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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: CAN IT BE A SOCIAL PROBLEM

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Abstract

The infant does not enter the family as a social being. He becomes social through his interaction with the family members. In the home the child learns that others besides himself have rights to which he must make concessions. The family then is the great training school in behavior or misbehavior. Further a Person's family background reveals the nature of his socialization, which in turn affects his personality. The influence of the family is pervasive and determines various goals, aspirations, attitudes and life style of individual and members too.

INTRODUCTION .

It is through familial association that social definitions and values are transmitted from one generation to next. It is for this reason the family has been treated as a “transmission belt” between an individual and society. A person's lifetime is purely divided between families the one where he is born and the other where he is a parent birth and marriage which initiate these two family systems represent life's major activities. While the family of orientation may attune a person towards violent behavior, the setting of the family of procreation is no less important in this regard.

Marriage normally involves the coming together of a man and women into a common household. In so doing the two partners who grew up in different families commit themselves. To a life long companionship. Both needs to make the necessary adjustment is that the personality characteristics and past behavior of the mates control their future conduct. Marital relation being the most significant human relationship, yet surprisingly little is known about its chemistry, generally, family members want spontaneous affection from each other not calculated obedience or compliance. Each wants the other to offer services, pay respect, cooperate, in reciprocal manner.

As long as what he gets as roughly equal to what he gives, all are fairly content in their feelings when ever, one or more family members being to feel a continuing ambience, they start to engage in conflict about them, and for various reasons they may also feel they cannot submit or right the balance. Such conflict can escalate to the point of violence because. no simpler or easier resolution emerges. Some volcanic violence occurs when one spouse is unable to communicate with the other in the course of an argument. Both husbands and wives resort to violence under the pressure and frustration of a family quarrel which they are unable to contain.

AIM AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It was during the second half of 1970's that social scientists in the west started conducting studies to find out the nature and extent of violence against wives in the intra family network whereas similar sort of movement got started in India in late eighties .

Till today in India very few studies have been conducted in this area except dowry related problems. However, from the late 1980's few individualistic attempts have been made to find out nature of the problem coping mechanism as well as the precipitating factors which led to violence against women were discussed.

However, the motives of violence have been classified under various headings but there cannot be any clear line of demarcation in the absence of first hand knowledge as an eyewitness to the event due to lack of qualitative research the problem of understanding and classifying the motives of violence still remains. Nevertheless, the various studies conducted in India and other countries have been grouped together to understand the concept were broadly classified as follows.

CRITICAL REVIEW ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Physical Aspect.

David Levinson (1989) an anthropologist after going through the records of human relations area files at Yale University comes to the conclusion that wife beating is the most common form of family violence around the world. In a study of 90 societies it never occurs or very rarely occurs in 15.5 percent.

Straus and Gelles, (1986) analyzed the data from the second national family violence survey conducted in the United States it was noted that in 16 percent of the home some kind of the violence between the spouses had occurred in the year prior to the survey in year. Seager and Olson (1986) observed in their study that wife battering is quite widespread in all the cultures though the problem is hidden away in some cultures as a private matter.

Hanmer and Johnson (1985) together conducted number of studies in the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) which firmly establish that the wife abuse is a social problem. Where as the government surveys have been remarkably poor at gaining information from women while non random surveys give a tantalizing taste of the magnitude of sexual and other violent crimes against women. Chaudhary (1989) made an attempt to account the reasons for seeking divorce, in his study he found that 17.5 percent of the cases had filed application for divorce because of physical assaults on them by their husbands.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT.

Hatty (1989) reported that in Australia violence against wives has been most prolific in New South Wales. In another study it was found that out of 500 randomly selected sample 106 cases reported wife abuse in New South Wales. Hatty and Sutton a study on 1000 families in New Zealand indicated that over a span of six years of family life that assault rates ranged between 8.5 percent and 33 percent however at the yearly bases the wife assault was limited to 3 percent of cases under study.

Zoomer (1983) conducted a study in Netherlands indicates that violence against wives has become a common feature the study does not however, indicate the extent and frequency with which such violence takes place. In another longitudinal study conducted on 100 Catholic mestizo households in Caipi an Ecuadorian farming community in 1976 it was noted that wife abuse was a common feature of the community (Stolen 1990). Khotkina (1995) highlighted in his study that no official figures for domestic violence exist in Russia because it is not defined as a crime in Russia's criminal code however reports based on the scientific research by sociologists and human rights groups started groups stated that about 14500 women died as a result of domestic violence in 1994 in Russia alone.

