

Gender Based Violence against Women: A Study on Domestic Violence in North Bengal

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Abstract: Globally, after generations of silence, violence against women has become an important topic of discussion in popular media and academic scrutiny in many developing countries. India has been no exception to this unfortunate situation. About 48 percent of the total population in India comprise of women and till recent years 2,44,270 cases have been reported against violation of women and as much as 70 percent cases, has been the case of domestic violence. This type of violence is silently caused and it affects the family of all classes and cultures. Even after years of independence, having women as victims of inequality and discrimination, the law makers in India, have been enacting various laws directed towards women's equality and one such law has been the Domestic Violence Act, 2005. In the state of West Bengal, the problem of domestic violence reveals a new dimension and thus, with the provisions of gender specific laws in the study area, the paper tries to make an in-depth analysis of 30 women respondents of Northern part of West Bengal on parameters such as the reasons for their discrimination, the types of violence they face, the extremity of violence and the protection they receive through laws, police and the society.

Keywords: Gender, Inequality, North Bengal, Violence, Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over the past two decades violence against women has been much more serious and common problem than previously suspected. It is estimated that one out of three women worldwide has been raped, beaten or abused. While gender based violence against women occurs in all cultures and societies, its frequency varies across countries [1]. Societies that stress the importance of traditional patriarchal practices which reinforce unequal power relations between men and women and keep women in a subordinate position tend to have higher rates of violence against women. India has been no exception to this unfortunate situation. Rape, sexual assault, physical and verbal abuse has deep roots in India's history and societal norms and such issues of violence have been growing over the years [2]. Between the years 2001 and 2011, the number of crimes against women was around 59 percent of the overall crimes in the country with rape being the highest recorded crime. Till 2014, as much as 244, 270 cases have been reported against violation of women and as much as 70 percent cases, has been the case of domestic violence. Women comprise 48 percent almost half of the Indian population. After years of independence it is a harsh reality that they are still ill-treated and humiliated.

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Women are deprived of their independent identity and have been looked upon as a commodity. They have not only been robbed off their individual dignity and pride by way of seduction by the men outside, but also have in few cases become a victim of cruelty by her saviours, within the four walls of her own house [3]. However, her trauma does not end here, it may even go up to the extent of forcing her to commit suicide or she may be burnt to death for various reasons including that of dowry. This type of violence is prevalent in almost all societies and it transgresses the boundaries of caste, class, region or religion.

A. Status of Women in the Global Scenario

Describing the status of women all over the world, Gustave Speth, in his foreword to the Human Development Report in 1995 wrote that women still constitute 70 percent of the world's poor and 2/3rd of the world's illiterate. However, women are born like men and their way of living are same. Still in most cultures of the world, women suffer disrespectful behavior. In economically progressive areas that are dominated by Western culture, including the developed or industrialized countries, North America, Europe, and Australia, women have achieved significant progresses [4]. In their personal level, there have been instances of less birth rate and preferences of staying away from their homes. But in developing areas dominated by non-Western culture, women have remained more or less subjugated, and in some countries they are even stripped of their basic human rights. Exploitation and abuse of women as such has been acceptable in countries where women have an inferior social status by customary or formal law [5]. Violence against women and girls is a direct corollary of their subordinate status in society.

As per the Global women's issues, primitive cultures have beliefs, norms, and social institutions that legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against women. Abused women in developing countries tend to accept their inferior status and to adopt the traditional values of submission and servility. Violence is a serious human rights violation and a public health problem of global proportions.

B. Status of Women in India

In India, women have two contrast positions, significantly opposite to each other. On one hand women have been bestowed a divine status, in Indian mythology the Shakti that is, the power has always been personified in feminine gender whether it is Durga, Bhairavi or Laxmi and on the other hand,

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women have also been discriminated and victimised by the norms created by male dominated society [6]. India's ancient history represents religious scriptures signifying men and women as two aspects of one person. Women were considered more powerful than men. They were not only significant role players at home but also in the society. In the Aryan Golden Age, men were free, brave and fearless but women were learned, free and highly cultured, they were considered as representatives of conjugal love and sacrifice. With the invasions by the Turks and Afghans, the gender equation changed in the sub-continent. The locals having lost the battle into subjection were coerced to hand over their women. The invaders always came single on horseback without accompanied by their families and they sought subjection rules to be written over the body of the women in the conquered territory. To protect the honor and chastity of the women became a major societal aim for the local population. The 'purdah' system became a trend for the Indian women and they became confined within the four walls of the house. Their position was no less than that of a maid. The Post-Vedic period saw the arrival of sati and child marriages. Despite being honoured as sacred in the Hindu culture, with the passage of time women's position started deteriorating and they became victims of various atrocities. Even after civilisations and revolutions in the country, women failed in getting a legitimate place. Thus, towards the end of British rule, Saints like Swami Dayanand, raised their voices fearlessly against such ill treatments and discriminations of women, and this lead to the culmination of the laws for women. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that the status of women indicates the character of the country and the social standing of any society just seems to be determined by the social status of its women. Women have played an important role in the evolution of man and his progeny. They continue to be the edifices of tolerance, personifications of sacrifice, effulgent emblems of selflessness and the towers of grace. Mahatma Gandhi believed that intellectually, mentally and spiritually women should run a race with man and should not continue to be caught up in the ever-tightening noose of exploitation [7].

