

The Surge Of Domestic Violence In India During Covid19-The Shadow Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence against women is a worldwide epidemic that harms all nations. Nationwide, the current COVID-19 epidemic and the associated lockdown period have seen a significant surge in domestic violence. If a shadow epidemic goes unchecked, it will destroy civilization, and we won't even be able to assess the true economic and social costs. Any violence that is happening within the 4 walls of the house like in marriage or live-in relationships is called Domestic Violence. It is abuse done by family members. Most of the research says that intimate partners mostly do it. It could also be between same-sex relationships or Heterosexual relationships. The scope of domestic violence includes psychological abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, religious abuse, financial abuse, etc.

Domestic homicide is also included in domestic violence like burning the bride, Honor killing, etc. In its broadest meaning, domestic violence might encompass hostility toward children, teenagers, or adults. The paper will outline this issue with the help of quantitative research and with the help of different authors' viewpoints. The objectives are mentioned so that the surge regarding this issue can be Determined. This study aims to look at the frequency and changes in domestic violence cases before and after the Coronavirus epidemic. A comparison of the two time periods is also carried out to see if there is any link between COVID-19-related lockdowns and recorded domestic violence instances.

Keywords: Shadow Pandemic; Domestic Violence; Covid 19; Lock Down

INTRODUCTION

After the outbreak of COVID-19, people were forced to be at their homes, and in such scenarios, different domestic violence had been escalated. Covid is one of the biggest challenges that India is currently facing and domestic violence has added an extra burden or challenge for people. Covid is a situation where people were mostly stuck in their homes and one of its biggest consequences was seen regarding domestic violence in homes. Domestic violence can be understood as the violence or abuse that is being done to women by their partner in a relationship at home or residence. This violence can be in the form of physical, sexual, mental, verbal, economic, and many other forms. This domestic violence is being defined as the shadow pandemic because it's been rising under the shadow of COVID-19 which is itself the biggest crisis. The paper describes the domestic violence that took place in homes, especially in the time of COVID-19.

This shadow pandemic is of great concern and is required to be brought into consideration by people so that it can be resolved. During this pandemic, family and societal support are highly recognized but if this domestic violence is there then complications will be higher which can make the situation even worse. Many surveys and data are available that tell the surge of domestic violence in the COVID period that is highly intensifying.

Domestic violence is not just a great issue, it's also a crime in Indian society. The solution is required so that it can be resolved and people can live their lives peacefully. A solution is required so that this issue can be resolved before it can take place and the victims can be saved. It's been observed that most of the calls were done that were related to seeking help against domestic violence. This has increased a lot in pandemic situations. It could be seen clearly from the beginning of Covid week and therefore the surge had begun. These shadow pandemics are required to be known and detached from society because they bring a lot of complications, especially for women. This gender inequality under the shadow of a pandemic has brought huge limitations for women and other people in Indian society, therefore it's required to be solved. The sudden augmentation of this shadow pandemic has been explored here so that solutions can be discovered and broad limitations can be perceived.

Research objective

- To understand the sudden surge of domestic violence in this pandemic.
- To determine the situation of domestic violence Before and after the pandemic.
- To discuss the measures taken to resolve the shadow pandemic situation.

Significance of the Study

One country after another announced a lockdown due to the emerging global pandemic, and the common public having no other option left had to stay at their homes. Lockdown and the stay-at-home instructions were problematic for the common public to control the COVID-19 spread, but it was majorly disturbing for females as they were locked up with their intimate partners. Even before the pandemic, there were long lists of domestic violence victims but as the pandemic continued the number kept on increasing with women's sexual health, their mental health, and their ability to become a part in recovering the economic and social crisis. If nothing would be done for this shadow pandemic then it would surely leave a great impact on the economic situation of COVID-19. The increase in cases of domestic violence victims must be urgently dealt with measures for meeting the gravity of the challenges that show the needs of victims who are facing multiple forms of discrimination (Andina et al., 2020). Reports state that the major cases came from the states of Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh but our capital of India Delhi was at the top of the list of complaints registered by the National Commission for Women. The central governments with the help of the state governments have taken the initiative to focus on the importance of seeking help and spreading awareness in the society as a whole, and their slogan was "stop violence, save lives". In addition, the government may further make additions by introducing two new campaigns for extending the scope of campaigns to the abusers

