

Domestic Harassment Of Women And Children During COVID-19

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Abstract: Domestic abuse, a prevalent problem in all cultures, and debates about this phenomenon are related to the complexities and the taboos. Domestic violence / harassment of relationships refers to romantic marriages or partnerships between spouses and in these situations often the female gender is the survivor. There are many women who experience psychological and physical violence in their close relationships and immediate social environment which later become a serious health problem for them. Domestic violence is a pattern of coercive behaviour which involves physical, psychological, mental, economic and emotional abuse committed by one individual against another near individual with the purpose of gaining and retaining power and control. Domestic abuse can be found in all sorts of intimate marriages, such as married spouses, single spouses, living in families, individuals with shared children, same-sex partners, in past partnerships etc. The aim of this study is to find out the nature and various causes of domestic violence against women during COVID-19's lockdown situation. Using standard questionnaire and random sampling, samples of 165 females from various sectors with varying educational qualifications and family status levels were surveyed. To get the appropriate results, a T-test was applied. Specific causes and character of domestic violence can be found in the COVID-19 case, such as oral bullying, abuse, physical abuse, assault, mistreatment, spouse's aggressive behavior and sexual abuse due in part to factors such as female identity, financial distress, domination, alcohol and extra-marital problems, etc..

Keywords: Domestic Violence, COVID-19, Women, Lockdown, Issues.

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence in many countries refers to violence between intimate partners but many times it also involves children and harassment of elderly people or any other family members as well. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in every three women around the world, any person responsible for this in their lifetime experiences violence physically and/or sexually through a close relationship or partner or sexual violence by one woman. Included in "emotional" or "psychological" violence are punching, hitting, kicking, bullying, etc. along with these cruel, unreasonable comments, constant harassment of others, coercion, threats of harm or taking away the children. Many times in the behaviors of domestic violence are regulated including isolating a person from family and friends, controlling their movements, restricting financial, job, educational and medical services.

Causes or reasons of Domestic Violence

There are many factors that cause domestic violence in social, cultural, and economic terms. These factors point to this behavior being an acquired habit and a choice.

Patriarchy: One of the main factors behind domestic violence is gender-role identity. In this context, the main element is the socially acceptable "correct masculine conduct" that explains and salutes aggression, brutality, and dominance. There are some people who have the common assumption that they do not believe they have the women's partner because they have the right to monitor their behaviour. Nearly 42 per cent of men think they have legitimate reasons to beat their wife, according to National Family Health Survey results.

Society influence: Some abusers are grown up seeing this domestic violence within their own family and the society in which they lived. Boys who are not taught to appreciate their sister and mother in their childhood and see these things in their own family are likely to abuse the women in their future lives and the girls who see things in their family and society are the victims and think it's normal.

Economic causes: The major drivers to violent behaviour are homelessness, alcohol and some sort of drug abuse.

Socio-cultural reasons: Domestic violence and dowry- and honor killing-related deaths are a reality of society.

Individual Factor Responsible for Domestic Violence: Most offenders feel the need to dominate their spouse due to "poor self-esteem," feeling jealous, having trouble controlling their rage and other intense emotions, and some of them suffer from inferiority complex towards their spouse in their educational or socio-economic context.

Impact of COVID-19 in rise in Domestic Violence in India:

291 domestic violence reports were registered with the National Commission of Women (NCW) in March 2020. The NCW still receives complaints through digital modes such as e-mail, and it is assumed that in reality the number of cases is much higher than they are reported. When there is virtually no movement of people and the police force is busy ensuring that the population of India meets the lock-down rules in the right manner, there is no means for women to defend themselves from domestic violence and harassment and in too many cases, and they have even had to face death. Moreover, because of the prevalence and commonness of traditional social values and guilt, these survivors of domestic violence are not going to the police to report their cases to the perpetrators. People who belong to the vulnerable and disadvantaged class are not in a position to lodge their complaint. The factors that contributed to the same are:

(i) Non-operational NGOs: there are women's centers which are to be contacted by a person who has had a complaint against domestic violence and who also advises the victim and the abuser and to a large extent resolves the issue, but because of the lock-up, these NGOs have not been functional and voluntary organizations which are available to women for assistance and advice.

