

Women, Victimization, and Covid-19 an Intensified Domestic Abuse amidst Covid-19

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ABSTRACT: COVID-19 pandemic has forced millions of people across the globe to restrict them under home quarantine. While lockdown was imposed for health and safety reasons for its citizens; it has exacerbated numerous socio-economic issues like rising in Domestic Violence cases and its complaints in India. Due to the increase in Domestic Violence cases in India, the Government of India in 2005 passed the ‘Domestic Violence Act’ that deepened work for the public health issue. The main goal of this research is to examine the available cases of DV in India during quarantine and infer the reasons for them. The data show that unemployment and dissatisfaction as a result of limited access to and/or availability of alcohol following a long prohibition are the major causes of increased DV. Nonetheless, establishing a relationship between DV and lockdown is now difficult due to a lack of data. Domestic Violence Act, it is said, has failed to reduce DV instances in India not just during a lockdown, but also before and after lockdown. This report recommends a large-scale national study based on data from government agencies that track domestic violence complaints.

KEYWORDS: Covid-19, Domestic Violence, Gender-Based Violence, Government Agencies, Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Nations across the globe are making all-out efforts to fight and repress the transmission of the Corona Virus and to alleviate its socio-economic impacts. This pandemic crisis unfurls in the context of many pre-existing challenges, one amongst which is Domestic Violence (DV) against women. The pandemic situation now aggravates the new challenges, and these have an unbalanced impact on women’s human rights, including cultural, social, economic, physical, emotional, and psychological. “*Gender-Based Violence is a form of the discrimination that inhibits the ability to enjoy human rights, on the basis of equality*”, Economic, Social & Cultural Rights (ESCR) has rightly said.

Approximately more than 15 million cases of DV are predicted around the world this year as a result of pandemic restrictions, providing a bleak image of life for women over the next few years and decades. Rendering over the data, the National Statistical Office (NSO), which utilizes a modified version of the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) to measure the prevalence of DV, estimates that every third woman in the world has experienced some form of domestic violence. And it is estimated that less than 40% of victimized women strive for aid.

India’s National Commission for Women (NCW), which receives complaints of domestic violence from across the country, has recorded a more than twofold rise in gender-based violence in the national Coronavirus lockdown period. The total complaints from women rose from 116 in the first week of March (March 2-8), to 257 in the final week (March 23-April 1). During the lockdown, NCW has received 315 complaints of DV in the month of April 2020 which was the highest since August 2019 (NCW). This rise should also be seen in a condition when a large number of females in rural areas still have no access to technology to communicate.

“In the second week of April, the Delhi Police recorded a “total event count” of 2,446 that pertained to the “event type: women”. Put simply, nearly 2,500 women in Delhi called emergency helpline numbers which trigger the Emergency Response Support System of the state police. Of these calls over 600 were classified as “women abuse”, 23 calls reported rape, while a majority -1612- pertained to domestic violence,” the Hindustan Times has reported. Data from a recent systematic review by the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that women in South-East Asia are at a higher likelihood of experiencing partner abuse during their lifetime than any other part of the world, which has been highly increased during the Covid-19.

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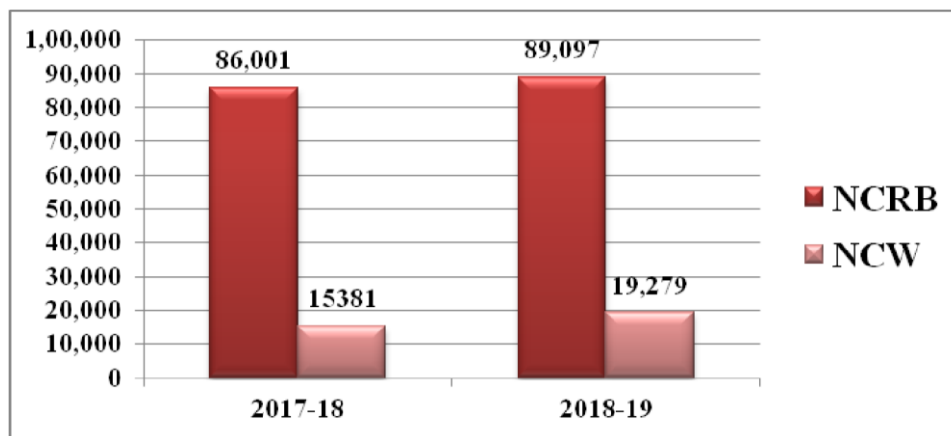


Figure 1. The above chart represents the data of Domestic Violence (DV) in the year 2017-18 and 2018-19 issued in Annual Reports of NCRB and NCW.

