

**SELF PERCEPTION AND COPING STRATEGIES OF
MARRIED WOMEN
AFFECTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
IN MUMBAI**

Married women affected by domestic violence in Mumbai forms my contribution to the research work carried out under the guidance of Dr. Lidwin Dias, from the University of Mumbai for the Ph.D. (Arts) degree in Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai.

**A THESIS SUBMITTED
TO THE
UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI FOR THE
PH.D. (ARTS) DEGREE IN
SOCIAL WORK**

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MARCH 2020

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOMMENDATIONS

Philosophers may have interpreted the world in various ways,

the point, however, is to change it”

(Karl Marx cited in True, 2012)

7.1. Introduction

The recommendation chapter is based on the suggestions and views of survivors obtained through in-depth-interviews; focused group discussions; observations of the researcher at the legal aid workshops and feedback received during credibility checks. The chapter is divided into three sections: Section I includes suggestions/recommendations of survivors who were part of the Focused Group Discussion; Section II includes implications for social work practice based on the findings of the study and recommendations of survivors (Focused Group Discussions and in-depth interviews), experts, and gatekeepers and, Section III includes implications for future research.

7.2. Suggestions/recommendations by survivors

Social Work Interventions by community-based centres/women’s organizations

The unconditional support of social work professionals was considered the most important intervention by survivors. Survivors shared that through the interventions of social workers they gained confidence and hope. The

intervention of social work professionals alarmed the perpetrators though the violence had not stopped completely. Survivors expressed that they realized they were not alone and the fear in them gradually began to diminish. Services provided by the Centre: formation of self-help groups; creche facilities for children; awareness sessions on rights; health needs of women; medical camps; training in skills development and income-generation benefitted the survivors.

“I can share my own experience with you. If not for the social worker from this organization, I would have been in darkness. She was a light in the dark tunnel of my life. I am grateful that I got to know of the organization through my friend.

Because of her, I gained economic security”

Women's organizations and community-based centres were always there to support survivors in times of crisis. Apart from the services sometimes survivors who stay in the same geographical area where community-based centres are located are also employed by them. Survivors could come to the organization anytime. One survivor shared that the office of the organizations served as a short-term shelter home when she had nowhere to go in an emergency.

“When my husband threw me out of the house with my four children, I came here and stayed for 15 days. My mother refused to accept me. I was alone and helpless”

After being associated for years with the organization, I have finally understood who I am and what I can do. I have realized my talents and

strengths and I now motivate other women to avail of the service offered by the community centre.

According to survivors the economic empowerment of women through services provided by the organizations (self-help groups, vocational training) can make a huge difference in empowering women to cope with domestic violence. When women start earning, they become confident, they socialize outside their domestic space and they learn a lot. Promoting the economic independence of women can go a long way in both preventing domestic violence and helping women cope when faced with domestic violence. If the woman is earning, she has money to manage her needs and those of the children. Without economic security, women cannot stand on their own feet. Education and employment help women gain self-confidence and respect.

Interventions to promote economic empowerment

It is important to secure women by granting her property rights. Property rights, a house they could confidently call their own are important for women to get out of abusive marriages. Once women start working it helps her gain economic independence which gradually builds her confidence, builds contacts, and long-lasting friendships. If a woman is working, then she is tension-free, she is free from mental agony and in control of life. There is no need to leave the husband. Economic independence will lead to empowerment and improvement of the status of women.

Because I am working, I can control my life, I manage my food and clothes.

Ever since I have started working, I am no longer tortured. I am now free. I

can also manage the needs of my husband. I do not have to ask anything. I am no more dependent.

Support for children: crèche facilities.

The most important concern of a survivor is providing for her children. Organizations that provide crèche facilities for women are the best. There should be more crèche facilities so that women can safely place their children in these facilities, and go to work.

My mother also came here, and I also have come here. I grew up in this very crèche where I have now kept my children. It is a blessing.

Support groups

According to survivors, when women have scope to come together and speak, interact with other women, they come out of their social isolation. They meet new people, befriend other women. They come to realize that they are not the only ones, there are others also who are suffering because of domestic violence and they gain courage and support. There is a collective consciousness that responsibility towards each other and the community they live in. They reach out to their members and other women in their community who are victims of domestic violence. When support groups or self-help groups are formed women get exposed not only to skill-based knowledge but also rights-based information through the training they receive from the organization. For many survivors, many of the material conditions for autonomy-bodily integrity, freedom of movement, freedom to form interpersonal connections with people other than

the batterer-will be established outside the relationship than within it (Westlund, 1999).

Empowerment of women: Developing a sense of self-worth.

Whether women gain economic or educational independence unless women are empowered within and understand her self-worth she will remain where she is. Women must develop courage from the beginning of their life to face such circumstances. No intervention can be successful till women themselves are empowered to recognize their vulnerabilities and assert their rights without fear of implications. Till her inner strength and self-worth are not built in her she will not resist domestic violence.