METHODOLOGY

The paper is completely based on a quantitative methodology. Different available articles and journals have been used to make relevant points. Several authors' viewpoints have been contrasted in this study so that a good conclusion can be drawn. The previously available papers and theoretical concepts were taken into consideration so that the growth of the problem could be understood easily. This methodology helps understand the existing viewpoints and evaluate different ideas. The data researched previously were beneficial in understanding the concept and making proper findings. The secondary approach could be observed as a useful one as the data available on the internet assisted in forming good results as well

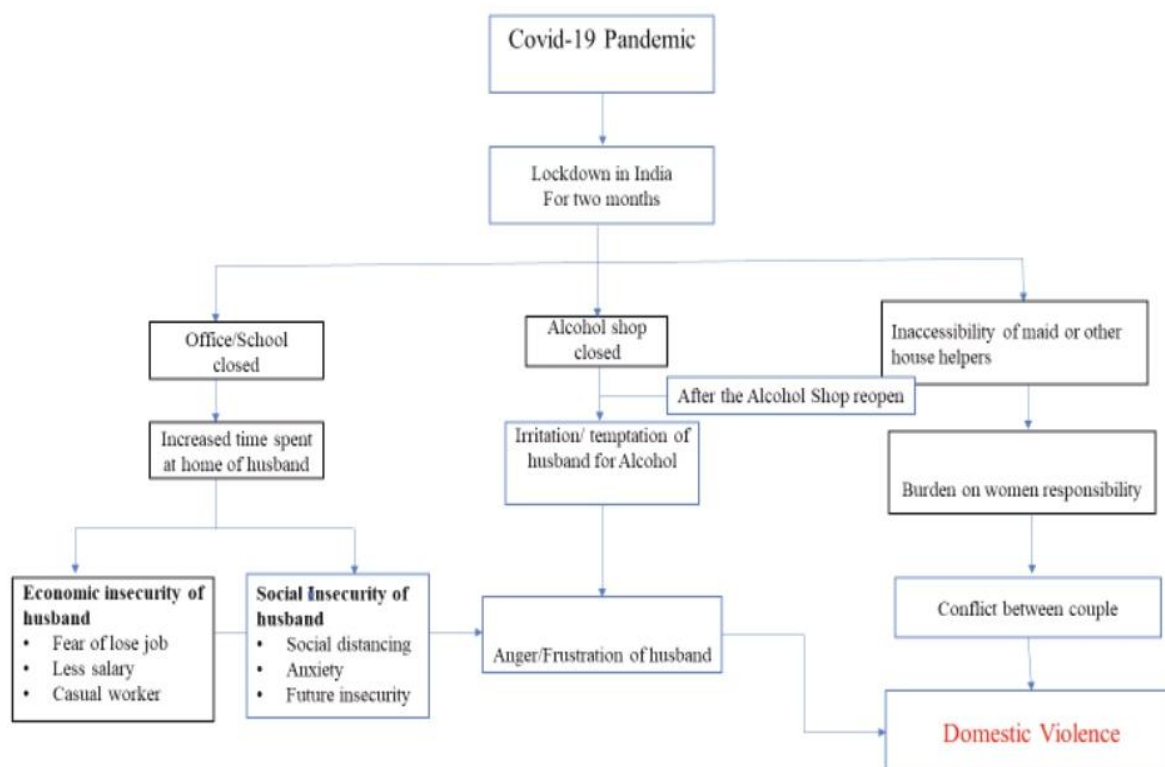
Violence against women-Indian Scenario

In India, especially in Delhi, the complaints of women and girls who had suffered domestic or sexual violence from their intimate partner in the year 2020-2021 registered by the National Commission for women were increasing rapidly. The commission for women registered around 6000 cases in April. It is a violation of human rights against women and girls. The female section of society had to suffer from all sorts of brutality from the male section of the society but domestic violence tops the list. This was the shadow pandemic that was emerging in between the global pandemic crisis. This domestic violence has always been a major issue but now the women have been trapped and have no other option in their houses with the abusers (Bansal et al., 2021). This increased the risk of abuse. The women who suffered were mainly informal workers like street vendors, and nurses as they had to travel from the local public transport services during the lockdown. Housewives within the age of 30 years who had arranged marriages were experiencing a major amount of domestic violence. Around 80% of the females who had gone through domestic violence were silent, that is, they didn't seek any help from the government but nearly 20% or less didn't bear the pain in silence and asked for help from local authorities or the National Commission for women. If we analyze the situation state wise then we found that in the state of Karnataka, the number of women who asked for help from the government is around 17% which is shocking. Likewise in the state of Bihar, 85% of the women were silently at their homes experiencing physical violence and they never raised their voices. Similarly, in the state of Kerala, a 21-year law student died by suicide, she had filed complaints against her husband as well as his family that she laws and her husband were misbehaving with her, the police called the family members to the station, and tried setting down the matter but the violence didn't reduce on her and having no other choice left on November 23, she committed suicide. The police have taken the husband and the family members under custody. This was not the end, India's National Commission for Women (NCW) registered around 26000 cases of crime which the