

IDENTIFYING UNRECOGNIZED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACED BY THE SOCIALY BACKWARD CLASS OF WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

In India, domestic violence is deeply rooted and commonly practiced in society which causes a slew of health and social issues for women, including anxiety, substance addiction, and plenty extra. However, there is very little in the growing literature on domestic violence that addresses specific issues in terms of race or ethnicity that consequences in abuse by the kin of the socially backward class of women. This paper aims to identify different forms of abuse faced by the same and brings out some of the peerless challenges faced by the victims. This study uses a qualitative single-blinded sample of nearly 150 individuals, who have been majorly selected based on their milieu. The questionnaires incorporate open and closed questions on domestic violence and its forms. The study shows more than 65% of the socially backward class of women experience domestic violence in various forms of abuse due to the major factors like lack of economic independence and cultural ability. Socially backward class of women are abused in ways that are demeaning to their ethnic or economic status which often remain unrecognized. Lack of cultural ability and the fear of being mocked by ethnic stereotypes with the preview of causing shame to their families may curtail a few from seeking resources that can assist them.

Keywords: *Unrecognized abuses, socially backward class of women, ethnicity, assistances, laws, oppression.*

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INTRODUCTION

Indian women have suffered drastic oppression over the years whose voices were stifled. The solution for this tyranny is long overdue. Self-sacrifice and kindness are their pride and yet they face all inequality, contempt, and discrimination.

Over the years, women are placed on a pedestal as “mothers of humanity”. Ironically, horrific atrocities have been inflicted on them, especially by their kin because of the traditional bias and cultural discrimination that prevails on the part of the community. Domestic Violence involves causing any harm to the safety, health, well-being of a woman who has been subjected to any form of physical, sexual, verbal, or economic abuse¹. Threats of violence are also included in this definition.² Domestic violence is not limited to harassment or cruelty of husband or in-laws - includes offenses such as having sex with a relative; amputation of genitals; rape, abortion of a fetus: abuse, unnatural sex, hitting, batter, and much more. However, the rise of discrimination and social ostracism has been accompanied by domestic violence, especially among the socially backward class. This idea of vulnerability hooks on the purview of the patriarchal norms.

The Constitution and the protective laws assert justice and equality to be the goals, in contradiction, the given theories of equality and justice result in gross injustice to the women and are responsible for the cause of their exploitation and their low status.³ Despite various statutes, the status of women has not bettered. Women cannot feel safe even at home however it turns out to be a safe place to commit sexual and physical abuse against women.

Therefore, a thorough analysis of women’s rights, discrepancies in the implementation of archaic laws in the 21st century and moot suggestion for assistance and rendering gender justice has resulted in the making of the paper.

¹ Aancha Singh, *What is Domestic Violence? An introduction to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005* (Feb 22 2022: 10:50 am) <https://www.theleaflet.in/know-your-rights-domestic-violence-an-introduction-women-2005-act-aanchal-singh/>

² Section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

³ Articles 14, 21, and 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Range and Profile Study of Area

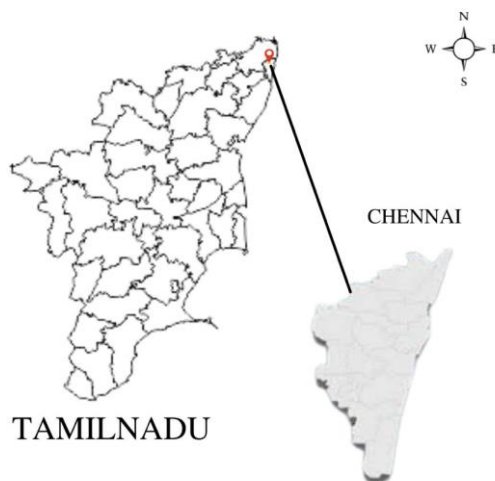


Figure 1: Location of the study area in Tamil Nadu.

Source: Google Image

- The present study includes the conclusions drawn from the survey which was divided into two different aspects where the first survey⁴ was direct door-to-door questionnaires to the women belonging to the socially backward class of the society in the native language (Tamil) whereas the second survey⁵ consisted of all genders which were conducted through the google forms who were selected based on their milieu and standard of living other than the lower class of the society.
- The survey was conducted both online and door-to-door to have all-inclusive research to provide an efficient statistical prevalence.
- The said approach was chosen to achieve perspectives of people belonging to different classes of the society to have efficient genesis research.
- The subjects of the survey belonged to Chennai, Tamil Nadu where 48% of the subjects of the first survey were drop-outs from middle school, and 42% were illiterate.

⁴Identifying Unrecognized Domestic Violence faced by Socially Backward class of Women,, (Feb 20 2022:11am), <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe-4qahbN-V-2qBfvou483PpUonA2VV4CH1ttYYPa0KhVkMTA/viewform>.