If you ask me, I will say developing the self of women, making her strong from within, as in my case can make the difference. Self-motivation in women is important.

Once you become conscious that you are victimized you have to just find your way out and that intervention should involve concrete measures.

What can GOD or faith do?

Provision of temporary shelter.

Survivors felt that shelter homes for women are needed. When women have a roof over their heads, they can deal with anything. Concrete measures to provide housing, crisis centres for the immediate shelter of women will go a long way in enhancing the status of women and giving her a sense of security. The provision of homes ensures women are in a secure position to confront injustice and violence. The government must think about providing suitable

shelter for women survivors of domestic violence and their children. Many women endure violence because they have nowhere to go.

She can manage with no food but no shelter, where do you go? You're on the roads and it's frightening. You are forced to tolerate anything.

सामान कहा रखेंगे? सामान रखने के लिए जगा तो: चाहिए।

Education that focuses on conscientization.

Education is the most important for women as it empowers them, helps them to think and discern. Parents must educate their children at all costs, no matter what. They should prepare their children to face adversities and empower them through education. Parents must never deprive their daughters of educational rights as it is a great injustice. Women are not informed and unaware of their rights because they are deprived of knowledge. Education and employment will help women gain self-confidence, self-worth, inner strength, and respect and help her to discern early when they experience domestic violence.

That is exactly the reason I have educated my daughters despite all the violence I have been through because I want them to stand on their own feet and discern what is right and wrong for them. Being educated helps women get some employment that ensures their self-respect and dignity.

Today there are more opportunities for women to be educated due to greater access and affordability and hence nowadays women are resisting domestic violence early. Unlike us who after thirty years of a violent marriage is still with our husband. Women are gradually questioning the hierarchical structures and

value systems that are patriarchal. Their threshold of tolerance is decreasing fast in today's times.

Girls are very different compared to our generation. They discern early whether they or their children could thrive or perish facing violence and most of them are deciding to leave their husbands. They are much wiser than us.

Educated women should also be employed ensuring financial independence before they get married so that they are not vulnerable. Education ensures that women dare to aspire and their aspirations could delay the age of marriage. Being engaged in some productive work, help women not only to earn an income and prevent complete economic dependence, but it also helps women to be occupied, venture into a public space, contribute, meet friends, socialize, share about her challenge's in day to day life with colleagues/co-workers and have space and place beyond the home. Work also helps women to earn respect and recognition.

Fostering egalitarian relationships.

Men have to be socialized to treat women as equals and not their property. Men don't even fear the law. Unless they internalize principles of equality men will never respect their wives. Men should be brought up in such a way that they understand women and value them. Children should also learn the values of equality when they are small. Educating men on the ramifications of masculinity on his well-being and interpersonal relationships were also suggested by the participants.

Support of neighbours.

Neighbours should be alert and reach out to help women victims of violence.

Neighbours are the only ones who can help. Police may not. Neighbours and friends can provide a great deal of help and support.

I still remember my neighbour who worked in this organization. She heard about my situation, met me, and coaxed me to meet the social worker here.

I met the social worker, enrolled in the training, and eventually got a job. She ensured that I met the social worker and speak to her explaining my situation so that I could be enrolled immediately. I can never forget her.

The unconditional support of parents.

Parents have to support their daughters or else the implications are severe.

Parents of survivors of domestic violence have the most important role to play in terms of breaking or building the resilience of women and enabling her to confront the violence in her marriage. Parents need to be strong and supportive.

Even siblings are the survivors' biggest strength in such a situation.

My father was a great support to me and I too believe that the natal family plays a crucial role. My husband was my cousin hence it was a very difficult situation. But my father still stood by me. It was my father I could run to whenever I was beaten or thrown out the house. He provided emotional and mental support to me at the time of crisis.

My father would cry with me and pack tiffin for me and my children. Maybe monetarily he could not help much but he did whatever he could. Sometimes he would even give me pocket money for my expenses. He is no more today but if not for his timely intervention how could I have ever sustained myself.

If you ask me about the best measures for dealing with domestic violence, I would say the unconditional support of the family. I remember when my husband beat me up badly and threw me out of the house with my three daughters, I called my sister and told her that if you don't help me now; I am killing myself and my three daughters. I had to say this to seek support and she rushed to my rescue or else I may have taken an extreme step.

If not for my parents where would I go. I would not have the courage to leave my house within three months of marriage and file a complaint against my husband.

Even before girls get married parents must ensure that they educate their children and ensure they are employed. Parents must socialize their children both girls and boys on values that promote equality and self-respect, not on values that promote subordination and servitude. The cultural practices and values that are passed on to young girls perpetuate male superiority over women.

Social welfare schemes.

Social welfare schemes specific for survivors of domestic violence can help survivors with alternatives to sustain themselves. The most common form of

domestic violence women face is the deprivation of household expenses to run the houses. Survivors need some immediate relief to survive.

Utilize formal support systems.

