

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EXPERIENCE OF MARRIED WOMEN IN
PUDUCHERRY: A FEMINIST SOCIAL WORK STUDY**

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By:

DIVYA K.
Reg.No.144500310

Prof. NILIMA SRIVASTAVA
Research Supervisor



**SCHOOL OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI 110068**

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CHAPTER-7

CONCLUSION

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7.1 Overview of the Chapter

“There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable and never tolerable”.

Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary-General

The research has reached a significant stage of conclusion where the enquiries seek to construct answers to the research questions. The feminist social work discourse on domestic violence continues to challenge the gendered power relations and reduce the existing gendered gaps in the area of theory and practice to improve the lives of human being. One of the questions of this research is to explore the socio-cultural, economic and family background of the survivors. The second research question aims to recognize the nature of domestic violence experienced married women in Puducherry who complained under the PWDV Act, 2005. Thirdly, this research seeks to identify the supportive mechanisms, which are available to the survivors of domestic violence. Finally, it enquires how domestic violence survivors avail of legal support through the PWDV Act, 2005.

7.2 Major Findings

Before discussing the concluding aspects, the summary of major research findings based on research questions mentioned below:

7.2.1 Socio-Economic Status of the Survivors of Domestic Violence

This research attempted to identify the socio-economic and family profile of the survivors of domestic violence who filed their complaints under the PWDV Act, 2005 in Puducherry. As per the sample framework of the study, 40 domestic violence survivors participated in in-depth interviews. The findings revealed significant details associated with the personal characteristics, socio-economic and family background namely, the age of survivors, the age gap between wife and husband,

educational and occupational profile of the couples, religion, class and caste background of survivors, house ownership and women headed families studied. The detailed discussion of each aspect presented below:

The range of age of the survivors revealed that married women in the young adulthood age group often complaint to the DVPOs. In the present study shows, 37 survivors are young adults. This may attribute to the fact of stage of human development witness changes in the development of attitudes, values that investigate the possibilities of life (Birch, 1997; Levinson, 1986; Parsons, 1942) gives strength to the survivors to look for legal recourse for the redressal of domestic violence. Levinson, (1986) called the young adulthood or age of thirties as 'age-thirty crisis'. It is the transition of behaviour from twenties to thirties and life takes serious turn, which is supported by the findings of the present research.

The economic uncertainty is another challenge to the survivors as the violent environment restricts the economic freedom of the survivors. The study reveals the economic damages occurred in the young adulthood that pertains even if the survivor manages to get out of the violent environment. Exposure to violence in young adulthood adds hazards to women's health. Women in young adulthood are in sexually productive age and violence harms women's motherhood and parenting stages of life. In the Indian context, the social taboo and expectation of producing son and the expected gendered roles over childbearing add fuel to the fire.

The age difference between husband and wife shows, majority of the survivors (29) are three to five years younger to their husband and only one survivor is married in the same age. This highlights the influence of social and cultural norms that encourages the higher age of husband than wife. It is a patriarchal belief that men's higher age leads to more dominance over wife, gradually it can lead to domestic violence. Patriarchal social orders give advantage to elder family member especially male in all endeavours. The studies (Breitman, Shackelford & Block, 2004; Girase, et al. 2016) reveal because of several reasons, grooms prefer to marry the younger bride and this age difference provides supremacy to husbands to perpetrate domestic violence. The findings of the study support the above assertion.

The empirical evidence about the educational profile of survivors shows that they are comparatively more educated than their husbands. The government of Puducherry provides free and compulsory education for girl children. Several schemes exist to support the girl's education at various levels and is evident from the development indicators of Puducherry. The present study reveals 35 survivors underwent schooling and college education before their marriage. The educational status of the husbands shows that 33 of them completed school and college education whereas seven husbands were not educated at all. This is an indication that even educated women suffer from domestic violence; however, the educated women survivors resist domestic violence in greater experience.

The marital status of survivors shows the diverse nature of marriage practices that exist at Puducherry. Love marriage is more prevalent among the survivors and this category further divided into two categories based on the consent of the family that is marriage with and without the consent. Ten survivors married without consent of their family while nine of them had with consent of their family. The couples married without the consent of families lack support from either one or both families, but in most of the cases after a few years especially after the birth of a child, gradually they start getting support from natal families of the couples. Thirteen survivors (13) married through arrangements made by the parents or family. There are survivors who had a second marriage, live-in relationship and forced marriage. The significant observation is that domestic violence cuts across all type of marriage.

Each family is different based on family dynamics, relation between couples and family members, allocation of resources and so on. Since domestic violence happens mostly in the domestic sphere, family needs to consider as the prime site of violence. The data of family structure brings out significant observations about survivors. Clearly, majority of them (30) are in a nuclear family set up and only ten live in a joint family. This need not to read as a nuclear family being more prone to compared to joint family system in the context of domestic violence as it could be observed that domestic violence occurs in both joint and nuclear families.

Twenty five survivors have children and fifteen survivors have no children. The study represent that there is a relationship between children and tolerance towards domestic violence by survivors. Initially the survivors with children used to tolerate domestic violence to avoid the separation of couples as it may affect the future of their children. This tolerance aggravates the violence and as a last resort, the survivor files the complaint against abusive husband. On the other hand, the survivors having no children break from the violent relationship. Another finding shows most of the survivors are unaware of the consequence of domestic violence among the children, and only a few of them noticed changes in the behaviour of the children who exposed to domestic violence. In such a situation, they sent the child either to a boarding school or to a relative's home to protect them from witnessing violence and non-interference of their education. The study finds all survivors are concerned about the education and the safety of their children.

Another social variable studied is the duration of marital life of survivors. In this study, the survivors have marital duration from one year to sixteen years. It observed, some survivors filed complaints in less than one year of marriage whereas a few survivors filed a complaint after more than fifteen years of marriage hoping that they would come out of a violent relationship. This shows that, in all the cases, the decision to file a complaint not taken in haste but it took after a lot of tolerance and tribulation. Most of the survivors (20) belong to middle class. The number of survivors belongs to the upper (10) and lower class (10) is same. Several studies (Verma & Collumbien, 2003; Jeyaseelan et al., 2007; Koenig et al., 2006) in India revealed the lower classes are more prone to domestic violence. However, there are studies (Srinivasan & Bedi, 2007; Schuler et al., 1996) that found domestic violence cut across class, economic status and poverty. The present study supports Srinivasan & Bedi and Schuler ascertain.