cases of domestic violence against women and girls were 5865, the main reason behind this was financial worries and the absence of alcohol. Even the helpline for the children registered around 90000 calls between March 20 to March 31. Almost all the states of women and even girls were affected by domestic violence. The Indian government to control domestic violence had come up with many redress schemes like 24*7 which were operated by volunteers and would rescue the victims immediately and transfer them to a safer place.

Causes of this shadow pandemic

The causes of this violence are not the virus or the economic crisis due to the pandemic but it's the gender stereotypes, inequality between male and female sections of society, social norms that tolerate and continue violence and abuse, and the structure of the society that promotes inequality and discrimination. Some abusers feel jealousy and self-esteem as they are unemployed and their wives are working hence to show them their power and satisfy their ego, they start domestic violence against their wives (Lee et al., 2021). To rescue women and girls from the wrongful side of society, a long-term, planned strategy has to be developed so that it can eliminate these causes.

Backdrop of the Domestic Violence during Lockdown



Pre and Post Pandemic Domestic Violence Situation in India

The patriarchal dogma in Indian Society is one of the ancient features of India. The male section of the country is treated as worshipping idols. The report of the National Crime Records Bureau, 2018 has revealed that the domestic violence by the husbands and their families is the highest reporting around 31.9% of criminal cases. Usually, the domestic violence cases reported in those years were mainly due to the dowry system. In 2019, 166 cases were reported against the dowry cases. Therefore, domestic cases were one of the prevalent backlogs of the Indian Society. However, the scenario worsened during the pandemic, and a steep surge in the total cases of domestic violence and deaths were reported in the society. In 2020, during March and May, around 1477 cases of domestic violence were reported. Besides, in 68 days between March and May, a high rise in the per week cases have been reported in the last 10 years. Besides, the sexual violence cases also surged during the pandemic period. The report laid down by the National Crime Records Bureau shows that in every 20 minutes, 1 woman gets raped. The onset of the pandemic resulted in the rapid rise in the number of marital rapes in all the classes of the Indian Society. In Karnataka, every second woman was a victim of domestic violence during the pandemic period. Even before the pandemic had started, the physical assaults and marital rape cases were 20.6% in Karnataka. During the pandemic period, it almost doubled to 44.4%. Besides, Bihar also contributed to the high percentage of 40% of domestic violence cases. Therefore, in the top six states and UTs, around 10% of women reported cases of domestic violence during the pandemic period.