Women should not only resist domestic violence or cope with domestic violence within the domestic sphere but should also utilize the formal network systems like the law to *teach men a lesson*. They should fight for their rights and not just compromise. It is not easy but important to bring an end to the problem of domestic violence through formal networks like police and the law.

Understanding domestic violence as an outcome of patriarchy.

Some survivors displayed their awareness of how domestic violence stems from patriarchal mindsets that perpetuate differential treatment for men and women.

What religion got to do with all this? Faith and the experience of domestic violence are two different things, it's not interrelated. Domestic violence is an outcome of patriarchy and you have to deal with it accordingly. You can't ask GOD help; you have to be responsible and find your way out. Yes, you may question GOD for giving you such a fate.

Prohibition of early marriages.

Marriages should be delayed. Early marriages can be detrimental to women.

I faced so much of domestic violence that I will not allow my daughter to go through the same. I saw to it that she becomes a graduate, encouraged her to take up a job, and have never pressurized her to marry. When girls are made

to marry young, they become very vulnerable, because they don't have any backup. They hardly complete their education and are made to get married after they attain puberty. They soon get pregnant with two or three children by the age of 25. Then they just have to survive. They cannot aspire for anything.

Ban on Alcohol

Alcohol should be banned. Domestic violence is an outcome of alcohol.

Sensitization of police.

The law and order machinery with special reference to the police must be sensitized in dealing with women. The way they talk to women makes a difference. When the law enforcement agency is responsive and proactive, women feel secure.

Meeting the health needs of women.

Something should be done to treat the health conditions of women. Women have suicidal tendencies. They are also physically affected because of the violence.

Measures to end impunity towards domestic violence.

Men must have fear in themselves when they use violence against women. There should be pressure from all sides for violence to stop: family members, relatives, neighbours, friends' religious people, employers, police. Condoning, justifying, or normalizing violence will perpetuate violence.

Challenge posed by hegemonic masculinity

Men need to change. Many survivors expressed that men have a personality that is aggressive and violent. Men treat women like doormats, servants. It is always about them, their needs, their space. They control everything. Even when there are differences among family members in the marital homes they unite against women.

It is the nature of man. No matter what is done, men will not change. Sometimes men are also violent not only with their wives but even the sisters in the house.

Madam एक लाखाची बात नवराची लात.

Dealing with the effects of domestic violence on children.

Children get affected when they are exposed to violence. They get addicted to substance abuse and something needs to be done about it. Sometimes the effects of domestic violence are extremely subtle and manifest itself into behaviour problems later on in life.

Challenging distorted cognitions of survivors.

How the survivor deal with domestic violence depends on how she thinks.

Tolerance is not a virtue.

Examining caste and cultural practices.

In my caste and community, women are supposed to wear पळ्ळ over the face and not show their face to the male members. Often, we would hear elders in our homes saying to young girls that next time the पळ्ळ falls; you will have a nail on your head so that the पळ्ळ remains on the head.

Women have to free themselves from the bondage of cultural dictates that assign them a secondary status. Notions of पराया धन, पति परमेश्वर, बेटा हमारा वारिस है should be challenged and confronted. Because when such discriminatory beliefs are perpetuated across generations and internalized it eventually becomes the truth and it's important to locate the issue of domestic violence in this context.

Teaching women how to de-escalate tensions.

Some survivors suggested training women on how to manage anger and respond in a violent situation. Survivors need to take taking responsibility for their survival. By retaliating they can become vulnerable to severe consequences of the violence.

I learned from one of my friends in the prayer group I used to go to, how women victims of domestic violence should deal with their husbands. A friend of mine had told me that when men come angry at home and are prepared to attack their wives, the wives should not retaliate but start cutting vegetables and cut into the smallest pieces possible to displace their anger. In doing this woman would not retaliate and the violence will not escalate and the situation will be under control. And of course, she should feed him the vegetables the next day.

When we are being beaten, we cannot do anything but after the violent episode we should also raise our hands on our husband to teach him a lesson only then will things change or we can answer back.

We cannot do anything when he is violent. But if he beats us and we don't do anything then he gets encouraged.

We are responsible for our survival

Public punishment for perpetrators

Men who beat their wives should be lynched publicly.

Ending poverty

Ending poverty will put everything in place.

Counselling

Counselling that empowers women can create wonders. Counselling services provided by social work professionals allow survivors to talk and vent out their feelings. Survivors are also trained in the process of how they should cope with the violence with minimum harm to themselves and their children. There is a safe space created for survivors.

Faith

For many survivors, faith, religion, and spirituality gave hope.

Yes, the only thing one could do is to start praying more when you're in a crisis that's it.

Leave abusive relationships.

