

A Study of Abusive Relationships of Women in Modern Era

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Abstract

Abuse, as a subjective concept, evolves with time. In the fast growing technological era the term abuse is not restricted to the traditional meaning but is a very relative term and is subjected to the conditions prevailing at the time when the act or omission takes place. In the olden days women faced more of Physical torture wherein they were beaten black and blue at the hands of their family, spouse or in-laws. With modernization the torture faced by women is not only limited to physical torture but has extended its arms to psychological torture as well wherein the women are now traumatized emotionally without being physically harmed.

Keywords: Abusive Relationships, Modern Era, Torture on Women

Introduction

Often, women in abusive relationships demonstrate a remarkable level of courage and tenacity. Women who have been abused are often stereotyped as passive and suffering from mental illness as the violence increases (Rothenberg, 2003; Stark, 2007; Walker, 1979). Women in abusive relationships have developed a variety of strategies to take back control of their lives and find support in previous studies (Abraham, 2005; Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; Rajah, 2007; Stark, 2007). In contrast, the most common narrative associated with domestic violence is one of passiveness. There may be difficulties for victims who resist the abuse and seek aid from agencies because they don't fit the definition of a "typical victim". Women who speak up and/or display fortitude and resilience in situations categorised as intimate partner violence should tell their stories.

However, when retelling the intimate partner abuse story, it is also vital to stress the various aspects of the woman's life. Though intimate partner violence is caused by structural disparities between genders, gender discrimination is only one kind of oppression that women face. The resistance options accessible to a woman can be influenced by her race, gender, religion, ethnicity, and/or sexual orientation. If a woman is in the process of leaving her abuser or is still in a relationship with him, her resistance strategies may be influenced. The goal of this study is to recount the story of intimate relationship violence and uncover structural changes that are consistent with the experience of an intimate partner abuse survivor.

Dynamics Underlying Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence is disproportionately prevalent among women (90%), making it a sex-based crime (Roberts & Roberts, 2005). The characteristics of violent relationships vary from couple to couple, despite the fact that intimate partner violence is a crime that targets both men and women. The debate over gender symmetry and asymmetry best captures this. Sometimes violent men and women form relationships because they aren't terrified of one another. Common couple or situational couple violence refers to when an argument between equals turns violent. Male and female partners alike are equally likely to physically assault one other during a fight, and this reflects the gender symmetry in violence. In large-scale national studies on violence in relationships, this sort of aggression is frequently found. Rather than a long-term plan to exercise control over one's partner, domestic violence is frequently a reaction to frustration. While frequent couple violence disproves the notion that abusers are always men, it does not illustrate how the patriarchal structure of society encourages men's use of violence against women. Therefore, this study will focus on incidents of male violence against women. There are no gender or sexual orientation constraints on who might be a victim of intimate relationship abuse; the emphasis of this study is male-on-female intimate partner violence.

According to shelter polls, many women indicate that their husband participates in a "campaign of terror" and not just single acts of violence. Interpersonal terrorism and coercive control are terms used to describe this sort of abuse by Johnson (1995) and Stark (2007), but both describe how patriarchy helps abusive men to maintain power and control in relationships. An debate between equals that devolves into a violent brawl isn't considered coercive control. With coercive control, abusive behaviour is captured in its most immediate and all-encompassing elements, as well. Violence and threats from the abuser are common elements of coercion, which focuses on the here and now. Coercion is a tactic used to get the abused spouse to do something they don't want to. In order to maintain control, an abuser must deprive and exploit the victim on a long-term basis for his or her own gain. Coercion and control, according to Stark, work together to keep the woman in the violent relationship.

The Process of Leaving an Abusive Relationship

Some people (e.g., Worden & Carlson, 2005) may think that leaving an abusive relationship is a simple decision, but this is not always the case. In most situations, leaving does not happen as a result of one abusive occurrence. Making the decision to leave, as well as taking the necessary actions to do so, is part of the process. The decision-making processes that women go through when deciding whether or not to stay in an abusive relationship have been studied by scholars. Numerous external factors, including a woman's economic dependence, deficiencies in the criminal justice system, and inadequate social support from community agencies and workplaces, have been shown to influence the process of leaving. Psychological and victimisation consequences, such as fear conditioning and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are internal elements that influence the decision-making processes of women. These include the processes and outcomes of socialisation, victim characteristics, as well as psychological and victimisation outcomes. When examining how abused women weigh their options and decide to leave an abusive relationship, several external and internal factors must be considered.

