

Influence of Domestic Violence on the Mental Health of Delhi NCR Women

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Abstract :- Covid19 has affected relationships, families and the whole society unmatched ways. Covid19 has been testing the society to an extent that goes beyond and above all the barriers. One such significant aspect is domestic violence, nature and number of domestic violence incidents have increased. The severity of domestic violence has devastating impact on the mental health of women. Their mental health is deteriorating day by day and this is something very important which needs to get in consideration soon.

At times it is so distressing that it leads to a women developing a mental illness. Mental illness includes PTSD, depression, suicidal thoughts, substance abuse, anxiety. Women who face domestic violence have lower self esteem and fed they are not independent enough to walk out of their situation. Domestic violence worsen the situation of already pre existing mental health issues.

Men, women, children all are already going through a period of stress during this pandemic plus women who are facing domestic violence in their houses just adds up to the situation and worsen it. If the women of the house is not mentally and physically fit, the whole family will face the repercussions as it is the women who takes care of everyone and everything in the family.

Keywords:- Pandemic, Domestic Violence, Mental Illness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence in simple language is violence at home. But now its broadly defined as ‘all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence’ that maybe committed by any family member or the intimate partner.

Although the definition of domestic violence is not limited only towards women (wife) but includes same sex relationships, unmarried partners. But here we are only going to research on women.

An abused women always lives in a fear, she may become isolated in such circumstances, it is really hard to make sense of what’s happening. Also the self esteem of women drops down to zero. About 2/3 of our country's women are victim of domestic violence.

Degree of emotional and psychological trauma is so high that it includes depression, anger, shame and suicide. It can even be the leading cause of death, disability and illness in women below the age of 45.

This ongoing pandemic has only worsen the situation. As all the households were under increased strains of health, wealth and the living conditions were confined and cramped, the domestic violence has been increased a lot.

Now women had to live with their abusers 24/7, the risk is increased to a higher extent. Also many men who used to go out every day for work and who used to enjoy every weekend with friends are now trapped inside their houses and have become frustrated to an extent that they had starting drinking and in a response to it they have started hitting their wives / partners.

The main factors that led to this increased aggression at home are mental stress, financial insecurity, low or no income at all. Basically whenever there is more family time together, domestic violence increases.

Another most important reason behind this situation is lack of access to alcohol. Delhi men are so extremely frustrated because of their inability to get alcohol that they lose control over their heads and beat up their wives.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Domestic violence is defined as a pattern of abusive behavior in a relationship. This behavior is shown by one partner to the other partner in order to gain or maintain control. Domestic violence is not only limited till physical abuse but it also includes sexual, emotional, psychological, economic abuse.

On the other hand mental health usually refers to behavioral, emotional and cognitive well being. Mental health problems affect both men and equally but certain problems are more common in women. Abuse is often a major factor in women’s mental health problems. Disturbed mental health of a women affects all her relationships and physical health. Women however, are on higher level of internalizing disorders.

We know in the recent times our country has been hit with a deadly virus i.e, coronavirus, it has been originated from Wuhan, a city in China. And since March 19 2020 there's been a complete lockdown in the whole country. Our lifestyle has undergone a major change.

Now if we talk about domestic violence in the times of Covid19 we can see that the number of cases reporting domestic violence in Delhi NCR has increased a lot since March and due to this the mental health of the women is deteriorating, many of them have attempted suicide and many tried. Women who hadn't attempted suicide or tried to are in hell lot of pain both physically and mentally that nobody can think of.

Domestic violence is such a big issue that prevails in our society since past so many ages and still there are no strict laws against it. Things are only getting worse day by day in almost every Indian household.

But what all factors led to an increase in number of cases in the lockdown period ?

There are n number of reasons for it. Two most significant reasons can be frustrated men and their inability to get alcohol.

➤ Objectives

The objective of my study is to find how badly domestic violence effects the mental health of Delhi NCR women and what role has the pandemic played in it.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The study analysis is an exploratory research that is used to investigate the influence of domestic violence on the mental health of Delhi NCR women and how badly the pandemic has played roll in it.

I've adopted the interview case study method. I've interviewed around 25 ladies for a better understanding of the issue and for the rest of them I've adopted the questionnaire method. Unstructured interviews were taken.