To not feel helpless a woman needs to leave the husband

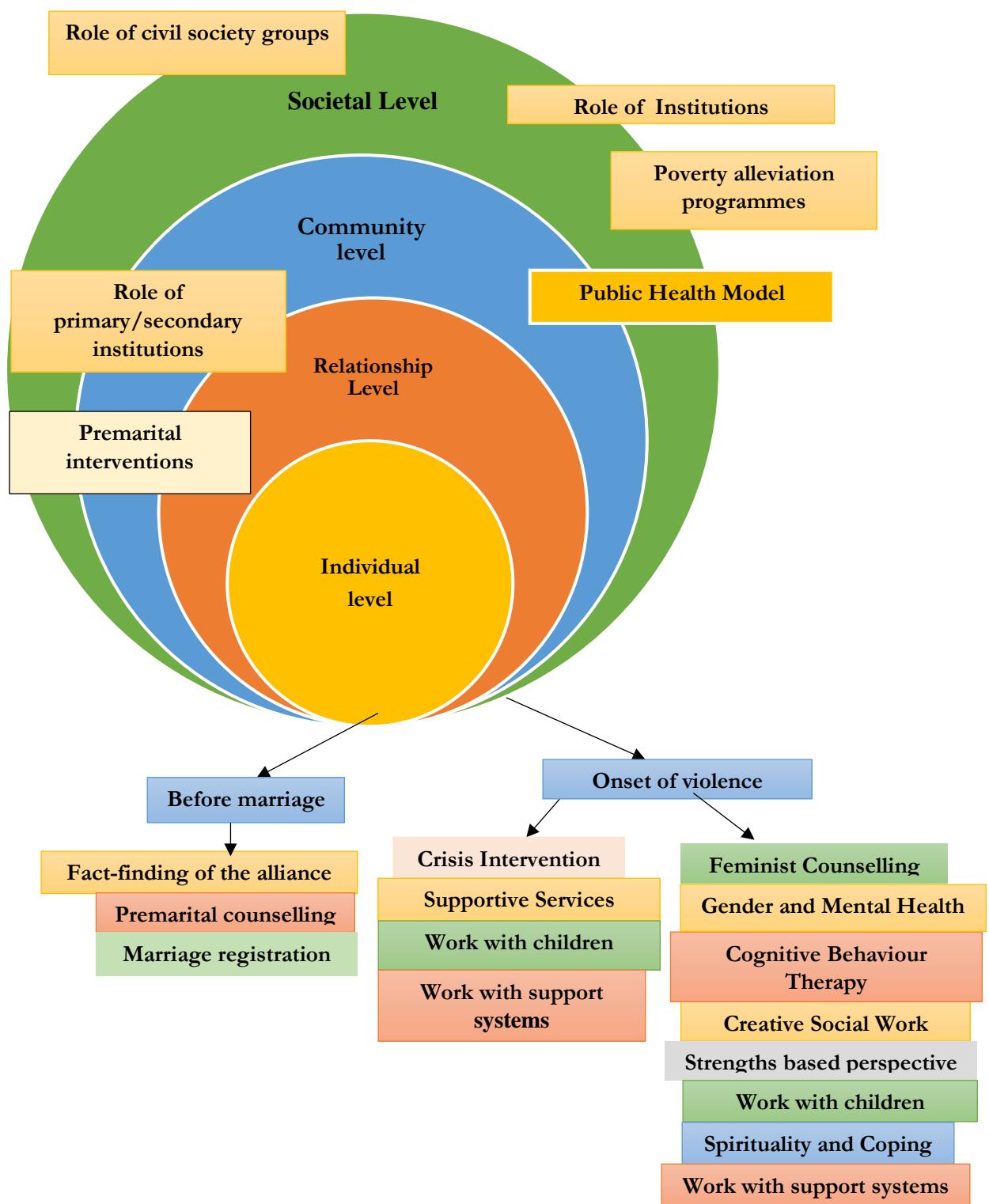
Building social contacts.

Women need to meet people and they must build their social contacts. This helps women to reach out to seek help in times of need.

7.3 Section II Implications for social work practice.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher has applied the ecological model to inform interventions at the individual, relationship, community, and society to address domestic violence.

Figure 7.1



At the Individual Level before marriage

It was observed that in most cases the alliance was fixed without fact-finding of the survivor's husband and his family in terms of who are the other family members who stay in the house, the occupation of the husband and his income, habits, friends. At times when there was an indication that the alliance was not good for the survivor, survivors too ignored the warnings. When there is limited information of the alliance or couples in marriage, limited scope for courtship before the marriage does not give scope for informed choices increasing their vulnerability. Information on laws related to marriage, giving and taking of dowry can be also integrated with the marriage preparatory courses. In some religious practices, there are one or two public announcements of the marriage and the congregation is said to be bound by conscience to report any reason they feel the marriage should not take place. Premarital counselling could also be made mandatory across religious groups. Registration of marriage must be encouraged and made mandatory.

At the Individual Level after the onset of domestic violence

Feminist Social Work Practice

The interventions after the onset of domestic violence should be grounded in the principles of Feminist Social Work Practice. Feminist theory belief that the inferior status delegated to women is due to societal inequality, that the personal status of women is shaped by political, economic, and social power relations and that women should have equal access to all forms of power. Feminist analysis helps women to understand how they are oppressed and dominated and often inspires women to engage in efforts to bring about broader social change.

