

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: THE INDIAN SCENARIO

---

Dr. Mahesh Nawria\*

### ABSTRACT

*This paper attempts to violence against women which emanates from the social hypothesis of superiority of men over women. Insubordination of women legitimizes gender violence and grants social sanction to the ignoble treatment meted out to women. Manifestations of violence encompass physical aggression, such as blows of varying intensity, burns, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmail, economic and emotional threats and control over speech, action and behavior. In extreme cases the result of this violence is death. The incidence of violence prevalent in male-female relationship takes place in the context of the family state, and society. In most cases the male aggression towards women and girls remains tacit, hidden or unrevealed.*

---

**Keywords:** *Violence Against Women, Criminality, Socio-Psychological Analysis.*

---

### Introduction

#### Violence against Women: in Indian Scenario

The problem of violence against women is neither nor was limited to any particular society. It is a universal phenomenon taking different forms in various societies. Women in Indian society have been victims of ill treatment and exploitation for as long as written records of social organization and family life are available. However there has been an immense indifference and negligence by public and academicians both towards the seriousness of the problem.

This attitude emanates from the universal acceptance of man's superiority over women and religious socio-cultural sanction given to this attitude. However in the last few Dred the issue of violence against women has attracted attention from all sectors of society. The issue of gender violence has been transformed from a private issue into a public problem.

Sociologists in the west have started taking interest in social problems like gender equality and female exploitation ever since they shifted there perspective in order to consolidate their understanding of social dynamics. This interest has had profound consequences in research and theory building.

The hypothesis that male criminality is a behavioral trait confined is a narrow sector of the lower class, has been questioned. Despite this growing awareness of the problem, Indian sociologists and even criminologists have yet is develop sustainable interest in this crucial problem of deviant behavior against men. They need is evaluate social and legal norms and underlying morality of society that criminalizes activities, which emanate from the contradiction in social valves and social system.

#### What Motivates Violence

Several theories have been proposed for understanding violence committed by an individual these theories may be classified on the basic of three theoretical level of analysis:

- Psychiatric or psychopathological analysis,
- Socio-Psychological analysis, and
- Sociological or Socio- Cultural analysis.

---

\* Head & Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, SSG Pareek PG College, Jaipur, India.

The psycho-pathological model focuses on the personality characterization of offenders and victims or major determinants of criminal violence. It links mental illness and other intra-individual model factors that exercise important influence on individual behavior. It examines the types of everyday stressors which are precursors of violence. The Sociological model provided a macro-level analysis of criminal violence. This model examines criminal violence in terms of socially structural inequality and Social and Cultural attitudes and norms regarding anti-social behaviors and interpersonal relations.

The two most prevalent theories in the sociological model are the Patriarchy Theory and the Social Learning Theory. The Patriarchy Theory maintains that throughout history, violence has been systematically directed towards women. Economic and Social Processes operate directly and indirectly in support of a patriarchal Social order and family structure. Patriarchy leads to the subordinations of women and contribution is a historical pattern of systematic violence directed against females.

The Social Learning Theory asserts that human aggression and violence are learned conduct, especially through direct experience and by observing the behaviors of others. According to this theory the individual learns violence through involuntarily. Aggressive behavior patterns are learned through modeling and imitation by becoming part of our repertoire of social responses over time. Rewards and Punishment also play a crucial role in the learning and expression of behavior patterns. It appears that physical aggression directed against known persons could hardly have any rewards. But the truth is far removed. Violence offers many rewards and this is a reality of life.

### **Domestic Violence**

A profoundly disturbing and distressing form of violence against women is domestic violence. Some believe that it is inevitable, that it is just human nature and you will never change it. However, a huge challenge, the legacy of violence and abuse against women can be eradicated and we can hope to have a world which is free from violence, a world where women and children can be safe in their own homes. Domestic violence is usually regarded as violence between adults who are (as have been) in an intimate family relationship with each other, most often a relationship between a woman and man. The depth of the imbalance in power between man and woman is revealed in a stark way by the reality of domestic violence. However, the term itself and the use of the word 'domestic' in particular can hide who is actually the abuser and who is being abused. It sounds general, as though it means any violence that happens in the domestic environment. Many have hence questioned the usefulness of the term. The term 'wife abuse' or 'wife beating' is sometimes used instead.

