

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

A woman is the foundation stone and the key of the family but they are subjected to domestic violence. Domestic Violence is deep-rooted in society and a universal problem. Except Vedic period, Indian women are continuously suffering from domestic violence. Any kind of violence like sexual, emotional or physical is known as domestic violence. Many studies show that almost 60 to 70% of women all over the world face domestic violence at least one time in their lives. In India the government passed an act in 2005 to protect women but this is not sufficient and more efforts are required to overcome this problem.

**Keywords:-** Domestic Violence, Society, Government, Women, Empowerment

### **Introduction:-**

women are the base of our society and the key of the family. These are almost 50% of the total population. Indian culture and heritage is very rich in the matter of women empowerment. In vedic period men and women were considered equal in social, educational and political field. Gargi and Maitrayi were very eminent scholars. In the later Vedic period also, women's condition was good but gradually women's condition became poor and miserable. They started treated like household servants, their right for education and other fields removed. Sometime they were treated like a slave. With the entry of Mughals in India, a veil system was started that is ridiculous and a big attack on women's freedom. This system prevailed even during the British period and in modern time. Traditionally Indian society is a patriarchal society and women always have secondary status which is reflected in almost every field of life. Domestic violence is a very common and deep-rooted problem in almost every part of the world; it is a most popular crime against women. Domestic violence mainly related to the matrimonial homes and it refers to all kind of abuse like sexual, physical, psychological abuse etc. It is

a hindrance in the path of development and women empowerment. During the covid-19 pandemic, the cases of domestic violence rise to their all-time highest level.

**What is Domestic Violence :-**

According to Oxford dictionary,

"violence as a behavior involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something. The unlawful exercise of physical force or intimidation by the exhibition of such force."(1)

According to WHO,

"the international use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against oneself, another person or against a group or community which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, Mal development for deprivation."(2)

"Domestic violence is violent victimization of women within the boundaries of family, usually by man. Domestic violence is the majority of case violence against women by the members of the house where she resides. It can be the husband, his parents or siblings or any other residents who have the covert latitude for actions that can cause physical or mental agonies to women."(3) It happens behind the closed doors of the house. It is mostly denied by women who have been the sufferer and the victim. So domestic violence means any behavior which has the power to harm any other person physically, mentally or in any other way. Most of the women become the victim. It can be experienced in a parental or in-laws house. Just because it happens behind closed doors, almost all women do not take it as an insulting behavior of family. Indian society is patriarchal and domestic violence is a well-accepted thing. It is always seen that one lady plays the role of enemy to another lady. Sometimes it may seem that if a victim wants to raise a voice against this, even parents do not support them. A theory that is commonly prevailing in India, a husband's house is the real house of a lady and their paternal home is a temporary one. When a girl gets married, their parents and family teach her daughter Doli rises from her maternal home and her Aarthi gets up from her in-laws house. Due to this approach, most of the women tolerate domestic violence because they have no alternative to husband's home. Most women are not financially independent and they depend on their father and husband for their financial needs.

### **Status of women in India : From Vedic Era to post independence period:**

The foundation of domestic violence is deep-rooted in history. To fully explore the development of domestic violence, it is necessary to study its origin within different periods.

#### **Pre Vedic period:-**

It is basically the period of the origin of human civilization and there was no difference between men and women. This was the real period of gender equality. Aggressive and violent behavior was seen in hunting and preparing food and water. Later on with the invention of fire, family life and domestication of various species of animals started. But violence as a concept did not exist in this phase.

#### **Vedic period:-**

The oldest Veda that is Rig Veda marks the beginning of a settled life. The unit of social formation was the family which consists of many members under a male head. Women's conditions were good and they were well treated. In Manu Smriti, Manu stated that "yatra naryastu pojanantay, ramantay tatr devta". During this period women enjoyed educational and religious rights. Women held the right to get education. Their status was equal to man and no discrimination on gender basis.

#### **Post Vedic period :-**

This was the Epic period which was known for the transition of women status. In the early phase of the period, women conditions were good like to Vedic period but later on social evils like polygamy, sati etc. started. In this period women came to be projected in dual roles. On one side they were worshiped as goddesses but on the other side they were treated as dependent persons with no identification. Their functions were limited to the boundary wall of the house and they were becoming more dependent on her father and husband and family.

#### **Muslim period:-**

During the Muslim period women conditions became worst. Child marriage, veil system started. They were completely deprived of education. This was the effect of Muslim culture on Hindu culture. They were started treated like servant and their powers were restricted to the boundary wall of the house.

### **British period:-**

With the end of Muslim period, British Empire established in India . There was no drastic change visible in women's condition but certain classes of men received English education and got the opportunity to know the English literature, customs and traditions. They realized that in India women's condition is very poor in comparison to other countries. They should be treated equally like the European countries and raised voice against sati pratha ,child marriage,widow remarriage and to support girls education.Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ravindra nath Tagore, keshav Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was the great supporter of women education. Due to the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, in 1829 sati pratha was banned in India.