Feminist scholars, educators, and social workers encourage women to reclaim the power to the extent possible in our society, express anger and build self-confidence and self-efficacy (Turner and Maschi, 2015). Feminist social work strongly emphasizes connection and the power of a mutual relationship (Jordan et al., 1992, Jordan, 2010 cited in Turner and Maschi, 2015). A mutual relationship is one in which there is a sense of respect, interest, empathy, and responsiveness on the part of both people in the relationship (mother/daughter, father/daughter, practitioner/client, teacher/student, etc.). The concept of mutuality expands the concept of resilience from a ‘one-directional perspective (where an individual gets support from another person) into a two-way relational dynamic in which the relationship itself becomes the vehicle to engender resilience’ (Turner, 2001, p. 442 cited in in Turner and Maschi, 2015). Feminist social work is based upon the desire to change societal structures so that women will no longer be oppressed and will further develop a sense of self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence as a path of claiming power (Grosz, 2010 cited in in Turner and Maschi, 2015). Their goal is to move away from focusing on individual change as the path to achieving an enhanced sense of well-being and move toward systemic change in our social, political and economic system with the goal of achieving a more equal distribution of resources and power (Jordan, 2010 cited in Turner and Maschi, 2015).

Feminist Theory has the capacity to play a greater role in enabling social work practice to become more ant-oppressive and inclusive. The primary goal is to empower women. There are certain non-negotiables emerging from a convergence approach towards Feminist Social Work Practice. When it comes

to interventions and working with survivors as well as perpetrators of violence, social workers work with a *belief* that all human beings can change, while establishing the non-negotiable understanding that violence against women in crime. The *goal* of joint intervention is to challenge the man's violence, hold him accountable for his violence, and work towards his commitment to change. The *woman is always at the centre of interventions* and joint work can only take place when current violence has ceased. The *self-determination of women* is paramount and she must feel safe in both living with her partner and participating in the joint intervention. It is also extremely important that perpetrators *take responsibility for the violence* and acknowledge that his behaviour was a choice, not a matter of 'loss of control' (Panchal and Ajgaonkar, 2019).

Crisis Interventions

Crisis intervention is to help individuals to regain control of their lives by learning or re-establishing coping skills so that they can move forward after the presenting issues have been dealt with and the crisis has been resolved. Crisis Intervention focuses on immediate /brief intervention to bring back the individual to a steady-state. Crisis intervention is usually implemented at the active or acute state where the individual is experiencing discomfort, often psychologically and/or physiologically based, which can be exhibited through helplessness, confusion, depression, anxiety, anger, impulsive, low self-esteem, incoherence, fatigue and exhaustion, disorganization, agitation, violence, isolation, social withdrawal, a state of shock, stressed-out or overwhelmed, difficulty breathing, sleeping, eating, and .or difficulty in communicating (Maclean, and Harrison, 2015). Social Work interventions in assisting survivors

to get prompt medical treatments; domestic violence emergencies trauma or injuries sustained during the violence (Mojoyinola, 2006); providing immediate shelter and ongoing safety risk assessment of survivors and her children are important for survivors.

Supportive Services

Social Work interventions should continue to recognize the vulnerability of survivors to domestic violence throughout their lifespan. Social Work interventions that integrate need-based services: risk assessment, economic, emotional, and safety needs, legal services, child care and educational opportunities, provision of temporary shelter, vocational or skill-building, and the opportunity to participate in local activism are critical to facilitate the process of coping. The aim of feminist interventions should also be the transformation of social relations between men and women and especially among women and not merely amelioration of distress.

Consciousness-raising interventions helps survivors construct their reality, thereby enhancing the survivor's levels of consciousness (Black, 2003 cited in Vindhya, 2013). Opportunities must be provided to survivors for coming together in the public spaces by women's organizations, religious groups, support groups, social media, self-help groups. Survivors can benefit from individual and group interventions that initially assist them in moving beyond their old ways of viewing themselves, their oppressive relationships, and their dangerous living environments (Jacinto and Turnage, 2010).

Work with Children

Relevant interventions have to be created to help children cope with domestic violence at homes. Assessment and screening of mental health of children in schools and colleges and availability of compulsory counselling services for children at school, communities, institutions, and non-institutional services are considered important interventions to mitigate the effects of domestic violence on children.