⁵Identifying Unrecognized Domestic Violence faced by Socially Backward class of Women, (Feb 21 2022:1:30pm), https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScZTDgrncSPQsTgR_UOasTG2ozz1v1DtTEYgZEM_G67qIQ0mg/viewform.

- The subjects of the first survey belonging to the socially backward class were either unemployed or working in low-paying jobs like Flower shops, vegetable shops, etc. in the slums of Chennai. Whereas the subjects of the second survey were either employed with high-paying jobs or currently pursuing their post-graduation.
- The information collected during the survey work has been classified into qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative information is transferred to the data entry sheets for computer tabulation and statistical analysis.

Domestic Violence - A Retrospective of Historical Context

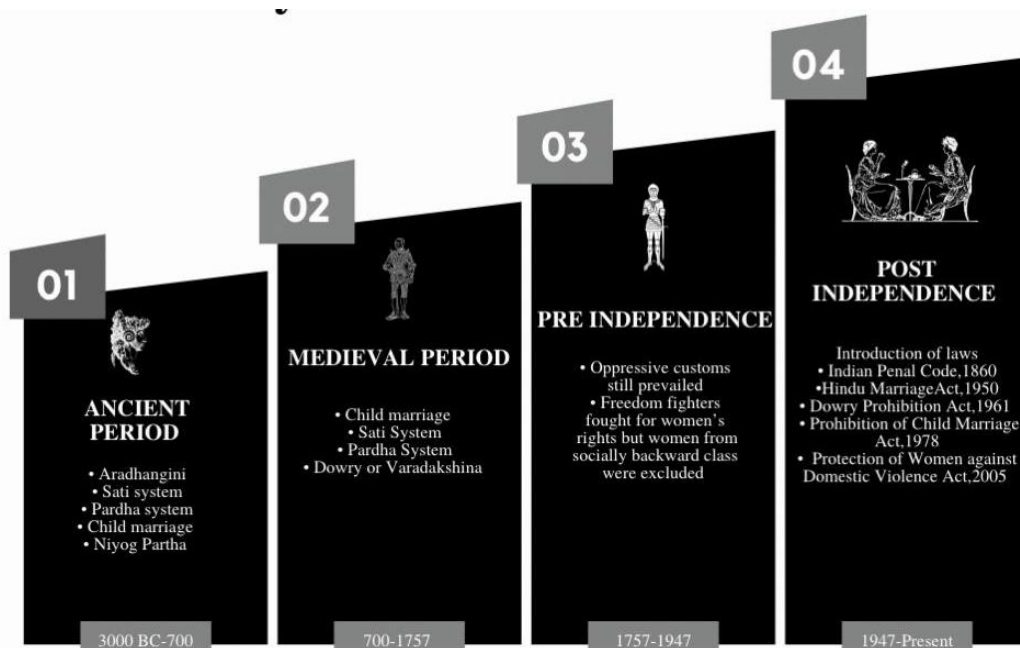


Figure 2: History of Domestic Violence

Source: Primary Data

- In ancient India, women were called “Ardhangini” meaning “wife” which provided the husband an unusual right to perform various kinds of abuses on the wife. Later the Vedic period introduced many oppressive styles such as the sati system, the Pardha system, child marriage, desi paratha, Niyog Pratha, and so on. Women especially from the socially backward class were forced to perform the above systems and on disobedience, were brutally punished.
- Medieval India saw a notable change in the status of women belonging to the upper class however the situation worsened for the socially backward class of women as the practice of varadhakshna or dowry prevailed in addition to the already existing oppression styles like Sati and plenty extra.

- The era of Pre-independence saw a slight change where women freedom fighters enraged their fights on women's rights, but the situation of domestic violence faced by the socially backward class of women remained unhinged.
- The introduction of laws against domestic violence and the protection of women in the constitutional framework is the greatest change brought in the patriarchal society. In the case of *Mary Roy vs. the State of Kerala*⁶, women were denied the same rights to inherit their father's property as men by the lower court, but the Supreme Court reversed its decision and, in 1986 granted the women an equal share of their father's property. There are various enactments like the Dowry Prohibition Act, prevention of women against Domestic violence act 2005 that helped bring justice for the victims by giving women the right to marry and choose to live with whomever their heart desires to⁷. However, the offenders are set free in practice, due to various disparities in law and lack of proper implementation by the State machinery.

POSITION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE INDIAN SCENARIO

The status of Indian women is extremely pitiful due to the rigorous repression which is responsible for the establishment of various provisions to boost the place of women in the society.