C. Gender Based Violence against Women in India

According to the Indian Constitution, women are the legal citizens of the country and have equal rights with men. But in reality Indian women are the worst victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for centuries and centuries. They have been the victims of atrocities and crimes. The crumbling mansion of women's life is made to stand on the weakening pillars of injustice, inequality and indifference. Crimes against women are assertion of dominance over them [8].

The studies on the rate of incidence and prevalence suggest that this violence is in its alarming state. It exists not only in India but also in other nations though in different forms and trends. In the Indian society it is a social evil that has deep seated roots in its culture. The National Crime Record Bureau suggests that in India there is:-

- One dowry death every 78 hours
- One act of sexual harassment every 59 minutes,
- One rape every 34 minutes,

- One act of torture every 12 minutes, and
- One out of every three married women experience domestic violence.

According to some, violence against women is also not considered as violence at all because of the general acceptance of mans superiority over them. Women also do not consider it as violence because of their misconstrued religious values and fears of misinterpreting it as a social and spiritual question. 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 and enjoys social sanction. Manifestations of violence include physical aggression, such as blows of varying intensity, burns, attempted hanging, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmail, economic or emotional threats, and control over speech and actions. In extreme, but not unknown cases, death is the result.

One reason why violence has been largely ignored as a social problem is because of a well accepted definition. Violence is an extremely diffused and complex phenomenon. Defining it is a not an easy task but it is a matter of judgment. Notions of what is acceptable and unacceptable in terms of behavior and what constitutes harm, are culturally influenced and are constantly under review as values and social norms are always on an evolution. The wide variety of moral codes throughout the world makes the topic of violence one of the most challenging and sensitive to address in a global forum. There are many possible ways to define violence, depending on who is defining it and for what purpose of arrest and conviction.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

The World Health Organization defines violence as 'the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation'.

Gelles and Straus (1979) Violence is an act carried out with the intention or perceives intention of physically hurting another person.

D. Domestic Violence

The term used to describe the exploding problem of violence within homes is Domestic Violence. This violence is towards someone who we are in a relationship with, be it a wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent or any other family member.

It can be a male's or a female's atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. This violence has a tendency to explode in various forms such as physical, sexual or emotional [9].

Since times immemorial, domestic violence has been an intrinsic part of the society we are living in.

The contributing factors could be the desire to gain control over another family member, the desire to exploit someone for personal benefits, the flare to be in a commanding position all the time showcasing one's supremacy so on and so forth. On various occasions, psychological problems and social influence also add to the vehemence.

The term 'domestic violence' is not exactly defined under the Indian laws. Under the Indian law the term 'cruelty to wife' is being used to address this growing menace. All acts of gender-based on physical, psychological, abuse by family member, ranging from simple assaults to aggravated physical battery, kidnapping, threats, intimidation, coercion and stalking, humiliating verbal abuse, forcible or unlawful entry, arson, destruction of property, sexual violence, genital mutilation, violence related to exploitation through prostitution, violence against household workers and attempts to commit such acts shall be termed as 'domestic violence' [10].

The National Commission for Women defined domestic violence to connote 'Domestic violence' means any of the following acts or any willful conduct which is committed on a woman by her husband or any of his or her relatives,

- Which is of such a nature as is likely to drive the women out of the house or commit suicide or to injure herself;
- Causes injury or danger to the life, limb or health whether physical or mental of the women;
- Any harassment which causes distress to the women;
- Any act which compels the women to do any activity against her will or on the pressure of the husband or the relatives;
- Any act which is unsuitable and destroying the dignity of the women;
- Any act of omission or commission, which is likely to cause mental torture or mental agony to the women.

Table I: Classifications of Domestic Violence

| Physical Violence | Sexual Violence | Emotional Violence |
|---|---|--|
| Physical violence occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions. | Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity. | Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless. |
| Psychological Violence | Spiritual Violence | Cultural violence |
| Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain | Spiritual (or religious) violence occurs when someone uses an individual's | Cultural violence occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of |

| control. | spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person. | her or his culture, religion or tradition. |
|--|---|--|
| Verbal Abuse | Financial Abuse | Neglect |
| Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual. | Financial abuse occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources. | Neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not. |

E. Factors responsible for Domestic Violence

There is no single cause to account for violence perpetrated against women. Increasingly, research has focused on the inter-relatedness of various factors that help us to understand the problem within different cultural contexts. Several complex and interconnected institutionalized social and cultural factors have kept women particularly vulnerable to the violence directed at them, all of the manifestations of historically unequal power relation between men and women.