Feminist Counselling

Feminist Counselling aims to adequately respond to survivors of violence because it questions oppression, helps women cope with their distress by focusing on their capabilities to overcome it, questions abuse; puts the onus of the abuse on the perpetrator, rather than the victim and provides necessary tools and strategies that equip women with skills for healing and stopping the violence. Feminist informed counselling places psychological distress in a socio-cultural context and promotes client advocacy via the politics, legitimises women's experiences and recognizes the power imbalance between relationships which reinforces abuse and, therefore, factors in power into the conceptualization of a couple's relationship (Vindhya, 2013). Feminists' counsellors strive to provide a larger picture of how client's problems, fears, insecurities and negative self -cognitions are entwined with patriarchal values and social constructions. The primary goal is to validate women's feelings and experiences, support their decisions, respect their intelligence, and mitigate feelings of inferiority, powerlessness, and disrespect. While keeping individual's experience in focus, feminist counsellors strive to provide a larger

picture of how clients' problems, fear, insecurities, and negative social-cognitions are entwined with patriarchal values and social constructions, helping clients to locate their distress not within themselves but in the social contexts. The attention to power, privilege, and gender roles is implicit in the focus on larger socio-cultural contexts. It is also considered imperative to integrate intersectionality of class, caste, communal, State, and conflict-related violence while working with domestic violence (Gupte, 2013) survivors. Refresher courses/training programmes for social work professionals on principles of Feminist Counselling can ensure that interventions are grounded in the value framework, and strategies discussed in Feminist Counselling.

Gender and Mental Health

A few Indian studies have explored the linkages between domestic violence and mental health (Joshi, 2013; Munro and Aitken, 2019). The report of Burte, A., Rege, S. & Deosthali, P. (2007). *Choosing to live: Guidelines for suicide prevention. Counselling in Domestic violence* highlighted that domestic violence or 'family problems' is a precipitating factor driving women to attempt to end their lives by suicide. Distress, sense of entrapment and hopelessness arising from domestic abuse can sometimes cause women to feel that suicide is "*the only way out*" (O'Connor & Knock, 2014 cited in Munro and Aitken, 2019). Violence against women encapsulates all three features identified in the social theories of depression-humiliation, inferior social ranking and subordination, and a sense of entrapment (Astbury, 1999, cited in Vindhya, 2013).

Living with a violent intimate partner is a significant contributor to women's adverse mental health outcomes: depression, anxiety; Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); suicidality, sleep, and eating disorders, low self-esteem, personality disorders, social dysfunction, and an increased likelihood of substance misuse. While some previous research has identified a dose-response effect whereby the victim's proclivity to suicidality is correlated with the severity, frequency, and/or longevity of the abuse experienced, evidence has also begun to indicate that the relationship between domestic abuse and suicide is not linear (Munro and Aitken, 2019). Most often these attempts fail and the woman survives only to face the contradictions in life all over again. There are few alternatives for her to free herself from the abusive family. She has little education, no earning capacity and the cultural attitude towards divorced women prevents her from contemplating the alternatives (Burte, et al., 2007).

Thus, protocol of plans must be made by social work and mental health professionals with the woman survivors of domestic violence during post suicide attempt phase or during the risk assessment done by social work professionals. The effort should be to provide knowledge and develop skills in problem solving and increasing the sense of self-esteem, belonging and worth in the women. Counselling a suicide-attempted woman has to start with placing the woman in the larger context of what has driven her to attempting suicide. Suicide prevention counselling needs to have empathetic understanding of the woman's social reality (Burte, et al., 2012) Agencies that engage with domestically abused clients must be alert to the risk of suicidality, provide sufficient opportunities and appropriate environments in which to encourage

disclosure, and be resourced adequately to provide flexible and tailored support, including in the longer term.

Domestic abuse could also be fully integrated into the mental health policy of the country as a ‘major risk factor for women’s ill-health’ (Devries et al., 2011: 85 cited in Munro and Aitken, 2019). First responders to suicidality in health and mental health settings need to probe regarding any experiences of domestic abuse, along with the immediate task of diagnosing and treating manifest physical and psychiatric symptoms (Rose et al., 2010; Oram et al., 2017 cited in Munro and Aitken, 2019). The gendered dimension and social context of women with mental health issues must be examined by physicians and mental health professionals. Along with feminist counselling services, addressing safety concerns, exploring support systems, providing psychological and material assistance and information on the police, legal and other services enabling the survivors to make informed choices are important interventions for mental health and social work professionals (Vindhya, 2013).

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)

Domestic violence can result in negative beliefs about oneself, such as “*I am not good or I am a bad mother and a bad wife*”. It may also contribute to the formation of negative beliefs about other people, the world, and relationships. These internalized messages are an outcome of the social, cultural, and economic constraints and dangers within which women experiencing domestic violence operate and can lead to emotions of guilt, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, paranoia, and isolation which in turn may discourage women from

adopting measures for their safety. They may limit women's disclosures to others who are or can be significant support and pose barriers to accessing help. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy offers effective tools to examine women's emotional distress resulting from violence, the internalized negative societal messages, and corresponding self-perceptions that perpetuate this distress. CBT helps women in designing safety measures, accessing supports, asserting their rights, making informed decisions, expanding choices (Joshi, 2013), and also evolving an 'escape plan'. The researcher presented a paper on *Self-Perception and Cognitive Distortions of Survivors Of Domestic Violence: Relevance Of Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy*. In the paper it was proposed that integrating the principles of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with Feminist Counselling may be an important therapeutic intervention to help survivors regain control over their thought processes; explore the internalized negative societal messages based on gendered socialization and promote conscientization of women survivors. These interventions are found to be more suitable for survivors who are currently not in a crisis.