(ii) Degradation of gender equality: the "Sustainable Development Goal" or SDG looks forward to eliminating all forms of favoritism and abuse against women in both the public and private spheres. SDG also undertakes improvement and reorganizations so that the women can also have the same rights as the men related to financial resources and had their rights in the property. There are so many additional obstacles when unraveling the negative psychosocial effects on women's mental health, and this condition causes them to lose their jobs and allows them to suffer from economic distress.

Some remedies to avoid domestic violence

Since the government is taking a variety of steps around the world to prevent coronavirus transmission, and because of the need to expand the lock-up and isolation process, and because of the need for the public to stay confined for a longer period of time, there is a great need to tackle the rise in domestic violence as soon as possible. Linked to this problem, it is very important for the government to use human rights and "intersectional" strategies in order to ensure that all of us, and even the most vulnerable, have access to all the relevant information and the infrastructure in place to help each of us, along with the required services, during this crisis situation. "Help lines" and "essential services" should be available during the lockdown. The media will raise the public's awareness of violence incidents and raise awareness of the programs and support available to enable people to share household tasks. Making Organizations more active in responding to domestic abuse, providing help, protection, counselling and legal assistance. Additionally, the person liable for domestic abuse must be brought to court and those who perpetuate it should be strictly dealt with in compliance with the provisions of the law.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Domestic abuse is a widespread phenomenon involving people who do not understand their age, socio-economic status or socio-cultural status. There is no risk assessment and there are significant health issues for the affected women. The percentage of women seeking medical attention because of violence is not clear. According to an earlier report in the United States, a large percentage of these women and physicians (general practitioners and gynecologists) are the main touch party in these incidents of domestic abuse (Flury, Nyberg and Riecher-Rössler 2010). Studies have shown that 20% of women are physically harmed by law or family members, 34% are mentally tortured by law, 32% are physically hurt by their husbands, and 44% are mentally tortured by their husbands. There are 10 per cent women, people with minimal human needs, 44 per cent are suffering from depression, 48 per cent of whom state that their children's education is affected by domestic violence. 76% of them are those who are not aware of the legislation relating to domestic abuse. Studies also indicate that alcohol is the main cause of domestic violence in Indian society and that most women are not aware of their rights and laws related to domestic violence (Choudhary, Kaithwas and Rana, 2017).

This is understandable that, at this moment of the pandemic, priority should be provided to supplying people with critical needs and taking the appropriate measures to prevent the transmission of diseases in contrast to taking action to avoid domestic abuse, but it is also true that the long-term consequences of domestic violence are still quite destructive and also demand similar consideration as COVID-19. There is a need to enforce the Domestic Violence Act successfully, and the media can increase awareness among the general population and include information about the helplines, shelters, legal aid, Charities, etc. Social services should be encouraged to raise consciousness of COVID-19 and at the same time raising awareness of domestic abuse and recognizing the symptoms of D. Human rights, including the health-related rights of women and children, are major challenges posed by the challenges of COVID-19. While the lockout is compulsory for the world's people, domestic violence against women and children is also on the rise. This has been noted that there are several countries in which special policies, legislation and services are enforced to tackle the domestic abuse crisis in households (Nigam, 2020). Domestic abuse has been recorded all over the world, including China, Argentina, Germany, Turkey, etc. Antonio Guterres, UN Chief of Staff, called for a "global truce" as domestic violence against women and girls is on the rise around the world in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (UN News, 2020).

The world predicts that millions of cases including "domestic abuse," "child marriage," "gender genital mutilation" and "unintended abortion" will be recorded in this crisis and lockdown era due to COVID-19 in 2020 (UNFPA, 2020). Home is known to be the safest location in this lockdown era, but it is not the safest place for all citizens, because many of them do not have the privilege of a home where they can maintain their social distance. Citizens are expected to work in the poorest circumstances and relegated to the margins. The corona virus reveals our vulnerable lives and blind faces to poverty, and is widespread among women. Women living in slums are expected to endure the worst circumstances in life due to lack of adequate services. Migrants are expected to face starvation as a result of the lockdown and lack of jobs in the cities. Originally, food was given by the government, but many of them are not in a position to use the facilities (Kumar Chandan, 2020). Later in the lockdown period, many workers are sent to their homes by the government, and many of them are still left behind, and due to lack of food and money, frustrations have given rise to domestic violence, and the declining support system has left women and children at high risk. Women are not able to use any of their support systems outside the home and are away from their parents' safety net. Females are burdened by the expectation of domestic employment on the basis of gendered societal values and are judged on the quality of work.

