

Navigation through the Literature on Domestic Violence: Discovering the Told and the Untold

Barsha Biswal¹, Navaneeta Rath², Muhammad Ridwan³

¹Assistant Professor in Sociology, KISS Deemed to be University, Bhubaneswar, India

²Professor in Sociology, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, India

³Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

navaeeta.rath@gmail.com, bukharyahmedal@gmail.com

Abstract

Domestic violence is a social ill having a phenomenal rise across communities, cultures, countries. Even after lot many International Conventions, National legislations to arrest its spread, national governments and international agencies have failed to put an end to it. At the same time its dimensions and depth are on rise. Bulk of studies across geographies has been conducted on domestic violence. This has boosted the interest of the authors to navigate into the existing literature on domestic violence. In this article, the researchers have focused on three aspects of domestic from a longitudinal and spatial standpoint. These three aspects are: Definitional issues of domestic violence, Theoretical discourses on domestic violence and Incidences of domestic violence within a time cohort of 1990-2020 along with a review of the policies and conventions. The desk review method has been adopted as a tool for analysis. The authors have noted that some studies are unique; many of them are overlapping in character. But it cannot be said that the existing literature on domestic violence is exhaustive in nature. While the studies reflect many told, still there are many untold areas which need further exploration and explanation.

Keywords

domestic violence; intimate partner violence; power and control



I. Introduction

Domestic violence has taken an exponential rise on both in terms of speed and scale. Though familial in origin, has damaging impact on the human personalities and on society at large. This has boosted the interest of the authors to navigate into the existing literature on domestic violence and to bring out the told and the untold. In order to overview literature and to present the literature in a more methodological manner and to identify the grey areas which need further exploration, the researchers have focused on three aspects of domestic violence in this article from a longitudinal and spatial standpoint. These three aspects are: Definitional issues, theoretical discourses and the incidences of domestic violence within a time cohort of 1990-2020. However, it needs to be mentioned here that some classic theories which have their origin before the period have also been brought into the purview of the review.

II. Review of Literatures

In this section the review of literature undertaken by the researcher is presented in three parts.

2.1 Part-I

Definitional Issues of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence definitions are multiple and often overlapping. Johnson(2008), Loseke(2009), Yllo(2005), Koss et al. (1994) suggest all acts of violence such as physical, verbal, visual or sexual abuse that are experienced by women or girls as threats, invasion or assaults and that have the effect of hurting her, degrading her, taking away the ability to control the contact with other individuals can be treated as domestic violence. All these authors lean in favour of feminist's scholars according to whom domestic violence indulges controlling tactics and inflicting violence of different forms like physical, verbal, economic and spiritual. Bufacchi(2005) basically talks about physical injury related with wellbeing and the infringement of rights as domestic violence. Dutton (2006), projects that domestic violence is simplistically described as physical violence in criminal justice and legal documents. Garcia, Moreno et al. (2005), Alhabib et al. (2010), Sarkar(2010) Ellsberg et al. (2014), Campo et al. (2015) describe domestic violence in terms of IPV. Stark(2007)suggests domestic violence as a structural form of deprivation, exploitation, command and compel for obedience which puts the victims in a state of disadvantage and creates a sense of victimology. Kalokhe et al. (2017) define domestic violence in the Indian context.

2.2 Part-II

Theoretical Discourses on Domestic Violence

A sound review of literature on domestic violence remains an unattainable task unless and until the established theories and models are not brought into the purview of a critical review. So, in Part -II an attempt has been initiated to make a review of the theories surrounding domestic violence.

Bandura(1977,1989), Danis, (2003) assert the role of social learning responsible for domestic violence. The child takes up the language, aggression, the decision-making behaviours of the members of the family used during a violence situation through imitation. Thus, elderly practices of the family are transmitted unconsciously and perpetuate domestic violence on an intergenerational basis. Gelles and Cornell(1990) view that under stressful influences of deficit education, lower socio-economic status, low income, unemployment, illness, people resort to violence as a coping mechanism and to channelize their deficit feelings. Malley Morrison (2004), Cano(2001) give the example of extra marital affair, job loss, hassles of life, low marital satisfaction, social isolation as some of the exo system factors that promote domestic violence.

Hegland (1992), Kerns (1992), Lambek (1992), Mitchell (1992), Nash (1992) through their cross-cultural research suggests that a subculture of violence triggers violence in the family. Violent community or societal norms are found to be associated with widespread wife abuse.

Gleason (1993), O'Leary (1993) provide the psycho pathological explanations of domestic violence. Variables like personality traits, personality disorders, aggressive outbursts, conduct disorders, attention deficit disorders, anxiety, depression, delinquency and sexual promiscuity are responsible for causing violence at home. Paymar, (1994) provides the

“family/relationship conflict” model which stipulates that in intimate relationships, both men and women mutually contribute to violence.

