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Domestic Violence Against Women in India

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Introduction :

Domestic violence is most common of all. One of the reasons for it being so prevalent is the orthodox and idiotic mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males. Though women today have proved themselves in almost every field of life affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against them are much larger in number than against men. The possible reasons are many and are diversified over the length and breadth of the country. According to United Nation Population Fund Report, around two third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence and as many as 70 percent of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49 are victims of beating, rape or forced sex. In India, more than 55 percent of the women suffer from domestic violence, especially in the states of Bihar, U.P., M.P. and other northern states.

The most common causes for women stalking and battering include dissatisfaction with the dowry and exploiting women for more of it, arguing with the partner, refusing to have sex with him, neglecting children going out of home without telling the partner, not cooking properly or on time, indulging in extra marital affairs, not looking after in laws etc. In some cases infertility in females also leads to their assault by the family members. The greed for dowry, desire for a male child and alcoholism of the spouse are major factors of domestic violence against women in rural areas. There have been gruesome reports of young bride being burnt alive or subjected to continuous harassment for not bringing home the amount of demanded dowry. Women in India also admit to hitting or beating because of their suspicion about the husband's sexual involvement with other women. The Tandoor Murder Case of Naina Sahni in New Delhi in the year 1995 is one such dreadful incident of a woman being killed and then burnt in a Tandoor by his husband. This incidence was an outcome of suspicion of extra marital affairs of Naina Sahni which led to marital discord and domestic violence against her.

In urban areas there are many more factors which lead to differences in the beginning and later take the shape of domestic violence. These include more income of a working woman than her partner, her absence in the house till late night, abusing and neglecting in laws, being more forward socially etc. Working women are quite often subjected to assaults and coercion sex by employees of the organization. At times it could be voluntary for a better pay and designation in the office.

Violence against young widows has also been on a rise in India. Most often they are cursed for their husband's death and are deprived of proper food and clothing. They are not allowed or encouraged for remarriage in most of the homes, especially in rural areas. There have been

cases of molestation and rape attempts of women by other family members in nuclear families or someone in the neighborhood. At times, women are even sexually coerced by their partner themselves against their will. They are brutally beaten and tortured for not conceiving a male child. Incidents like, ripping off a woman's womb for killing the female fetus when she disagrees for abortion have also come to light especially in rural areas. Female feticide and female infanticide continue to be a rising concern.

Also as expressed by Rebecca J. Burns in the following lines, "When I am asked why a woman doesn't leave abuser I say: Women stay because the fear of leaving is greater than the fear of staying. They will leave when the fear of staying is greater than the fear of leaving." A common Indian house wife has a tendency to bear the harassment she is subjected to by her husband and the family. One reason could be to prevent the children from undergoing the hardships if she separates from the spouse. Also the traditional and orthodox mindset makes them bear the sufferings without any protest.

Other forms of physical abuse against women include slapping, punching, grabbing, burdening them with drudgery, public humiliation and the neglect of their health problems. Some of the other forms of psychological torment against them could be curtailment of their rights to self expression and curbing the freedom to associate with the natal family and friends.

Consequences of Violence Against Women :

Battered women have tendency to remain quiet, agonized 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. The suicide case of such victimized women is also a deadly consequence and the number of such cases is increasing.

working Indian woman may drop out from work
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place because of the ill treatment at home or office, she may lose her 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), Affus Woman Welfare Association (AWWA) and Woman's Emancipation and Development Trust (WEDT). Some of them who leave their homes are forcefully involved in women trafficking and pornography. This results in acquiring a higher risk of becoming a drug addict and suffering from HIV/AIDS. Some of course do it by their choice.

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 victimized by the evil of domestic violence.

Effect of Domestic Violence on the Society :

All the different forms of violence discussed in this essay adversely affect the society. 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.

Remedies for Domestic Violence :

What exactly do we want?

A very important question in wake of domestic violence remedies is that what exactly we are looking for in the process of minimizing their occurrences. Is it so that we want to gather more information about such cases for just expressing our concern over this issue with more accuracy, having facts and figures at hand? Or instead of just raising

our voices, we want to clean up the mess with sheer force and determination?

Fighting the Domestic Violence Evil :

A recent study has concluded that violence against women is the fastest growing crime in India. According to a latest report prepared by India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a crime has been recorded against women in every three minutes in India. Every 60 minutes, two women are raped in this country. Every six hours, a young married woman is found beaten to death, burnt or driven to suicide.

The response to the phenomenon of domestic violence is a typical combination of effort between law enforcement agencies, social service agencies, the courts and corrections/probation agencies. The role of all these has progressed over last few decades and brought their activities in public view. Domestic violence is now being viewed as a public health problem of epidemic proportion all over the world and many public, private and governmental agencies are seen making huge efforts to control it in India. There are several organizations all over the world government and non government actively working to fight the problems generated by domestic violence to the human community.

Conclusion :

Having looked at a sensitive topic of Domestic Violence in India, we can sense the importance of discussion of such a topic. The varying causes which can spark the violence within the four walls of homes need to be analysed carefully and a wise study of the factors causing the violence may prevent a family to suffer from the menace of domestic violence. The domestic violence may have a far wider and deeper impact in real life than what has been covered in this essay. What is required is to see closely the association of the factors provoking a particular form of domestic violence. If these factors can be controlled then more than one form of violence can be prevented from harming an individual or our society and India would be a much better place to live in.

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