During the lockdown period, women are forced into all households, there is no or very little contribution from the other members to help them, and this is one of the reasons for domestic violence (Shekhar, Divya, J., 2020). Domestic abuse against women and children is an example of the ability of the people to work together against women and children that are less dominant. Man, as a husband, believed that he had an equal right as his wife to the sexuality of a child. In addition to all these issues relating to domestic violence, women's groups around the world are focused on domestic violence against women as a violation of human rights and are collaborating with the governing bodies to eradicate any discrimination against women (Agnihotri et al, 2006). Strong government action and a consistent enforcement of the law are the basic demands of the common people, who can provide swift justice to monitor and restrict these escalated cases of domestic violence against women, girls and children as well. In India, there is a need to shift people's views and attitudes about the fundamental rights of women for their "justice," "protection," "security," "equality" and "freedom." We can not forget our conventional understanding that a woman is a source of strength, and that without her the world of men will stand nowhere, is the maker of life, and has the potential and capacity to support and teach a new generation (Kumar and Chary, 2016).

Objective of the study

1. Identify the essence of domestic abuse against women and children during the pandemic condition of COVID-19.
2. To recognize the various factors responsible for domestic abuse during COVID-19.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the present research, a survey of the sample size of 165 females was performed. The females listed were from different fields with different professional backgrounds and family background. A common questionnaire was used to assess the various causes and existence of domestic abuse. The research was exploratory in nature and the sampling method was random. T-test was conducted in order to achieve the correct answer.

The results of the study

Table 1 shows the demographic history of respondents who have questions about gender , age , education, profession, place, family status and class. The sample is performed for females, 23.6 per cent of whom are 28-35 years of age, 22.4 per cent of whom are 36-42 years of age, and 20 per cent of whom are 43-50 years of age, 17.6 per cent of whom are 51-60 years of age and 16.4 per cent of whom are older than 60 years of age. Among them, 18.8 per cent were uneducated, 13.9 per cent were undergraduates, 12.7 per cent were undergraduates, 17.6 per cent were students, 20 per cent were postgraduates, and the remaining 17 per cent were undergraduates. 55.2% of them came from urban areas and 44.8% came from rural areas. This is shown that 29.7 per cent of them were unemployed, 34.5 per cent were working in various industries, and 35.8 per cent were householders. 56.4% of them come from a traditional family and 43.6% have a nuclear family. 28.5 percent of them came from a wealthy family, 38.2 percent from a middle class family, and 33.3 percent from a poor one

.Table 1 Demographic background of the respondents

Variables	No. of respondents	% age
Gender		
Female	165	100%
Total	165	100%
Age groups		
28-35 years	39	23.6%
36-42 years	37	22.4%
43-50 years	33	20%
51-60 years	29	17.6%
Above 60 years	27	16.4%
Total	165	100%
Qualification		
Uneducated	31	18.8%
Secondary	23	13.9%
Senior secondary	21	12.7%
Graduates	29	17.6%
Post graduates	33	20%
Others	28	17%
Total	165	100%
Area		
Urban	91	55.2%
Rural	74	44.8%
Total	165	100%
Occupation		
Unemployed	49	29.7%
Working	57	34.5%
House makers	59	35.8%
Total	165	100%
Family status		
Joint Family	93	56.4%
Nuclear Family	72	43.6%
Total	165	100%
Family class		
Rich	47	28.5%