India has never been an exemplar of women's equality. The crime rate against women is increasing year after year. The country is an especially unenviable place for battered women. Every third woman in India suffers sexual or physical violence at home. Worse, 27 percent have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, according to a report by the National Family Health Survey (NHFS-4, 2018).

India's Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 elaborates that domestic violence can take on sundry hues - physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or economic violence. There are other laws to address gender-based violence, including the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. However, Human Rights Watch (HRW) observed that persistent gaps in enforcing them scupper a victim's chance of seeing justice done.

Women's equality and empowerment are one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but also integral to all dimensions of inclusive and sustainable development. In short, all the SDGs depend on the achievement of Goal 05. Gender equality by 2030 requires urgent action to eliminate the many root causes of discrimination that still curtail women's rights in private and public spheres.

Due to the pandemic, and the increasing number of domestic abuses, the present scenario is in imperative need to strengthen the prevailing mechanisms to address the greater complications, and to deliver contemporary solutions. First and foremost, there is a necessity to ensure the proper measures that cater to women to access alternative platforms to use online support between the lockdown and post-lockdown periods. Effective measures should be ensured for the economic upliftment of women through various house-based small-scale industries, which can provide them their personal space, economic independence, admiration, and proper respect by their spouses and other family members, even after the pandemic.

A. Research Questions

The following questions are formulated for empirical verification in the present proposed study:

1. To what extent impact of an outbreak of coronavirus have on Domestic Violence (DV) in India?
2. What efforts are being made by the Government to provide economic security and also to end the increasing challenges of unemployment especially amongst women?
3. What are the 'preventive measures' and 'policies' adopted by the Government for combating gender-based abuse in the family and the shelter camps?
4. Are the serious cases of DV still being documented in hospitals and police stations at the present time of global lockdown?
5. What is the role of Women Organizations in reducing the effects of DV?

B. Research Objectives:

1. To explore the relationship between domestic violence and financial independence.
2. To analyze the policies and efforts made by the Government for the economic security of women.
3. To arrange a quantitative figure and registered data of Gender-based Violence in India during the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. To examine the measures taken by the different stakeholders to address this issue.
5. To analyze the impact of DV on mental and physical health, which often continue even after the abuse ends.

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II. PROPOSED OUTCOME

Domestic Violence (DV) is always difficult to comprehend and counted as an intergenerational cycle of violence. As it thrives in silence, the proposed research would try to throw some light on how the proper observation-based counseling of both the genders and their family members can help in removing the patriarchy as an existing norm from society. Separate and safe accommodation spaces and pop-up counseling centers ought to be provided for the survivors. The counseling cells for males, legal awareness campaigns for women in rural areas, help centers at the Panchayati level, should also be institutionalized accordingly. The proposed study would submit the flaws of the policies and the programs, which are already in effect by the government for a long time. As the present scenario is witnessing the large scale of people affected by the global pandemic irrespective of age and gender, the existing Pandemic and Domestic Violence Acts need to be amended and implemented according to the current scenario. The study would be able to provide the best possible data of DV including the vulnerable states of different zones of India. The research would be proficient enough to record the percentage of women who faced DV because of the lack of financial independence in their own house. At last, it is important to examine the aftereffect of DV on the mental health of a woman and also to look into the measures taken by the various stakeholders such as the Committee for Legal Aid to Poor (CLAP), Prerna, Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell, etc. for this issue. The proposed study would try to trace the cases tracked by the NGOs and would point out, how the quick plan of action, organized and coordinated effort by the local governments, grassroots organizations, and communities can work together for the effective implementation even after the pandemic.