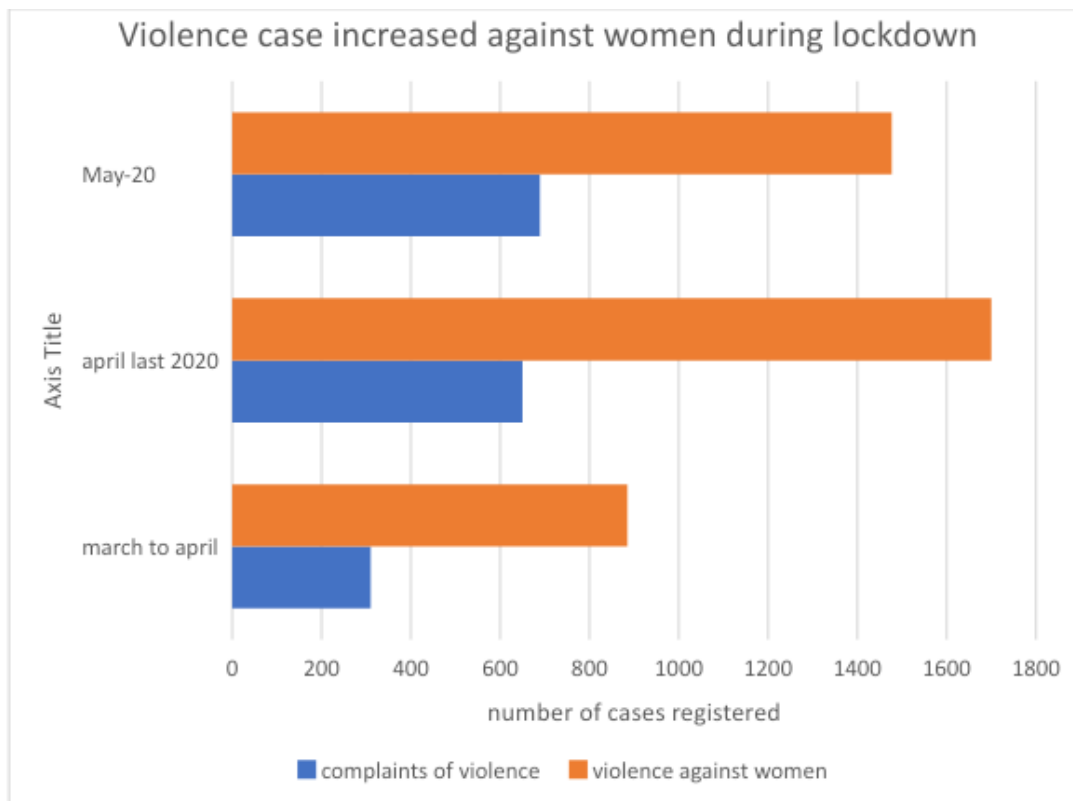


Fig 1: Violence cases increased against women during lockdown(S Pallikadavath, 2019).

A study by an investigator found that “approximately 25.5% of married ladies, as compared to zero men and unmarried ladies, worked for quite seventy hours per week” throughout the imprisonment. The study additionally same fired ladies witnessed the very best increase of 30.5 share points for people who spent quite seventy hours per week on unpaid work (B debate, 2020).