Fear of increased and/or escalated violence toward themselves and their children, directly or indirectly, is frequently stated by victims of intimate partner abuse a woman feel that she must believe her life is at

peril before she can feel confident enough to make morally proper decisions to protect herself. When women who have been sexually assaulted or physically abused say they are afraid for their life in studies, researchers term these themes "triggers", "turning points" (Baly, 2010; Murray et al., 2015). Other turning points include a changing in a woman's perspective on her husband, the relationship, and/or the abuse; learning more about the dynamics of abuse; experiencing an intervention from others; realising the impact of violence on children; and deciding to exit the relationship (Murray et al., 2015). Victims of intimate partner abuse typically identify these turning events as the reason for taking action, whether that action is ending the relationship or seeking outside assistance.

Reasons for Women Stay in Abusive Relationships

Outside the box, it's simple to make judgments. Let's put ourselves in the position of women who are in violent relationships.

Women in abusive relationships have thoughts and feelings that we can better comprehend if we want to help them.

1. The Value the Sanctity of Commitment: Some women believe in fulfilling their vows till death's door closes.

To be honest, in this day and age of difficult marriages, high divorce rates, and open infidelity, a partner's dedication to a relationship is admirable.

It's possible to have too much of a good thing. There are ladies who are willing to put up with insecure losers, and we know it. Losers who do everything they can to undermine their partner's self-esteem.

2. Hopeless Romantic: A few people, mainly women, still believe in fairy tales. They believe that their Prince Charming will bring about a dramatic transformation in their lives.

Every relationship has its ups and downs; women in abusive relationships explain their acts by claiming they are in love with their partner.

In a "you and me versus the world" scenario, the pair builds a deluded world and lives in it. Even if it is romantic, it is still juvenile. The lady defends her relationship or her guy against criticism by claiming that the other person is "misunderstood".

3. Maternal Instinct: In every woman's mind, there's a small voice that urges her to take in stray kittens, adorable puppies, and ungrateful losers.

They desire to care for and soothe every "sad soul" that comes their way. Despite their best efforts, these ladies are determined to care for every unhappy creature, including the cruel males who ruined their lives in the process.

4. To Protect their Children: One of the most prevalent reasons why women stay in violent relationships is because they are afraid of being alone. In contrast to the other explanations given, these women realise that their partner is a cold, cruel scumbag.

As a safety net for their children, they remain. They put their own well-being at risk in order to keep their partner from abusing the children. They contemplate leaving an abusive partner, but decide against it because they fear for the safety of their children.

Things at home are bleak, and they know it. For the sake of their children's safety, they keep the situation a secret.

5. Fear of Retribution: To keep the victim from leaving, many abusers resort to using verbal, mental, and physical threats. Using terror and fear as a weapon, they restrain his family from defying him.

The woman is well aware of her partner's lethal nature. As a result of this, they fear that they will take action to prevent this from happening. It's possible that it could go too far.

This apprehension is warranted. Most extreme physical abuse situations occur when the illusion of power is lost and the guy believes they must "punish" the woman for her misconduct.

6. Dependency and Low-self Esteem: When it comes to punishments, abusers make the woman believe that she is to blame for everything. Such lies are believed by some women. The more time they spend with you, the more inclined they are to believe it. When a woman and her children are completely reliant on her partner's income, it has a powerful effect. They fear that they won't be able to feed themselves once the relationship is gone.

Abusive Relationships and Domestic Violence of Women

In the last two years, it appears that a greater number of people have gone to the police to seek civil remedies rather than seeking the court. At the same time, the number of First Information Reports (FIRs), which are registered with the police and are required to initiate legal procedures, has decreased even further. The number of registered cases in most Indian states has either remained constant or decreased see Figure 1. This contradicts the trend shown in NCW statistics and media reports.