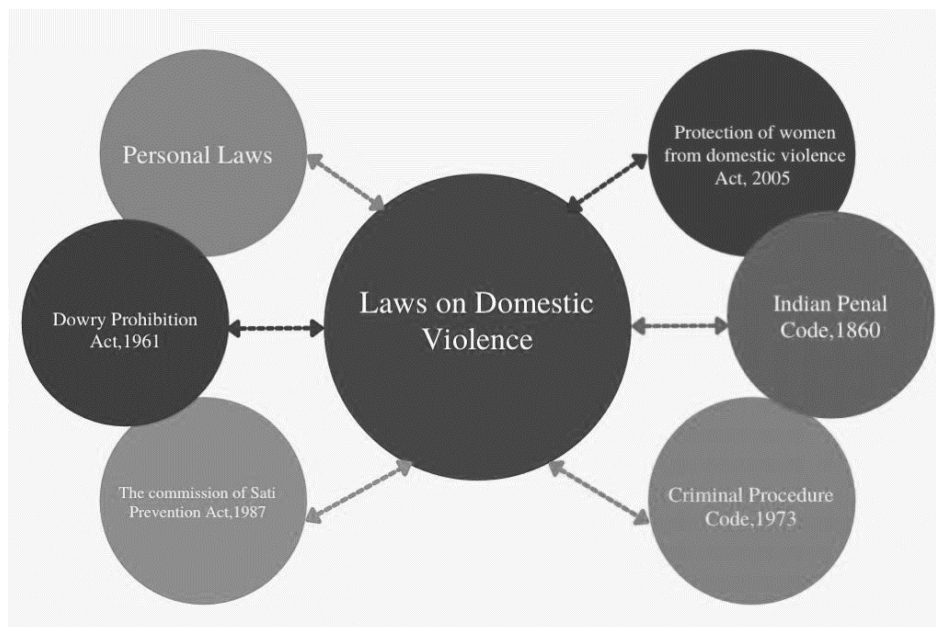


Figure 3, *Laws on Domestic Violence*.

Source: Primary Data

⁶ *Mary Roy vs. the State of Kerala* AIR 1011, 1986 SCR (1) 37.

⁷ *Lata Singh vs State of U.P. & Anr.* (2006) 5 SCC 475; 2006 (56) ACC 234.

The Constitution of India, 1950

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the preamble, fundamental rights, duties, and directive principles of the Constitution of India. Fundamental rights, among the others, ensure equality before the law, equal protection of law prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth⁸. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c), and 42 of the Constitution of India are of specific importance in this regard.

The Indian Penal Code, 1860

The Indian legal system has made Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code⁹, specifically to deal with domestic violence, a person must be a “relative” of the husband by blood, marriage, or adoption in order to be covered under Section 498-A of IPC¹⁰, Section 304B was added to the Indian Penal Code dealing with the dowry death to emphasize that emotional abuse plays a key factor in the abetment of suicide. Many survivors report that ongoing psychological violence, emotional trauma, and living under fear is more intolerable than physical violence that leads to mental stress thereby leading to high suicide rates and suicide attempts.¹¹ Under the amendment¹², the principles of sexual harassment and rape were clarified and added, and fines and penalties were made more severe, acid attacks and traps were made and punished under the law.

Domestic Violence Act, 2005

The primary necessity to create laws that efficiently deal with domestic abuse cases while also offering community remedies for victims and including domestic relations, women's rights. The law defines domestic violence as any act, omission, or commission, or behavior that causes physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse¹³. The act provides for the appointment of Protector Officials and NGOs as service providers¹⁴ to aid women about medical examinations, legal aid, haven, etc. The act also enforces fines for violations of the protection order or temporary protection order by respondents as a tangible and non-existent offense for which bail can be

⁸ *Ajay Kumar vs. Chandigarh Administration* AIR (1983) P H 8; *Air India Etc., vs Nergesh Meerza & Ors.* 1982 SCR (1) 438.

⁹ The Criminal Law (Second Amendment), 1983 (46 of 1983).

¹⁰ *Vijeta Gajra vs. State (NCT of Delhi)*, (2010) 11 SCC 618.

¹¹ *Kamesh Panjiyar vs State of Bihar* (2005) 2 SCC 388.

¹² The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.

¹³ Section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

¹⁴ Section 10 of the Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

punished imprisonment. The law serves as the removal of a single window to support women's access to justice.

Sati Prevention Act, 1987

This law aims to prevent the burning or voluntary burial or coercion or burial of a living widow and to prevent the glorification of this act by holding any event, participating in any procession, building a fund, building a temple, and any other acts of remembrance or honor in the memory of a widow who made sati.

Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, penalizes the giving and receiving of dowry in any form. Dowry includes property or money given by any party to a marriage, or any other person in connection with the marriage. The act is applicable to all religions and sectors of India.