C. Relevance to the Study

Even after the remarkable progress in every sphere of life, the situation regarding gender based violence still seems the same. In the Post Coronavirus phase, India should be a nation of shared equal opportunity and gender-based equality. The proposed study is the need of the hour to find out the better solution. The findings of this research project will not only help to determine the aspects of domestic violence but also help in preventing the above-mentioned issues and will be useful for strengthening the women's role in society and in the Indian economy positively.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE: OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMIDST COVID-19

There is enormous literature available on Domestic Violence and Violence against Women. According to Bhattacharyya, 2015¹ 'private space' of the domestic household across the globe often emerges as a space of 'contestation'. This happens because the house is a place that is considered as 'heaven' that is an emotional space for the family members where their hearts hang, they share a strong bond with other members, but evidence also demonstrates that this household has emerged as a site of violence for women. The dimensions and causes of Domestic Violence vary from place to place and house to house. There are majorly three forms of domestic violence i.e. sexual, verbal, and physical; sometimes all forms of domestic violence take place at the same time. (Thomas, 2017; Thomas 2018; Thomas 2019; Das et al. 2020)^{2,3,4,5} In India the pattern or prototype of Domestic Violence might range from mild verbal abuse to slapping to kicking to hair pulling, sexual assault to even violent forms of attack like murder (Das et al., 2020)⁶. From a psychological viewpoint, many studies argue that silhouette of Domestic Violence might be responsible for provoking Violence against Women in the public space. These studies show that a youngster (male) experiencing various types of DV at home comes to believe that executing Violence against Women is a "normative standard." Thereby, a child at the very early stage starts imitating in the same way not only in private but also in public spaces like buses, malls, streets, and more (Bhattacharyya, 2015; Bhattacharyya, 2016). There are some similar arguments that are given by Pulla (2020)⁷ in his certain lectures on theories of

¹ Bhattacharyya, R. (2015). Understanding the Spatialities of Sexual Assault against Indian women in India, *Journal Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 22(9), 1340-1356 DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2014.969684

² Thomas, B. (2017). Intimate partner violence: Exploring links with men's childhood gender inequality and violence experiences. *World Conference on Women's Studies*, 1-11. doi: 10.17501/wcws.2017.2101

³ Thomas, B. (2018). Intimate partner violence as reported by men in India: Exploring pathways with childhood gender inequity and violence experiences of perpetrators. *Man in India*. 98(3-4), 605- 616.

⁴ Thomas, B., Trivedi, H., Subhash, R., & Pathak, S. N. (2019). *Understanding Proximate Factors Associated With Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence by Men In India*. *Space and Culture, India*, 7(3), 29-39. <https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.v7i3.574>

⁵ Das, T., Bhattacharyya, R. Alam, F., & Parvin, A. (2020). In-depth Semi- structured Interviewing: Researching Domestic Violence as a Public Health Issue in Bangladesh, *SAGE Research Methods Cases Medicine & Health, Disciplines: Public Health*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781529719840>

⁶ Das, T., Bhattacharyya, R. Alam, F., & Parvin, A. (2020). In-depth Semi- structured Interviewing: Researching Domestic Violence as a Public Health Issue in Bangladesh, *SAGE Research Methods Cases Medicine & Health, Disciplines: Public Health*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781529719840>

⁷ Pulla, V. (2020, 26 July). A short explanation of the theories of DV Venkat Pulla. *Youtube*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEbcDKiz994&feature=youtu.be>

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Domestic Violence. According to Pulla (2020), Domestic Violence remained unrecognized as one of the forms of violence until 1960 indicating that the world recognized Domestic Violence as a form of Gender-based Violence only 60 years ago.

D. Domestic Violence and Covid-19:

It is debatable that due to covid-19 lockdowns were initiated by Government nationwide to keep citizens safe and healthy but this decision, unfortunately, led to the rise in cases of Domestic violence. Due to this grave situation that is faced by Indian women during a lockdown, it is difficult to understand the major reasons behind the concerning trends in Domestic Violence. This study discussed how the reported cases of Domestic Violence and its causes amidst the Covid-19 lockdown have triggered an increase in Gender-based Violence. For this purpose, different cases of Domestic Violence and Gender-based Violence amid the Covid-19 lockdown were collected and studied from secondary sources i.e., articles on Indian media platforms, central and state government agencies reports, and more. Reports of the National Commission for Women and the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) were also studied and included. Some of the government organizations offering these numbers are Mitra, Sakhi One Stop Centre (OSC), Mahila Samakhya, and NCW.