### **Post independence period :-**

With the independence of India in 1947, a new phase was started for women in India. The time after independence was like a new morning for women with the implementation of the constitution of India. They got equal fundamental rights, got equal opportunity in every field. Govt. started many programs for the development of women. Women's education became a primary issue for the government .They got the right to vote, to contest elections and became members of legislature but in spite of all these provisions of the constitution and efforts of the government, the literacy rate of females is not good. According to the census of 2021, the literacy rate of females is 65.46%.,gender inequality is existing, female foeticide is a big problem. women are facing violence at home even in their paternal homes ,rape cases are increasing day by day, parents desire for baby boy is very high. Time to time the government has taken strong action against evil but more effort is required in this field.

### **Covid-19and Domestic Violence:-**

End of 2019 and beginning of 2020 brings a pandemic for the whole world i.e known as covid-19 pandemic. With the announcement of P.M narender modi, Govt of India declared lockdown on 22nd March,2021 of 21 days to control the coronavirus. All offices were closed and people were confined at home.But a new thing was emerged in this period rapidly i.e Domestic Violence cases. Cases of domestic Violence increased.”As informed by National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), a total of 3,582 number of cases of domestic violence between April, 2021 and June, 2021, as against a total of 3,748 number of cases between April, 2020 and June, 2020, were received,"(4)

the minister said This was the statement of central minister Smriti Irani. A Mumbai based NGO Akshara that works for women empowerment brought a report on domestic Violence during covid-19 and report says that "The first lockdown, from March to May 2020, severely impacted women. Like others in cities and towns all over India, women too lost jobs, saw their savings dwindle and witnessed family and friends falling seriously sick. What was not foreseen, however, was that the slogan 'Stay home, stay safe', urging people to follow the lockdown rules and isolate, would mean something entirely different for women. With family members at home all the time, women were doubly impacted not only with economic and other losses but also with a heavier burden of housework and with the ugly specter of domestic violence looming over them."(5)

#### **Types of domestic violence:-**

Domestic violence has many forms. Females get tortured in many ways. Physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, emotional violence etc.

#### **Physical violence:-**

Physical violence is a very common violence. Husbands and other family members kill them, heat them and lock them in their rooms, deprived of food. These are very common methods. Majority of women face this violence at least one time in their life in almost all over the world and in India sometime ladies does not bother it and it does not take it as a humiliation or torture.

#### **Sexual violence :-**

"sexual abuse include, any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of woman."6

This type of violence is never discussed in Indian society. Women feelings never matters in sexual relations. even they forced for sex after physical violence or when they were not feeling well or sick. Rape cases is increasing day by day. women is considered as sexual object in society.

#### **Economic violence:-**

Most of the women engaged in household work and financially depended upon their parents and husbands but generally males control the economy of the house and female suggestions are always rejected, women basic needs sometimes denied and also control their access to healthcare.

### **Psychological violence:-**

Psychological violence is less considered in our society .It includes verbal aggression, surveillance,use of abusive language. Women faces this type of violence daily at their homes and at workplace by husband and in laws.They got mentally torture for their way of working at home ,in office they are also abused to not to perform their duties timely.

### **Emotional violence:-**

women get tortured emotionally that never be visible to anyone. Husband humiliated them at public places, drove away their family and friends, insulting her in front of other family members .Almost Male people satisfy their male ego by humiliating their wives. Their decision for further study or job refused .They regularly threatened them to leave them in their parents house.

### **General causes of domestic violence**

No single factor is responsible for domestic violence. There are many factors which are interrelated. The main reason behind this is the patriarchal nature of Indian society where womens have no identification. They are always considered as a subordinate of male members. According to a report by Indian Express, Sharada A L, director of Population First, an NGO working for women rights, said, “This kind of patriarchal mentality is deeply imbibed in the minds of the women who think that serving their family and husband should be their first priority.(7)

They are treated as secondary in society. In Indian society male or boys are responsible for the growth of the family and the desire for a baby boy is very high in society. Dowry is also the main factor which is responsible for domestic violence. many womens get burnt, murdered because their parents cannot fulfill the demand of dowry.Financial dependence of females on males is also a big factor.Because of this factor,they are not able to raise their voice against injustice.In Most of the cases , family also does not support them

### **Protection of women from domestic violence act 2005:-**

To provide effective protection of the rights of women and save them from domestic violence,an act was passed by the parliament of India in 2005 and implemented in 2006 Is known as the **Protection of Women from domestic violence act 2005**. This act clearly defines the meaning of domestic violence and its types. According to this act Domestic

Violence means "An Act to provide for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." [8] Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. makes a provision of protection officers to whom anyone can inform about any act of domestic violence. The protection officer shall be appointed by the State Government with a notification on district basis. Government should ensure that protection officer must be a female member and perform her duties as prescribed in the act Under the column 4 of this act. Any person can inform protection officer about the domestic violence performed or about to be done. This act is a milestone in women empowerment but misuse of this act is visible at large scale. So government should ensure the proper implementation of this act so that it fulfill the purpose for whom legislature made it.

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