Factors contributing to these unequal power relations include:

Social factors: The family institution where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males, legislations and cultural sanctions have denied women and children an independent legal and social status. In identifying factors leading to domestic violence tested the co-relationship between domestic violence and education [11]. According to his survey in Gujarat, illiterate women face more violence than literate women. Relationship between abusive behaviour and level of education has been found to be statistically significant. Illiterate women and those with education up to primary level tend to be more subjected to violence as compared to those who had received education beyond the primary level. However, one has to keep in mind that the percentage of literate women in Gujarat is overall between 20 percent to 50 percent. In contrast a study (Ram, 1993) shows that there is no significant relationship between beating and educational level of the couple. Educated women are beaten as much by their husbands as those who are illiterate or less educated. About one-fourth of the batterers (24%) in Ahuja's study were those who were moderately educated and about one-fourth (26%) were highly educated. However, he added that men, whose educational attainment is low, are more likely to beat their wife than men who are better educated. Study findings of Ahuja shows that although women of all ages are victims of wife-battering,



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a larger number of victims (72%) are among those with an age difference of upto 10 years between spouses. According to the survey findings of Visaria, women who experience domestic violence early in their marriage, continue to be subjected to it even with increase in age.

The findings point out that family structure, the presence or absence of children and the size of the family have little co-relation with wife battering.

Economic factors: The lack of economic resources underpins women's vulnerability to violence and their difficulty in extracting themselves from the violent relationship. The link between violence and lack of economic resources and dependence is circular in nature. On one hand, the threats and fear of violence keeps women from seeking employment or at the best compels them to accept low paid, home-based exploitative labour. On the other hand, without economic independence, women have no power to escape from an abusive relationship.

Cultural factors: Both in the industrial and developing countries cultural ideologies provide legitimacy for violence against women in certain circumstances. Religious and traditions of the past have sanctioned the chastising and beating wives. The physical punishment of wives has been particularly sanctioned under the notion of entitlement and ownership of women. Male control of family wealth inevitably places decision-making authority in male hands, leading to male dominance and proprietary rights over women and girls. The concept of ownership in turn, legitimizes control over women sexuality too, which in many law codes has been deemed essential to ensure patrilineal inheritance [12].

With different processes of socialisation that men and women undergo, men take up stereotyped gender roles of domination and control, whereas women take up that of submission, dependence and respect for authority. A female child grows up with a constant sense of being weak and in need of protection, whether physical social or economic. This helplessness has led to her exploitation at almost every stage of life. The family socialises its members to accept hierarchical relations expressed in unequal division of labour between the sexes and power over the allocation of resources. The family and its operational unit is where the child is exposed to gender differences since birth, and in recent times even before birth, in the form of sex-determination tests leading to foeticide and female infanticide. The home, which is supposed to be the most secure place, is where women are most exposed to violence. Excessive consumption of alcohol and other drugs have also been noted as the factor of provoking aggressive and violent male behaviour towards women and children. The isolation of women in their families and communities is known to contribute to increased violence, particularly if those women have little access to family or local organisations. On the other hand however women's participation in social networks as acted as a critical factor for lessening their vulnerability to violence and in their ability to resolve domestic violence.

Political factors: There is under representation of women in power, politics and media and in legal professions. Lack of legal protection, particularly within the sanctity of the home

is a strong factor in perpetuating violence against women. There are other factors too that cause domestic violence and these include sociological and historical factors.

The pace of social changes in West Bengal has accelerated in the recent years but the problem of gender violence in the state almost reveals a new dimension. Despite being the land of various political, social, economic and cultural movements there has been a failure to look into the movement for married women's development. Patriarchy limits their lives and they are practically excluded from decision making processes. Studies estimate that from region to region a large percentage of women experience violence at the hands of an intimate partner or family member and based on this notion of violence this study is based on analysing violence in North Bengal. Thus, this study attempts to analyse the incidence of domestic violence in North Bengal region of West Bengal by surveying 30 women respondents as the sample for study. The primary objectives of this study are: - i) to study what is the meaning of domestic violence and its types, ii) to identify and examine the extent and the types of violence prevalent in North Bengal, iii) to identify the factor that cause violence in North Bengal, and iv) to understand who help the victims during their times of violence.

II. METHODOLOGY

The method of data collection for this study is based both on the primary data acquired from the survey with women respondents and by the secondary data acquired by journals, articles, books, newspapers, government reports and web sites. Fieldwork for this study has been carried out in Darjeeling district and Siliguri subdivision of West Bengal. The universe of the study is a sample of 30 women respondents and they are surveyed by employing research techniques that include a survey and in-depth interviews. It was structured on questions relating on their social and economic and personal experience. The responses of the surveyed women are analysed and interpreted through figures.