All the survivors are religious believers and no one found as an atheist. Most of them belong to the Hindu religion (30), seven from Islam and three practices Christianity. Among Hindus, horoscope and other astrology related beliefs used to justify the violence against married women. It observed, Christian survivors

approached the church and their congregation to solve the issues of domestic violence and take advice and counselling by the priests. However, when it did not stop domestic violence; they approached the DVPO and reported the case. This study reveals Muslim survivors found more vulnerable because of the customary laws of marriage and its practices. It reveals the religious head never supported the survivors to complain against their husband. The study found that when domestic violence occurs, no religious institution took any positive intervention to stop the violence or to support the survivors to approach the act.

Most of the survivors (19) belong to the upper caste. Twelve survivors belong to a backward community and nine are Scheduled Caste. There is no survivor from the Scheduled Tribe as no ST population notified in the region of Puducherry. This study reveals the nature domestic violence experience is different among dalit women survivors. Hence, the finding reveals domestic violence cut across caste. Caste is an Indian social reality. In a caste-ridden society, cross-caste marriages have been institutionally prevented to establish the purity claim by certain castes (Chakravarty,1993). The data shows that some of the survivors (11) had engaged inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. Even though, domestic violence cut across religion and caste, the experience of domestic violence differs in exogamous marriage. The finding also reveals that the hierarchical status of caste used as a justification for perpetuating violence. Upper caste men marry lower caste women, if they are economically sound and take advantage of using violence by justifying caste as an excuse. Another tendency noticed with exogamous marriage that it causes social exclusion. This leads to uncertainties that aggravate domestic violence among couples. To conclude, both domestic violence and caste are social experiences and the co-existence of both adds vulnerability. Another category is inter-religious marriages. There are four survivors married from a different religious background. It observed in these cases, the couples from other religion converted into Christianity.

The occupational status of survivors significantly linked with the experience of domestic violence. There are 31 survivors are working women and managed to balance professional as well as the domestic roles of women. The violence adds

burden to women's multiple roles; however, the professional roles were highly affected. It noticed that the suspicious husband visits the wife's workplace and continue the nuisance with an intension to insult her in front of colleagues. Thus, violence in the domestic sphere extends to professional space too.

Several survivors revealed that there is an extension of domestic violence into their workplace. Consequently, the survivors lost or quit their job and there is a negative impact in their career. The irony is husband's jobs not affected by the domestic violence and their job remains safe. The survivors forced to draw loan citing wife's salary as collateral security by the husband. Women do not have any control over loan amount except the liability. This form of violence is specific to employed survivors that results in an economic crisis or economic dependency over the husband. Another burden of employed women is the redundancy by the unemployed husband and 7 survivors partners are jobless. It observed that there is a continuous demand for money by the unemployed husbands.

On the other hand, unemployed survivors (9) tend to continue their abusive relationship with earning husbands. The interviewed women shared that scarcity of money created stress among the couples that lead to the violent behaviour of husbands towards them. Indeed, the unemployment of either husband or wife creates a high risk of domestic violence. To conclude, both employed and unemployed married women suffer domestic violence from their husbands, however, its nature, magnitude and consequences differ. The economic independence of married women is strength and a breakthrough from violence.

Wage or income plays a vital role in familial conditions and marital relations. It observed that a fulltime or part-time dual-earner model is prevalent among the survivors' families. Rosa, Lorga & Lyonette (2016) argue that while married women engage in professional work rather than domestic duties, a crucial transformation of gender norms occurs in the family as well in society. Unlike the above study, the results of the present study revealed, though survivors employed and earning member in a family, they prioritized traditional gender roles associated to women that is engaging in domestic chores, childcare and taking care of in-laws. This study reveals

that 9 survivors manage to meet all the financial need of the entire family. This is because either the husband is unemployed or do not contribute to the financial needs of the family. There are seven survivors husbands are jobless.

Another significant finding is that 37 survivors did not have ownership over their house where they live. Only 3 survivors had house ownership and it was given by their parents. The lack of ownership of their home leads to poor self-esteem, loss of self-confidence among the survivors. This section has answered the economic and family profile of the survivors that give depth to understand the profile of survivors and their experience of domestic violence.

7.2.2 Nature of Domestic Violence Experienced by Survivors

The physical form of violence is the most common and visible form of violence spanning from beating with hand on the face to the extreme of causing permanent impairment or attempt to a suicide. While tracing the history of domestic violence, assumes significance as it stays in the memory of the survivors. Secondly, most of the survivors and their in-laws kept silent towards the initial incidences of violence that led the husband to repeat the violence frequently. Hence, the intervention in any form to stop domestic violence needs to start at the very inception of violence. Physical violence is not just ‘physical’ alone; it has influence over mental, psychological and emotional health of survivors. In most of the cases, husbands have key role to perpetrate the domestic violence. However, the in-laws are founds to play a key role in justifying the violence perpetrated by the husband or maintaining a culture of silence towards domestic violence.

While discussing the health consequences the domestic violence induced injuries are important signs of violent incidents. The result shows all the survivors have consulted medical practitioners one way or the other for availing the medical services. The medical professionals had mistaken the domestic violence induced injuries as ‘domestic injuries’. Even though, 18 survivors availed medical emergency services like surgery, admitted in Intensive Care Unit, in-patient services, treated for Orthopedic services for broken bones, applied neck collar and so on. The physical form of domestic violence affects the day to day life of women and it has economic,

psychological, sexual and health related consequences too. As a consequences, some of the survivors suffer from severe back pain, chest pain, abdominal pain, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, thyroid problems, suicide tendency etc.

Another significant finding observed from the field data is increase in incidents of domestic violence during pregnancy period. The nature and experience of domestic violence intensify during pregnancy period, as the perpetrators find this period is potential to bargain with the life of women and child. Firstly, the pregnancy period is used to bargain and negotiate to get more dowry and resources from survivors' family. The survivors are forced to follow the dowry demands of the husband for avoiding violence during pregnancy period. Violence during pregnancy is found with respect to denying food, water and health care service or threatening the survivors for abortion. Secondly, the demand by husbands for delivering a male child of survivors is commonly observed among survivors. The domestic violence perpetrators frequently threaten their wife as he may marry another woman or go for divorce if wife failed to deliver son. The PNDT Act, 1986 is strictly followed in the Union Territory of Puducherry but sex determination test facilities are available in the bordering districts of Tamil Nadu. Thus, it can be inferred that connection of pregnancy and the birth of a child can be considered as a trigger for domestic violence by a patriarchal society. If domestic violence starts at the inception of marriage, parents believe that the husband will change his behaviour after the birth of a child. In Vijayanthy's (assumed name given to the respondent) case, domestic violence started soon after her marriage. Parents advised her to give birth to a child so that the attitude of the husband will change. The husband continues to abuse her during pregnancy and it is even worse after the birth of a child. She became more vulnerable as she needed to protect herself and ensure the safety of the child.