Figure 1: Crimes against Women - Cases as per FIRs Registered (2018-2020)

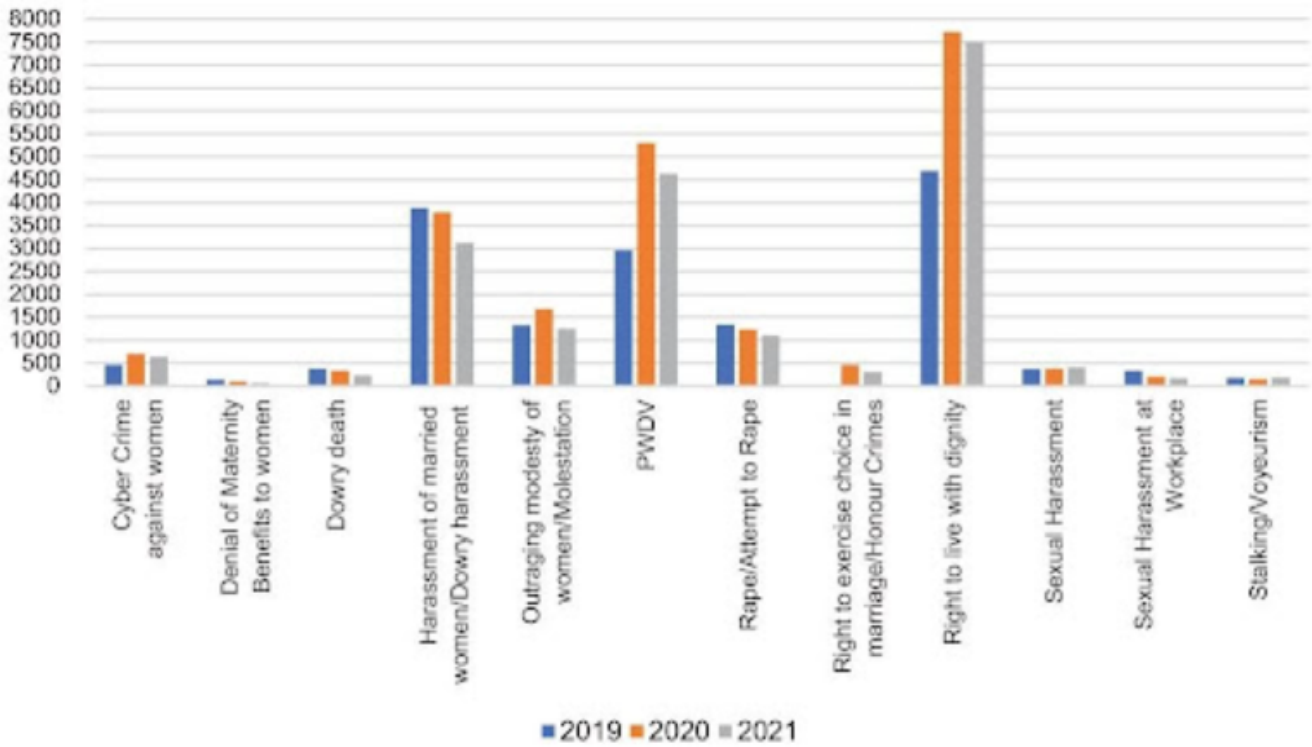


Figure 1 shows a visible increase in several prevalent types of legal gender-based violence in India between 2019 and 2021. The National Commission for Women (NCW) seeks complaints from women in this situation and attempts to resolve them without using the courts. Domestic violence (as defined by the PWDV Act), dowry harassment, and violations of the right to live in dignity have all increased in recent cases. It's vital to remember that all of these cases include the "secure" space of a home.

Table 1: Women’s Health and Domestic Violence Profile

Health Indicators	Physical Violence	Emotional Violence	Sexual Violence	Physical and/or Emotional and/or Sexual
Tuberculosis	49.22	21.71	16.03	51.95
Diabetes	33.15	15.32	9.98	38.86
Asthma	45.87	22.01	15.18	50.76
Thyroid/Goiter	32.62	15.79	13.24	38.79
One or More of the above	39.72	18.90	12.62	44.42
Nutritional Status				
Underweight	41.86	18.74	12.55	46.70
Normal	35.69	15.78	10.04	40.31
Overweight	24.62	11.05	5.28	28.71
Anaemia Level				
Severe	38.50	18.77	10.41	42.83

