

## Domestic Violence in India: A Case Study of Survivor

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### Abstract

*India is a country where women are considered as goddess but still they are suffering from several women related issues like domestic violence, rape, dowry, harassment etc. Despite of remarkable achievements in the field of women's development and bearing a magnanimous history of women's movement, incidences of violence against women are still burning issues. Many laws are implemented by the govt. for the empowerment and protection of women. Women got empowered but still they are not safe. Crime against women is prevailing almost parts of county. Gujarat is famous for its traditional garbha during navratri and during this period women can move freely on roads during night also. It is considered as safest state of county but still women are dominated and harassed by males and their orthodox mentality. This is a case study of a small village Antroli of Kheda district, Gujarat. This is a real study of a girl of this village who got victim of domestic violence due to child marriage and orthodox mentality of society.*

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Survivor, Child Marriage

### 1. Introduction

Even in the age of knowledge-revolution, one of the major social concerns of the world is the continuance of cruel form of gender inequality. Despite being a prosperous state, Gujarat is no exception to the domestic scenario in other parts of India. It is very painful to see that economic prosperity and literacy expansion could not help in reduction of domestic violence. Both girls and boys are affected by child marriage, but girls are affected in much larger numbers and with greater intensity. Child marriage can be seen across the country but it is far higher in rural than in urban areas. Girls from poorer families, scheduled castes and tribes, and with lower education levels are more likely to marry at younger age. Domestic violence and perpetuation of physical crime, verbal abuses and mental torture of women pervade in every society in varying degree whether developed, undeveloped or urban. Several legal provisions have been made by government to contain this socio- psycho problem of domestic violence. Anti-dowry laws have been made. Despite those steps nearly one third of women are the victims.

As per the data of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 12283 cases of 'crime against women' were registered in Gujarat in 2013 of which 64 per cent was under the Domestic Violence Act. The number of domestic violence cases is on the rise in the state of Gujarat. Ahmedabad tops the dubious distinction list with nearly 13,500 cases or 18 per cent over 71,000 cases from across the state, say official sources.

According to a research study report on "A study of nature, extent, incidence and impact of domestic violence against women in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra." by Yugantar Education Society, Civil Lines, Nagpur, (submitted to planning commission, Govt. of India, New Delhi) in 2015, 94 per cent of women are married at the age of 16 to 24 years and they are victims of domestic violence and 61 percent of them belongs to nuclear families and 39 per cent from joint families from Gujarat and 90 per

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cent of the women had suffered from emotional abuses. About 84 percent of women had experienced physical violence in one form or the other like beating, slapping, pushing and kicking, burning with rod and hurling injurious objects, assaulted with weapons.

The main purpose of this study is to aware people about domestic violence and child marriage and about the cases not registered against violence in small villages due to orthodox mentality of people. These villages are far away from media coverage.

## **2. Objectives**

- To examine the causes of domestic violence against women in **Antroli** village of **Kheda** district, Gujarat.
- To examine the registered cases of violence against women in **Antroli** village of **Kheda** district, Gujarat.
- To examine the awareness of women rights among the women of **Antroli** village.

## **3. Methodology**

This study is based on primary data as first hand data is collected directly from survivor by using interview and observation method. The value of this paper consists of the women exploitation in different forms such as torture, sexual harassment, orthodox mentality of society, exploitation of women rights and child marriage etc. A small village **Antroli** of **Kheda** district, Gujarat is selected for this study which is out of reach from media and cases of domestic violence and child marriage can be seen here.

## **4. Introductory Information of survivor**

The survivor belongs to a middle class family who likes to visit different places and spent time with her friends. She got married at the age of 16 years due to societal beliefs about early marriage of children. Now she is only 19 years old and suffered from domestic violence in her early years.

The survivor belongs to a lower middle class family and their main source of income is farming. They have a small house and little land from which they earn their livelihood. She has 1 younger brother. She belongs to a joint family having parents, grandparents and sibling. She also belongs to a Brahmins community where girls get married after attending the age of 14 or 15 years because this community believes that they will not get suitable match for their children after 18 years even in the case of boys also. This community not allows their members to marry outside their community and if someone does this then they not allow that family to live in their community.

In her (survivor) in-laws house, husband work as a labour in private sector and father in-law work as a farmer in his own field. He has only one younger brother and he belongs to a nuclear family.

This is an arrange marriage and she got married with an 18 year old boy Sunil who is now 21 years. Her marital relation is not working properly because her husband (Sunil) is a drinker. After marriage, she came to know about this evil truth. In her family, no one drinks so she can't bear the smell of drink. Her husband drinks on regular basis and if she or his family tries to stop him then he threatened to commit suicide. Before few years in 2015, he had attempted suicide by taking rodenticide (rat kills poison). When he drinks, he never listens to anyone and does only those things which he likes. He used to beat, slap and push his wife after drink. He also abuses his wife and family members. He wants to live with her but don't want to leave drink. Even he doesn't give any money to his wife for fulfillment of basic needs. So survivor doesn't want to live with him. He does physical abuse (hitting, slapping, pushing and beating with objects), emotional abuse (verbal abuse, threaten to commit suicide) and economical abuse (not providing money for basic needs also), so she returned back to her parents house and living with them.

## 5. Background of the Problem

In beginning after marriage everything was good. They love and care each other but soon after marriage, survivor came to know about the truth that her husband is a drinker and he used to drink on a regular basis. In starting, she ignored this but later she noticed the changing behaviour of her husband after drink. In starting he used to abuse her but later it results in hitting and slapping also. He also refused to give money to her for basic needs.