Johnson (1995), Goode (1971), Bostock (2002) in their intimate terrorism theory and the control theory of domestic violence, describe physical violence is embedded in the overuse of power and control by the partner on the other. The situational couple violence spells out that physical violence against a partner is provoked by situational context. It is more conflict oriented than control oriented. Schechter & Ganley (1995) provide the control and power wheel theory which is based on the assumption that the batterer consciously uses these tactics to ensure the submissiveness of his partner to get his way.

Douglass (2001) talks about the reactive aggression theory of domestic violence which suggests that DV is a simple expression of emotional pain and frustration experienced by the people which they channelize by hurting their spouses. He is supported by Pita (2019) who quotes Warburton & Anderson, proponent of the General Aggression Model. Hines (2002) points out the behavioural genetics foundation of domestic violence, according to which the instinct of aggression, the rate of aggression and the nature of violence following aggression are genetically conditioned.

Goode (1971), Anderson (1997) advance the resource theory where they establish that men of lower economic classes use their physical power as their resources to control their wives. Garbarino (1980) talks about the social isolation theory which suggests that long term isolation affects the satisfaction of the daily needs of the people and causes frustration in the individuals manifesting itself in the violence within the family.

2.3 Part-III

Prevalence and Incidence of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence for a long time was accepted as a familial and private issue and no public intervention was permitted. Of late, data base is developed on domestic violence by various national and international agencies and individual scholars have also tried to develop country wise data base on reported cases of violence. In this section of the review, the researchers have tried to analyse the available statistics from global to local on domestic violence.

The national and the international surveys on violence against women compiled by the UN's Statistics Divisions exhibits that at least 6% women in China, 7% in Canada, 48% in Zambia, 18% in Peru, 4% in Azerbaijan, 5% in France, 6% in Palestine, 25% in Switzerland, 28% in Denmark, 34% in Australia, 35% in Czech Republic, 41% in Costa Rica, 44% in Mexico experience at least one-time violence in their life time. Ruiz et.al (2007) suggest that the incidence of D.V is almost between 24% to 43% internationally.

The WHO (2013) notes that worldwide almost 30% of all women experience physical or sexual violence, 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners while in 2016 violence rate ranged from 10 to 69% depending on the countries. Again, the WHO (2014), UNIFEM (2010), USAID (2014) establish that Worldwide, 40–70 % of female murders are done by their intimate partner. According WHO multi country study, domestic violence ranged from 15 % in Japan to 71 % in rural Ethiopia. More than three women are murdered per day by their husbands in the United States. About 1,181 women murder took place by their intimate partner in 2005. About 2 million women experience injuries from intimate partner violence each year. About 84 % of women are victim of spouse abuse.

The UN Women (2019) estimates that 35% women worldwide experience domestic violence.

UNODC (2019), enumerates that out of 87 thousand women intentionally killed in 2017, 50 thousand amounting to 58% were killed by their intimate partner within the premises of their domestic areas. It establishes that 137 women across the world are killed every day in domestic spheres. UNICEF (2019), writes at least 200 million women and girls in the age group of 15 to 49 have undergone female genital mutilation, a severe form of domestic violence in 30 countries.

James et al. (2013), on the basis of their meta-analysis of 92 independent studies completed in 23 countries reveal that domestic violence does not stop during pregnancy. Among these D. Vs which have taken place during pregnancies, 28.4% are emotional violence, 13.8% are physical violence, 8% are sexual violence. Samgis (1996), Khorasani & Merzaei (2012) through their studies show that violence against women is a global issue and exists in many societies. The incidence of violence against women across the world varies from 21 to 41 percent as per the studies of Jones & Horan (1999), Fraser (2001).

Zimmerman (1994) in his qualitative study in Cambodia notes that 43 out of 50 women interviewed were physically abused by their husbands. Baleta(1999); Ellsberg et al., (1999) quote an estimate which suggests that 52% of women in Nicaragua, and 25 to 50% of women in South Africa have been abused by a domestic partner in their lifetime. Thus, domestic violence seems to be rampant in the developing countries. Watts (2004) from a cross country study on the incidences of domestic violence enumerates that about 10 % and 7% pregnant women in Zimbabwe and in South Africa are physically assaulted during pregnancy. Almost half of women reported domestic violence in Zambia (48 %), 44 % in Colombia and 42 % in Peru. In Egypt, Nicaragua, Cambodia, Dominican Republic and India about one in three married women reported the experience of domestic violence. The Bristol Study (2018) discovers that D.V is socially an accepted phenomenon in developing countries. In their analysis of the data collected from the low- middle income countries between 2005 and 2017, the researchers noted that social acceptance of domestic violence is nearly 47% in South Asia, 38% in Sub Saharan Africa, 12% Latin America and Caribbean and 29% in Europe and Central Asia.