Unfortunately in India no nationally representative sample survey has been conducted to find out the extent of the problem of wife abuse however a few sample surveys have been conducted in metropolitan cities to highlight rising crime against women. Moreover the data used in these sample surveys have been restricted to cases of physical aggression only. Even the figures on physical violence hardly reflect the enormity of the scale of aggression as they are based on police data which depend on complaints registered and not on the number of actual incidents Ahuja 1987.

Grewal (1982) observed that after marriage innumerable women have been at receiving end in a bid to control the sexuality of women many an insensitive husband has been known to indulge in the most barbaric forms of wife abuse, both of the body and mind a very few studies have been conducted to find out the frequency of wife abuse in a sample of 117 cases of the lower class at Chandigarh found that approximately 33 percent use physical violence against their wives.

SOCIO CULTURAL ASPECT.

Tribune (1994) conducted a study jointly with women's cell of the Math police district has revealed that wife beating by inebriated husbands is on the rise where alcohol is back in the open after militancy in Punjab petered out each day a member of battered wife's thrown out of their homes by drunken husbands throng to the women's cell at the district headquarters along with their parents and members of the panchayat to seek justice. A number of studies highlighting the dowry related problems in Indian marriages have identified a number of atrocities committed against women by their husband's and in laws (Ganker 1993).

The concept of domestic violence is considered as a private affair in the Indian society and it is difficult for the researchers to find out the extent of the problem in the general population. Hence depending upon snow balling technique a few studies have been conducted on the known cases of the battered women to find out the severity of the violence (Jain 1912).

Bhatti (1989) while taking into account different forms of violence concluded that 88 percent of women in lower class were the victims of physical and verbal violence in contrast to 43 percent from the middle class and 35 percent from the high income class were the victims of physical violence with regard to emotional and intellectual violence he found that the representation of the upper and middle classes was more as compared to lower class.

BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS.

Ball and Snell (1977) found in their study that abused women are described as aggressive masculine frigid and masochistic in nature whereas observed that battered women as unassertive shy and reserved in their behavior.

Straus (1980) in his study claims that it is a myth that violence is used only by mentally disturbed people. He argues that fewer than 10 percent of all instances of family violence are caused by mental illness or psychiatric disorders similar views have been expressed by other researchers (Browning 1983).

Gelles and Cornell (1990) argue that it is difficult to interpret behavior of the battered women in terms of personality disorders because one never really knows whether the personality factors found in the battered wives were present before they were battered or are the result of their victimization.

Gelles and Harrop (1989) further argue in their study that personality studies of the battered women frequently use small samples or clinical samples and often fail to have comparison groups thus generalization from these studies is difficult that the battered women are actually different from non-battered women is nearly impossible using quantitative sample survey data. Filey and Stith (1993) suggest that batterers have low self esteem and they use violence to compensate the feelings of inadequacy because violence can be a vehicle for achieving a more positive attitude toward the self if the individual has experienced its being subtly condoned.

PERSONALITY COMPLEX.

The battering males may induce guilt in their victims by blaming for the abuse until they come to blame themselves blaming the victim is frequently used to justify the use of coercive power.

The victims also endorse the contention of their aggressors they assume the responsibility and suffer from the guilt that they provoked their husbands to be violent further they argue that self blame is common in the battered women who invest more and more efforts in the relationship to make it work and blame themselves for the failure several studies have suggested that women experience violence at unusually high rates during pregnancy for this two types of explanations are given for it firstly children are considered intruders by fathers and secondly pregnant wives are perceived as unwilling or unable to retaliate to violence (Helton 1983).

SEXUAL ASPECT.

Quite a few studies have enumerated a number of additional factors responsible for wife beating sexual jealousy and form of insecurity is common them in the literature on violent marriages (Bhatti 1989). Some studies indicate that violence is negatively correlated with marital satisfaction on the other hand there are some studies which indicate existence of violence in satisfied couples too. There is a belief that love and violence go together (Byles 1982). However, there are studies which suggest that females are less

aggressive sexually than males. Hence females are always victims of male aggression. Physiologists have attributed violence to genetics and hormones (Eme 1979).