50 women were chosen for the questionnaire method. I've chosen the area of Delhi NCR because I live here and it was easier for me to conduct a research here. Also it is the capital and it has a large exposure.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

We will first analyze any five interviews taken to have a clear image of the severity of the issue.

1. Suman Kumar: She is a maid and works in 10 houses every day to earn money and help her husband. She has been married for 3 years now and is not able to conceive. Her husband was a bit supportive in initial months of the marriage but slowly he started hitting her as the pressure from the family increased. But all this never really affected her as she used to spend her whole day working out and didn't had the time to think about this all. However during the lockdown, her husband started beating her up more often. She wasn't in her proper mental state for almost 3-4 months, she was mentally drained, had suicidal thoughts. All this affected her because there was nothing to keep her distracted all this while. But now she's back to work and is recovering bit by bit every day.

2. Sonia Khan: She is a young girl in her teens. She belongs to a poor conservative Muslim family. She aspires to open a parlour in her locality. Her family is completely against it. However in February 2020 she started a 5 month beauty course, behind her parents back but unfortunately due to the pandemic she couldn't complete the course and her parents came to know about it. Now that her father was 24/7 at home he used to hit her with belts and wooden rods, he humiliated her a lot during the lockdown period. Her mental health was ruined but it was her inner strength that didn't let her lose her sanity. She is broken but not completely. There is hope for a better tomorrow in her eyes.

3. Swati Sharma: She is a middle class housewife. Its been 10 years of her marriage now, it was a love marriage. For first 2-3 years everything was going smooth, then differences between her and her husband started popping up, her husband started finding her too old fashioned and flawed in every sense. Out of frustration he started hitting her. When it first happened, it was a major setback for Swati. She got numb for many days. But now after 5 years she has adjusted and compromised with her situation. However her personality never got developed. She is not very much efficient in home chores. She is not confident enough to talk to somebody outside her family or make new friends. She is super conscious and has low self esteem.

4. Payal Sharma: She is a 18 year old girl who lives with her father and step mother. She belongs to lower middle class family. Her father works as a clerk in a private firm. Relations between her and her step mother have never been smooth. In the lockdown when Payal's college was closed and both of them, Payal and her step mother are spending their most of the time in house together their relationship became more rough. Her step mother have even hit her in this period. Payal got a major setback of this. She feels extremely lonely even in the presence of her father. She misses her mother a lot. She has lost hope of things getting better. She can not trust anyone easily and got commitment issues. She fears of forming new relations.

5. Khushboo Mirza: She was just 17 years old when she got married with a promise from her in laws and husband that they would let her study even after marriage but it never happened. When she rebelled against it she was beaten up by her mother in law and husband. She was a normal girl with many dreams but now she is just a woman living in a constant fear of being thrown out of the house or getting beaten up again.

More such interviews were taken. All were taken in the absence of the abusers and any family member. The woman who suffered from domestic violence or are still going through are in a really bad state of mind. Most of them do not have the confidence to confront their abusers and take a stand for themselves.

Almost every woman, when she faced it for the first time had a emotional setback for days or weeks. Domestic violence is not only an issue that prevails in lower society, but many middle class women also faces it on regular basis.

Pandemic, clearly had a devastating affect on the lives of many women. Living with abusers 24/7 is not easy. It takes a lot of patience, courage and strength. The pandemic had only added up the fuel and made the situations worse.

The questionnaire had questions regarding the employment status of both, woman and her abuser, substance abuse, general health, childhood experiences of abuse etc.

V. CONCLUSION

Domestic violence in any form had long term consequences on mental health of women. Domestic violence and its consequences for the psychological well being of a women have been recognized as a very important health issue. Woman who had suffered domestic violence generally experience high levels of anxiety, depression and PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). They have a worse coping mechanism plus they suffer from poor self esteem. They do not have strength to fight or confront their abusers. They are mentally disturbed to level none of us can think of.

Moreover age and time plays an important role. Women who experience it in their teens or early twenties take a longer time to get over it and are more prone to depression and have suicidal thoughts. And women who have recently experienced severe episodes of abuse experience high levels of distress and anxiety.

However higher education status and employment status are the protective factors against the abuse. Women who are independent know how to take a stand against it and are mentally more stronger.

Around two thirds of the women reported clinical level of depression and psychological distress. However the severity of distress depends upon the severity of the abuse. 60% women experienced post traumatic stress disorder. The pandemic has worsened the situation. It had adverse affects on the mental health of the woman.

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