



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSLIM WOMEN: A CASE STUDY IN DOGACHHIA GRAM PANCHAYAT, (WEST BENGAL)

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ABSTRACT:

Domestic violence is a worldwide problem. It undermines the value of women as an individual and denies her the dignity of a human being. It's a serious human rights violation. Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women, much of gender violence is considered normal. Female feticide, domestic violence, sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence constitute the reality of most girl's and women's lives in India. Domestic violence in any form is a sure violation of human rights. It affects her physical and psychological well-being of the abused women and even that of their children. Although many laws have been passed internationally and nationally to combat violence against women, India still has a long way to go to make Indian women safe in their home and outside. In our society many women are violently treated by their intimate partners while they suffer in silence, in some cases, domestic violence assaults to the death of these women. Thus, it is in the background, the present study is an attempt to in understand the forms and causes of domestic violence against Muslim women in Dogacchia Gram panchayat, Nadia, West Bengal.



KEYWORDS: Domestic violence, Muslim Women, Sexual Violence, Physical Violence, Psychological Violence, Economies Violence etc..

INTRODUCTION:

Domestic violence is a global problem. It threatens the dignity of a women as an individual and denies her value as human being. Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women, much of gender violence is considered normal. Women experienced different forms of domestic violence such as physical violence, emotional violence, sexual violence and economic violence. Physical violence is when an individual or a group attacks or threatens to attack someone physically. This may or may not involve the use of a weapon. Examples of Physical violence include: scratching, kicking, slapping, hitting, punching etc. Psychological abuse that course of conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity though coercion or threats. Economies violence can take the form of- property damage, restricting to financial resources, or not complying with economies responsibility such as alimony. Domestic violence is violence committed by someone in the victim's domestic circle. This includes partners and ex- partners, immediate family members, other relatives and family friends. The term domestic violence is used when there is a close relationship between the offender and the victim. sexual violence is a broad category of actions in which a person use their power and control over another person through unwanted or harmful sexual actions.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Tripathi & Shankar in their article titled “Domestic Violence against Women during the Covid-19: A Case Study of Bihar (India)” ¹ conducted a case study in Bihar which encountered a high rate of domestic violence during the pandemic. The article revealed that the socioeconomic challenges in developing countries intersect within and beyond the dynamites of caste, class, space, and most importantly, gender. The subsequent lockdown witnessed an upsurge in domestic abuse cases across the globe, making us realize how the four walls of the familial space turned into or hot bed of the 'shadow pandemic resulting from the socioeconomic disparities and individual forest oration during difficult time. India also witnessed a sudden surge in domestic violence cases, often called a Shadow pandemic, while some got reports many went without being documented in any forum. This empirical study examines the economic, psychological and social factors responsible for the surge in domestic abuse in Bihar during the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Babu & Kar in their study “Domestic Violence against Women in Eastern India” ² found that the overall prevalence of physical, psychological, sexual and any form of violence among women of Eastern India were 16%, 52%, 25% and 56% respectively. These rates reported by men were 22%, 59%, 17% and 59.5% respectively. Men reported higher prevalence of all forms of violence apart from sexual violence. Husbands were mostly responsible for violence in majority of cases and some women reported the involvement of husbands' parents. It is found that various acts of violence were continuing among majority of women who reported violence. Some socio-economic characteristics of women have significant association with the occurrence of domestic violence. Urban residence, older age, lower education and lower family income are associated with occurrence of domestic violence. Multivariate logistic regressions revealed that the physical violence has significant association with state, residence (rural or urban), age and occupation of women, and monthly family income. Similar associations are found for psychological violence (with residence, age, education and occupation of the women and monthly family income) and sexual violence (with residence, age and educational level of women).

Kumar and Devi in their article Domestic violence against women: Indian Perspective ³ narrated that a woman who has been foundation stone of family and society in general who gives birth to life. Nature's life shapes it and strengthens it, who is transmitter of tradition and an instrument through which culture is preserved and transmitted from generation to generation, the greatest tragedy in our country is that grave injustice is done to her. She is subjected to domestic violence irrespective of her age, race and caste, social and economic and political status. Her vulnerability in various forms is the common phenomenon in Indian society. The silent suffering of women is making her easy prey to the male domination which is supported by prevalent patriarchy. The authoritative, autocratic nature of male member in society and victimization of female makes the situation worst. Almost every home in India must be suffering from some kind of domestic violence where women either mentally, verbally or economically. Men and women both are equal in human rights. Women are discriminated in this male dominating society. As a result most of women are unable to understand their own rights and freedom. Thus domestic violence not only hampers women but also impedes the country's growth.

Banasree, 2015 ⁴ carried out a study on Domestic Violence against Women in Tinsukia District of Assam, India with an objective to find out the causes of domestic violence against women and to study the impact of domestic violence on the abused women, their children and their intra-family relations. A sample of 100 families belonging to different socio-economic status from rural areas of

¹ Tripathi & Dwivedi (June, 2022). Domestic Violence against Women during the Covid-19: A Case Study of Bihar. *Journal of International Women studies*, 24 (5).

² Babu & Kar (2009). Domestic Violence against Women in Eastern India. *B.M.C Public Health*, 9(129).

³ Kumar & Devi (2019). Domestic Violence against Women: Indian Perspective. *South Asian Law Review Journal*, Volume 5

⁴ Banasree (2005). Domestic Violence against Women in Tinsukia. *Research Journal of Family and Community*, 3(4).