PERSONAL LAWS: AN EPILOGUE

Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956

Section 18 of the Act deals with the concept of maintenance, the right to claim temporary maintenance in a case is a binding right. As there is no prescribed form to enforce this right the court has jurisdiction to grant interim maintenance in case of abuse.

Domestic Violence under the Islamic Law

Domestic violence within the Muslim community is considered a serious human rights issue¹⁵ due to the wide range of legal remedies for women by their ethnicity, but on the other hand, the Quran also supports domestic violence in various ways by considering men to be superior to women and in case of refusal, men have the privilege to abuse her physically¹⁶.

¹⁵ Quran 4:34.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Maintenance under the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936

Article 40 of the Act provides for the maintenance of a Persian woman. The court may grant a limit of one-fifth of the husband's remaining income as maintenance. The court looks at factors such as the husband's ability to pay, property and other assets of the wife, and the personal conduct of the husband and wife. The husband is obliged to pay maintenance to the wife for the rest of his life only if he remains single and chaste after the divorce.

Maintenance under the Christian Law

The Indian Divorce Act, 1869 regulates the maintenance rights of a Christian woman. The husband will be responsible for paying maintenance for the rest of his life. The Bombay High Court referred to Section 36¹⁷, which states that maintenance will be increased, not a violation of the provisions of any other law and stated that “the amount of maintenance provided under the Domestic Violence Act. The maintenance order under Section 125¹⁸ of the CrPC will not be substituted¹⁹.

Despite the above-mentioned laws, the need for recognition of the unrecognized forms of abuses faced by the socially backward class of women in specific is the need of the hour.

UNRECOGNIZED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACED BY THE SOCIALLY BACKWARD CLASS OF WOMEN

It is often misconceived that abuse has only explicit forms that affect the physical health of the victim however there are many unrecognized forms of domestic abuse that affect the victim's mind, body, and soul drastically leading to various health issues. Furthermore belittling, mockery, and so on is supposedly a normalized form however it is the little things that deeply perpetuate the victim's overall peace.

¹⁷ The Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

¹⁸ The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

¹⁹ *Prakash Babulal Dangi vs. State of Maharashtra*, criminal writ petition no.3791 of 2016.

Mythical Triggers That Cause Domestic Violence

It is often perceived that domestic violence is triggered due to the actions of the women which clearly shows the patriarchal norms of the society. However, it is due to the abuser's state of mind and his lack of ability to control anger and fear of being voiced out by a woman which will often lead to domestic violence. There are numerous mythical triggers that are supposedly the cause of many cases of domestic violence faced by the socially backward class of women. They are:

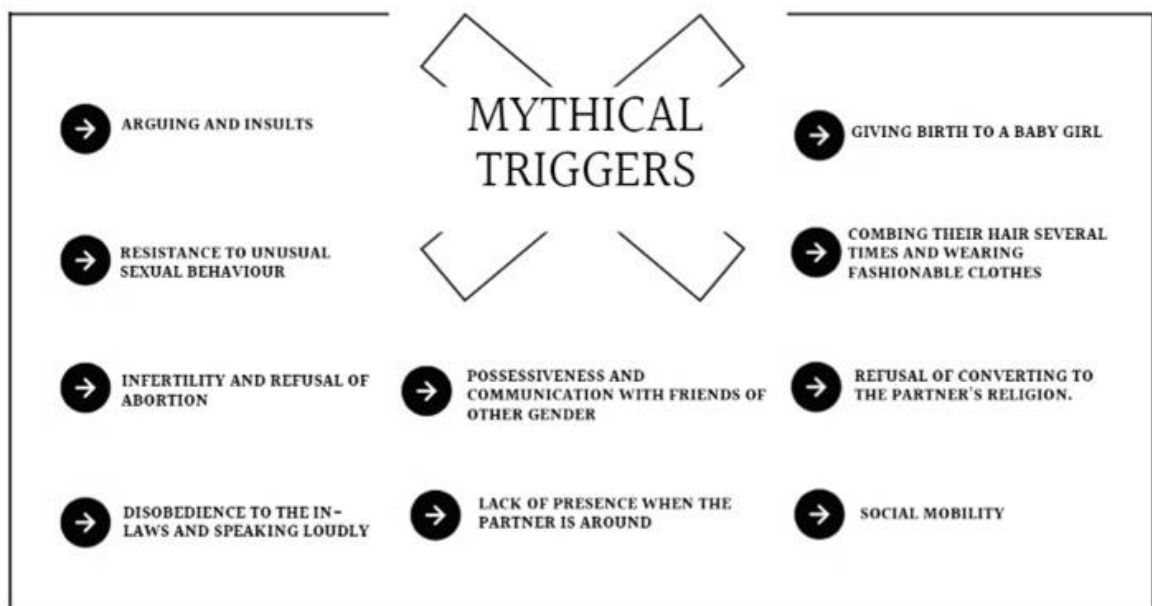


Figure 4, Mythical Triggers

Source: Primary Data

The triggers (Figure 4) are merely another proof of how society is increasingly male chauvinist by suppressing women who are exercising their fundamental right by voicing out their opinions. It is high time that society realizes that women are breaking the shackles of all the taboos to live a prosperous life.