A. Profile of the Study Area

Darjeeling district forms the northernmost district of the state of West Bengal, in eastern India in the foothills of the Himalayas. The district is famous for its beautiful hill stations and is often referred to as the Queen of the Hills. It is surrounded by two important neighbouring countries namely, Nepal and Bhutan in the eastern and the western side and by the state of Bihar and the district of North Dinajpur in the southern and the state of Sikkim in its northern side. Thus being encircled by international boundary with the countries, this district has remained a place of immense strategic importance since last 200 years. The rivers Mechi, De Chu, Mahananda, Rangit, Teesta and Rangpo also form the natural border of the district. Darjeeling district is located between 26° 31' to 27° 31' North Latitude and 87° 59' to 88° 53' East Longitude at an average elevation of 6982 ft (2128m).



B. Population

The population growth of Darjeeling district is not static rather it is fluctuating in nature. The total population of the people of Darjeeling district was 10,06,434 in 1981 and it increased to 13,35,687 in 1991 (Census of India).

A comparison of the census of a decade between 2001 and 2011 shows that in 2001, the total population of the district was 1,609,172 out of which there were 830,644 males and 778,528 females and according to 2011 census, the total population of the district is 18,42,034 out of which there have been 9,34,796 males & 9,07,238 females.

The district also comprises of both urban and rural areas. Out of the total population, 7, 27,963 (39.42%) people live in urban area and it includes 370,294 males and 357,669 females. On the other hand, 11,18,860 people (60%) live in the rural areas of the district which include 5,66,965 males and 5,51,895 females (Census of India,2011)

C. Geography

Geographically, the district can be divided into two broad divisions, the hills and the plains. The entire hilly region of the district initially came under the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, a semi-autonomous administrative body, which was replaced by the Gorkha Territorial Administration under the state government of West Bengal. The council covers the three hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong. The foothill of Darjeeling Himalayas, which comes under the Siliguri subdivision, is known as the Terai. The Terai is bounded on the north by the mountains, on the south by Kishanganj district of Bihar state, on the east by Jalpaiguri district and on the west by Nepal. It has a length from north to south of 18miles, and a breadth from east to west of 16miles. As of 2011 it is the second least populous district of West Bengal after Dakshin Dinajpur.

The survey has also been carried out in Siliguri subdivision which is situated at the base of the Himalaya Mountains in the plains of Darjeeling District by the side of river Mahananda. It is the second largest city in West Bengal and known as the gateway of North-Eastern India. The strategic location of the place makes sure that travelers to the North-East has to pass through Siliguri. It is also the commercial capital of the region. The Sub-Division is bounded on the north by the Sub-Himalayan ranges and on the south by Bangladesh, Uttar Dinajpur and Bihar. To its east lies Jalpaiguri District and Kalimpong Sub-Division and on the west by Nepal. Siliguri got its Sub-Divisional status in the year 1907 and it has got four Community Development Blocks, namely, Matigara, Phansidewa, Naxalbari and Khoribari block and one municipal Corporation area known as Siliguri Municipal Corporation under its administrative jurisdiction. The Sub-Division comprises of 7 Police Stations and 22 Gram Panchayats and three Assembly Constituencies.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The questionnaire on analysing domestic violence was distributed to married girls and women whose age was between 19 yrs to 59yrs. The maximum number of respondents belonged to the age group of 30-39 years and

40-49 years. All of them had basic education, 6 of them had primary education, 7 of them who were graduates, other 6 were post graduates, 2 were professionals and maximum no. of 8 respondents were had secondary education till class 12. Out of the 30 respondents 24 of them were unemployed, in private business and daily wage earners, the remaining 6 were working as public servants. It was strange that even working women faced violence.

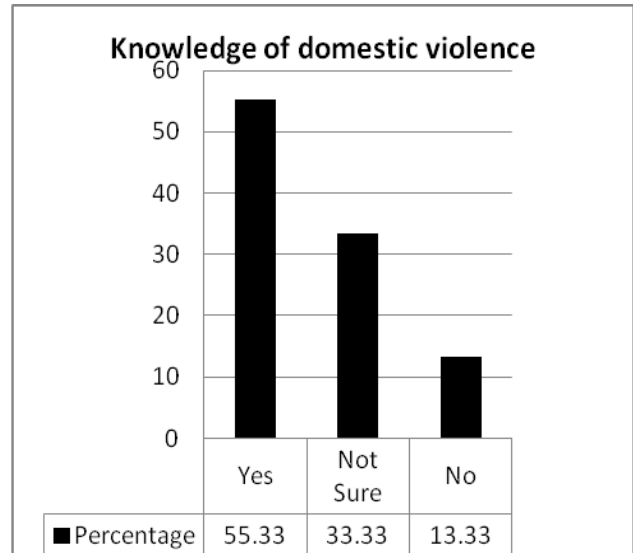


Fig 1: Respondents Knowledge of Domestic Violence Taking Place in the Area.

