

## **VIOLENT INCIDENCE AGAINST WOMEN ..... A CHALLENGE TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

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### **Abstract**

The empowerment of women concerns women gaining control and power over their own lives. It involves awareness raising, building self confidence, expansions of choices, increase access to and control over resources. Empowerment should come from within, women empower themselves. Inputs to promote the empowerment of women should facilitate the articulation of their needs and priorities and more active role in promoting these needs and increase. Violence against women is a pandemic that knows no boundaries of culture, geography, age or wealth. Yet, it is generally down played by the public as social processes continue to support men's societal dominance. In this regard the present study is confined to bring out the nature of causes and its consequences of domestic violence on women. The study also explores the tortures, harassments, humiliation, troubles and discrimination on women and instability in the family life. Within the activities to study the causes and conditions of present crisis, degradation of social life in this region. Further this study identifies the barriers for sustained family life and women empowerment in the study area.

**Keywords :** Domestic Violence, Discrimination, Liberation Movement, Recreation, Social Security

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## Introduction

Women today are the vanguard of several ground breaking changes across different spectrums of human development and activity. Education, employment, political participation, the list is endless but as justice Krishna Iyer, a much respected votary of equitable justice for women and author of several landmark judgments pointed out.. ‘The little done...The vast undone...’ sums up the scenario prevailing scenario, (Dr. V. Janaki, 2014).

The empowerment of women concerns women gaining control and power over their own lives. It involves awareness raising, building self confidence, expansions of choices, increase access to and control over resources. Empowerment should come from within, women empower themselves. Inputs to promote the empowerment of women should facilitate the articulation of their needs and priorities and more active role in promoting these needs and increase. Our development efforts have yielded creditable benefits for women in doubling their life expectancy over the last fifty years, and considerably reducing female infant mortality and child mortality rates.

Traditionally, in India, women are respected. So, their economic empowerment will naturally lead to their political empowerment. They can be the harbingers of harmony in all spheres of life. They have great role to play in projecting our culture and our family life. In our country women specific projects continue to play an important role in promoting gender equality. They are still needed because gender equality has not yet been attained and gender mainstreaming processes are not fully developed. Target initiatives focusing specifically on women are important for reducing existing disparities. Women and their organization can play a powerful and positive role in confidence building and creating awareness in their daughters and other women to promote self-reliance.

Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives communities, and their society, by acting on issues that they define as important. Empowerment of women involves many things- economic opportunity, property rights, political representation, social equality, personal rights and so on, (Sheetal Sharma, 2006).

The charter of the United Nations signed in 1945 is the first international agreement that proclaimed gender equality as a fundamental right. In order to promote development of women and protect their rights, the General Assembly of the UN adopted "Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women" on 18th December 1979 which came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1981. The convention also took notice of particular problems faced by rural women and their significant role in survival of their families.

### **Violence against Women**

Violence against women is a pandemic that knows no boundaries of culture, geography, age or wealth. Yet, it is generally down played by the public as social processes continue to support men's societal dominance. The problem of violence against women is not new. Women in the Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as the social scientists have written rewards of social organization and family life. Today, women are being gradually recognized as important, powerful and meaningful contributors to the life of men, but till a few decades back, their condition was pitiable, ideologies, institutional practices and the existing norms in society have contributed much to their harassment. Domestic violence is not a new social ill. Violence towards women was a common aspect of marriage in medieval times and in the early days of industrialization. The home is often idealized as a heaven of security and happiness, but domestic violence- violence in the context of the home in part of the experience of many women.

### **Theoretical Views of Gender Inequality**

The major important theories of domestic violence are strain theory, learning theory, control theory, masculinity theory, labeling theory, and the women's liberation thesis.

The essence of Durkheim's theory, as it little suggests, is that criminality is caused by pressure or tension. The source this tension is stimulated aspirations to achieve certain goals coupled with obstacles to their achievement. Frustrated individuals turn to crime either to release this tension or to achieve their goals via illegitimate avenues.

The idea of learning theory that criminality is normal, learned behavior goes back to 1939 when Edwin Sutherland introduced the theory in principles of criminology. Sutherland's differential association theory states that a person will become criminal if her or she associates more with criminal than with anti criminal people and ideas.