Factors that Perpetuate Domestic Violence

There is no single factor or any explicit cause that perpetuates domestic violence faced by the socially backward class of women. It is a collection of various economical, psychological, cultural, and legal frameworks that affects various kinds of abuses. Domestic violence is a controlled pattern of aggressive behavior due to a plethora of factors in the area.

FISCAL DEPENDENCE: AN INFLUENCE

It is often normalized that women belonging to the socially backward class are unemployed and are economically dependent on their partners which drastically affects their day-to-day decision-making abilities, freedom of social, cultural, and economic life. Moreover, fiscal dependence must be a factor of communication and understanding in any relationship but, in reality, it is instilling a fear of leaving an abusive relationship.

With the findings of the study (Figure 5), it was perceived that 72% of the socially backward class of women agree that economic dependence on the partner and domestic violence are two variables of a steady linear graph. Economic dependence refers to being financially dependent on the partner due to various reasons like lack of accessibility to own properties, less education, low source of employment opportunities, less access to cash and credit, or participation in social networks. According to one of the subjects of the survey, “the fear of getting beaten up by her husband surpassed her need to have a social life or an independent career.” Thus, the threats and fear of domestic violence curtail them to seek employment opportunities.

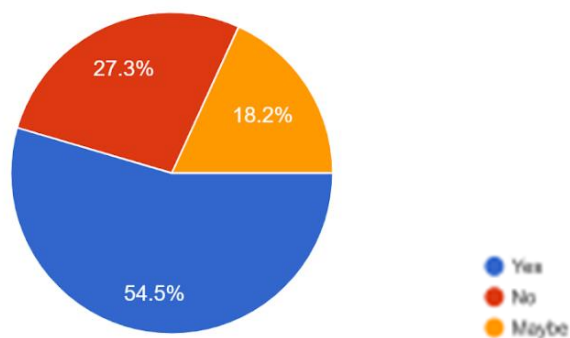


Figure 5, Economic dependence as a factor of domestic violence.

Source: Primary Survey, February 2022.

However, the second survey portrays that 85.7% (Figure 6) believe that economic dependence is not a factor of domestic violence. This drastic aperture can be understood that the link between economic dependence, education, and domestic violence is circular and are deeply interrelated. It is also observed that 73.5% of the subjects believe that lack of awareness is a major constitution for domestic abuses.

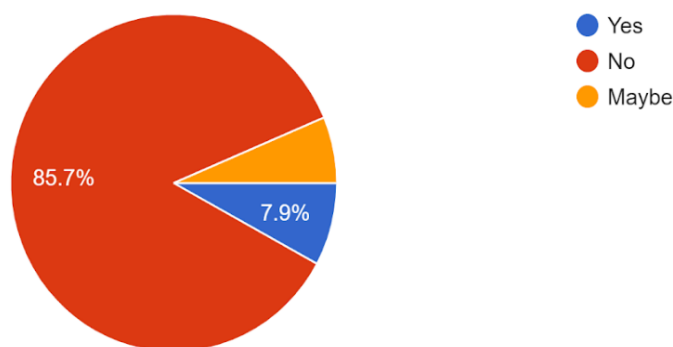


Figure 6, Economic dependence as a factor of domestic violence.

Source: Primary Survey, February 2022.

Economic dependence is a key factor to combat the major problem of domestic violence faced by the socially backward class of women. However, there should be an equal emphasis on creating awareness about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of education to completely eradicate domestic abuses.²⁰

Personal Factors: A Major Hindrance

Socially backward class of women face a lot of oppression from their kin due to arbitrary reasons like bringing lower dowry than what was demanded.²¹ Excessive consumption of drugs and alcohol leading to the aggressive and violent behavior of the partner, low level organized political systems to govern the day-to-day hurdles, the normalized concept of “Adjusting instead of adjudicating” and the fear of saying “No” to be abused even more or most importantly voicing out during disagreements and conflicts, these are a few of the personal factors that affect the socially backward class of women. There are different reasons including the family environment, socio-legal status, image of maintaining peace and harmony, and the fear of societal mockery or embarrassment, advancement in the hope of future transformation stops them from leaving the abusive relationships. It is shocking to learn that 52% of women and 42% of men surveyed in the National Family Health Survey (‘NFHS’)²² believe that it is legal for a man to beat his wife when his wife goes out without informing the husband, ignoring the home or children, arguing with him, refusing to have sex with him, does not cook well; or when the husband suspects that she is

²⁰ *Kundula Bala Subrahmanyam vs. State of Andhra Pradesh*, 1993 SCR (2) 666, 1993 SCC (2) 684.