The present research explored the survivors' experience of sexual violence. It is a serious form of domestic violence, which most of the time people do not consider domestic violence as society permits unconditional sexual access to the wife. In the field data, it is ranging from sexually targeted comments to marital rape and forced abortion. The data reveals that sexual intercourse without the consent of

intimate partner is a prevalent form of sexual violence against survivors. Two survivors faced marital rape as a punishment; to question the extramarital affair of the husband in one case and another for denying sexual demands of the husband. Culturally, if women initiate sexual acts, it is considered that the woman is “unchaste”. Besides, certain dilemmas exist in connection with sex and sexuality among the survivors in the background of existing cultural and stereotypical notions. The gendered notions and bias include satisfying the sexual needs of the husband, in any form, is the duty of married women or men are sexually uncontrollable by their nature etc. Repeated sexual demand is another prevalent form of sexual violence faced by the survivors. Most of the survivors had undergone sexual violence that led them to distinguish what is healthy and unhealthy sex. Initially, the survivors were confused and did not recognize forced sex or unnatural sex as domestic violence. They mistook these unhealthy sexual relations as part of marital life, it further, lead to frigidity.

After a prolonged period of sexual abuse, the survivors realized, that their husband sexually exploited them. Cultural restrictions denied them to share the incidents of sexual violence with members of their family or friends. Impact of sexual violence observed among the survivors includes emotional distress, feeling of humiliation and lack of interest towards sex etc. This study reveals, the survivors who experienced sexual violence were more prone to issues related to sexual and reproductive health like sexually transmitted disease, frequent urinary infections, allergies and repeated miscarriage. To conclude, each case of sexual violence, women’s body and sexuality is targeted and culturally legitimized.

Verbal abuse and emotional abuse against women are other forms of violence that need to be addressed. The findings show, verbal abuse perpetrated by both husband and in-laws, are most frequently perpetuated against survivors. The common mode of verbal abuse is “name-calling”, using abusive words, use of threatening words against survivors or their loved ones and so on. The patterns of the verbal abusive act are targeting the body shaming (you are so dark/fat etc.), caste of the survivors, character assassination, blaming parents, complexion and economic or social status of the natal family of the survivors. A common agenda behind the use of verbal

abuse by either husband or in-laws to provoke the woman and justify perpetuating violence by them. The in-laws frequently use threats against their daughter-in-laws. As in the case of Selvi, after a physical attack by her husband and in-laws, she admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. Her mother-in-law visited the hospital and warned in front of other family members, *“be obedient to the husband else next time I will see you in a coffin”*. It creates a culture of justifying violence within the family. It also defuses the possibility to rethink over violence perpetrated by the husband.

All the survivors (40) experienced emotional violence as part of domestic violence. Mostly husbands and in-laws perpetrate emotional violence against married women. The purpose of emotional violence is to dominate and gain control over women. Common forms of emotional violence are; purposeful blaming, public humiliation, preventing socialization, locked up in the room, denial to meet parents and friends, control use of mobile phone, denying to interact with children, blaming for delivering girl child / demand for a boy child, blaming to be infertile, break emotional bond between children and the mother through hate-talks, threaten to attack children, threaten to divorce, threaten with acid/poison, threaten to commit suicide by husband's after citing wife's name and forced the survivors to commit suicide etc.

The study found the different dimensions of domestic violence begins with emotional violence; it continues throughout the violent marital relationship and sustain even after the survivors are out of the abusive relationship. Apparently, the nature of emotional violence is subtle and it appears 'normal' in family life, unlike physical violence. It is very difficult to voice out without evidence; hence, the survivors tolerate emotional violence for a prolonged period. The study found that economic abuse is another rampant form of domestic violence against the survivors. All survivors underwent economic abuse by their husbands. The majority (31) of survivors engaged in economic activity and financially contributed to the marital family in one way or the other and only nine survivors are economically dependent on their husbands' earnings. Besides, thirty-six survivors were married by following the customary practice of giving dowry. These survivors started married life after contributing a huge amount of economic resources in the form of dowry. The

significant finding of the study is the relationship between economic violence and 'revenge/vengeance' of husbands over wives. The economic independence of women adds autonomy to the survivors, which challenge the male supremacy in the domestic sphere and it leads to rage and revenge or vengeance among husbands against wife. This leads to destroying the economic stability or resources owned by women. As happened with Jeeva (31) who worked as a technical assistant in a firm, faced continuous complaints and RTIs against her job by her husband who is trained in law. Her husband did the same with Jeeva's father and brother who were working in the government sector. It reveals the perpetrators' revenge against wife and her family members.

Similarly, Muthulakshmi (28) terminated from three different occupations; tailoring, beauty parlour and apiary (collection of honey from bee-house) because her husband repeatedly made trouble at her workplace that caused loss of job. Subha (26) worked in a private school and managed to pass Pondicherry Government Teacher Selection Examination during the period of severe domestic violence experience. She failed to attend the interview because her husband hid her academic certificates. Finally, she had to get special approvals and legal fight to get back her academic certificates from him. There are 29 cases found in the field data where the husbands purposefully spoiled or damaged the existing livelihood options/ resources as a means to seek revenge or vengeance. This tendency reveals the magnitude of economic violence faced by married women and the need of economic autonomy of women facing domestic violence.

Another finding of this research is the types of economic violence faced by the survivors. The study found three major types of economic violence as 1) Coercive control 2) exploitation and 3) destruction. Coercive control includes husband forcefully controlling or taking decisions regarding overall economic activities and resources of women. It operates as controlling access to resources, limiting access to livelihood, not allowing the wife to take economic decisions, limiting the basic needs etc. The second type of economic violence is exploitation. This allows the abuser to exploit the resources, financial source or assets of the wife or her in-laws. Major

activities noted under this category are selling, using her assets as collateral or misuse the gold ornaments or other resources. Another type of economic violence is destruction; in which the abusers deliberately destroy the economic source or the valuables of the wife. Most of the survivors faced the revenge form of violence from the perpetrator. Major economic abuses noted under this category are; damaging the financial sources or the assets of the wife.

The result shows that cultural practice of dowry is rampant in Puducherry. Majority of the survivors (36) practiced giving dowry at the time of marriage. It starts at engagement and continues throughout the upcoming occasions like cultural festivals of the couples (*Thala Deewali*), pregnancy, childbirth, naming ceremony and so on. The amount of dowry depends on the career and family status of the groom. For instance, Sangeetha's (25) husband demanded additional dowry of five lakhs after two years of her marriage against the promotion of her husband from constable to Sub Inspector. In most of the cases, the in-laws operated the dowry demand through their son. Failing to provide dowry in any form leads to domestic violence.

