdown for almost three months. Many studies have proven the fact that there is a great effect on interpersonal violence in the midst of crisis such as. Circumstances like these will take a huge toll on human’s mental health and wellbeing. The fear of uncertainty, economic instability, financial inconsistency and quarantine etc. factors like these are some of the reasons why there is amplification of violence on women during the pandemic.

Reports have shown that the cases of domestic violence got rapidly increased last year. The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, On 6 April 2020, called for a “ceasefire” to address the “horrifying global surge in domestic violence.”¹⁴ The National Commission for Women registered a total of 4350 complaints under the category “Protection of Women against domestic violence”, from March 2020 to September, 2020, since the pandemic unfolded.¹⁵ This is a report of the number of women who actually reached out to NCW and filed complaints through whatsapp and phones but imagine the number of women who must have been silenced themselves because of the fear, self-blame, over thinking along with women who don’t have technological access or not aware of the fact that they can give a complaint by just one whatsapp message. A report of Hindu paper shows that during the first four phases of COVID lockdown, Indian women filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded in a similar period in the last 10 years.¹⁶ It further added that this was only the tip of the iceberg as 86% of the women who experience domestic violence do not seek help in India.

¹⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1061052>

¹⁵ Kalpanasharma, Violence by an intimate partner increased this year, Times of India, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/violence-by-an-intimate-partner-increased-this-year/articleshow/80024850.cms>, visited on 29/3/2021

¹⁶ Vignesh Radhakrishnan, sumantsen, Nareshsingaravelu, Domestic Violence complaints at a 10 year high during covid19 lockdown, The Hindu, <https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-domestic-violence-complaints-at-a-10-year-high-during-covid-19-lockdown/article31885001.ece>, visited on 29/3/2021

Under reporting is again a huge issue. Among the 14.3% of victims who sought help, only 7% reached out to relevant authorities- the police, doctors, lawyers or social service organizations. But more than 90% of the victims sought help only from their immediate family.¹⁷

Many countries have taken protective steps to reduce the impact of domestic violence in covid-19 pandemic in their possible ways. The Italian government had introduced an app called YouPol which made it possible for the victims of domestic violence to seek help without making an actual complaint through a phone call. The app allows victims to forward the pictures and messages directly to the state police. In France, pharmacists acted as a channel to report the complaints to the police of which they used to receive from the victims.

Many women used to use a code word called Mask 19 when they felt uncertain to seek help openly. In India the government used sources like radio's, newspapers, and televisions to create awareness among women for seeking help. At ground level there are aganwadi workers, ASHA workers, auxiliary nurse midwives, supervisors from block and district level, healthcare officers who have been constantly working for the betterment of women's mental and physical well-being. If they receive any complaint of domestic violence these workers will immediately reach that place and will give proper counselling to them. Later they will keep a check on that family in order to know whether the act of domestic violence against is repeating or not. If the husband is not changing his behaviour in any manner then these workers will report it to the local police authorities.

Despite the government taking measures to curb domestic violence in the midst of pandemic it is a proven fact that India and most of the countries have seen the highest no: of reported cases of domestic violence than ever before. This makes us clear that nevertheless this is not enough, there should be more awareness campaigns from the side of the government and NGO's; family help to brace their daughter in times of filing a complaint against the perpetrator; openness to consult a therapist; opting for a couple therapy; introducing a curriculum in schools on gender equality, sex education, etc. Adapting to these few things will make a huge difference in tackling the issue of domestic violence in India.

Recommendations

1. Though there are laws and policies which are in place that are safeguarding women and encouraging them to put forth their complaint and to get the culprit punished. But all this is there when violence has already been done and it is only recognized when a complaint

¹⁷VigneshRadhakrishnan, sumantsen, Nareshsingaravelu, Domestic Violence complaints at a 10 year high during covid19 lockdown, The Hindu, <https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-domestic-violence-complaints-at-a-10-year-high-during-covid-19-lockdown/article31885001.ece>, visited on 29/3/2021

is lodged. Everything we have is curative but we need something precautionary which will prevent such acts from committing in the very first place itself.

2. The reason for which many of the domestic violence cases goes unreported is because of the fact that women is worried about her uncertain future in terms of financial instability, acceptance in natal home and fear of being judged by the society. To overcome this, the law makers should make sure that she will be given with proper financial support and safety to live independently after getting a divorce. The government should conduct proper campaigns to create awareness on domestic violence and its laws so that women should no more be frightened to file a complaint. It is only in the hands of the government to make them feel safe and protected in order to report a case against the perpetrator.
3. Moreover as we have pointed earlier it is highly important to educate the future generations about gender equality, violence at schools by not just limiting to regular subjects like math ,science, English and nurture them with good behavior so that at least they would be able to understand things like what is good and what is bad.
4. Social media and internet and the most power tools to voice out and create impact on people's mind. It is very important that governments, activists and NGO's work together and use these tools to address this issue and create positive change in the people's mindset.
5. We should normalize therapy in India and encourage partners to go for a couples therapy to solve their problem easily, by sitting and understanding the behavior of each other.
6. However these things are to be done collectively as they are interconnected to each other and the only way to curb this evil is to have more discussions on this topic and find new ways to solve the problem with the changing times as we cannot simply rely upon making stricter legislations.

Conclusion

Each one of us needs to understand the fact that everything is interlinked in this globe. It is like a butterfly effect wherein tiny changes that we bring into the society have a possibility of creating a huge impact in the society at large. It is pressing necessity to act immediately upon the root causes like gender inequality, girl child education, adding sex education into the curriculum, normalizing mental health, free access to mental health experts, conducting self-awareness programs for kids, addressing gender stereotypes in schools, alcohol restrictions by the state etc.

However, each state is standing differently with respect to its root causes and lacunas that it is failing to address. So, it is in the hands of each state's policy makers to identify the root causes for the issue of domestic violence against women and bring action plans to make some effective changes in the country. For example in India talking about sex, mental health problems with someone is a huge deal where as in Pakistan education for a girl child is still a major problem. We

have seen a great activist Malala who came forward and put her life at stake to fight against the problem of girl child education in Pakistan. So, it is highly important to come out like that and fight for these changes. Moreover, it can only happen with the government's support and role to address these issues publicly and to bring the actual change. The statistics will clearly tell us the fact that the existing laws are not sufficient to curb the issue of domestic violence and henceforth to combat this problem the only solution is to work upon the root causes by each state.

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