Boyle & Todd(2003) cite that the emergency department in the hospitals in U.K has 55 thousand patients enrolled of all ages, out of which 500 adult patients are the victims of acute domestic violence. Zink et al. (2005), talk about elder abuse in domestic violence which is often overlooked by researchers. The authors spell out that a survey by National Crime Victimization Centre establish that even women over 55 years were vulnerable to IPV in United States of America. However, the authors conclude that many of these cases remain unreported. The worst consequences the authors find is withdrawal of emotional and financial support to elderly women which results in many forms of health hazards. Moracco et al. (2007), in their study of the French society point out that one in every three women suffers from domestic violence.

Razaghi et al. (2013) mention that domestic violence perpetuates across countries. In the advance industrialized countries its share is 20%, in the Latin America third world countries its share is 70%. Thus developing countries supersede the developed ones in domestic violence. Economic condition thus emerges as a strong precondition of domestic violence.

Hajnasiri et al. (2016) in their study in Iran report that geography brings difference in the rates of domestic violence. Some geographical locations witness a higher rate of domestic violence in comparison to other areas. To corroborate this, they cite that domestic violence against women in Iran was as high as 70% in the east of Iran, 70% in the south, 75% in the west, 62% in the north and 59% in the central parts of Iran. According to statistics released

by the Malaysian Royal Police in Parliament 62,670 domestic violence cases were reported from 2000 to January 2017 with an estimated 3,800 cases per year equivalent to 323 cases per month (Parliament of Malaysia, 2017).

The incidences of domestic violence have escalated phenomenally during the present pandemic. Mozes(2020),Ramaswamy(2020) point to pandemic lockdowns triggering a surge in cases of domestic violence. To these researchers, not only the cases of domestic violence has increased in number, but their severity has gone up compared to the last three years, with high-risk abuse cases being two times higher than before. This is a pan world syndrome Abramian(2020) labels violence in the home, predominantly perpetrated by men against women is a pandemic within the pandemic.

The U.N. (2020) notes in China, there has been an uptick in domestic abuse cases in January and February during the peak period of the country's lockdown. Similarly, the National Domestic Abuse helpline surged 25%in United Kingdom during lockdown. The same has been recorded in France, Spain and Australia.

Studies on the types and numbers of domestic violence though are less in India, yet the existing studies make startling revelations. Some of these studies are brought into the scope of the present review. A survey of 1842 rural women in India conducted in 1997 projects that 40% of all wives have been beaten by their husbands and 5 thousand dowry related deaths takes place every year. Reuters (2012) reports that in India domestic violence takes different forms. Women and girls continued to be sold as chattels, married of as young as 10, burnt alive for dowry claims and are exploited and enslaved as domestic labours. Thus, it seems that the Domestic Violence Act has done little in reality. Yoshikawa et al. (2012) conclude that 40% of women experience abuse at the hands of a partner. Chaudhary(2013) reveals that domestic violence rates are maximum in the states like Bihar, as high as 59%, followed by M.P 45.8%, followed by Rajasthan 46.3%, Manipur 43.9%, U.P 42.4% , Tamil Nadu 41.9% and West Bengal 40.3%.UNICEF (2014) point out 43% women who had an early marriage before the age of 18 have been susceptible to violence because of their financial helplessness.

Rana et al. (2014) in their study in Lucknow city reveal out that 20% women are hurt physically by their in laws and family members, while 34% are emotionally hurt, 32% are physically hurt by their own husbands, 44% mentally hurt by their close partners, 10% denied of their basic rights and 44% women suffer from domestic violence induced depression.

Sharon(2014) suggests that in India cruelty affects a woman in the household in every 33 minutes. The author also shows that domestic violence has taken an exponential growth curve in India being 48.7% in 2002 to 66.5% in 2012.An independent survey of the Planning Commission of India (2014), notes that in India 84% women are abused at home.

Kalokhe et al. (2017) notice from their overview of literature estimate that 4 in 10 Indian women experience domestic violence in their lifetime and 3 in 10 report of domestic violence in the recent few years. ViduShy& Sethi(2016), in their study of domestic violence in India, find that 79% men used sexual violence to control their wives & 57% of them have a very low formal education.