The figure represents that 16 women (55.3%) were aware of the fact that domestic violence is taking place in their area, which is in North Bengal. It seems that 4 women (13.3%) are still unaware of this evil because of their unawareness about the society and the remaining 10(33.3%) were not sure if the things experienced to them was even a situation that could be called violence (Fig 1).

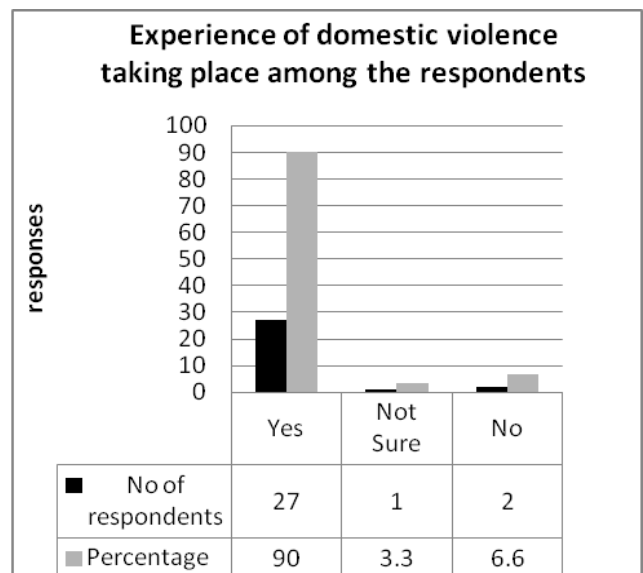


Fig 2: Respondents Experience of Domestic Violence Taking Place among the Respondents



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The above figure shows that there are about 27 women (90%) out of the 30 women, who said they had an experience of violence, after having understood what actually violence comprised of. 2 more women (6.6%) said that they had not experienced violence at all, while the remaining 1(3.3%) of them was not even sure of her own situation (Fig 2).

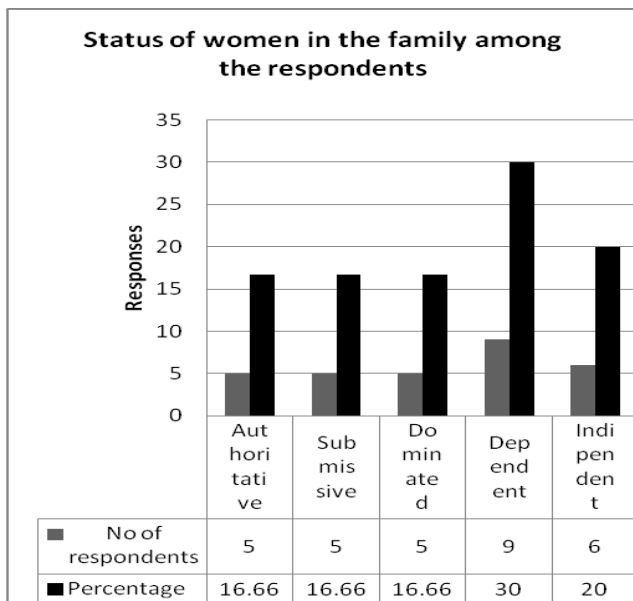


Fig 3: Responses on the Status of Women in the Family of the Respondents

The above graph suggests that the women in North Bengal have mixed types of status in their families. While the maximum respondents 9 women (30%) of the 30 women have a dependence towards their husband for food, shelter and clothing, the remaining 21 women respondents have either an authoritative (16.6%), submissive (16.6%), independent roles in their family life, and 5 (16.6%) are rather dominated while being at home (Fig 3).

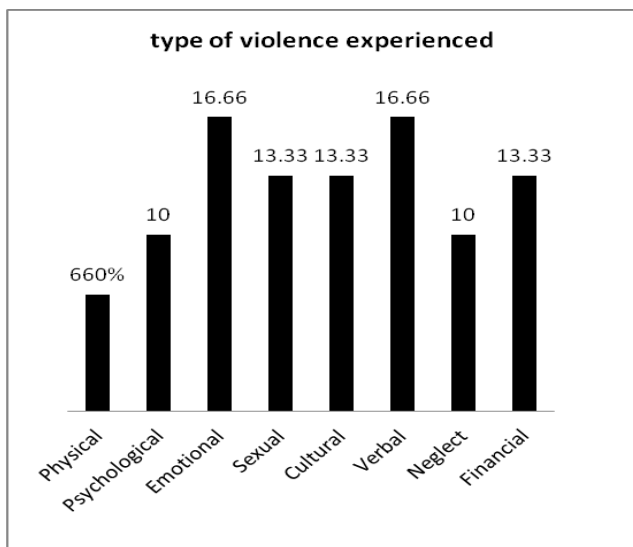


Fig 4: Experience of Violence under Different Category of among the Respondents in the Area

Among the various types of violence experienced by women they were of the opinion that out of 30 samples of answers, 2 of them (6.6%) were facing physical violence, while of them faced psychological(3.3%) neglect(3.3%), sexual(13.3%),

cultural(13.3%), financial(13%) and the maximum of them 5(16.6%) had an experience of verbal and emotional violence (Fig 4).