Creative Social Work Practice

The researcher experienced the difficulty many faced to articulate their concept of *Self*. Some survivors displayed detachment while sharing their traumatic experiences while some expressed their inability to express their pain and suffering. Some stated that they could best express themselves and their life stories through narration or journaling. social work professionals of the community centres and women's organizations expressed the need to engage survivors in some form of creative expression as survivors appreciate such

opportunities. Survivors expressed how the movement of the mind, heart, and soul liberates them even if momentarily from a sense of ‘internalized captivity’ to ‘being free’ to be themselves, be happy, enjoy without a sense of guilt. They cited examples of the overwhelming participation of survivors in dance and drama events of the Women’s Day celebration held at their organization and community-based centres. The researcher recommends that *Expressive Arts* be integrated with work with survivors of gender-based violence by women’s organizations. Involvement of survivors in Art Based Therapy forms: dance, music, drama, poetry can encourage alternate forms of expression and support the healing process.

Strengths-Based perspective

The strengths-based perspective makes three major assumptions (Saleeby, 2002): despite adversities, people remarkably do well in managing their lives; people survive and learn from their journeys, and counsellors and other practitioners need to help people identify those qualities that have contributed to their survival. The basic goal of the strengths'-based perspective is empowerment—that is, helping the client to mobilize both inherent and environmental resources to make positive changes (Worell and Johnson, 1997 cited in Vindhya, 2013). Social work professionals can promote empowerment by assisting survivors to identify their strengths, coping skills, and personal resources; promoting their sense of entitlement, to their opinions and perspectives, regarding themselves and the world; supporting them to make informed choices; and recognizing the complexity of each woman’s situation (Vindhya, 2013)

Spirituality and Domestic Violence

The spiritual needs and concerns may also be considered in social work interventions that facilitate the inner healing of survivors scarred by deceit, disillusionment and emptiness, self-blame, guilt, self-anger, and a sense of hopelessness because of the failure in relationships they nurtured and valued throughout the life. Possible responses of faith-based interventions could include offering domestic violence support groups, individual counselling, emergency relief funds, and possibly shelter for women who must leave their abusers. Religious and spiritual leaders should also attend domestic violence educational training to make them more aware of the dynamics of abusive relationships, and the experiences and needs of domestic violence survivors. The researcher is concerned that the focus on *Forgiveness Therapy* that characteristics of religious/spiritual recourse need to be endorsed more from the perspective of healing survivors than emphasizing the need to absolve the perpetrators from acts of brutality and dehumanization.

Couple Therapy/Counselling

From a feminist perspective, when therapy is contemplated as part of an intervention, it generally consists of separated treatments for perpetrators and survivors. For the perpetrator, individual/group work is focused on enabling him to take responsibility for his behaviour, and confronting him for his denial and minimization of the violent actions and patriarchal norms. Feminist therapists are not neutral in their interventions and take a clear moral stance against the domination of women by men. For survivors, therapy seeks to help her address post-traumatic stress symptoms, maximize safety, and exploring legal options.

Couple (conjoint) therapy can be employed as a treatment approach, but only when a clear moral framework is utilized that holds that the perpetrator/s are fully accountable for the use of violence. Understanding the psychological and relational underpinnings should be used to deter the violence but never to excuse it (Greenspun, 2000). Exploring the patterns of gender relations in the family of origin can also highlight the unspoken gender scripts and the ways these are enacted. These gender scripts are not only patterns of acting, but qualities assigned to male and female roles within the family and ways of expressing affect. Fears of vulnerability, issues of intimacy and open expression of feelings are examples of such gendered qualities that are often assigned to one or other of the partners. (Hart, 1996).

At the community level

Role of Institutions

Domestic Violence has to be discussed and addressed across various social institutions such that condemn violence and underscore the importance of egalitarian relationships. The researcher strongly recommends that such conversations and discourses are held periodically in religious and educational institutions including the public health sector. Interventions with children and adolescents in communities, schools, and colleges should focus on increasing visibility to issues of domestic violence, its intersections with structural factors, caste, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and its implications on all concerned. Educational programmes that offer training on nonviolence and relationship skills, sex education, premarital counselling, values in interpersonal relationships, and develop more alternatives to the masculine cultural norms of

aggression, competition, and exploitation should be promoted on a large scale. Conversations on masculinity and femininity and its impact on intrapsychic and interpersonal relationships should be foregrounded in discourses around gender. There is a need for the dissemination of effective messages about the unacceptability of domestic violence in public settings., so that there is an increased awareness of what is mutually respectful behaviour between people in relationships (Bostock, et. al., 2008).