Several other countries have also reported an increase in the incidents of Domestic Violence during the ongoing pandemic situation. The countries include Singapore rise by 33%, Cyprus by 30%, France 30%, and Argentina has shown an increase by 25% according to the reports of UN Women 2020⁸. Also, some other countries in Latin America like Brazil, Mexico, Colombia along with Australia, Germany, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia have noted a rise in Domestic Violence (Sigal et al., 2020)⁹. Also, India has seen the greatest hike in Domestic Violence cases during the lockdown period. However, there remains a perception, especially in developing countries like India that DV means VAW (Thomas, 2017; Thomas, 2018).^{10,11} This rise in Domestic Violence cases in India is due to the dominance of patriarchal culture concerning women's submissive position across caste, class, and religion (Sharma, 2015¹²; Das et al., 2020¹³). This does not mean that there is no Domestic Violence against men in India. Rather Domestic Violence against men¹³ is highly researched in India. This is due to the patriarchal society that the Domestic Violence against men is highly ignored in India. This study discusses Domestic Violence on women during the lockdown period that was triggered by Covid-19 pandemic adverse situations. Taking these issues into consideration the following segment will briefly discuss the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and Domestic Violence in India.

E. Domestic Violence and Domestic Violence Act, 2005:

It has been that Violence against Women has been increasing in India at a rapid pace over the past few decades. Domestic Violence Act was enacted in India in 2005 which is one and a half decades ago and aims at creating, "more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto." Domestic relationship is described among other things as, "a relationship between two persons who live or have, at any point of time, lived together in a shared household, when they are related by consanguinity, marriage, or through a relationship in the nature of marriage, adoption or are family members living together as a joint [extended] family". Though reporting Domestic Violence cases in India still remains often skewed due to several reasons like embarrassment, fear, a taboo that is linked with deeply embedded socio-cultural values, and most importantly loyalty of victims

⁸ UN Women (2020). *COVID-19 and ending violence against women and girls*. Retrieved from <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls>

⁹ Sigal, L., Natalia, A., Ramos, M., Martinez, A. I., & Machicao, M. (2020, April 27). Another pandemic: In Latin America, domestic abuse rises amid lockdown. *Reuters*. Retrieved from <https://in.reuters.com/article/healthcoronavirus-latam-domesticviolenc/another-pandemic-in-latin-america-domestic-abuse-rises-amid-lockdownidINKCN2291JM>

¹⁰ Thomas, B. (2017). Intimate partner violence: Exploring links with men's childhood gender inequality and violence experiences. *World Conference on Women's Studies*, 1-11. doi: 10.17501/wcws.2017.2101

¹¹ Thomas, B. (2018). Intimate partner violence as reported by men in India: Exploring pathways with childhood gender inequity and violence experiences of perpetrators. *Man in India*. 98(3-4), 605-616.

¹² Sharma, I. (2015). Violence against women: Where are the solutions? *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 57(2), 131139. doi: 10.4103/0019-5545.158133

¹³ Das, T., Bhattacharyya, R. Alam, F., & Parvin, A. (2020). In-depth Semi-structured Interviewing: Researching Domestic Violence as a Public Health Issue in Bangladesh, *SAGE Research Methods Cases Medicine & Health, Disciplines: Public Health*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781529719840>

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towards their abusers (Sharma, 2015¹⁴; Das et al 2020¹⁵). Besides this, the methods that are adopted by victims of Domestic Violence include some drastic steps like leaving home or in some cases it worsens like self-harm or even committing suicide (Rao, 2015)¹⁶. Unfortunately leaving home was not an option that women could have chosen during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

However, there is an emerging concept of men falling prey to Domestic Violence (Pathak 2006¹⁷; Ramesh 2007¹⁸; Kumar 2014¹⁹; Bhardwaj 2015²⁰). These scholars have argued that in many cases women file false cases of Domestic Violence by taking advantage of Section 498-A under the Indian Penal Code which talks about the cruelty of in-laws or husbands and also of Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 which falls under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005' umbrella (Pathak 2006²¹; Ramesh 2007²²; Kumar 2014²³; Bhardwaj 2015²⁴). Nonetheless, a further indepth research is required to explore male victimization and their relationships with intimate partners.