²¹ *Kamesh Panjiyar vs State of Bihar* Appeal (crl.) 205 of 2005; *Bachni Devi vs State of Haryana* Appeal (crl) 831 of 2006.

²² International Institute for Population Sciences Deonar, *India National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16*, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, (Feb. 24, 2022; 1.30 pm) <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR339/FR339.pdf>.

being unfaithful or shows disrespect for her in-laws. It was also found that 17.1% of men thought it was their right to be angry with their wives when they refused to have sex with them, 10.7% thought it was their right to refuse financial support in such cases and 9% thought it is their right to force sex.

Furthermore, according to the findings of the study, the socially backward class of women rarely believe in the option of divorce because of factors like the future of the kids, fear of economic independence, public scrutiny, and most importantly the societal purview of the women's character or bringing disgrace to the family's name. Thereby many remain unreported and shoved under the blanket and prefer to resolve or adjust in the comfort of their own home.

The Role of Culture in Domestic Violence

Factors like culture, ethnicity, race, and caste are ingrained in everyone from birth and can emulate in either ending or perpetuating violence. Individuals' actions are affected by traditional norms, religious ethics, and other elements. These norms still exist to perpetuate the problem and have a severe effect on the level of domestic violence against women. When compared to other women in the class, the socially backward class of women of diverse ethnic trends are at a higher risk of being beaten, sexually attacked, and facing other sorts of "intimate intrusions" by their intimate partners. This is because social problems like violence and substance abuse tend to be more prevalent in the socially backward class.

People who reside in rural areas or lower-income regions may have strong values of independence that prohibit them from seeking "outside" assistance or other programs. People of color may follow a code built over time that teaches them to distrust other cultures of color and the institutional systems it provides for help (eg, the criminal justice system, the social service system, and domestic violence programs). Older people may have been ingrained to avoid sharing "personal" matters with strangers and thereby failing to participate in "self-help" programs that require them to disclose abusive experiences. Fear of dishonoring their family, embarrassment and rejection from their community are some of the cultural barriers that prevent them from seeking help.

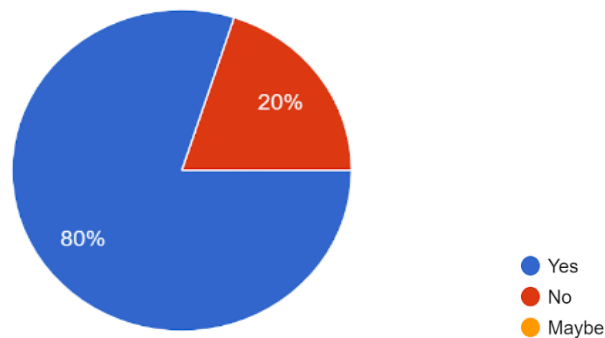


Figure 7, Culture/Ethnicity/Race/Caste as a factor of domestic violence

Source: Primary Survey, February 2022.

With the findings from the study, nearly 80% (Figure 1.3) of the responses have shown a negative impact on the woman's status in livelihood by giving a positive answer to the question that was raised. Thus, the perpetrator harnesses the fear of family and societal criticism, community alienation, and the shame of being divorced to perpetuate domestic abuse, as indicated above. In an already difficult circumstance, the combination of these factors makes it increasingly challenging for a woman to disclose the abuse and escape the connection that links her to the abusive household. Furthermore, because of the nature of the norms, abused racial/ethnic minority women's "battle cries" are more likely to go ignored. Without a doubt, racial and ethnic privilege have a significant impact on how services are distributed and delivered.

- Therefore, in a culture where women are considered to be submissive, abusing them in any form can be deemed okay from an extreme patriarchal lens. Family values, religious beliefs, economic conditions, and social status can influence how abuse is viewed and experienced. The access to education and the justice system can also influence how an individual would like to hold accountability and seek help.

| S.No | UNRECOGNISED SOCIALLY TABOOED ABUSES | EFFECTS |
|------|---|---|
| 1. | Marital Rape | The rape inside a marriage is considered impractical, marriage is not an eternal implied consent for sex. |
| 2. | Cursing | According to one of the subjects from the first survey confessed, their sister-in-law cursed her for entering the house because of belonging to a different caste. |
| 3. | Gaslighting | Using phrases like “It is all in your head” or “you have a bad memory” amounts to gaslighting which is an effective form of emotional abuse that causes the victim to question their feelings and thoughts, resulting in more power to the abusive partner. |
| 4. | Victim Shaming | The victim's humiliation may be more subtle than the obvious questions — “What was she wearing? Did she do anything to cause anger to him?” This falsely portrays that the victim had a say in these abuses. |
| 5. | Mockery | Victims are being mocked based on their caste, sex, lack of education, and economic status. |
| 6. | Infidelity | The victim has been accused of having an affair for irrational reasons. According to one of the subjects of the first survey, she was accused of having an affair with a stranger because of visiting an early morning flea market. |
| 7. | Forceful confinement of workspace, education, and personal space. | Constraining the victim from having access to her any and every resource of her regular livelihood. |
| 8. | Neglect | The victim is often neglected to pursue their career, their own financial decisions. |
| 9. | Indirect physical violence | Causing of Harm to animals, Destroying of physical objects of the victim. |
| 10. | Incest | Forceful incest within the family without her consent. This leads to various health issues both physically and mentally. |