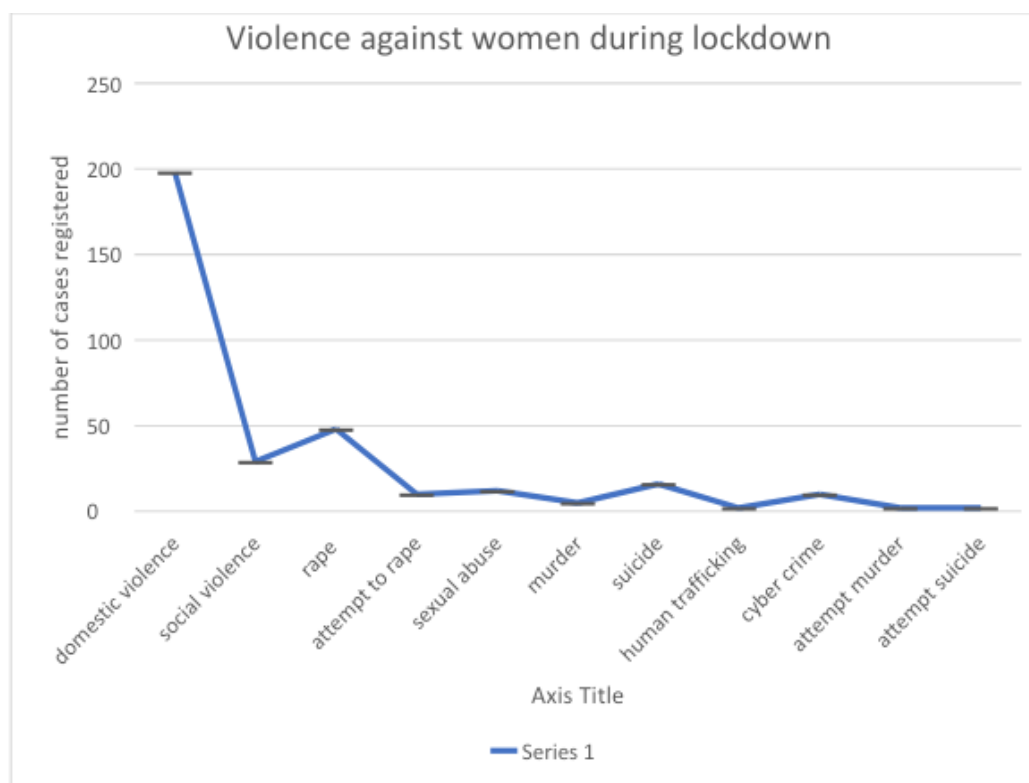
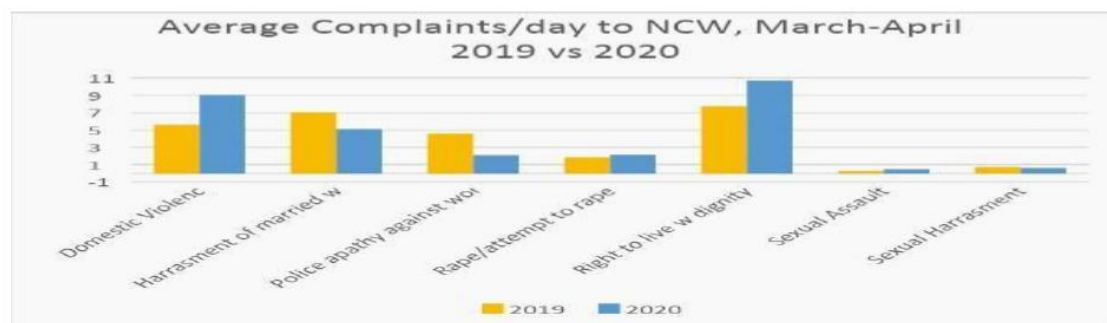


Fig 2: Violence against women during lockdown (J Xue, 2020).

Causes of Domestic Violence during Lockdown:

The primary reason for domestic violence amidst the lockdown is the frustration of losing jobs and being bound by various constraints due to the lockdown. This frustration takes the form of abuse on the women of the house. Most victims are unable to seek help due to the restriction of staying at home. The police are exhaustively occupied with ensuring strict implementation of the curfew, leaving the suffering women with lesser modes of seeking help and support.

1. The pandemic has led to a decrease in payment for some and a loss of jobs for others owing to the lockdown. This has caused loss of financial security for many families leading men to turn towards domestic abuse.
2. The worry of financial instability and insecurity of not being re-employed leads to stress and anxiety. Some perceive masculinity as being able to earn bread and butter; in these instances, when a job is threatened, masculinity allegedly becomes vulnerable too.
3. Isolating oneself is new to most. The frustration of adhering to strict lockdown restrictions and being confined inside a limited space is one of the reasons.
4. Amidst stressful environments, many abusers have found solace in substance abuse. Alcohol and distress work synergistically. Alcohol is a depressant, and when it is consumed during suffering, it would only prove to elevate the misery in an abusive relationship. In one of the reported cases in Hyderabad, a woman and her son from a previous marriage faced abuse from her husband due to frustration of inability to access alcohol. Also, the first step taken by the government to ease the lockdown was to open alcohol shops even in the most sensitive areas of lockdown, further aggravating the problem. (The Indian Express 2020). The cruelty of the violence faced by women amplified after the husband came to know that she had filed a complaint. (Shemin Joy, 2020).
5. Due to lockdown, women are trapped with their abusers and even if they wish to seek help from friends and family, it would not be possible. Also, the restricted movement does not allow them to get help from the police and organizations. Thus, the women who wish to free themselves from the abuse cannot do the same.
6. How the victims could get help was also limited during the lockdown. The limited means were phones and the internet. Some women do not have access to phones and technology, which limits them from receiving help.
7. The police had specific duties to ensure the smooth imposition of the lockdown, which makes them not adequately responsive to domestic violence complaints. There had been incidents where the police did not cooperate with punishing the abusers.