Tinsukia District was randomly selected. Alcoholic nature of husband was the major reason of domestic violence. But the data revealed that in all cases domestic violence was caused not because of a single reason. In large number of cases a mix of different causes was observed. The domestic violence also affected the physical and mental health of victim in different ways. Domestic violence has long term impact on the life of victims, the life of their children and their intra-family relations.

Significance of the study:

Very few research roach has been conducted on domestic violence against Muslim women. Hence, the researcher is going to fulfil this gap in the present study.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

The present study addresses the following research question:

- 1) What are the forms of domestic violence's Muslim women at Patpukur village of Dogachia Gram panchayat?
- 2) What are the causes of domestic violence against Muslim women at Patpukur villages of Dogachia Gram panchayat?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study the different forms of domestic violence against Muslim women at Patpukur villages of Dogachia Grampanchayat?
2. To study the causes of domestic violence against Muslim women at Patpukuor village of Dogachia Gram panchayat?

METHODOLOGY:

The present study was conducted in Patpukur village of Dogachia Gram Panchayat . For the purpose of the present study, both primary and secondary data have been used. Secondary data consists of books, journals etc. Primary data were collected by conducting case studies of 5 Muslim Women victims from the village. Thus, basically the present study adopted qualitative research design.

Case Studies

Case Study: 1

The victim was married according to Islamic rites. Her present age is 25 years. She narrated the story of her 7 years marital life. She runs a tea stall for bearing her family. The tea stall was running very well. In the meantime, she delivered a boy child. However, their relationship started deteriorating soon. She accused her husband of assaulting her over suspicion of her extra-marital affairs which she denied. She was subjected to physical, emotional, mental and verbal abuse by her husband. One day, unable to tolerate these tortures she went to her paternal house with her small kid for shelter. After few months, she was brought back by his husband after so many requests. Again he started torturing her mentally and physically. Being helpless, she went to her parental house and she is living there permanently.

Case Study: 2

The victim aged 33 years living peacefully with her husband. However, after living 12 years of marital life things started worst as husband started drinking alcohol. He started abusing her physically and mentally on a regular basis. At first, she tried to continue the relationship and tried to make her husband understand. However, all went in vain. Unable to bear the assault and harassment she leaved her husband's house and now she is marinating her life by begging here and there.

Case Study: 3

The victim got married to an educated man. After few months of their marriage the victim was subjected to physical, emotional, mental and verbal abuse by mother in-laws on the issue of “dowry”. Her mother in-laws often used to ask her to bring 50 thousand Rs from her father. However, her father was not in a position to fulfil this demand as he is a poor man. She informed the same to her husband but the husband was also reluctant to say anything to his mother. Therefore, without getting any support from anybody she took her own life.

Case Study: 4

The victim was initially living a very happy life with her husband. She had one son and one daughter. Her husband got married with another woman without her consent. She was assaulted both mentally and physically. Unable to bear the pain, she left her husband's house with two kids. Against she was brought back to husband's house and again her husband started assaulting her. Now she is living in a different place.

Case study: 5

The victim was got married when she did not fulfill her legal age of marriage. The age difference between the couple was very high. There were always differences of opinion between them. She was often physically assaulted by her husband. Without bearing the pain she decided to take her life and left this world.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

After analysing the case studies of Muslim women victims of domestic violence, the nature and forms of violence, causes and consequences of violence which emerged have been given below:

Nature and forms of Domestic Violence against Muslim Women

On the basis of the analysis of the case studies and observation, the nature and forms of domestic violence against Muslim Women in Dogachia Gram Panchayat have been broadly categorised under the following heads:

Physical abuse: Wife beating by husband and in-laws, punching, slapping, kicking, hair pulling, threaten to kill, using stick or any other weapon like wooden piece, beating in pregnant condition etc.

Economic abuse: Driving out of home, not providing ornaments and clothes, preventing from doing job, taking the profit of wife's money, not giving money to wife for daily household expenditure, taking money with in-laws.

Emotional abuse: Threaten to remarry, threat to kill, husband's physical relationship with other women, scolding for not having a child, scolding for not having a boy child, extra marital affair of husband, suspicion on wife, assaulting the children, threat to be driven out of matrimonial house on failure of bringing demanded *dowry*, articles or cash etc.

Verbal abuse: Scolding the wife using slang language.

Causes of Domestic Violence against Muslim Women:

The above case study reflects that there are several causes behind domestic violence against Muslim women. The issue of *dowry* is such a serious social evil that has always been contributing towards violence against women. It is considered as one of the root cause of violence against married women within the household by their husbands or in-laws. In the present study it is also found that *dowry* is one of the major causes of domestic violence against Muslim women. In these cases either the husband or in-laws have inflicted both physical and mental violence against many married women. Some married women have been asked to bring cash amount from their parental house and in some cases the husband or in-laws are dissatisfied with the articles that are given to the women at the time of marriages. Polygamy is another factor that led to domestic violence against women. Often husbands torture their wives both physically and psychologically in order to get married again with another

women. In many cases the husbands maintain illegal physical relationship with other women without getting a legal divorce from their wives. Another cause of domestic violence found in the present is the suspicious nature of husband; husband did not give permission to talk with other family members.

CONCLUSION

Domestic Violence against women is a very common phenomenon and worldwide problem. Women are victims of domestic violence irrespective of class, culture, religion etc. Muslim women of Dogachia Gram Panchayat are no exception to that. This study mainly focuses on the nature, forms and causes of Domestic Violence against Muslim women. The analysis of the case studies reveals that Muslim women have experienced different forms of violence- physical, sexual, psychological and economic. Further, the major causes of domestic violence against women found in the study are: Dowry demands, Birth of girl child, polygamy, Affairs of Husband, Suspicious nature of husband, etc.

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