F. Domestic Violence in India during Covid-19 pandemic lockdown:

In India, since 23rd March 2020 four phases of continuous lockdown was imposed till 31st May 2020 (Shukla, 2020)²⁵. Since 8th June 2020, the country started reopening but in phases i.e.

'Unlock 1' in June followed by 'Unlock 2' since 1st July 2020; however, there were still local containment zones across the affected areas in the country (Gupta & Stahl, 2020²⁶; Vora et al., 2020²⁷; Moutafis, 2020²⁸; EPW Engage, 2020²⁹; Tandon, 2020³⁰).

Sadly, National Commission for Women (NCW) has received 257 calls on Violence against Women in the first week of lockdown (Chandra, 2020a³¹; Chandra, 2020b³²; Owen, 2020³³; Vijyalakshmi & Dev, 2020³⁴). The number of these calls received between 23rd March to 16th April 2020 i.e., the initial three to four weeks of the lockdown was approx 590 which has shown a rise by 48% as compared to 396 calls received during the period of last week of February third week of March (Rukmini, 2020)³⁵. At the end of India's first five weeks of national lockdown, the NCW reported a grim 92% increase in the number of reported Domestic Violence complaints (Pant, 2020)³⁶.

In addition to these centrally operated complaint cells, various state governments also have their specific complaint channels. Due to the availability of multiple complaint channels, the data of Domestic Violence compiled during lockdown vary from one report to another. For example, according to the data of NALSA, only 727 cases of Domestic Violence were reported across the country during the national lockdown period (Mahapatra, 2020)³⁷. On the other hand, as per some other sources, 616 cases alone were reported in Tamil Nadu. Overall, it can be said that the number of cases of Domestic Violence has increased nationwide during a lockdown. For instance, from March 2020-April 2020 there was an increase in Domestic Violence cases by 46% reported in India's Sakhi OSC (Melly Maitreyi, 2020).³⁸

¹⁴ Sharma, I. (2015). Violence against women: Where are the solutions? *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 57(2), 131139. doi: 10.4103/0019-5545.158133

¹⁵ Das, T., Bhattacharyya, R. Alam, F., & Parvin, A. (2020). In-depth Semi- structured Interviewing: Researching Domestic Violence as a Public Health Issue in Bangladesh, *SAGE Research Methods Cases Medicine & Health, Disciplines: Public Health*, <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781529719840>

¹⁶ Rao, N. (2015). Marriage, violence, and choice: Understanding dalit women's agency in rural Tamil Nadu. *Gender & Society*, 29(3):410-433.

¹⁷ Pathak, N. (2006, November 16). Harassed husbands seek a pro-men law, *World Asia, Gulf News*. Retrieved from <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/india/harassed-husbands-seek-a-pro-men-law1.265832>

¹⁸ Ramesh, R. (2007, 13 December). Dowry law making us the victims, says India's men's movement. *The Guardian World News*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/dec/13/india.randeepamesh1>

¹⁹ Kumar, H. S. N. (2014, May 28). Activists Highlight Rise in Suicides Among Married Men. *The Hindu*. Retrieved from <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/activists-highlight-rise-insuicides-among-marriedmen/article6056181.ece>

²⁰ Bhardwaj, D. (2015, 25 February). *Men - The Forgotten Gender*. TEDxIIFTDelhi https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_2gl7lz25E

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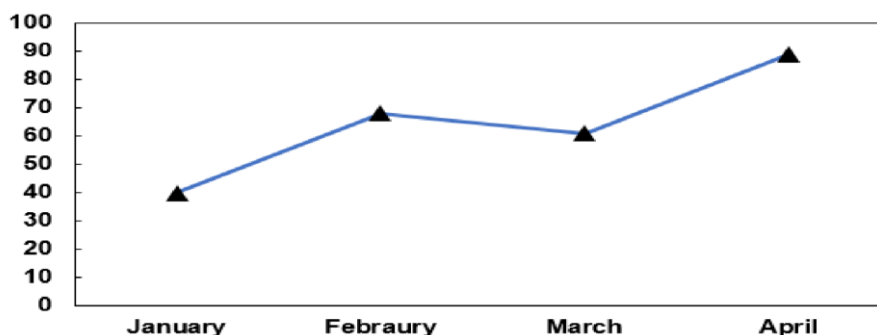


Figure 2: Percentage of Domestic Violence Complaints made to Sakhi One Stop Centers in India from January 2020 to April 2020

