



## A sociological study of domestic violence against women in Bihar

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*Domestic violence is one of the crimes against women which is linked to their disadvantageous position in the society. Domestic violence refers to violence against women especially in matrimonial homes. Domestic violence manifests in many ways – spousal, man on woman and woman on man; adults' children and children on adults; woman on woman and man on man. Sometimes, domestic violence also manifests as family wars or clan wars. The percentage of domestic violence is always more in countries where the laws and social norms diminish the status of women. Woman is usually the chief victim of domestic violence. Therefore domestic violence is recognized as a significant barrier to empowerment of women. However, an attempt has been made to study and measure the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence against women and also to keep an eye on men and children who are also being seen victimized these days. An escape from abuse in domestic set ups is almost impossible, correction being a more practical solution.*

**Key words:** Domestic violence, Matrimonial, Empowerment.

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**Introduction :** Domestic violence, that is any act of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, inflicted against a woman by a person intimately connected to her through marriage, family relation, or acquaintanceship is universal and has its root in the socio-cultural set up of the society. Looking at the domestic front, starting from the Vedic age to the twenty first century, women in India perhaps have never experienced equal rights and freedom compared to their male counterparts. The concept of 'Ardhangini' [half of the body] seems to be restricted only to literatures and have never been implemented in practical life. In addition to this, extracts from Ramcharitamanas of Tulsidas like 'Dhol, Gauwnaar, Shudra, Pashu aur Nari; Sakal Tadan ke Adhikari' [drums, uncivilized illiterates, lower castes, animals and women are all fit to be beaten] besides other indicators like *Parda* system [hiding the face in veils], *Sati* system [self immersion of the lady in her husband's pyre] reflect the subordination of women to men. In short, it is always the women who have to be in the tight rope, subject to inequality and looked down as an inferior sex. Starting from childhood to the end of her life she has to be under the control of father or husband or son. The subordinate status of women combined with socio cultural norms that are inclined towards patriarchy and masculinity can be considered

as an important factor in triggering domestic violence. In view of the prevalence as well as the pervasiveness of domestic violence, many researchers in the past have attempted to assess the situation besides exploring its possible cause and subsequent consequences for society in general and women in particular. INCLEN (2000), found it as a problem that cuts across age, education, social class and religion in India. The same study is of the view that 40 percent women had experienced at least one form of physical violence in their married life. While many researchers come out with findings that lifestyle of men such as smoking, alcoholism and drugs promote men to commit domestic violence (Leonard, 1992; McKenry et al., 1995; Rao, 1997 and Bhatt, 1998. Another study among Uttar Pradesh by Gerstein (2000) is of the view that low educational level and poverty are important reasons for domestic violence. Further, marriage at a younger age makes women vulnerable to domestic violence (Mishra, 2000; Hindin, 2002 and Rao, 1997. Over two decades, domestic violence against women has become a matter of serious concern in both developed and developing countries. It is an act, which is not only an issue of human right but also of economic development as violence of any kind has a detrimental impact on the economy of a country through increased health

burdens, disability, medical costs, and loss of labour costs. An alarming 59 per cent of married women in Bihar suffer domestic violence with 50 per cent of wives enduring physical violence, 19 per cent sexual violence, 2 per cent emotional abuse and 59 per cent experience both physical and sexual violence. The national average for violence against married women is 37 per cent, according to the National Family Health survey that was released recently. Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh jointly occupy second place with 46 per cent spousal violence. Men, old people and children can also become victims of domestic violence in specific situations. An escape from abuse in domestic set ups is almost impossible, correction being a more practical solution.

**Hypothesis:**

Hypothesis of this study is to see the percentage of domestic violence in our society not only against women but also against men and children, although our main objective is to see the percentage of domestic violence against women.

**Purpose:**

The main purpose of the study is to measure the level of domestic violence among women.

**Methodology:**

We have used several methods in our project. Both primary and secondary sources of data were gathered for the study. Secondary sources included documents, books, reports of surveys and studies, literature pertaining to domestic violence and other relevant publications.

The methodology is designed with a combination of qualitative and quantitative research tools.

**Sample:**

As a sample we have taken area study of different districts of Bihar. We studied approximately two hundred households, records of hospitals and clinics.

**Research tools:**

The techniques used in this study are detailed below:

**Questionnaire** : we prepared questionnaire to know about the actual condition and circumstances which perpetrate domestic violence.

**Schedule:** It will be presented by the interviewer whereby questions will be asked and the answers will be noted down by him.