Domestic Violence is understood as extending beyond physical violence and beyond the home. Domestic violence comprises a range of types of abuse. These include physical, sexual, mental, and psychological violence. Threats of violence are also included. The violence may be life threatening, systematic and long term. Domestic violence not only affects the physical and mental health but other aspects of life and care giving as well. A 2011 survey found that 1 in 4 women reported being physically abused by an intimate partner in the last year. The survey found that violence of intimate partner physical assault last 7-2 days from paid work, there is a strong correlation between domestic violence victimization and mental health concerns too. These studies suggest increased rates of depression and stress disorder.

### **Indian Scenario**

The problem of violence against women is not new. Women in Indian society have been victims of ill-treatment, humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as written records of social organization and family life are available. These records are replete with incidents of abduction, rape, murder, and torture of women. But, regrettably, female victims of violence have not been given much attention in the literature on social problems or in the literature on criminal violence. Nor has any attempt been made to explain why both the public and the academicians alike have ignored for so long the hard fact that women have continuously been ruthlessly exploited in our society.

The attitude of indifference and negligence can be attributed to factors like lack of awareness of seriousness of the problem, general acceptance of man's superiority over woman because of which violent acts against women were not viewed as violent or deviant, and the denial of violence by women themselves owing to their religious values and socio-cultural attitudes. As the cases of wife-battering, rapes, kidnappings and abductions, intra-familial murder, dowry-deaths, eve-teasing and molestation, etc., have been more frequently reported since the late 1990s and early 2000s, the issue of violence against women has been transformed from a private issue into a public problem.

The declining sex ratio over the last hundred years and particularly since the beginning of the current century of females to males in the Indian population is a reflection of manmade discrimination in favor of man. This discrimination which was in the form of female infanticide, neglect of female child, lesser breastfeed continues in subtle forms of not making medical facilities available to the female child, less nutrition and not providing educational facilities for the girl child. The advent of technology has enabled discrimination right from the inception of the foetus in the form of female feticide almost making a lifecycle from conception right up to gender biases in old age. Violence is an act of aggression, usually in interaction or relations. Indian scholars in the field of women studies have emphasized the dynamics of power and powerlessness involved in a violent act. It is a coercive mechanism to assert one's power or to feel a sense of power. Violence often becomes a tool to socialize family members according to prescribed norms of behavior within and overall perspective of male dominance. Physical violence as well as less explicit forms of aggression are used as methods to ensure their obedience.

Research done in India by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRF) has established that domestic violence is high (nearly 50% of women surveyed reported experiencing physical and psychological violence in their marriages). Universal (women of all ages, educational levels and regions reported experiencing violence.) and normative (i.e. nearly 58% said that it was a normal part of marriage). More disturbingly, the research highlighted that domestic violence far from being private is well known to natal and marital families as well as neighbors. The documentary named "Bell Bajao" reflected and raised the conscience of the public to raise their voice against domestic violence.

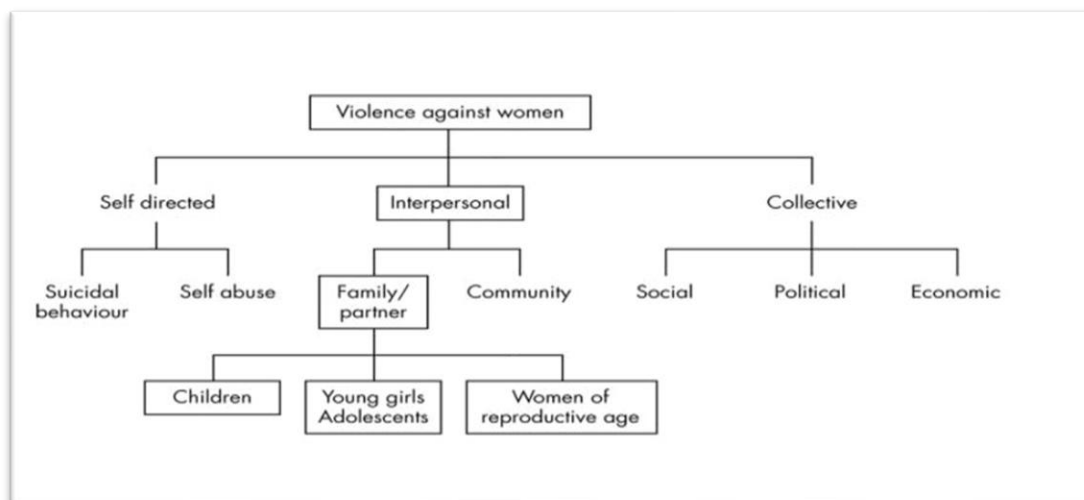
Violence against women in some major states of India is shown in the table:

**Table 1: Violence against Women in Some Major States of India**

| Indicator                                   | Gujarat | Andhra Pradesh | Karnataka | Kerala | Maharashtra | Rajasthan |
|---|---------|----------------|-----------|--------|-------------|-----------|
| Experience of Spousal Violence              | 33.8    | 36.8           | 21.5      | 19.8   | 33.4        | 50.2      |
| Experience of physical Violence             | 25.7    | 35             | 19.5      | 15.3   | 30.6        | 40.3      |
| Justification for Spousal Violence by men   | 74.1    | 72.9           | 62.7      | 54.2   | 48.4        | 63.9      |
| Justification for Spousal Violence by women | 57.2    | 75.3           | 65.7      | 65.7   | 50.9        | 57.6      |

The table shows that in Rajasthan 50% of the women have experienced violence and 40% have specifically faced physical violence. Justification by men justifying their act of violence is relatively high across states ranging from 74% to 48%. Women also justify spousal violence by their men, which shows acceptance of such violence.

A Typology of Violence against women, modified after the India report on violence and health.



Marital rape is wide spread and so is abuse of girls by neighbors and relatives. All this violence is inflicted mainly by men on women and it continues because male superiority and power are accepted and tolerated, until recently these cases takes its own time and it is because of public pressure that these have been put in fast track courts. Media and more particularly Bollywood films promote staking which is again a form of passive violence. More recently rap songs have come under the cognizance of law and for instigating and promoting violence against women.

Conclusion: Violence against woman can be controlled by taking some effective measures Such as empowerment, awareness, establishment of legal framework and implementation as well as human rights education. Awareness should be coupled with mass awareness targeting male members of society. Media's role also cannot be undermined. All these steps taken together can help is can combat violence against woman.

### References

1. Ahuja, Mukesh, *Widows: Role Adjustment and Violence*, Wishw Prakashan, Delhi, 1996.
2. Ahuja, Ram, *Female Offenders in India*, Meenalshi Prakashan, Meerut 1969.
3. Gelles, Richard, J., *The Violent Home: A Study of Physical Aggression Between Husbands and Wives*, Sage Publication, Beverly Hills, 1974.
4. Ghosh, S. K., *Women in a Changing Society*, Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1984.
5. Jayawardena and Malathi (eds.), *Embodied Violence*, Kali for Women, New delh, 1996.
6. Leonard, Eileen B., *Women, Crime and Society*, Longman, New York, 1982
7. Steinmetz and Straus (eds.), *Violence in the Family*, Herper and Row, New York, 1974.
8. Baker William d. "A New Approach to Domestic Violence". FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin 64,no.9 (September 1995) 18-20.
9. Carden Ann d. "Wife Abuse and the Wife Abuser: Review and Recommendations." *Counseling Psychologist* 22. no.4 (Oct.1994): 539-573.
10. Leojohn. "The Media Misreport Domestic Violence." Ed Karin L. Swisher, Domestic Violence. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1996.
11. Pearson Patricia. When she was Bad: *Violent Women and the Myth of Innocence*. New Delhi: Viking, 1997.
12. Violence Against Women, Thousand Oaks, Calif,: Sage Periodicals Press, 2, no.4 (Dec. 1996).
13. Wallace Harvey. *Family Violence: Legal, Medial, and Social Perspectives*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon,1996.