The nature of Domestic Violence varied from one case to another. For instance, in one incident, a girl was beaten by her parents and was forced to marry against her will. Another case was registered with NCW where a brother filled a complaint on behalf of her sister who was being physically tortured by her in-laws in Tripura. In another case of Rajasthan, a father filed a complaint against his son-in-law for not only beating his daughter since lockdown started but also for denial of food (Vijayalakshmi & Dev, 2020).³⁹ There were many other incidents also during lockdown where women were not allowed to enter their house by their in-laws. In Jammu & Kashmir during the pandemic 19 harassment cases were reported for dowry (Bhat,2020)⁴⁰.

The comprehensive data of Domestic Violence cases filed during lockdown is compiled in the Table below. Among the states for which the data is compiled Punjab has the highest number of registered cases during the lockdown period followed by Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Uttarakhand.

Table 1: Number of Reported Domestic Violence Cases During the Lockdown in Some Indian States.

State/Union Territory	Period	Number of reported cases of domestic violence	Authority
Punjab	Since March 22, 2020	At least 30 cases per day (approximately 900 in a month)	Punjab State Commission for Women
Tamil Nadu	March 25 – May 14, 2020	616	Tamil Nadu State Government
Karnataka	March 23 – April 21, 2020	162	Karnataka State Government
Uttarakhand	March 24 – May 15, 2020	144	National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)
Haryana	March 24 – May 15, 2020	79	NALSA
Jammu Kashmir	March 24 – April 24, 2020	65	Government Sources
Chhattisgarh	Per month of lockdown	60-65	Chhattisgarh Police
Delhi	March 24 – May 15, 2020	63	NALSA
Maharashtra	March 24 – May 15, 2020	12	NALSA

Sources: Ratnam (2020)⁴¹; Joy (2020)⁴²; Bhat (2020)⁴³; Mahapatra (2020)⁴⁴; Uttarakhand witnesses highest number of domestic violence amid lockdown, Delhi on number 3 (2020, May 17). *Times Now*. Retrieved on May 17 2020 from, <https://www.timesnownews.com/mirrornow/in-focus/article/uttarakhand-witnesses-highest-number-of-domestic-violence-amidlockdown-Delhi-on-number/593038>; Raipur Police launches "Chuppi Todd" campaign as domestic violence cases surge amid lockdown. (2020, May 3). *ANI News*. Retrieved on May 4 2020 from, <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/raipur-police-launcheschuppi-todd-campaign-as-domestic-violence-cases-surge-amid-lockdown20200503025811/>

Evidently, it can be seen that state-wise domestic violence cases during the lockdown period when compared with nationwide cases have increased. In Chhattisgarh, number of Domestic Violence cases registered was 40 in January which rose to 60-65 cases per month by

February showing over 60% rise in reports. Likewise, the Haryana State Commission for Women also reported 78% rise in Domestic Violence reports in the first five weeks of lockdown

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i.e., between 22nd March- 28th April, 2020 (Pant, 2020)⁴⁵. However, some states in India exhibited irregular trends in Domestic Violence reporting. The states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Telangana reported a decrease in Domestic Violence cases complaints registered during the lockdown period (Ratnam, 2020).⁴⁶ In fact the decline registered in Telangana was as high as 50% (Deepak, 2020)⁴⁷. However, this does not mean that decrease in number of cases and reported incidences are not actual decrease in such incidents. Some of the reports have claimed that there is inverse relationship between Covid-19 cases and Domestic Violence cases. For example, Maharashtra has reported least number of Domestic Violence cases despite of having highest number of Covid-19 cases. On the other hand, Uttarakhand has shown opposite i.e. lowest number of Covid cases during initial phase and highest number of Domestic Violence cases during lockdown (Mahapatra, 2020)⁴⁸.

G. Effects of lockdown:

The increase in Domestic Violence cases can be due to many reasons. One of such reason is the sudden announcement of lockdown. Due to no prior knowledge of lockdown women who are victim of Domestic Violence were unable to move away from their dangerous family members. A related effect was that women who would otherwise run to their neighbors or parents to seek help in the event of Domestic Violence could no longer do this due to the lockdown.