Masculinity theory Comprise two ideas: crime is symbolically masculine and masculinity supplies the motive for a good deal of crime. The qualities demanded of the criminal- daring, toughness, aggression- all exemplify maleness. As an explanation of female behavior masculinity theory posits the unsuitability of crime for women, thereby explaining their conformity. While it is possible to trace labeling theory as far back as Husserl, and his philosophy of phenomenology, within criminological circles the idea that external social stigma or Labels make the criminal is usually attributed to the American social scientist Howard Becker.

Since 1975, the impact of the women's liberation movement on female crime has become the basis of a heated debate in the criminological literature on women. The catalyst was Freda Adler's *Sisters in crime*. To Adler the liberation of women in western society is a fait accompli. Women have fought and won their battle for equality.

### **Problem Settings**

Globally women are a disadvantaged group. One in three women will suffer violence in her life time. Women will be beaten, raped, assaulted, trafficked, harassed, or force to harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. In the majority of the cases, abuser will be a member of the women's own family or someone known to her. Violence against women in the domestic sphere is a universal phenomenon as well as the social problem and hinderance to women development. When a women is subjected to violence in the domestic sphere, the family and the walls of the home in which women resides a virtual prison for her than a protection from the external environment.

In this era made women the special targets of their attacks and increased incidence of violence against women all over the country of honor killings and new dimensions to atrocities and discrimination against women in all spheres. It has been recognized as a social problem and a

contributor of disempowerment through the degree of this realization still varies sharply from country to country. Though, there in many legal guards in India, which are not exclusively directed against the phenomenon of domestic violence. The issue is not only of gender abuse, it is recognize the right of every individual to exist as a human being and do live as subordinate sex.

In this regard the present study is confined to bring out the nature of causes and its consequences of domestic violence on women empowerment. The study also explores the tortures, harassments, humiliation, troubles and discrimination on women and instability in the family life. Within the activities to study the causes and conditions of present crisis, degradation of social life in this region. Further this study identifies the barriers for sustained family life and women empowerment in the study area.

## **Methods**

The present empirical study carried out at Chidambaram town to explore domestic violence against women with following objectives:

1. To study the nature extent of violent incidence and discrimination on women in their home.
2. To analyze the causes of violence on women and exploitation in domestic life, and
3. To know the consequence of violence on women's sustained family life and empowerment of women.

For this purpose, 100 women who were victims of violent incidence among partners particularly women were selected by snow ball sampling method. The respondents were selected from the slum area of Chidambaram town. The interview schedule was constructed on the basis of literature study on domestic violence against women to collect the data from the respondents.

## **Findings**

### **i. Socio-economic background:**

From the investigation it is clear that in general 83 percent of the respondents belong to the age group of below 40 years old that is productive age group. 95 percent of the respondents are

Hindus; only 5 percent of the respondents belong to Christianity and no one in Muslims and other religious people in this study area. Out of the total 100 respondents 35 percent of the respondents are schedule tribe which is higher than the other communities' represented in the study area. No one from forward caste as victims in the study site. 53 percent of the victims are illiterate and deprived of the fruits of education. A high proportion of the victims are uneducated and school dropouts by various reasons such as caste factor and family background of the women. It is noted that majority of the households are unable to spend money for educational purpose of their children. This is mainly due to the financial deficiency and lack of interest towards education among the respondents.

Indian women are in domestic sphere as 'housewives' this is also fitness and witness in Indian social life. The spouses of the respondents are engaged mostly in daily wage labor. It is reported that majority of the respondents earn marginal amounts and most of them hardly meet their daily expenses with their earnings. The state of affairs leaves behind the dilapidated houses, torn cloths, half filled stomachs and continuous indebtedness. It is evident from the study that 83 percent of the respondents are living in small family size and also adapt the small family norms. 12 percent of the respondents are belong to large family size. A vast majority (72%) of the respondents belong to the nuclear family. The joint family system rapidly breaks down to modern nuclear family system. Most of the households have lack of important assets depend upon manual labor and lack of accommodation under one roof are probably the reasons to put up a nuclear family rather than staying together and sharing their earnings. Thus in the sample households, most of the members earning income is inadequate to meet their day to day life requirements. Majority (75%) of the respondents own house. 20 percent of the respondents stay in rental houses and only 5 percent of the respondents house are in temporal house in the encroached lands. Majority of the scheduled caste respondents live in huts among the total sample. The housing vital amenities conditions of the respondents also cause much inconvenience to them. Most of the respondents are hardly accommodated in very small huts. In the absence of minimum facilities, women have to work hard in discharging their duty in domestic life. Only 20 percent of the respondents' houses have adequate facilities to manage their day to day life. Two thirds of the respondents have very low exposure of mass media due to illiteracy and poor financial conditions.