The UNFPA report in (2016) points out the highest number of domestic violence, were from the states of Odisha and U.P, where 70% men admitted of their own abusive behaviour towards their wives and partners. Saaliq (2018) quotes the report of the National Family Health Survey-4 reports that since the age of 15, every 3rd woman in India admits to have experience domestic violence, 27% women experience physical violence at the age of 15. Domestic violence as per the report is 29% in the rural areas while it is 23% in the urban areas. 83% of the D.V victims reported that the perpetrators of the violence are their

husbands. However, women in India are supportive to domestic violence particularly, 54.8% middle aged (40-49) years and 47.7% girls in the age of 15 to 19 years justify the action.

Ram, et al. (2019) provide the evidence that in contrast to the popular notion that employed women are economically and socially empowered, employed women are at 2.4 times more risk of experiencing domestic violence as compared to homemakers. This confirmed the study of Babu (2010) and Kamat et al.(2010).

However, the COVID19 pandemic has triggered the number of domestic violence cases in India. Nandan(2020) shows that the National Domestic Abuse helpline surged 25% since the start of the country's lockdown due to a phenomenal growth in the number of domestic violence. The national lockdown has reported more than 50% rise in domestic violence. NALSA documents that a total of 144 cases of abuse were filed in Uttarakhand alone followed by increasing cases in Haryana with 79 cases and New Delhi with 63 cases.

The NCW Report(2020) records that between March 25 to May 31, the Commission has recorded more complaints than those received between March and May in the last 10 years. During the period of lockdown, the number of cases registered between March 23 and April 16 nearly doubled with a total of 587 complaints registered. Around 1000-1200 distress calls are received by the National Commission for women every day.

III. Research Methods

The study has adopted the review method as a tool for analysis. In this effort the study outcomes are assessed thread bare and have been analyzed. The authors have tried to document the interpretation of the theorists and their counter theorists to bring out the strengths and weaknesses ingrained in them by applying a critical analysis.

IV. Results and Discussion

A navigation of the definitions of domestic violence portrays that definitions have their lacunae. Authors like Kelly (2000), Barnard et al. (2001) proclaim that definitions of domestic violence fail to bring into their ambit the qualitative experiences of the victims. Researchers like Matthew (2001), Scott (2001) argue domestic violence definitions are used in a myopic sense predominantly pointing to the physical assaults and overlooking typical experiences like ritual abuse, preventions within the home environment against a woman. Anderson (2002), Archer (2000), Brown (2004); Capaldi & Owen (2001) note that domestic violence definitions primarily highlight men perpetrating violence against women and that too in marital relationship. But this group of authors try to establish that the use of this term has most often failed to acknowledge that violence can be perpetrated by men as well as women without restriction to marital, heterosexual, or homosexual relationships.

Guthrie (2015) points out, domestic violence can't be described through standard formula, which is done by the international organizations, the national law agencies, feminists, activists and developmental theories. It varies on the basis of how it is understood, investigated and experienced. So, the author calls forth agencies, institutions to avoid macro generalization of the definition of domestic violence.

Fernandez (1997), Kaur& Garg (2010), Raj et al. (2011) describe that the stereo typical definition of domestic violence needs an instant change. To these authors, control over reproductive choice, family planning, new tools of inflicting abuses, isolations from children and parental families which are not covered under the D.V Act needs to be reconsidered. Babu & Kar (2010) describe that even if some commonality is noted in the acts of domestic

violence there are certain specificity on the basis of geography, language and culture. So, domestic violence definitions need to address both macro syndromes expressing generality and the micro exceptions exhibiting specificities.

So far as the theories are concerned, it is noted that theories of domestic violence has started fermenting from the 1980s. Explanations are social, psychological and economic in character. Among the social explanations patriarchal culture with controlling ideology, socialization under domestic violence environment, social isolation and deficits dominate the theories. However, a critical observation points out that hardly theories have been developed in the post 2010 period when the notion of domestic violence is rapidly expanding. Theories fall short of describing the aggressive behavior of women, technological determinism of violence, role of institutions of education, property, religion in domestic violence. While browsing the theories, to the utter dismay of the researchers it was noted that all most all theories are west-centric in character. The local, cultural perspective is not addressed in the theories.

The reviews clearly establish that both developed and developing countries face the burnt of domestic violence. Finally, the literature establishes that abnormal situations like disasters, pandemics aggravate the rate of domestic violence. However, in contrast, it is revealed that scanty literature is available on spiritual violence, image-based violence, telephone and online violence harassment as emerging dimensions of DV, violence beyond intimate partner violence. Many country-based data are unavailable on the phenomenon. There is a lack of time series data and recorded data on the Indian scenario is poor.

V. Conclusion

Thus, the article concludes that domestic violence is a classic topic in social science research. Researches on domestic violence are innumerable. There are many told discovered through researches over the years. But still untold are there. They are below the carpet. Deep research penetrations need to bring them to limelight.

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