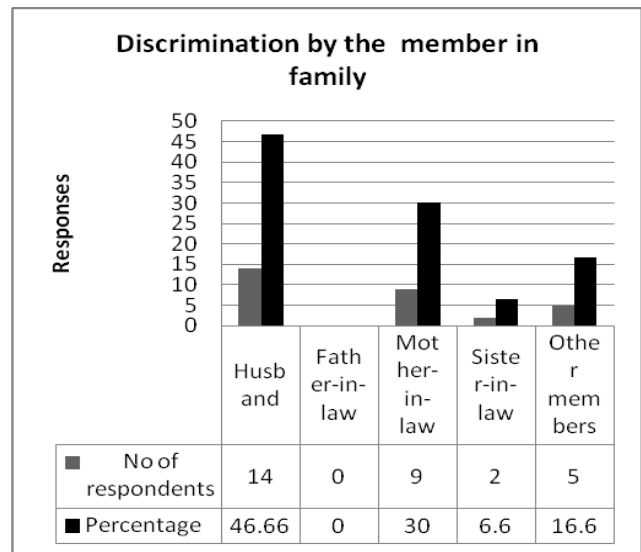


Fig 5: Discrimination by Certain Member of Family.

It suggests from the above figure that 14 of the 30 women (46%) are violated by their husbands; there are 9 of them (30%) who are discriminated by the mother-in-law. There are 2 of them whom often face discrimination at the hands of their sister in-laws and (16.6%) who are tortured by other members of the husbands family (Fig 5).

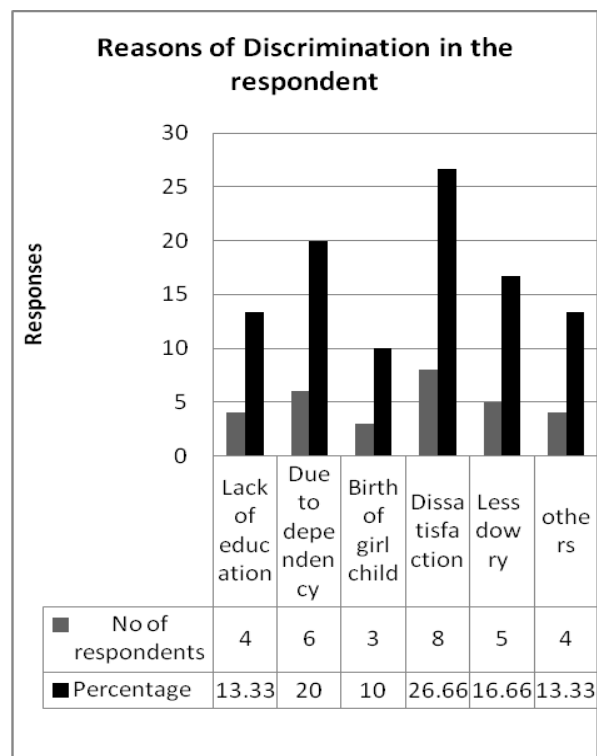


Fig 6: Reasons of Discrimination of the Respondents

The above figure suggests that women respondents were subjected to violence, criticism and inhuman treatment by their husband and family,

among the 30 respondents 3 of them (10%) birth to girl child, 4 of them had a lack of education (13.3%), 5 of them (16.6%) gave less dowry, 6 of them were dependent and acted like burden to the husband, while the maximum of 8 (26.6%) were of the opinion that their husbands family was dissatisfied with them (Fig 6).