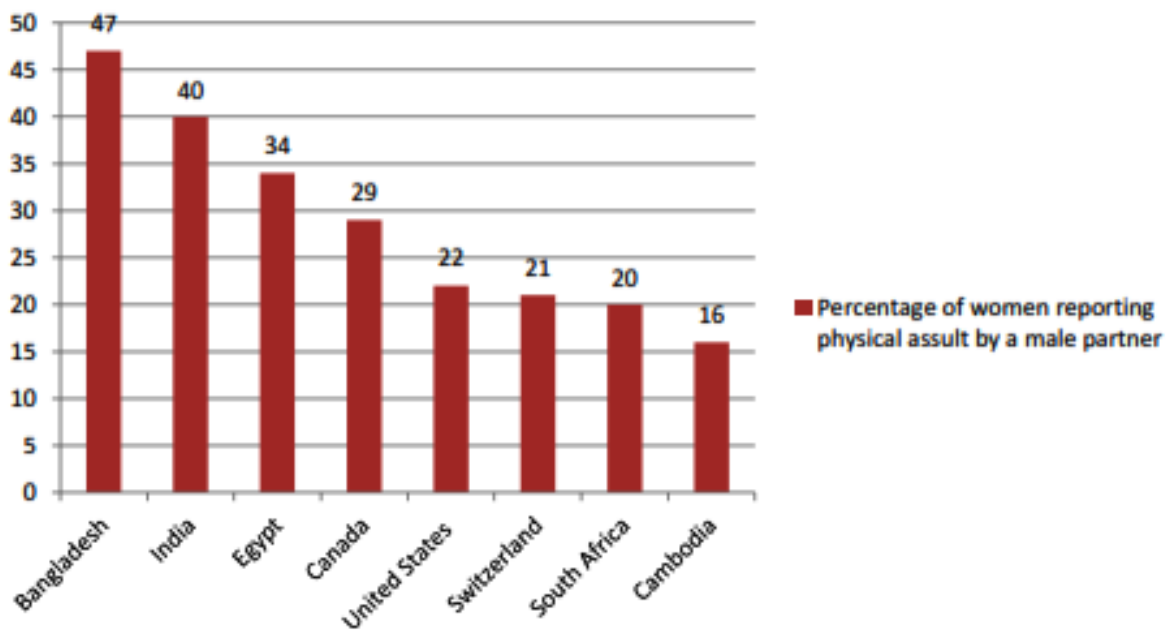
Moderate	39.09	17.20	10.74	43.24
Mild	37.77	16.54	11.37	42.78
No Anaemia	34.01	15.37	9.14	38.48

Violence Against Women - An Analysis

Violence against women is a global issue that murders, injures, and maims women on a physical, emotional, sexual, and financial level. It is one of the most common violations of people's rights. It denies women equality, safety, dignity, and self-worth, as well as the right to basic liberties. Women experience violence from the government, the community, and their own families from birth to death, in both peace and conflict.

Violence against women manifests itself in crimes perpetrated against them. This means that looking at crime against women can provide insight into trends in violence against women.

Table 2: Percentage of Women Reporting Physical Assault by Male Partner



Source: Times of India

Odisha has become a high-incidence state for crimes against women, demonstrating that society has deprived individuals of their love and respect for women. Women's crimes are prevalent in Odisha. Every 24 hours, over three women are raped in the state. The number of dowry cases has increased dramatically.

Odisha is the eleventh worst state for crimes against women, accounting for 4% of all crimes against women in the country, according to the NCRB report. The most troubling aspect is that nearly three women are raped in the state every 24 hours. The Dowry Prohibition Act has resulted in a significant increase in instances, which is contrary to the national trend. Odisha alone has one-fourth of the

instances, with a 25% across the country. Many victims of domestic violence in the state of Odisha can no longer say, "Home sweet home". The cases filed with the state women's commission are included in the table below.

Conclusion

Individuals tend to be affected by these discourses as well as those that keep women in violent relationships. Their main goal was to give people a way out of the abusive relationship by allowing them to take control of their own situation. Yvonne and Cassie, for example, make it obvious that being alone is better than staying in an unequal relationship. As a result of this and their need for equitable treatment in partnerships, there is an implicit belief that people should display some degree of self-reliance in respect to addressing their own needs. Domestic violence is a global problem that affects people of different races, classes, cultures, and financial levels. This problem is not only widespread, but it also occurs frequently. As a result, it has become a common and accepted manner of acting. Domestic violence is frequent and has existed for a wide time. It has a significant impact on the health and well-being of women. It is morally immoral to keep it around. The cost to individuals, health-care systems, and society as a whole is enormous. Nonetheless, no other major public health problem has been so widely overlooked and misunderstood.

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