The frequency of domestic violence also increased day by day. As days passed, he used to abuse and beat his wife twice or thrice a week. He shows disagreement in all her interests and desires. Survivor tolerated this for two years and later she decided to leave her husband and want an independent life.

During this period, survivor faced physical, emotional and economic abuse. She got tortured again and again but her in laws were supportive and they helped her but her husband not obey his parents and never listen to them.

## 6. Personal Traits and History of the Survivor

Survivor has an ambivert personality from her childhood. She has friendly nature and easily mixes with people. She was also talkative and cooperative. She used to help others in their work. She is only 9<sup>th</sup> pass and don't have any interest in studies but she loves cooking and do household work. She has also interest in stitching. She was born in lower middle class family but as she was the elder child of her parents, she gets everything which she needs like parents love and affections. Her parents also try to fulfil her all needs. But her society and parents are orthodox. They believe in early marriage of their children either boy or girl and also not allow their children to marry outside their caste and community. Some parents fix their child's marriage in early years in their own relation and when they get 14 or 15 years of age, they get married by their parents. They believe that their children should get married before their maturities so they don't do love marriage outside their caste.

During interview, when counsellor asked about the human rights and specially about women's rights to survivor, she told that she doesn't have any idea about their rights. She simply told that the girls of this society have to obey their parents and the culture of this society.

## 7. Impact of Domestic Violence

The impact of domestic violence was survivor got depressed as she was living in a friendly environment before marriage in her parent's house but soon after marriage she noticed the drinking nature of her husband which was not acceptable for her because in her parent's house nobody drinks. After marriage when a girl goes to her husband house everything is new for her, new family, new rules and regulations, culture, environment etc. In this situation she has some expectations from her husband that he will help her in adjusting in new family by supporting her but in survivor's case the scenario was different. The other impacts are that she got isolated and left her husband house returned back to parent's house. Now she becomes self centred and doesn't like to interact and communicate with others without any work. Most of the time she wants to live alone and if someone talks about her husband, tears come in her eyes. Now she doesn't want to go back to her husband's house.

The main causes of domestic violence are child marriage (as she got married at the age of 16 years) then drinking habit of her husband which she doesn't like because after drink, he used to abuse her and the last cause is orthodox mentality of society and parents as they think that their children will not get suitable match after certain age and they should get married before they attain maturity.

## 8. Efforts made to solve the problem

The survivor did not file any complaint against her husband due to society. In begging, she hasn't taken any initiative to solve her problem but later she got counselling and advice from a CRP member of Kaira Social Service Society, KSSS, Ahmedabad.

She helped her under Child Marriage Prohibition Mission, Udaan Project (UNICEF) running by KSSS. In starting, she was not ready to meet counselor and haven't discuss anything as she got isolated and thought that her life will be like this only and she can't do anything. She almost lost social interactions. After certain interactions, she told her story to counselor and now trying to overcome from her problem. Now she involves herself in different activities like stitching, cooking and attending social functions.

## **9. Respondent's awareness regarding the Domestic Violence Act, 2005**

The survivor is not aware about domestic violence act, 2005 but she knows the term "gharelu hinsa". Simply she know that if husband or in-laws harass any married girl then it can be called as domestic violence but she is not aware about the types and its detail. She know that she can file a complaint to police against her husband but due to societal rapport she don't did any complain. But that time she was not aware about 181, 100 and other agencies working for the welfare and protection of women.

## **10. Initiation of Legal Recourse**

The survivor did not file any complain against her husband due to society but she got counselling and advice from Kaira Social Service Society, KSSS, Ahmedabad under Udaan Project (UNICEF) Under Child Marriage Prohibition Mission. In starting, she was not ready to meet counselor and haven't discuss anything. After certain interactions, she told her story to counselor and after counseling now she is trying to overcome from her problem.

## **11. Impact of Legal Recourse**

Now after counseling, she is overcoming from depression and isolation. She starts interacting with others and taking interest in social activities like attending functions and traveling with family and friends. She also got motivated for further education and filled the 10<sup>th</sup> class form and preparing for exams. She also starts continuing her stitching work which she left due to marriage. Now she is learning to stitch different clothes like blouse, frouks, chaniya choli etc. After violence she lost her interest from stitching. The husband also promised that he will not harass her if she will return but she doesn't want to go back because she doesn't have any trust and interest in her husband after harassment. She also doesn't want remarriage with anyone.

## **12. Conclusion**

The cases of domestic violence are increasing day by day even after the enactment of several laws for the protection of women. In this case, the survivor has faced domestic violence for 2 years in her early age of 16 years due to the rapport of her parents and societal norms. The main reasons of her violence are early marriage, social norms and drinking habit of her husband. Even she is not aware about her rights also. In India, where women are considered as goddess but still they are facing problems like domestic violence, rape, kidnapping, molestation, dowry deaths, harassment from in laws and husband etc. Most of women lost their identity after suffering from these problems and same happen in this case also. Survivor got isolated and depressed after suffering from such abuses and also lost interest from the work she like before marriage but later she came into normal situation after getting counseling from KSSS member. There is a need to convince the people and this society for stopping child marriage and cast related beliefs and discrimination regarding marriage. If people of this community will change their mindsets and such type of counseling will carry on then definitely in future women can lead a violence free life.

After conducting this study I can say that there is a need to tighten the panel laws, to grease up the law enforcing agencies, empowerment of women by enabling them to stand on their own feet and of course the wider social movement in rural and urban areas especially in the villages which are far away from media coverage. The community based awareness group ought to be living up with program like advocacy.