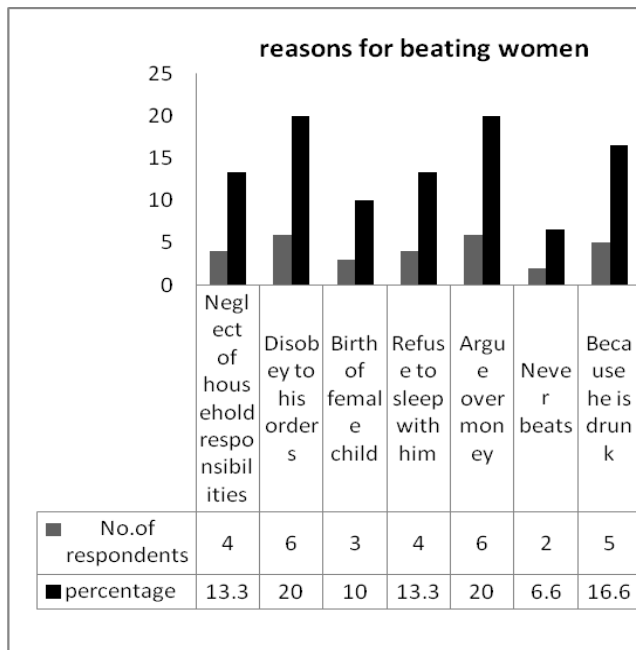


Fig 7: Reasons why Women Are Beaten by the Family Members

The above figure shows that 2 out of 30 women (6.6%) were never beaten by the husband or any family member. There were 8 of them beaten because they neglected household responsibilities (13.5%), and also because they refused to sleep with their husband (13.3%). The highest no. of responses 12 were received by disobeying of orders (20%) and argue over money (20%). There were even 5 of them (16.6%) who often got beaten by their husbands because their husbands were drunk and without reason they were subjected to their anger (Fig 7).

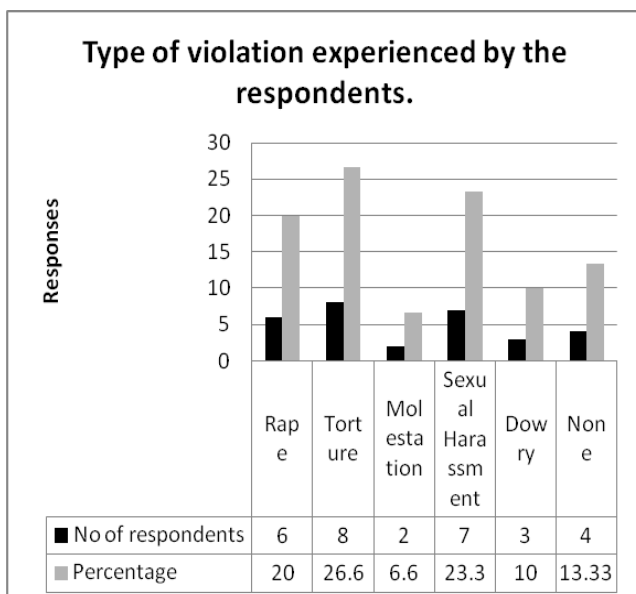


Fig 8: Responses on the type of Violation Experienced by the Respondents.

The above graph denotes molestation (6.6%) and dowry being experienced by women (10%), Rape being faced by (20%), while some more of them are being faced by the violence of sexual harassment while maximum respondents are being tortured (Fig 8).

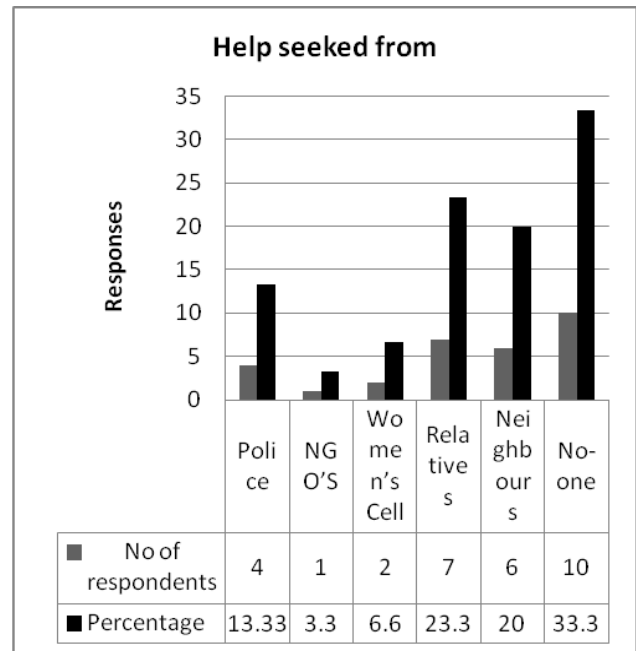


Fig 9: Help Sought During Violence by the Respondents.

When women of this region faced domestic violence there were 1 of the 30 who took help from NGO(3.3%), some took help from relatives and neighbors during minor incidents, while 4(13.3%) of them informed the police and the highest respondents of 10 women (33.3%) were helping herself without letting anyone know what she faced (Fig 9).

It has been clear through the above data that women in North Bengal have been facing domestic violence. Their family members including their husband have been discriminating them, mainly because of birth of girl child, a lack of education, gave less dowry and few were regarded as burden to the husband and were a source of dissatisfaction to them. Violence in this area has been found to be of a domestic violence type.