Role of Health Care Professionals in Identifying and Responding to domestic violence

Domestic Violence has increasingly been seen as a health care issue, with implications for women's immediate and long-term physical and emotional health and well-being (Allen, Lehrner, Morrison, Miles and Russell, 2007). As victims and survivors interact with the health care system multiple times during their lives, health services are the most appropriate source of support, information, and referral for victims and perpetrators, as well as survivors. The potential for early identification to not only prevent or reduce further suffering but to reduce the significant health care and productivity costs of domestic violence is well established (Hadley, 2002 cited in Evans, 2007). Health care professionals can play a pivotal role in identifying survivors affected by domestic violence and connecting them to intervention services. Unfortunately, deficiencies in training, screening protocols, and referral policies and lack of sensitivity amongst health care professionals may prevent them from recognizing and intervening in cases of domestic violence. Elaine J Alpert emphasises that health care providers should observe four guiding principles of

care: victim safety (inquiry, assessment, documentation, safety planning, communication, intervention, and follow-up); victim autonomy (facilitating survivor's ability to make her own choices); perpetrator accountability (making the perpetrator take responsibility of the violence and rejection of victim-blaming), and advocacy for social change (collaboration with others in healthcare, law enforcement, the faith community, and society at large) (Jackson, 2007).

Religious organisations

Members and leaders of religious communities have a particular capacity to engage in community agency programs and approaches to addressing domestic violence. Assertions by clerics of all faiths that violence in a relationship is unacceptable, and a criminal act, would contribute to changed community attitudes. Individual clerics should recognize and understand the significant role they can play when confronted by a perpetrator, victim, or survivor (Evans, 2007).

Poverty alleviation programmes

The Asian Development Bank (2002: 135) emphasizes that the overarching goal of poverty reduction is closely linked to improving the status of women. A range of interventions aimed at increasing women's literacy and education, facilitating their access to micro-credit, enhancing their vocational skills, and/or providing economic or infrastructural support to female-headed households are recommended to ensure survival of women. It is important to remember that the feminisation of poverty is not 'just about lack of income' (Fukuda-Parr, 1999

cited in Chant, 2008). Feminist Research has stressed the importance of a more holistic conceptual framework to encapsulate gendered privation. These include: (a) ‘capability’ and ‘human development’ frameworks, which identify factors which pertain to human capabilities or ‘functioning’s such as education, health, and infrastructure; (b) ‘livelihoods’ frameworks, which emphasise social as well as material assets; (c) ‘social exclusion’ perspectives which highlight the marginalisation of the poor from mainstream society through lack of political participation, social dialogue and ‘voice’; and (d) frameworks which stress the importance of subjective dimensions of poverty such as self-esteem, dignity, choice, and power (Chant, 2008). Supportive government schemes for the rehabilitation of survivors who are forced to leave their abusive husbands were also recommended by survivors.

Community engagements

Facilitating community engagement in eradicating domestic violence as an important development issue, was another recommendation suggested by women survivors in the study. They felt that since a majority of women live in communities and housing societies, zero tolerance to domestic violence must emerge as an important policy decision within communities. According to women survivors, if short stay homes emerge as crisis intervention centres, then they should admit women survivors without any restrictions. Restrictions in the admission procedures may force women to return to a potentially dangerous home.

7.4 Section III Implications for further research

In implications of further research, the researcher has shared insights on both method and topics for further research:

Research Methods

The research process gave the researcher important insights into what should be the ethical consideration and scope of research that is most relevant to the study process:

Ethical considerations: Research should lead to outcomes that must operationalize the ethical principle of Beneficence. The good of the researched at the micro or macro level pursued as a commitment should be an inevitable outcome of the research process.

Method: The researcher underscores that any research endeavour should ensure that the resilience, coping and liberation process the survivor and the oppressed have embarked on is validated and further strengthened in the depiction of the findings. It will also be critical to apply a feminist methodology that is attentive to all forms of power especially those more hidden aspects, to different types of knowledge, and relationships with research participants. Practicing reflexivity is an essential feminist ethic and sets most feminist research apart (Ackerly and True, 2008, 2010 cited in True, 2012). In research based on the qualitative research design, a smaller sample and intensive data collection would facilitate deeper insights into the subject of study. The absence of recording of interviews can pose many challenges in data accuracy and interpretation. In a grounded

research study, the researcher needs to be associated with the primary unit of analysis for a longer period and have direct interventions with them.

Topics for further research

1. Based on the researcher's reflections of research findings, feedback gained during credibility checks by survivors and experts, the researcher identified the following topics for further research.
2. Development of the concept of the *Self* and its effects on interpersonal relationships in individuals of diverse sexual identities;
3. Multi-stakeholder perception of the relevance of the coping strategies of survivors;
4. Studies on the impact of witnessing domestic violence on children should be an ongoing area of research;
5. The impact of addiction on the co-dependents as survivors of domestic violence;
6. The relevance of Art-Based Therapies in the exploration of the Relational Self;
7. Multi-stakeholder perception of the sanctity of heteronormative marriages:

Myth or Reality

8. The impact of hegemonic masculine ideals on the perpetuation of domestic violence.