H. Unemployment during the Lockdown as a Cause for Domestic Violence:

Narinder Singh Rawat, a consultant at the Government of India's NITI Aayog, cites that the increased "interaction time", the insecurity related to economic possibilities and the general atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, as the significant reasons for an increase in DV (Rawat, 2020)⁴⁹. Though, employment is an important factor that reduces or prevents Domestic Violence as the partners stay away from each other for a large part of the day. Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, people have been 'forced' to stay in their homes with their spouses which ultimately lead to rise in Domestic Violence cases.

Although, lockdown resulted unemployment does not discriminate gender. Temporarily, several women have become both economically and physically endangered. This has been visible even when women managed to stay in their parents' homes, away from their abusive husbands. For example, in one case, a brother beat up his sister because of the increased burden of feeding another person in the household (Joy, 2020)⁵⁰. Moreover, in many households, women hand over their earnings to the men in the household and since they are not able to do so because of the lockdown, cases of men engaging in Domestic Violence have increased (Joy, 2020).

I. Consumption of Alcohol during the Lockdown as a Cause for Domestic Violence:

In several studies consumption of Alcohol many time has been linked with gender based Domestic Violence. According to National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4)⁵¹ around 160 million people consume alcohol i.e. 29.2 % men and 1.2% women consume alcohol. It was expected that the cases of Domestic Violence will decrease due to the ban on sale of alcohol during the first six week of lockdown in India. For example, Telangana reported decrease in Domestic Violence cases and the possible reason considered for this restriction on sale, purchase and consumption of alcohol. Though, alcohol has proven to be a 'double-edged sword' amidst lockdown. As reported in some cases ban on alcohol affected adversely i.e. increased frustration in many men which ultimately led to rise in Domestic Violence cases against women. The numbers of Domestic Violence cases were expected to increase after government relaxed ban on alcohol during lockdown on 4th May, 2020. As a result many women filed complaint against their drunken husbands for beating them and their children. A complaint or request was filed by a woman in Delhi to shut down the liquor shops again as she said that her husband was not engaged in Domestic Violence during the lockdown period when there was ban on liquor. Thus, combined with rising unemployment, alcohol use is further exacerbating the situation of Indian women during the pandemic.

IV. CONCLUSION

The existing data is not sufficient to set a relation between lockdown and Domestic Violence. This is because this study aims to interpret and collate publically available statistical data of Domestic Violence in India during lockdown period. There are several other concerns also related to the same. Firstly, there is no proper channel for women to report for Domestic Violence case and non-availability of publically available government statistical data of lockdown period hampers the proper analysis of such cases. Secondly, the accuracy and extent of reporting is always a matter of extreme importance in Domestic Violence cases. Reporting of Domestic Violence cases amidst lockdown have adversely affected the proximity of the victims with their abusers. Previous evidence suggests that due to fear of their abusers, many women tend to avoid reporting cases of Domestic Violence.

Alongside, it can be seen that during the lockdown period, over 60,000 prisoners were released from jails all over the country to decongest them and prevent the spread of Covid-19. Although no reports have directly linked this release of prisoners to changes in the number of DV incidents, it would be crucial to investigate this relationship as and when more data are made available.

Domestic Violence is now receiving substantial attention. The recommendations enlisted in this research paper reflect current knowledge concerning the ethical and safety considerations that need to be addressed when conducting research on domestic violence. Despite of some limitations in the study, it is unequivocally clear that incidents of Domestic Violence in India increased

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during lockdown period as evident from the observations published in various outlets. The main reasons for increase in cases of Domestic Violence are unemployment, restricted consumption to alcohol during first six weeks of lockdown and after 4th may, 2020 sudden availability of alcohol. Even though some corrective steps have been implemented to help the victims of DV during the lockdown through the installation of helpline and dedicated WhatsApp numbers, there is still an enormous scope to improve upon these measures. Thus, prompt and

[https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.617311/full#:~:text=In%20India%2C%20alcohol%20consumption%20is,women%20consume%20alcohol%20\(14\).](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2021.617311/full#:~:text=In%20India%2C%20alcohol%20consumption%20is,women%20consume%20alcohol%20(14).)

persistent attention from authorities is a must, particularly in a country like India, where women's safety is a massive issue even under normal conditions. This review indeed provides a basis for a more rigorous and in-depth study on DV, a deepening public health threat in India.

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