Middle	63	38.2%
Poor	55	33.3%
Total	165	100%

Table 2 Nature of domestic violence against women during COVID-19

S. No	Nature of domestic violence	Mean score	t Value	Sig
1.	Couple and family members abuse each other verbally	3.63	8.796	0.00
2.	Ill-treatment and physical assault is also seen in many families	3.19	2.199	0.01
3.	Women of many families faces Harassment and maltreatment in day to day life	3.82	10.717	0.00
4.	Offensive nature of the spouse hurts the partner many times in number of cases	3.79	9.834	0.00
5.	Domestic violence can be in the form of sexual abuse even between the married couples	3.91	10.246	0.00

The extent of domestic abuse against women during COVID-19 is seen in Table 2. It is shown that married couples and other family members tend to physically harass each other with a mean score of 3.63 due to their personal anger during the lockout time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ill-treatment and physical abuse were still found in many households with a mean score of 3.19, with women in many communities suffering violence and regular ill-treatment from their husbands and their partners with a mean score of 3.82. It is shown that the offending behavior of the offender also affects the victim in a number of situations with a mean score of 3.79, and that the percentage of times domestic violence can be sexually abused and between married partners with a mean score of 3.91. It is shown that the essence of domestic violence against women can be inconsistent in different contexts. One experimental t-test was used to determine whether or not the reactions to the statements were relevant. This was observed that for all the statements the value under the sense column is below 0.05, thus, all the mean values for the statements have been slightly higher than the test values (3.5) and thus all the solutions are important.

Table 3 Causes of domestic violence against the women during COVID-19

Sl. No.	Causes of domestic violence	Mean score	t Value	Sig
1.	Identity of the female damages the reputation of the man that is partially restored by them through domestic violence	3.93	12.985	0.00
2.	Financial crisis during COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to domestic violence	4.01	11.691	0.00
3.	Dominant nature gave rise to domestic violence during COVID-19	3.97	12.677	0.00
4.	Alcohol is the major cause of domestic violence in many families	3.89	11.079	0.00
5.	Extramarital affairs is one of the key reasons of the domestic violence	3.99	11.146	0.00

Table 3 demonstrates the causes of domestic abuse against women in a pandemic scenario of COVID-19. It is shown that Personality of a girl hurts the image of a man who is partly

recovered by domestic abuse with a mean score of 3.93. During the lockdown situation due to COVID-19 people are suffering from a financial crisis as there is no job and this dissatisfaction takes the form of domestic violence with a mean score of 4.01, it is also true that the superior aspect of the partner is also one of the causes for domestic violence with a mean score of 3.97. This has been found in so many households that alcohol is the primary source of domestic violence with a mean score of 3.89, and the research further indicates that extramarital problems are one of the biggest causes for domestic violence between so many partners with a mean score of 3.99. It is also clear that there are so many factors and causes for domestic abuse. One experimental t-test was used to determine whether or not the reactions to the statements were relevant. This has been observed that for all the statements the value under the sense column is less than 0.05, thus, all the mean values for the statements have been slightly greater than the test values (3.5) and thus all the solutions are important.

4. CONCLUSION

Domestic abuse is a serious and critical phenomenon that has been happening all over the world for many years now, but this crisis has been heightened since the lock-down scenario as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This unfavorable condition of domestic abuse has impacted the health and welfare of millions of women during their lifetime. This state of abuse and aggression is called a "intimate partner crime" that often takes the form of physical violence, sexual harassment and mental crime. This is the case that in India, women are not aware of their rights, legislation and organisations that are there to deal with domestic abuse and are there for their assistance and protection.

The present study concluded that there might be various factors and natures of domestic violence, such as verbal abuse, ill-treatment, physical aggression, stalking, ill-treatment, offending of the partner and sexual misconduct, for reasons such as Identity of the person, financial distress, Dominant gender, Drug and Extramarital Relations, etc., during the Covid-19 pandemic and lock-down situation. There are various comments that have also been described as important in describing the causes for domestic violence and the essence of domestic abuse during the lock-up era.

This is necessary to raise awareness about rights, policies and organisations related to domestic violence. The curriculum of schools and colleges needs to incorporate social sensitivity and consciousness-raising activities related to domestic violence that will undoubtedly transform the mindset of future generations. The directory of Charities and organisations that are there to work with domestic violence should be readily available so that people can use it to prevent and reduce this adverse situation.

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