

Topic – Domestic Violence Amid Lockdown

Introduction

As we all know that the “Domestic Violence” is the main issue in today’s world. Basically, the idea is that some people exhibit a feeling of superiority over some others by making them feel frail comes out as incomprehensible and despondent to me. All the more, the de-stressing that is said to follow after such inhabitants voluntarily put their family members, particularly spouses, on a rail of negative thoughts about themselves is undiscernible. This might sound confound but some reports concerning the domestic violence around the world appear more bemusing.

According to the United Nations’ the definition of domestic abuse is also called "domestic violence" or "cherished partner violence", is a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to profit or maintain power and control over an inmost partner. The another commentator Huss defined the nature of domestic violence as any action of violence perpetrated within the context of significant interpersonal relationships¹ like it is physical, sexual, emotional, economic or psychological actions or threatened of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviour that petrify, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or disable someone. Domestic violence can materialize within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together or dating. It affects people of all socioeconomic circumstances and education levels². Domestic Violence can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual inclination, religion, or gender.

Staggering Specifics From Across The World

Even in this technological and knowledge driven era, one of the major concerns for any country is to safeguard and protect the women of the country. Violence against women is no news today. Every day, there is news of a crime perpetrate against a woman. The crimes include domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, etc. One of the biggest crimes against women in India is domestic violence. In simple terms domestic violence can be said when a person harms or endangers the health, safety or well-being of a woman mentally or physically and includes causing physical

¹ Domestic violence and abuse in inmost relationship from public health perspective, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4768593/>

² What is domestic Violence, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/what-is-domestic-abuse>

assault, sexual abuse, emotional and verbal abuse. Basically, it means that when a woman is beaten, or humiliated or deprived of any economic or financial resources. Domestic Violence pervades in every society may it be developed, under-developed or rural, just the extent of violence changes. Generally, the reason for domestic violence is money related like dowry, property, etc. but can be caused due to anger or violent nature of husband or in-laws of the woman. In 2005, the government introduced “The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005” which aimed to save women from this matter. Even though the act was made, the number of cases for domestic violence did not reduce. As per NCRB data, in 2013 the number of cases filed under domestic violence (under the head of cruelty by husband and his relatives) was 1,18,866. While the number in 2014 was 1,22,877 under the same head as per NCRB data. In 2018 also, the number of cases reported under domestic violence was higher than any other crimes against women. This situation became worse amid lockdown. The nationwide lockdown declared due to Corona Virus pandemic resulted in an increased number of cases of domestic violence. It can be understood by the data shared by the National Commission for Women (NCW)³. According to NCW, it received an increase in complaints of domestic violence at least 2.5 times in lockdown. The number of cases reported between March 25 and May 31 was 1477, most of complaints were received on its WhatsApp helpline.

Some Prominent Cases

1. A case from Chennai

This is the case of a 45-year-old cook in Chennai. She was accustomed to the beating and abuse from her husband who is an alcoholic and unemployed person since the early phase of her marriage. Due to lockdown, she could not earn enough money to provide for the alcoholic needs of her husband, which made him angry and he started beating her again. To get help she ran out of her home and went on the slum`s street which was a common practice for her to avoid these situations. But due to lockdown there was no one outside and when she called the neighbors of her house, they asked her to go inside her house and stay there only. She then again went outside

³ Violence against women, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>
6Coronavirus lockdown| Surge in domestic violence, says WHO,
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/coronavirus-lockdown-surge-in-domestic-violence-says-who/article31529111.ece>.

towards a police barricade to be taken to a nearby police station. But the officer on duty near barricade told her to stay indoor and sort it out.

2. A case from Delhi

This is the case of 28-year-old and a mother of two. She was facing physical abuse from her husband for four years and in the lockdown it was worst. She contacted her brother who lives in Nepal for help. Her brother got in touch with a Delhi government-licensed shelter home and asked to help his sister. The shelter home then rang at police helpline and asked for a policeman to investigate the matter. The policeman initially asked her to mediate with her husband and live inside the house amid lockdown but she said that the beating has become worst since her husband got to know about the police complaint. Then the police took her to medical office to record her bruises and then shifted her to the shelter home.

3. A case from Andhra Pradesh

Tara, a middle-aged woman, went online to search for helplines to protect victims of domestic violence on April 18. She was mentally tortured by her husband who was very aggressive and abusive since her marriage and mother-in-law. Due to lockdown all the family members had to spend the time inside the house and this is when her mental torture became unbearable. Her husband and mother-in-law constantly harassed her and told her that she is neither a good wife nor a good mother.

After understanding these cases from different parts of the country, it is clear that the intensity of violence has increased in lockdown. There are various reasons for this increase in anger and rage of family members. According to some psychologists, this sudden increase in anger is because of limited movement a person has in lockdown. A person gets frustrated because he has to stay in one location for this much time, therefore his attitude also changes. Furthermore, the victims have to live with the abusers or offenders 24/7. This is another reason for increase in cases of domestic violence. Also, when men and women are employed, they interact with each other comparatively less, but due to lockdown many people became unemployed or worked from home, therefore the interaction between the family has increased. Thus, cases of domestic violence also increased. All India Council of Human Rights, Liberties, and Social Justice (AICHLS), an NGO filed a plea seeking the protection of victims of domestic violence in Delhi High Court on April 18. Petitioner

(AICHLS) claimed that the number of cases has increased since lockdown was enforced as they were getting complaints from many victims, and asked the High Court to lay down measures to protect these victims amid lockdown. The NGO also said that the number of cases that are reported is quite less as compared to actual cases as most of the victims are afraid to call for help as they are living with the offenders all the time and there is also a feeling of shame in the mind of the victim as society might judge her.

Conclusion

Domestic Violence tops the list of all the offences against women. As per WHO 1 in every 3 women has faced physical or sexual abuse in her life. India is no different in this regard. The official government data shows us how many women have fallen victims of domestic violence. The situation became even worse in lockdown. The victims had to live with the perpetrator all day. Lockdown also worsens the attitude of these criminals as they became more aggressive and abusive. Amid lockdown it was also difficult to help the victims as some of the places were sealed, and most of the time they were told to make peace with the perpetrator and live inside home. NGOs working for safety and protection of women also said that they received more cases of domestic violence in lockdown than before lockdown. But the actual number is still far from what is reported as most victims do not reveal what happened with them. This is a very important issue. If the victims do not approach for help, no one can help them. It is very necessary for the victims of domestic violence to approach police or NGOs or any other government body. Domestic violence is not something which can be figured out easily as the crime took place inside the four walls of the house. It is also important for government to take important measures and stop these cases and provide proper safeguarding to the survivors and victims of domestic violence⁴.

⁴ Issues of Andhra Pradesh, Delhi and Chennai during Lockdown.