One of the significant finding evolved from this study is the economic cost of domestic violence. Domestic violence acts as a reason for feminization of poverty (Pearce, D. 1978). The survivors employed in daily wage to the survivors working with government and private job faced domestic violence as a matter of economic crisis. Domestic violence is an extra burden for their economic activity which leads to poverty. The case of Ganga (33) in chapter 4, Girija (40) in chapter 3 and Muthulakshmi (28) in chapter 7 are the clear evidence of this.

One of the most significant findings of this research is the link between dowry violence and access to the accommodation at the marital home. In Indian marriage system, women shift their habitat from their natal home to the marital home. Women's stay at their natal home after marriage is culturally not acceptable. The prime strategy of the abusers, when they fail to get the demanded dowry is, they send back the woman to the natal home until she brings back the demanded dowry. By this, the perpetrators directly challenge the right of wife to reside in the marital home. After marriage, women's families did not encourage them to stay in the natal home.

Thus, married women facing domestic violence feel loss of a place for residence, which is the denial of fundamental human rights. Here, the PWDV Act, 2006 ensures the right to reside inside the marital home. For instance, Valli's (31) husband was denied stay at home for not giving demanded dowry and later she gained residence order to stay within the husband's home as per the PWDV Act, 2006.

The findings on relationship between domestic violence and alcoholism shows that not all the male perpetrators of domestic violence are alcohol addicts and not all husbands addicted to alcohol are abusive while they were drunk. Mostly, the use of alcohol makes the husband to withdraw from household and parenting responsibilities. Therefore, marital life with a drunkard husband burdens her responsibilities as a mother and as a responsible household manager. In this context, the survivors would be additionally concerned about their role as a parent and provide extra care of children who exposed to domestic violence. Further, the survivors' husbands would beat them up while they were intoxicated. As found in earlier studies, the present study also asserts that the husband's addiction to alcohol becomes an excuse for his abusive behaviour and socio-cultural norms justify this atrocity of alcoholic husband.

The nature of masculinities of abusive husbands are found numerous forms. The data reveals the notions of masculinity and domestic violence is strongly associated with the experience of survivors. Men's aggressiveness, alcoholism, economic stress and other socio-cultural justifications are widely used as justifications of husband's abusive behaviour by both perpetrators, survivors and the society. The result shows that the perpetrators' wives rarely challenge the abusive husband's masculinities. The data shows, there is an intrinsic relationship between masculinities and son preference in the dimension of domestic violence. The findings show that there are deep-rooted discriminatory practice exists against married women who delivered girl children. Domestic violence incidents are prevalent among survivors because of delivering girl children and women face enormous pressure by husband and his parents to produce a son. The study substantiates that domestic violence experiences are not completely restricted to the four walls of the home. It extends into their workplace, natal homes and towards survivors' natal family too.

7.2.3 Nature of Supportive Measures Received by the Domestic Violence Survivors from Stakeholders

In this research, the role and contributions of stakeholders are highly valued because they provided immediate relief and formed a network of support systems to the survivors of domestic violence. The stakeholders include protection officers, service providers like police officers, advocates, NGOs, Anganwadi workers, health professionals, professional counsellors, elected representatives, social workers, parents and the neighbourhood community of the survivors. The PWDV, Act has identified these specific social supporters and envisaged several responsibilities for them to ensure humanitarian concerns towards the pursuit of wellbeing of the survivors.

Protection Officers are multi-tasking professionals in handling the domestic violence issues. The pre and post-litigation duties under PWDV Act ensure the immediate relief to the survivors. The POs manages all these duties single-handedly which was previously performed by an entire police station. All POs are devoid of basic infrastructure facility for the job requirements such as established office building, personnel, and transport facility. The researcher observed that all POs are working on contractual basis with consolidated salary not receiving all the allowances and other social security measures. All the PO's has expressed their lack of dissatisfaction with their nature of work but with the lack of recognition from the state and lack of appreciation of their work by the civil society. Safety and security of protection officers is also a serious concern. The Protection officers deal with criminal cases, therefore, they are prone to the rage of the perpetrators or attacked in an extreme case. One of the woman protection officers had to evacuate her home in the midnight to protect herself and family from the attack of a local goon whose wife complained under PWDVA. At the time of the interview, she recalled the incident and concluded, "*there is no protection for protection officers*". It has noted, even though, Puducherry have an equal number of men and women protection officers, women officers receive more number of cases of domestic violence. It shows the survivors prefer the services of women protection officers rather men.

The major findings on medical practitioners revealed it is highly essential to facilitate training to handle the complex medical cases of survivors and encourage the doctors to develop gender sensitive attitude and humanitarian concern towards the victims of domestic violence. Moreover, medical practitioners need to consider the mental health aspects of the victims of domestic violence. The findings on the role of police revealed that they support the prevention strategies for domestic violence and assist the Protection Officers to handle the complex cases efficiently. The findings prove that the intervention of police in the case of domestic violence ensures the physical protection of victims. Majority of the stakeholders suggested that the intervention of neighbours and community members was supportive and it is necessary for reducing the incidents of domestic violence against married women. In short, the stakeholders function as supporting structure among the survivors of domestic violence. The result shows that interventions of stakeholders increase the awareness about the PWDV Act and they strive to overcome the barriers to implement the Act.

Another outcome of this research is the support structure available to the survivors. The knowledge, experience, and proficiency of stakeholders has contributed to bring an enormous effort to tackle the issue of domestic violence. It is noted in no case, the family members from marital family either men or women helped the survivors to access the PWDV Act. Eventhough, in most of the cases the violence was happened at marital home and women members were present in matital home. It is noted the marital home nurtures a culture of violence.

7.2.4 Legal Support Availed by the Survivors of Domestic Violence

This research question intended to explore the access and availability of PWDV act among the survivors of domestic violence. The findings reveal that awareness generation about the PWDV Act, 2005 is highly necessary among civil society. Because only the sensitive civil society can sustain an effective legal mechanism to resist serious social crime likes domestic violence. Majority of the survivors (27) were not aware about the basic information about legal service under the domestic violence prevention act. The survivors approached several legal and

non-legal agencies for redressal of violence to confront the domestic violence issues against them.

It observed that most of the survivors still value the support of their family members, police and the politicians of local governments. There are reluctant help seekers (12) who revealed that social stigmas, lack of awareness that made them hesitant to seek external help to stop domestic violence. The findings shows that, homelessness, violence against children, prolonged victimhood, poor economic conditions and life-threatening domestic violence incidents prompted the victims to take legal action against their abusive husbands. These are the precipitating factors, which motivated the survivors to report their complaints against domestic violence.