**Interview:** It will be conducted with a person who will observe to be likely victim of domestic violence.

**The following table is showing the main reason behind the domestic violence against women in Bihar, (N=200)**

| Causes                 | No. of cases |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Alcoholism             | 32           |
| Intrusion of in-laws   | 18           |
| Rape                   | 12           |
| Property dispute       | 9            |
| Marital maladjustment  | 12           |
| Extra marital affairs  | 22           |
| Drug addiction         | 15           |
| Personality disorder   | 20           |
| Dowry                  | 26           |
| Economic crisis        | 27           |
| Divorce related issues | 7            |
| Total (N)              | 200          |

**Result and Interpretation:**

While doing our research project we found that 22 of the 25 cases, were of beating, biting, and slapping of the wife. The victims had experienced this sort of harassment and offence at least thrice during the 12 months that preceded the interview with our team of investigators. The violence was often associated with other types of abuse such as forced sex, strangling, hurting the feelings of the spouse, use of foul language and abuses, and humiliation. Women more than men experienced domestic assault at some part of time in their lives: 23% of women and 15% of men aged 16 to 59 said they had been physically assaulted by their partner. Young women aged 20 to 24 reported the highest levels of domestic violence. Pushing, shoving and grabbing are the most common type of assault. But kicking, slapping and hitting with fists took place in nearly half of incidents. The victim was injured in 41% of incidents. More women (47%) were injured than men (31%). Although injury was usually restricted to bruising, 9% of incidents resulted in cuts and 2% in broken bones. Nearly all victims admitted they were upset by the experience, with women more likely to say so than men. The majority of female victims said they had been very frightened, compared to a minority of men. Of victims

who had children in the household, about a third said the children had been aware of the last assault they had experienced.

#### **Facts :**

- About half of the victims had told someone about their most recent assault: most often a friend, neighbour or relative.
- Victims who had been injured, frightened or upset, or whose children were aware of the incident were the most likely to tell someone about their experience.

#### **Suggestion :**

We know that domestic violence accounts for 16% of all kinds of violence and that a quarter of women & 15% of men have suffered abuse in their lifetimes. We know that women are overwhelmingly more likely to suffer repeated abuse that two women a week are killed by a current or former partner and that one incident of abuse is reported to the police every minute of the day. Sadly, we also know that these reports only account for a fraction of the true number of attacks, many of which go unreported.

We know, that no government, no matter how active or intrusive, can stop partners from being violent to each other, and as the goal of eradicating domestic violence will always be unreachable, the question we must ask is whether we – as a state, as a society, and as individuals – are doing the most we can to condemn, prosecute and punish its perpetrators, and protect, counsel and care for its victims. A wide variety of agencies exist which offer services in cases of domestic violence like Family court, Police station, Family Counselling Centre, Women's Commission, People's Council for Social Justice, and religious institutions.

#### **1. Awareness generation and sensitization**

- (i) Awareness of about gender equality and women's rights should be instilled in boys and girls from a very early age in order to bring about a change in the mindset of the future generation.
- (ii) Legal literacy camps should be conducted on a regular and systematic basis at the local community level.

- (iii) List of NGOs and governmental organizations dealing with women's issues should be made known to the public.

#### **2. Laws**

- (i) Separate laws should be enacted to deal with domestic violence.
- (ii) There should be strict laws for the prevention of vices such as alcoholism and drug addiction and social evils such as the dowry system.

#### **3. Judiciary**

- (i) There should be a special court with a woman judge and magistrate in each district to handle domestic violence cases.
- (ii) Only women magistrates should try cases of violence against women.
- (iii) Mobile courts should be introduced as an effective strategy to provide justice to the victims of domestic violence.

#### **4. Role of Government**

- (i) Government should ensure proper enforcement of existing laws related to women's rights.
- (ii) Women should be made aware of Women's Commission; offices of the Women's Commission should be opened at the district and lower levels.

#### **5. Role of police**

- (i) Police should be trained to be respectful and courteous to women in distress.
- (ii) A separate wing of police may be opened to deal with women's issues, in all police stations and personnel of this wing should be exempted from other duties.
- (iii) Only women police officials should be allowed to handle cases involving women.

#### **Conclusion:**

Domestic violence can never be eliminated from society unless society refuses to tolerate it. This will require an internal change in the basic nature of society world over, beginning with the recognition of the worth of

every human being as an individual. The study identifies different types of violence related to alcoholism, dowry, financial crisis, extra-marital affairs, rape, personality disorders, intrusion of in-laws, marital maladjustment, property disputes, drug addiction and divorce. The study suggests that education of girls should aim at strengthening their inherent abilities and utilizing them for their own development as well as for the society's development. This empowerment will help improving the status of women and raising voice against atrocities and harassment. If the law does not punish those who are responsible for violent within the sacred walls of the institution called family and home, the weaker will continue to be violated and abused by the stronger – physically, mentally, materially and spiritually.

**Suggestion :**

1. Mobile courts should be introduced to provide justice to victims.
2. Legal literacy camps should be established in various districts.

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