IV. CONCLUSION

Gender based violence against women is a common reality in the lives of women and girls in many parts of the world, developing and industrialized countries alike. Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Violence against women in the society of developing countries like India is now beginning to be recognized as a widespread health problem impeding development. In this present study conducted in urban area of Siliguri, District Darjeeling of West Bengal, under the guidance of books and journals and personal interaction with married women, an attempt was taken to get the overview of this social curse that



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has lowered the existence of women in their eyes. The entire survey shows that it is not education or the birth of girl child or dowry that serves as the main sources of domestic violence. There are educated husbands and educated wives and still when it comes to being the decision maker of the house is the 'man'. Often a figure it can be said who is neither has much education nor much experience but 'his will' that under any circumstance has to become the will of the house. Thus, it is the patriarchal society mainly which doesn't allow a girl, a woman to stand up for herself. She is brought up in a dependent atmosphere, is not allowed to act free with the surrounding. She is supposed to be submissive and shy, she supposed to respect her elders, know household work, marry with a man who doesn't respect existence, rear children, at home she has to work more than a man who goes to office. She has to give up everything she has because she is a 'girl' or a female. A man never has to bear as much as a woman. A woman is the essence of life in simple terms, she is the source of a life, nurtures a new life, handles not just one but two houses with same loyalty like she had in her own parents house, she possesses double the energy than any man has but still she is not respected, not cared and not appreciated. Apart from appreciating a woman who is getting better position in different careers of life, will ever there come a day when a women will be appreciated for a good family life free from violence is the main question. Legal provisions will surely not change anything, at the end there should be realization among the men that women was not born to be lesser than him, to be subordinated by him but was born equal to him, without whom the world won't exist.

One of the severe effects of domestic violence against women is its effect on her children. It is nature's phenomenon that a child generally has a greater attachment towards the mother for she is the one who gives birth. As long as the violence subjected to the mother is hidden from the child, he/she may behave normally at home. The day when mother's grief and suffering is revealed, a child may become upset about the happening deeply. Children may not even comprehend the severity of the problem. They may turn silent, reserved and express solace to the mother. When the violence against women is openly done in front of them since their childhood, it may have a deeper and gruesome impact in their mindset. They get used to such happenings at home, and have a tendency to reciprocate the same in their lives. It's common in especially in rural homes in India which are victimised by the evil of domestic violence.

Battered women have tendency to remain quiet, agonised and emotionally disturbed after the occurrence of the torment. A psychological set back and trauma because of domestic violence affects women's productivity in all forms of life. A working Indian woman drops out from work place because of the ill-treatment at home or office, she may lose inefficiency in work. Her health may deteriorate if she is not well physically and mentally. Some women leave their home immediately after first few atrocious attacks and try to become self-dependent. Their survival becomes difficult and painful when they have to work hard for earning two meals a day.

Many such women come under rescue of women welfare organizations like Women Welfare Association of India

(WWAI) and Woman's Emancipation and Development Trust (WEDT). Some of them who leave their homes are forcefully involved in women trafficking.

Domestic Violence effects the family, violence against women may keep them locked in homes succumbing to the torture they face. If they come out in open and reveal the wrong done to them for help and rescue, it influences the society both positively and negatively. At one hand where it acts as an inspiration and ray of hope for other suffering women, on the other hand it also spoils the atmosphere of the society. When something of this kind happens in the society, few families may witness the evil of domestic violence knocking their door steps. Some families try to imitate what others indulge in irrespective of it being good or bad for the family.

Domestic violence affects the productivity level of the victim negatively. Men and women lose interest in household activities. If they are employed they fail to work with full capabilities in workplace. Children are found to concentrate less on studies. They drop out of school and do not get the education which otherwise they might have got if they were not tormented and thus the country loses a productive asset. Therefore, the nation's productivity altogether gets affected because of domestic violence in homes. Women should be aware of the rights for them, specially the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 which is a landmark initiative for protection of women against domestic violence. This act was brought into force by the Indian government from 26 October 2006. The Act provides for the first time in Indian law a definition of domestic violence with this definition being broad and including not only physical violence, but also other forms of violence such as emotional/verbal, sexual, and economic abuse. It is a civil law meant primarily for protection orders and not meant to penalize criminally

A. Limitations of the study

The survey has tried to accomplish a sample of total of thirty women and due to constraints of time the sample may fail to include the opinion of the whole population of North Bengal. Further, many of the women refused to reveal the type of violence committed against them since they are bound to the religious and cultural norms and values. Another limitation is that the presence of family members in the house acted as constraint for clearer information. For example, the fear of disclosing the truth in front of the mother-in-laws made them awkward. More hindrance to the interview as the lack of the women to understand that what they faced was a discrimination against them and not any type of fate, destiny or what they deserved. Emotional breakdown while expressing the views suggest that some women have endured much.

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