The intervention of police and their support were highly recommended by the survivors and Protection Officers. The result proves that the intervention of police provided temporary relief from the abusive marital relations and the intensity of domestic violence-related incidents temporarily reduced. In some cases the interventions of police has brought remarkable result to stop the intimate partner violence against survivors. The stakeholders were the key informants about the PWDV Act among the survivors. The justice delivery mechanism and relief orders of the Act had found to be widely discussed among the survivors by stakeholders. Majority (27) of the survivors expressed their satisfaction regarding the service of Protection Officers. The survivors (30) expressed their satisfaction regarding the functioning of PWDV Act. The survivors shared the source of information they used to contact the DVPOs. They received help from NGOs, Police Officers, social workers, Anganwadi and health workers. The findings on the availability of legal relief orders proved that protection orders, residence orders and monetary reliefs are highly demanded and availed by the survivors. The survivors also expressed their satisfaction regarding the legal relief orders approved by the Magistrate through the Protection Officer.

The survivors emphasized the need for enhancement of the entire justice delivery mechanism associated with domestic violence. The relief orders must

strengthened and there must be effective regularity mechanism over monetary relief of survivors, along with effective counselling service for the betterment of mental health of the victims. The number of Protection Officers should increase for comprehensive management of the issues of domestic violence. The researcher observed that strategic and multi-sectoral efforts of public and private sectors associated with prevention of domestic violence may bring actual social changes that result violence-free home environment at local and national levels. To summarize, the survivors of domestic violence have availed, accessed and benefitted from the legal relief through PWDV Act, 2005.

7.3 Theoretical Integrations

Functionally, theories attempt to make structure and order to the facts or knowledge that brings sense of understanding of social phenomenon. The qualitative empiricist philosophers have argued the need for theoretical integration of qualitative data (Kelle, 2014). There are numerous theories exist about the issue of domestic violence. This research structured within the framework of feminist, social work and other social theories that explain the lived experience of survivors of domestic violence. Domestic violence experience, consequences and risk factors of survivors has critically examined and analysed with the support of feminist theories. This research found that deep-rooted patriarchal influence in familial relations works as a serious cause behind every incident of domestic violence. The abusive intimate partner always hides in the shadow of patriarchal favouritism that highly prevalent in the domestic sphere. Considerable emphasis has been given to the feminist social work perspective while analysing the effectiveness of the agencies of Domestic Violence Protection Offices in Puducherry.

7.3.1 Walby's Theory of Patriarchy

The study found Walby's theory of patriarchy and six structures of patriarchy being reflected in the findings of the study. Walby argues, the patriarchy functions through the six distinctive structures as 1) The patriarchal mode of production 2) Patriarchal relations in paid work 3) Patriarchal relations in the state 4) Male violence 5) Patriarchal relations in sexuality 6) Patriarchal relations in cultural institutions,

such as religion, the media and education (Walby, 1989, cited in Best, 2003, p.204). Among these 6 structures, the reflections of male violence as stated in 4th form namely male violence was seen in the data w.r.t. physical, sexual, emotional and economic violence that severely affected the survivors. As with the fifth structure, the patriarchal relations in sexuality found perpetrators to be dominant, oppressive and using exploitative practice against their spouse not only within the domestic sphere and but also restricted their access to resources and opportunities in public sphere. Patriarchal power relations in cultural institutions (within the institution of marriage and family here) was found to be the core reason for inflicting VAW.

This research found two forms of patriarchy that operate against the survivors. Walby quite accurately states that there are two distinctive forms of patriarchy exist in the social world: private patriarchy and public patriarchy (The BIG Thinkers: Walby in Context. p.4). Private patriarchy allows male domination over women and subjugate women within the household and are they prevented from participating in decision making process of household discourses. As an exclusionary tactical form, men receive women's services individually and directly in the home. The findings of the present study show, the survivors are not involved in the decision making process of household. Public patriarchy functions in a more complex and oppressive form in marital relations. (Walby, 1989). The findings prove the survivors separated from preserving and managing the resources and wealth.

7.3.2 Gender Theory and Domestic violence

This research used gender theory for understanding the gender roles and gendered power dynamics that perpetuate violence against married women in marital relations. Gender theory is widely used to understand the issue of domestic violence against women. This research found concurrence with what the gender theory proposes that violence is a resource for constructing masculinity. The use of domestic violence has different meanings for women and men. Gender theory states that domestic violence can be affected by social processes that support men's societal dominance. Anderson highlights domestic violence is embedded in gender and power

relations that represent men's gendered masculine nature, which attempts to maintain dominance and control over women (Anderson, 1997).

7.3.3 Feminist Social Work Perspectives

The feminist social work perspective of the research focuses on the domestic violence protection agencies, their strategies for the prevention of domestic violence in their respective localities. The present study applies feminist theories to understand the physical, sexual, emotional and economic forms of domestic violence among married women. At the same time, the research is associated with the assessment of functions, responsibilities and contributions of stakeholders who are actively involved in the prevention, correctional and rehabilitative aspects of the survivors of domestic violence. Therefore, the application of feminist theories and practical elements of feminist social work effectively studied within this qualitative methodological framework. The study found crisis management strategies, social advocacies, and community interventions from social work point of view.

The thoughts of Lena Dominelli, the pioneer of feminist social work have been incorporated to understand the functions of service providers and stakeholders who are involved with the prevention activities of domestic violence. Dominelli's arguments brought new insights into the women's advocacy programmes specifically on addressing the issues of violence against women. Dominelli & McLeod pointed out that feminist social work originated through women activists who contributed to the empowerment of women communities (Dominelli, & McLeod, 1989). Feminist social work intends to enhance the wellbeing of women in personal and public positions of society. This feminist-oriented social work practice with the survivors of violence may bring integration into feminist theory and practice (Attlee, 1920).

7.3.4 Mary Richmond's and Theory of Person and Social Environment

Social work professionals engage as a central force to realize the vulnerability of victims of domestic violence and arranged protection and safety measures for them. Theoretically, the feminist perspectives of social work explain the structure and dynamics of gender and power politics in interpersonal relations of husband and wife. The goal of feminist social work is the incorporation of feminist theory into social

work education and praxis. This study made attempts to realize the lived experiences of married women who faced domestic violence from their intimate partners. Mary Richmond, renowned as ‘mother of Social Work’ raised the status of Social Casework is one of the significant primary methods to study scientifically about individuals and their issues. She argues that the environment is a crucial element that influences life and incidents of every individual. This argument focuses on individuals and their family environment. From Mary Richmond’s perspectives, the social environment plays a critical role in the social functioning of every human being.