**ii. Marriage scenario**

Most of the sample women (65%) were married in arranged marriage pattern of and 35 percent of the respondents wedded through love marriage. Among the arrange marriages 30 percent of the women followed the kinship marriages and a little of them (15%) married in love marriage with kinship. The kinship marriage is popular in the study sites. 45 percent of the women knew their husbands initially before marriage because they are relatives, friends, batch mates or class mates and same area residents. The Indian culture of keeping bride grooms secret from their brides till marriage is slowly depleted away with. 17 percent of the respondents married in between 23-28 years old. 44 percent of the respondents married when they were below 18 years old. A considerable number of women are trapped by abusive marriages, because they were minors during their marriage time. Spouse's age difference for the Majority (46%) is 6-10 years. In India the common age differences between spouses is below 5. From the study, 40 percent of the couples belong to this group. Only 3 percent and 11 percent spouses are same age and above 11 years respectively. Majority couples age difference is more than 6 years up to 28 years. A good majority of the women preferred both sexes of children. Female child also get more affection and love by the women. It is expressed that all respondents are deprived by patriarchal system and also hatred cultural attitude of male aggressive activities.

**iii. Domestic life style and women social place:**

From this investigation it is obviously seen that 40 percent of the respondents serve food to their husbands first in the families at time of taking food. 29 percent of the respondents serve food to their children first. Most of the women follow the Indian cultural heritage of serving husbands first. The husbands do not co-operate their spouses perfectly and do not discharge their duties in rearing their children and loss cohesiveness with their wives. This is also a major source for creating violent incidence, friction and dual controversy among the couple and also barrier to harmonious family and women welfare. Almost 72 percent of the respondents lonely bring up their children themselves without any help from other family members, relatives and neighbors. This indicates the great and unique role of the mothers in the family. Only 14 percent of the women act independently deciding authority in family matters and all other domestic activities,

most of them are separated women. 33 percent of the respondents' families both husband and wives are jointly making decisions to manage their family in a prosperous manner.

It is heartening to note that two third of the total respondents have no saving habit and most of the husbands have aggressive and rude habit to adapt the financial aspect in their family and restrain the women's role and subject them to economic dependency. It is observed that 48 percent of the respondents are economically involved to finalize their family budget. Majority of the wives are not participating directly in the process of family budget because of economic dependency.

In the leisure and recreation aspect, 44 percent of the respondents are going to cinema because cinema is the cheapest means of entertainment to them and also they spend money from Rs.15 to Rs.40 in every month. Only 6 percent of the sample women are listening radio. 12 percent of the respondents are reading books. It is noted that 13 percent of the respondents have taken scanning during their pregnancy. Most of the respondent's i.e. 87 percent of the women didn't do scanning and 16 percent of the respondents have done abortion. Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance are influenced on their health care for healthy life and also their husbands' irresponsible role in this matter. 45 percent of the respondents are not adopting the family planning methods and they have not interested and knowledge regarding this matter.

It is clear from the study that only one man affectionately behaves in public places with his wife. 26 percent of the respondents' husbands behave friendly with them in public places, and 14 percent of the respondents' husbands behave very harshly with them in the public places. Most of the husbands are having smoking habits i.e. 69 percent. Among them 54 percent of the men are drinking alcohols and are addicted to it. It is reported from the study that they spend most of their earnings for this deviant habits. Further, it is found that 18 percent of the respondents' husbands addicted by gambling and only 3 percent of them use evil smoking practice of cannabis (Ganja). Most of the head of the households are addicted to the evil habits of smoking, drinking etc. These evil habits also make disgusting and discard among the couple and cause of empowering women and equality.

Most of the respondents certified that their husbands are not good conduct and character and irresponsible life partner. It is observed that, even though there is no cordial relation between them, only few women are not ready to give a bad certificate to their life partner because of cultural obedience.

#### **iv. Genesis of Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence is a discriminatory attitude of life partner and retardation of women empowerment. It is observed that 98 percent of the respondents have tremendously faced many violent incidence in their family life towards their husbands. That is related to money, children's education, husbands' bad habits and character, domestic violence against them and some other problems. Only 2 percent of the respondents haven't posed significant complaints in family life against their husbands. A considerable number of women have faced discriminatory acts and a frequent function and conflict (60%) occurs with their life partners. Very limited number of the respondents (11%) have conflicts occurs occasionally or rarely. Frequency of conflicts between couples generally leads to unrest and friction as its pertaining to the violence against women particularly physical harassment.