RACIALASPECT

Sturs et al. willie (1980) tried to find out association between race and wife abuse. It is argued that blacks use more violence against their wives as compared to whites. These researchers are of the opinion that there is more marital violence in blacks because they are also subject to different types of stress, discrimination and frustration there are however a few studies in which it was reported that whites were more violent both inside and outside their homes (fagen 1983).

Casanave and lockhart 919790 argue that there is no significant different between the proportion of black and white women who were the victims of marital violence. it is further argues that race has no effect on marital violence however. When social class positions are controlled black women experience more violence. Thus the issue of race remains enigmatic and warrants further investigation.

CASTE, CLASS ASPECT,

According to dollard and his associates (1939) try to develop a model on frustration aggression and they found that lower class husbands use physical force against their wives in order to give vent to their frustrations. On other hand a number of studies highlight that wife beating is more common in the lower classes (ahuja 1987).

However, several studies show that wife battering cuts across the class boundaries. When comes to dowry related violence against women in the Indian society is a phenomenon of the middle class families. The low incidence of violence in the upper and middle classes can be attributed to their resources with the help of women in the middle and upper classes are free from such abuse (gelles and connell1990).

ECONOMIC ASPECT:

Fitch and papantonio (1983) found in their study that wife abuse has been found to be associated with employment status of the husband. Wife battering is more in families where the husband is unemployed. It is further argued that men who are employed part-time have even higher rates probably because they do not have full time jobs and ineligible for employment or other benefits.

Steinmetz (1977) on the other hand argues that occupational environment rather than employment status was an important stimulus to violence and survey data points that clerical, service workers or managers and professionals are at a highest risk) wartime jaja (1989) however indicates that husbands working in unskilled occupations are more likely to be abusive than those working in skills occupations and men in professional occupational were the least abusive.

Never the less dependency is considered to be positively related with wife abuse those wives who do not have independent source of income and are psychologically more committed to their marital partners are at greater risk of being abused lack of any alternative support forces them to continue in the abusive relationship (levinson1989).

POLITICALASPECT :

The power imbalanced relationships are associated with spousal abuse, especially when the imbalance threatens the males power, and wife beating occurs for more often in families where all the decisions are made either by the wife or the husband however, equal power is seen as a lower position for the husband and as a higher position for the wife as a consequence husbands refuse to accept egalitarian way of living violence continues (hause 1982).

Quite a few studies have found that violence tends to erupt when there is a clash of ideologies between traditional conservative patriarchal husbands and nontraditional liberated wives. Their patriarchal belief system grants them privilege and power to enforce their expectations on their partners using violence if necessary (smith 1990).

Socio Environmental Aspect

The large number of studies show that violence is a learned behavior batterers have been abused as children or they have witnessed their fathers beating their mothers and as adults they also use violence against their wives as a means to an end (leary 1988) gelles and cornell (1990) observed that the chances of being an offender or being victim are increased if one grows up in a violence as children and some people who experienced extremely violent childhoods grow up to be non – violent persons .

Emery (1989) studied that the social learning model assumes that the battering male is violent with his wife in order to control her behavior to get rid of what he sees as aversive in her behavior and to get her to behave as he wishes. The status inconsistency between the spouses is also considered to be risk factor in wife abuse wives having higher occupational status than husbands have high risks of being abused particularly life threatening violence because such a situation disturbs the traditional position of the husbands (demaris1987).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

However, cooperation and conflict are normal features of familial relationships. The presence of these features in the indicate relationships creates paradox, and on the other hand, there seems to be social norms which grant the right to a few members to abuse other family members. Social scientist has unfortunately overemphasized the positive aspect of familial relations and have neglected the other set of normative pattern regulating relations between family members.

During the last two decades a number of studies have been conducted and it was now been established that family has a darker side also. Which seems to be source of assaults violence and homicide particularly in the United States of America violence crime occurs more frequently in the home than outside. Violence perpetrated among the members of the family is more common than violence among strangers.

Many are puzzled by the idea of violence in the family despite the popular notion that the family to be a place where individuals get love, security and companionship rather than a group where conflict and violence take place. The important question is why physical violence or any other form of violence is so common between members of the closest and most intimate of all groups? All though social scientists are still far from a full understanding its causes.

It can be concluded and suggest from this study that evidence is accumulating that family violence is learnt in childhood in the home peers group and with neighbors the child that actually observes and experience the physical or verbal aggression between his parents as the family more than any other social institution, is the first place where norms values and modes of behavior are cultivated our attention ought to be directed towards the family for possible motives behind violence.

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