Mary Richmond’s celebrated work *Social Diagnosis* (1917) stated about the analysis of individuals unique situation associated with their social environment. Hypothetically, ‘social environment’ is an impact on the social problems of individuals. This study found the socio-cultural and economic environment of survivors has been conveniently utilized by the perpetrator to operate domestic violence against them. The privacy is one of the significant elements in domestic sphere that creates a potential environment for domestic violence. The structural discrimination and oppression of women contributes to continuous victimization of women by male perpetrators.

7.3.5 Application of Person- Centered Approach/ Client-Centered Approach of Social work

Carl Rogers has developed the person-centered approach (PCA) or client-centered approach during the period of 1940-1950 as part of his practice. This approach is an influential mode of counseling skills used for effective communication with clients. The researcher has made an effective (therapeutic) conversation with the survivors of domestic violence. As a talk therapy, the duration of in-depth interviews with survivors was a lengthy and deeper involvement at every stage of the interviews. This involvement with effective listening skill, empathy and unconditional positive regard to the survivors resulted in an openness among the survivors to share their experience with the researcher. The researcher focused on the survivor’s conscious mind, memories and state of emotions. The person-centered approach has followed with every research participants with an in-depth analysis of their environment. The

present research get inspired by this feminist social work based initiatives and followed the same spirit throughout this research.

7.3.6 The Cycle of Violence by Lenore Walker

The theory of the cycle of violence by Lenore Walker (1979) states the abusive relation carries three phases including 1) Tension building 2) Acute explosion and 3) Honeymoon stage. The result shows all the survivors have undergone these stages and most of them accepted the violence without any defence. The behaviour of abuser includes pulling down the confidence of the victim, blaming and criticizing the victim, withdrawing affection and care to the wife. This theory has given clarity to understand the situations as what survivors faced in different phases of cycles of domestic violence. This theory has further helped to understand the psycho-social health consequences among the survivors of domestic violence.

7.3.7 Power and Control Theory and Domestic Violence

The power and control theory has developed by Hagan, Gillis and Simpson to explain the impact of “familial control on gender differences” (Bates et al. 2003, p.170). The patriarchy portrayed males are more powerful and they control, dominate over females both socially and culturally (Mitchell, 2009). There is social power dynamics in family relations. In a patriarchal family, the husband represents the masculinised power and control over the wife and other family members. This coercive control in domestic sphere is socially accepted practice in patriarchal societies. Therefore, husband’s control over the wife is culturally sanctioned and perceived as normal in every family. Thus, the use of power is an effective strategy to create fear in the form of physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuses against wives.

According to the power and control theory, the central dynamics of domestic violence is the patriarchal power and control between husband and wife. In a patriarchal family, men take the economic control power and they control the female partner completely. Through different male-centred socio-cultural practices, hierarchically ordered gender notions to transmit its propaganda and repeatedly reinforce the power and control over women. Accordingly, the family becomes a

sanctuary for maintaining gendered domestic violence through power and control. Thus, the family by taking advantage of its private nature, systematically constitute and maintain the social construction of gender roles and facilitate the male power not only in the family but also in society. From the feminist perspectives, domestic violence is not a personal issue rather it strikes through the core structure of society. Feminist strongly believes domestic violence is not a private issue rather its political (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Yllö, 1993; Bograd, 1988; McPhail, 2007). The present research proves that, as per the power and control theory, all the survivors experienced physical, sexual, psychological and economic forms of violence from their intimate partner.

7.3.8 Bronfenbrenner's the Ecological theory

The ecological theory is an effective model to understand the domestic violence against women. It analyses human behaviour and their experience that happens within the person's environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986; Germain & Gitterman, (1996) cited in Alaggia, Regehr & Jenney, 2012, 7). As per the Bronfenbrenner theory, the individuals are influenced by 5 layers of ecology; 1. Microsystem (very intimate to the individual like family and friends etc), 2. Mesosystem (individuals from immediate interaction like school, workplace, neighbours etc) 3. Exo-system (community and social networks) 4. Macrosystem (societal, religious and cultural values and 5) Chrono system (internal and external elements of time, historical and political content). In chapter 5, the case description of survivors has correlated with the ecological theory for making a better understanding of the socio-cultural and economic environment of the survivors of domestic violence.

7.3.9 Cooperative Conflict Theory

Amartya Sen's cooperative conflict theory is unavoidable theoretical framework in this research (1990). The theory explains the gender dimension of economic distribution of resource, opportunities within the family. Women as a resource, exploit and engaged them as unpaid, unrecognized in economic activities. In the process of the exploitation, a synergy of cooperation and conflict develop between

the husband and wife. Accordingly, the cooperation elements use for continuing the survivors marital life with the domestic violence perpetrator who economically exploit and abuse them and incongruously the conflict element occurs when they depend the abuser for economic necessities. Thus, patriarchal family functions as a “cooperative unit” there “competition itself can be the driver of cooperation” (Mace, 2013, p. 252). This study found, the survivors experienced the cooperative-conflict elements with their intimate partners. Except few, most of the survivors are working and earning partners. All the survivors had experienced the economic form of domestic violence from their husbands.

All the above mentioned social theories are integrated into different levels of the research such as; to understand the researching phenomenon, organize the thought system of researcher, coordinate the knowledge, facts and evidence of the research, developing the theoretical framework of the research, conceptualization and critical analysis of empirical evidence of the research and so on.

7.4 Suggestions and Recommendations

The following recommendations have developed to prevent and address issues related to domestic violence. Furthermore, these recommendations intended to facilitate the effective implementation of the PWDV Act, 2005.

7.4.1. Suggestions by Stakeholders:

The Protection Officers play a key role in the immediate intervention and taking action to protect the victim from domestic violence. Their recommendations are grouped into 3 categories: A) administrative B) strengthening of justice delivery mechanism C) public-private-community partnership. The following are the recommendations suggested by the POs:

A. Administrative Suggestions:

Domestic Violence Protection Offices require separate buildings, sufficient staff and basic infrastructure facilities. Networking with public service agencies and multidisciplinary teams like police officers, advocates, doctors, counsellors, NGO personnel and elected representatives will enhance the

functioning of DVPOs. The permanent appointment of staff members including Protection Officers, regular counsellors and other office staff are required for better functioning of the Protection Office. The maintenance of night shelters/ shelter homes should be improved for a safe and comfortable stay of victims of domestic violence. Skilled and trained stakeholders are necessary for the strategic crisis management of the cases of domestic violence. Training and skill development or capacity building workshops will enhance the efficiency of stakeholders.