Table 1, The unrecognized forms of abuses.

Source: Primary Data

SCARS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A TABOO PREVALENCE OF PHYSICAL OVER EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Survivors of domestic violence face persistent and challenging consequences after enduring physical, mental, and emotional abuse. It may take some time for the victims to overcome the painful abuse.
- Emotional abuse is a form of behavior that instills fear and underestimates a woman in the form of belittling her opinions, controlling her freedom, and mocking her in front of others, preventing her from seeing her friends, or family, hostile withdrawals, threats of divorce, other restrictions.
- Domestic violence has adverse consequences on women's reproductive health, including unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), including HIV, complications during pregnancy and maternal death.
- It is often illustrated that only physical abuse accounts for domestic violence as it affects the victims directly, however, the most important kind of consequence that deeply affects the victim is the mental aftermath that they must go through.
- Although the psychological impact of a particular event will vary from person to person, most people experience increased levels of emotional distress after traumatic events which results in having intense fear, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, illicit drug use, alcoholism, and even suicidal thoughts.
- Abusers might force their partners to prostitution as a matter of another abuse or to learn new sexual activities. Furthermore, victims themselves, tend to resort to prostitution due to lack of financial resources, embarrassment and so on.
- The violent behavior of their parents may cause serious psychological loss, absenteeism from schools, low educational performance, and physical, and mental retardation.
- Thus, domestic violence faced by the socially backward class of women affects the victim's mental health drastically which in turn affects the health of the family members as well.

A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

The study was both empirical and doctrinal in nature to maximize efficiency. The empirical research was further divided into two aspects as mentioned above²³.

²³ Refer Pg. 4.

- From the findings of the study, it was contended that nearly 66% of the subjects from the second survey gave a negative response to the experiences of domestic violence. However, nearly 80% of the subjects from the socially backward class gave a positive response to the experiences of domestic violence in various forms.
- From the findings of the study, it was also revealed that more than 65% of the subjects from both surveys corroborate that domestic violence has been normalized and marginalized. It was evidently witnessed that a crime, mythically normalized due to the rules of the patriarchal society, where nearly 9 of 10 subjects were emotionally inclined about their confession due to the factors like societal pressure and cultural norms.
- From the findings of the study, one of the subjects believe that, “Some cultures may even deem it necessary for men to control their wives and/or mothers under an iron fist. Such beliefs encourage men to commit violence and harm their spouses because these beliefs also shield them from public scrutiny and any punishment.” 79% of the victims validate that cultural norms shape domestic violence which eventually reflects in the decline of the number of abuses reported.
- From the findings of the study, 75% of the subjects were prone to have forceful sex and the women’s consent was not prioritized by their spouses. It was haunting to hear that one of many described the state of lust in a man’s mind like an animal searching for prey especially when consent was not given. It is inherently understood that a woman’s consent in such an intimate act of sexual intercourse is neglected thereby leading to forceful sex and other forms of abuses.

THE SHADOW PANDEMIC: VIOLENCE AGAINST SOCIALLY BACKWARD CLASS OF WOMEN DURING COVID-19

- The results of the National Commission for Women’s (NCW) show that complaints of domestic violence have doubled since the pandemic in India²⁴. About 7 out of 10 women think that domestic violence has exceeded limits during the epidemic, and 3 out of 5 think that sexual harassment has also drastically increased. Reports on an increase in domestic violence complaints has been filed by the Tamil Nadu Police.
- There can be numerous reasons like prolonged confinement, economic and psychological stress, lack of socialization, fluctuation in the regime, etc., that led to a platform of showcasing rage and stress in the form of abuses.

²⁴ Vora, M., Malathesh, B. C., Das, S., & Chatterjee, S. S. (2020). *COVID-19 and domestic violence against women*. Asian Journal of Psychiatry, 53, 102227.

- Victims agree that Covid-19 facilitated various indirect or direct abuses leading to different kinds of trauma like anxiety, depression, and the lack of will to function properly on a regular basis.