(Source: Ashwini Deshpande, In locked down India, women fight coronavirus and domestic violence, Quartz India, (April 16, 2020) available at: <https://qz.com/india/1888351/indias-coronavirus-lockdown-leads-to-more-violence-against-women>)

Steps taken in India during lockdown to prevent domestic abuse

Though the concept of domestic abuse is being discussed in India, but no steps have been taken to deal with the issue at the policy level. In fact, several NGOs when petitioned the courts, some courts have issued directions to the state to provide protection to women and children.

For instance, the Delhi High court, after a petition filed by an NGO, on 18 April 2020 directed the Delhi government to deliberate on measures to curb domestic violence and protect victims during the lockdown. The state in its reply stated that it has put a protocol in place where a survivor once call the helpline number, the tele caller will take the complaint and will forward it to the counselor who will establish a phone communication with the survivor on her account during the lockdown. However, this approach has several loopholes. Frequently, the survivors are not in position to communicate easily with the counselor when the perpetrator is constantly controlling and monitoring the victim. The court has directed both the central and the state government to effectively implement the provisions of the Domestic Violence Act 2005.

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court took suo moto cognizance of domestic violence cases and on 18 April 2020, offered slew directions that include creation of special funds and designating informal spaces for women such as grocery stores and pharmacies where women could report abuse without alerting the perpetrator.

The Karnataka High Court, too has asked the state government about the helplines and action taken on domestic violence complaints. The state in its reply stated that helplines, counselors, shelter homes and protection officers are working round the clock to help victims of violence.

In Tamil Nadu, protection officers appointed under the Domestic Violence Act 2005 are allowed to move during the lockdown and some women in dangerous situations are being rescued and have been moved to shelter homes.

Further, several NGOs have been lending a helping hand to women in distress. An organization has launched an initiative called 'red dot' under which a woman can be identified as a victim of domestic violence by the NGOs and authorities if she puts a red dot on her palm. Within three days after this scheme is launched, it received 20 complaints as claimed.

In UP, the state government has initiated a special helpline for women victims of domestic abuse under the title 'Suppress Corona not your voice' as a part of an enhanced response to cases of violence against women. The police have assured that once a woman complain, a woman police officer will attend to it. The purpose is to reassure women and to send a stern message to the abuser that he cannot use isolation as an opportunity to abuse a woman.

The NCW chairperson claims that ASHA and Anganwadi workers and other frontline health workers are counseling against domestic violence and women can report these workers in case they are facing abuse. However, these measures, seemingly and evidently, are not sufficient enough. Considering the diverse situation of India, and recognizing the limitations, a multi-dimensional approach is required to be evolved to address the grave situation of domestic violence.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that after the enforcement of the lockdown, there was a huge surge of domestic violence especially in countries like India. It can be seen that after covid 19 these domestic crimes were reported much more than before the pandemic. The prohibition of not stepping out of homes brought a huge problem in homes. The study is focused on this theme only regarding the surge of domestic violence in the time of the pandemic. As this domestic violence was growing under the shadow of a pandemic therefore it is termed a shadow pandemic and it was seen all over the paper. The quantitative methodology was followed in the paper so that good information could be collected. The available information supported a lot in the study and the objectives were clear throughout. Proper results and findings were formed with the help of different authors' and researchers' viewpoints. Different sources such as the internet, journals and articles helped get proper data and analysis.

It was all about pandemic under pandemic, which means a problem that's growing rapidly under the shade of Covid 19. The different government initiatives and solutions for the situation are being discussed in the study. Domestic violence is a less discussed issue but its awareness is highly required so that it can be eliminated from our society. The present study proves that there is a sudden increase in domestic violence in times of pandemic and is required to be abolished.

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