B. Strengthening of Justice Delivery Mechanism:

Domestic violence is a serious crime and ironically, the criminal nature of domestic violence incidents follows the civil legal strategies by the means of PWDV Act, 2005. The PWDV Act should incorporate strong criminal legal sections that take stringent action against the perpetrators of domestic violence. Thus, serious legal action against domestic violence will reduce the occurrence of such incidents. Another recommendation is related to the duration period of prevention of domestic violence. The Act allows 60 days for the immediate decision on and prevention of domestic violence which would ensure the safety of the complainant. Awareness about the salient features of the PWDV Act should be spread among all the urban and rural regions and local communities too.

C. Public-Private/Community Partnership (PP/CP):

The elected representatives in Panchayat Councils should encourage the civilians to report the complaints about domestic violence in Protection Office. NGOs can organize awareness campaigns that will bring significant changes to the attitude of community members about intervention and prevention of domestic violence. The rescue operations for victims of domestic violence should be carried out with the assistance of community members and police officers. Strengthen the coordinated approach of private-public and community partnership to adopt a zero-tolerance policy against incidents of domestic violence. The PP/CP can

ensure their solidarity with feminist organizations and women's movement that stand for the prevention of domestic violence.

Action points for the above-mentioned Suggestions can be listed as follows:

1. Raise awareness about the PWDV Act and call for action to promote the effective implementation of the Act with the support of civil societies.
2. Encourage the community members to ensure immediate intervention in every incident of domestic violence without any social bias.
3. Domestic violence against women in marital homes needs to be reported to the Protection Officer.
4. Strengthen the punishment for the perpetrators of domestic violence according to the PWDV Act.
5. Enhance the resistance skills of women and encourage them to take bold steps against domestic violence.
6. Organise gender sensitive training programmes for the stakeholders under the regulation of the Department of Women and Child Development.
7. Legal awareness programmes should be organized for police, medical practitioners, NGO persons etc.
8. Ensure speedy legal performance in the cases of domestic violence to receive legal relief orders from Magistrate.

7.4.2 Social Work-Based Recommendations

Feminist Social Work is a helping profession intended to establish 'equal and just society' (Anand, 2019, p.1). Four social work functions are significant to deal with any social issue, which includes a holistic perspective on problem-solving. Prevention strategies could be included in every stage of identification, intervention, and referral services of the survivors of domestic violence. The following recommendations are based on preventive functions of social work.

1. Preventive functions:

Individual Efforts:

- i. Documentation of domestic violence prevention activities is necessary for advanced prevention process.
- ii. Creative use of mass media is necessary to address the issue of domestic violence and its acceptance in social norms and cultural practices. The use of media will raise public consciousness and their response regarding towards the issue of domestic violence.

Initiatives to be taken at the Community:

- i. Encourage the involvement of informal and formal groups (SHG etc.) in addressing and taking action in the prevention against domestic violence in the neighbourhood.
- ii. It is necessary to encourage men's participation in preventing and in redressal of incidents of domestic violence in the community.
- iii. De-addiction and counselling centres need to establish within easy reach of the community people.

Role of the State:

- i. Create a zero-tolerance policy toward the issue of domestic violence. Legal literacy programmes and human rights education will enhance the anti-domestic violence approach and it will raise the public consciousness against domestic violence.
- ii. Gender sensitive programmes must be conducted at regular intervals for the police, medical practitioners and members of PRI (e.g. Gender Sensitive Police Reforms) and other justice delivery system associated officers, NGOs and medical practitioners. It will create more awareness among the service providers about their preventive role.
- iii. The 'no-drop policy' of cases against perpetrators needs to implement and the tendency to withdraw the reported cases from Protection Offices must avoided.

- iv. Strengthen the legal aspects of domestic violence and ensure the quality of legal relief under the PWDV Act, 2005 received by the survivors.

2. Promotive Functions: This function aimed to bring changes in the attitude of society and break the assumptions about domestic violence.

Individual Efforts:

- i. Promote the economic empowerment of women and girls and ensure their financial stability and employability.
- ii. The elimination process of violence-imbibed values and belief system will bring in fundamental social changes that in turn will ensure equality in and out of the home.
- iii. Research and publications on domestic violence will expand the knowledge production on magnitude, patterns, factors and consequences of domestic violence.
- iv. Male domestic violence perpetrators' views about their violent behaviour towards their wives need to be studied.

Initiatives to be taken at the Community:

- i. Community-based collective interventions by social activists and by voluntary organizations can be promoted for tackling domestic violence.
- ii. Establish community helpline service for speaking out and addressing the issues of the survivors of domestic violence.
- iii. Self-defence workshops should be organized in schools, colleges, universities and communities for girls and young women.

Role of the State:

- i. Appointment of Magistrates and advocates who are gender sensitive can fasten up the legal process to bring justice to the survivors of domestic violence.
- ii. Immediate and long-term support should be arranged for the survivors by the Protection Officers and stakeholders.
- iii. Encourage the accountability and documentation of reported cases of domestic violence in All Women Police Stations, Women's Commissions,

Family Courts and other agencies. It will help with data development and research activities on domestic violence.

- iv. The Protection Officers can conduct a home visit, assess the perpetrators' approach towards the survivors, conduct family discussions and follow up activities in domestic violence affected families.
- v. Introduce anti-domestic violence education in schools and develop the students' attitude to respond and intervene in the issues of domestic violence. Encourage a non-violence culture among children monitored by school authorities.
- vi. The state should encourage and reward the Protection Officers and their contribution to their effective functioning of Domestic Violence Protection Office.

3. Curative Functions: Include perpetrator-based anti-domestic violence work and it will create value integrated peaceful family environment for women.

Individual Efforts:

- i. Psycho-social -educational treatments like anger management and self-control technique should be part of the treatment for abusive men.
- ii. Acknowledge the remarkable actions of stakeholders/service providers who boldly intervened and reported the issues of domestic violence.
- iii. Encourage medical health practitioners to identify the medical cases on implications of domestic violence and facilitate proper medical care and support for to the victims who brought for treatment to them.

Initiatives to be taken at the Community:

- i. Perform social advocacy activities with the use of a right-based approach about anti-domestic violence in community levels.
- ii. Invite worldwide attention to the promotion of peace and peace building in a family environment and familial relations.

Role of the State:

- i. Mental health aspects of domestic violence survivors have to be considered and the possibilities for mental illness of survivors need to be assessed.