IMPACT OF MEDIA IN INCREASING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING THE PANDEMIC

- Media platforms like Television, social media, Radio are the best means and overly utilized sources of entertainment during the pandemic.
- It is globally accepted that many day-to-day serials and movies have influenced the thoughts and views in life. However, this ceases to have a positive influence on many people by showcasing incidents of hitting the wife, belittling the socially backward class of women, and so on.
- Of late, the media is failing its purpose to educate people on various occasions instead is focusing on normalizing a serious crime like domestic violence especially faced by the socially backward class of women.

AID: FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Domestic violence has serious consequences on families, society, and the nation. It can cause health issues, trauma, and even death in a variety of cases.²⁵ To curb violence against women, "The Cancer of Society", the following necessary steps are to be taken:

- The Crisis Referral Service / Hotlines, handle incident calls from women, family members, or related neighbors, and requests for legal, medical, or emotional support.
- Counseling, relocation, credit support, and employment are included in the intervention process to help victims rebuild and regain their lives.
- Domestic abuses are identified and referred to competent bodies using protocols developed by local community-based support systems.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) collaborate with governmental agencies to offer a wide range of services including education and awareness programs.
- Victims of assault should receive free legal counsel and help, before filing charges.
- Gap residential centers are created where women will receive psychiatric treatment, as well as funds for welfare organizations and emergency services, which will help victims of abuse.

²⁵ A K Singh, S P Singh & S P Pandey, *Domestic Violence against women in India* (Madhav Books 2009)

- The police and enforcement agencies are granted the authority to hold out immediate investigations and procure proof for immediate Justice.

“An independent life with jobs, reasonable earnings, educational training, a home, and government-provided supported services such as maternity and childcare that empowers us to stand up inside the home”.

CONCLUSION

- Women earn one-tenth of land income, and own less than 100% of the assets of land property²⁶ even though they make one-third of the world’s population.
- One in three women suffer abuse from intimate partners and strangers.²⁷ According to the findings of the current study, 66.7% undergo domestic violence, of which 57.1% of socially backward class of women are afraid of their partners. Thus, it is evident that though the gravity of the problem is hidden from the public’s gazes, the extent of the abuses is highly dangerous.
- The prevalence of domestic violence has an upward spike against the socially backward class of women.
- By conducting unstructured interviews with the victims of the domestic violence belonging to the socially backward class of women, it was shocking to see 66.7% of the socially backward class of women undergo domestic violence and has been subdued as normalcy in marriage due to various reasons like lack of awareness, lack of education, lack of financial freedom and the age-old stereotypical cultural norms. These subjects also believe that it is better to forcefully have sexual intercourse with them rather than their husbands having an affair.
- 67% of the subjects believe that justice for the socially backward class is often not provided thus leading the victims to live a prolonged life with the abusers. It is agreed that various legislative initiations that aim to safeguard women against domestic violence. However, the abusers are set free without any rigid punishments due to the lack of evidence in most cases.
- Hence, there is an immediate need to eradicate the cancer of society otherwise the constant fear and insecurity experienced by the victims might lead to even more abuse and psychological issues and thus perpetuating the cycle of abuse and violence.

“She believes the trump card of marriage triumphs over her brittle weakened bones”

²⁶ *C Masilamani Mudaliar vs. Idol of Sri Swaminathswami Thirkoil* AIR (1996) SC 1697.

²⁷ World Health Organization, *Devastatingly pervasive: 1 in 3 women globally experience violence*, (Feb 26 2022; 3:20 pm), <https://www.who.int/news/item/09-03-2021-devastatingly-pervasive-1-in-3-women-globally-experience-violence>.

SUGGESTIONS: COVERING LEGAL LOOPHOLES

Strategies and interventions should be constructed within a robust and comprehensive framework, considering the links between the elements that cause domestic violence, such as gender dynamics of power, culture, and economy to bridge the gap between law and its enforcement.

- To recognize the socially tabooed abuses by implementing dynamic laws for inclusive justice.
- Education, employment possibilities, legal knowledge, and the opportunity to inherit are all important ways for women to gain power.
- Initiate countrywide awareness campaigns against domestic violence using the media and create specialized information programs with the goal of preventing domestic violence.
- Default inclusion of applications like “Kavalan” to all the Mobile phones.
- Mandatory classes of self-defense tactics along with the knowledge of good touch and bad touch must be taught to the children at the school level.
- Total cessation of serials that portray women in a negative light and send a harmful message about their character and society.
- Police officers must be trained and sensitized at all levels, and rules must be set to monitor police reaction.
- Support the training of professionals and medical workers, working with children and adolescents who are growing up in violent households and to take necessary steps to help them.
- Women's rights must be aggressively protected by the state.
- Change in a society rooted in physically and socially inferior castes and religious values necessitates extraordinary efforts, and Indian women can only be saved by education and economic freedom.