It is significant to note that 91 percent of the families are affected by family life characterized by the lack of adequate money, indebtedness and other financial problems related to daily bread. 19 percent of the respondents are injured by their husbands but all the other victims are affected without injury. 11 percent of the respondents are injured heavily by their husbands 'manhandling and atrocities. 8 percent of women have minor injuries at several times. Due to the violent physical harassment few women have hospitalized at many times for treatment. It is sad to note that three respondents got treatment for more than 6 months to cure themselves because of major bodily damages like broken hands, broken teeth etc. Out of the total respondents, 7 percent of women are affected by injuries which are made by sharp weapons like knife, razorblades etc. The other crucial violence is sexual harassment which affected 6 women in the study area. 12 percent of the respondents are tortured by their husbands and 9 percent of the respondents have faced cruelty. Wife battering take the first place of violence in order of reporting. Slapping, scolding are second and third order of violence respectively in the study area. Male domination, extreme traits, alcoholism, gambling, and smoking are common and effective causes for violence on women in home in the study area.

The matter is within the four walls of their home but due to the ill-treatment and inhuman activities the matter has gone up to the police station to get their rights. It is significant to note that there is no violent incidence occurs in any home because most of the families are nuclear family. 97 percent of the respondents have not enjoyed their marriage life though they rarely do when their husbands are sober. Out of total 100 respondents, 9 respondents are very worst with regard to the utilization of married life because they suffered many problems from marriage day onwards. 3 respondents enjoyed their married life even though they faced many tortures in their domestic sphere. Most of the women dedicated their life for their children in the first order and tolerate other evils.

It is stated that 94 percent of the respondents are not ready and willing to dissolve the family life and never think about the dark side of the family. Majority of the women obey and follow the Indian culture and not ready to dissolve their family life and never think about the alternative pattern of life. 65 percent of the respondents are dissatisfied with their married life because they faced lot of problems in day to day life. 12 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied with their married life and tolerate all their problems and violence. 9 percent of the respondents are never satisfied and do not tolerate their husbands' criminal and inhuman activities. 8 percent of the respondents contrasted the statement that married life is unnecessary for the women. 70 percent of the respondents have no opinion and no tactical methods to sustain the family life. This pitiable and bitter experience of respondents' opinion shows that their family life is very pathetic and painful to them.

### **Conclusion**

After the marriage the women do not enjoy the real benefits of the marriage and harmonious family life. Instead, they are made subservient and submissive to their husbands who command and control them in all respects. It is proved that domestic violence is a barrier and an enemy to women empowerment and sustained family life. They are subjected to mental and physical torture at home and become abnormal and disabled. The women capacity to work and health are badly affected. Their husbands smoke, drink and gamble away the family income. The women have been relegated to the position of slave. Their social place is lowered and the extent of their dependence on women enhanced. The women are affected much by the violent incidence against them. Defense of male authority, compulsive masculinity, economic constraints and discrimination, humiliation, burdens of child care, preeminence of the wife role for women,

negative self- image, women as children (women as the property of men is longer part of the legal and traditional system) smoking, alcoholism, poverty, physical needs like sexual satisfaction, male orientation of the criminal justice systems are the major causes for the domestic violence against women and a challenge to women empowerment in the study site.

**Suggestions:**

1. Awakening women's Organization and self confidence building measures among them should be courage by peoples of different walks of life.
2. Women should cultivate self defense mechanism present in their mind. (Making self-defense in presence of mind to women)
3. Young women must learn the martial arts like karate for protection measures when there is no otherwise.
4. The victims should speak and discuss with women social workers who will consider them and help them from the trauma.
5. Special and separate clinics have to be established to treat the victims of domestic violence.
6. Solve women's physical and mental problems.
7. Most preferably women's complaints should be enquired into only by women police.
8. Victims aids centers should be established and give to victims succor, support and shelter at all times.
9. Women centers should avail the services around the clock working and opening for women problems has no timing and immediate attention.
10. The legal aids like free advocates should give to the victims to help them deal effectively with issues related to domestic violence.
11. Reports of domestic violence may be published in the daily news papers but without the names of the victims as a matter of awareness to the public.
12. All the women participate in revolutionary activity of working for the welfare of theirs with one voice.
13. Rowdies, Goondas and anti-family and social elements should be subjected to family and social boycott.

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