- ii. Treatment service and counselling are necessary for men who are aggressive and abusive towards their wives. This treatment process should intend to make the men accept and take responsibility for their violent behaviour and end their violence.
- iii. Improve the economic conditions of married women through the encouragement of entrepreneurship programmes, microfinance programmes by women. It will ensure the quality of life of women affected by domestic violence.

4. Rehabilitative functions:

Individual Efforts:

- i. Children in abusive families need to be considered and ensure their safety from abusers.
- ii. Identify the domestic violence survivors who are homeless or staying away from the marital home.
- iii. Key stakeholders can assemble the contact details of available rehabilitation facilities near their communities for the necessary use for domestic violence survivors.

Initiatives to be taken at theCommunity:

- i. Encourage to establish the community based short stay home/ night-shelters and women shelter homes in rural and urban areas within the communities.
- ii. Income generation programmes and skill development training for survivors of domestic violence will develop the economic sustainability of survivors of domestic violence.
- iii. Encourage the funding agencies and NGO's to support and contribute to the rehabilitation centres for the women.

Role of theState:

- i. Battered Women Shelter Homes (BWSH) and short-stay homes for women have to be arranged for women who seek help against domestic violence.

- ii. The contact details of such rehabilitative centres should be documented in All Women Police Stations and NGOs where women frequently visit for seeking help.
- iii. Safety planning must be arranged for the survivors in rehabilitation centres.
- iv. Treatment and mental health services should be arranged for the survivors who avail the service of rehabilitation.

7.5 Future Directions of the Research: Way Forward

The views of an abuser may bring in more insights about the instinct of abusive and violent nature of the intimate male partner. More explorative, multi-dimensional and in-depth inquiries about violent behaviour among men in domestic sphere, in the context of domestic violence will be considered for future research. In this way, the research can be extended to the perspectives of perpetrators about domestic violence. It will bring more clarity about the attitude and views of the abusers. Multi-regional and cross-cultural qualitative studies may unravel the ground realities of domestic violence.

A detailed inter-disciplinary study will explore the status of women in public and private spaces that may distinguish the gender power politics and method of patriarchy-oriented violence against married women. Mental health dimension and consequences of domestic violence is an emerging concern in the field of domestic violence. Analytical research on the government policy on domestic violence can bring factual evidence on the evaluation of the PWDV Act, 2005. Legal policy, procedures, implementation aspects are likely to be studied for further research. These future directions will develop holistic perspectives to understand the issue of domestic violence.

7.6 Final Thoughts

Family structure, gender power and use of control over wife are the patriarchal structural factors associated with domestic violence. The implementation of the PWDV Act, 2005 and the establishment of Domestic Violence Protection Offices have brought more visibility to the issue of domestic violence. The

implementation of the law has made it possible to recognize the intimate male partner as a major perpetrator of violence in marital life. Thus, many families function as potential social units that produce, procreate, socialize, impose and execute the culture of violence against women.

The present research is a call for response against the issue of domestic violence from all the civilians including men and women. This research attempted to bring in a holistic understanding of domestic violence. It has covered the socio-cultural, economic and familial factors of women subjected to domestic violence and the experience of all forms of domestic violence has been incorporated into the research. The detailed discussion of the experience of domestic violence has brought attention towards the nature, pattern, risk factors, and consequences of domestic violence among survivors. The sufferings undergone by married women who lived with violence perpetrators and their violent experiences within patriarchal families are far-ranging and diverse. The discussion of the identification of stakeholders, their duties, contributions, challenges have thrown light on the attitude of public-private community members towards domestic violence.

The legal aspects highlight the contemporary situation of domestic violence. Social legislation is a motivational factor for social activists to theories social issues like domestic violence and develop social advocacy for seeking further possibilities for the wellbeing of domestic violence survivors. All these aspects aid to create a better platform for addressing the issues of domestic violence survivors. Interventions to ensure a dignified life for the survivors in a peaceful environment also discussed in the research. These thoughts emphasize the need for value-based education in the subject of feminist social work. This study argues for the need for strengthening the implementation of the Act and providing more resources at the hands of service providers especially the PO who are the backbone for implementation of the provisions under this legislative support. Strengthening the civic sense is highly necessary for the elimination of domestic violence from familial relations and the domestic environment.

In the present study, chapter 4 discusses the domestic violence experiences that explicitly point towards the non-resistance of married women towards domestic violence. The invisible and subtle forms of silencing have encouraged the abusers to intensify their attacks. It proves that the passive nature of the victim only aggravates the issue. Numerous assumptions exist about domestic violence — like, marriage gives right to the husband over his wife, men are aggressive, the wife should be subordinate to the husband, domestic violence is unavoidable in marital life, both love and violence are necessary factors for strengthening family relations etc. These misconceptions pressurize women to continue the life with the abuser. All these assumptions strengthened the belief system that men's use of violence against their wives is a natural way of family life. This socio-cultural notion has been accepted by both the husband and the wife, resulting in the continued presence of violence in marital life. In most cases, life-threatening violence against the wife or children or any such serious incidence of domestic violence prompts the woman to approach legal agencies like Protection Offices. Thus, only the women who are severely subjected to domestic violence approach the protection officer to stop/ eliminate violence from their family life.

Perhaps, a surprising finding of the research is that majority of the survivors expressed their expectations to continue their marital life with the abusive partner in future course of time. The highlight of the study is that all the survivors expressed a common opinion that it is not a solution to leave the husband even if he is very abusive. This is because they are skeptical of society's tendency to blame the wife for the failure of marriage. Moreover, the survivors believe that when a woman stays with her husband, she is safe from the violence from other men. The survivors are also very concerned about their children's safety and future. These thoughts compel women to forgive their abusive partner and work towards the legal and social punishment he deserves.

Several patriarchal notions exist about the gender roles as wife and husband. It causes identity crises/ self-doubt amongst the survivors and gives sanction to the men who follow patriarchy as it suits them. The PWDV, Act by giving a legal warning to the abuser reminds him of his responsibility to maintain a peaceful

environment in family. In this legalized process, the abuser may reduce the violence against the wife due to the fear and force of legal action. But, it does not enlighten the man to change his abominable attitude towards wife and women in general.

The pattern and nature of domestic violence may change according to the culture, context and cycle of violence in the life of womanhood. Domestic violence and outdated notions about gender continue to exist as an obsession in the patriarchal family system. Therefore, this research highlights the significance of de/reconstruction of gendered notions about women in the family and other spheres. Gender sensitive education and discussions can be used as a strategy to encourage a dignified marital life and justice-oriented social life for women. Domestic violence perpetually destroys peace in the family. It is highly necessary to eradicate violence from marital life and reinstate healthy and peaceful relationships in families, which can then be extended to society at a universal level.

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