

Original Research Article

Domestic Violence in Rural Areas of Bangladesh: Reasons, Present Situation and Ways to Combat it

Abdulla-Al-Mamun

LL.B, LL.M (pursuing), University of Barishal & Research Assistant under UGC, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author: M.Kamraju, E-mail: dmbu013@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This paper tries to analyze perception of women of rural areas about domestic violence against women. Many women live in the rural areas of Bangladesh. They face several times a domestic violence from their own families or from husbands or from their husbands' families. Whether the women are educated or non-educated, it does not matter to face the domestic violence. It is often seen that even educated women who hold a government job or any types of private job also face domestic violence from their families. And the situations of the non-educated and non-job holders of women are in higher description. The survey report suggests that women are more secure in their own family than their husbands or husband's family. That is to say, women face less violence from their family before they got married. The crucial percentages are increased after their marriage. 70.71% of women faced violence from their husband and 72.27% women face violence from their husband's family. This study may help the government to take appropriate policy to stop the domestic violence against women.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh is a signatory state of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 and the Convention on the Children's Right, 1989. And the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh also provides the equal rights for women and children. But, our women society is not free from domestic violence, which is also known as Gender-based violence, and it is mainly purported by their male counterparts and family, whatever it is own family or in laws family. Bangladesh society is a patriarchal society; domestic violence against women is significant in our country. In Bangladesh, violence against women is occurring in almost every aspect of women's lives. So, it is a serious threat to overall development and progress of the country (Md. Abul Hasam, 2016, p. 14).

The term "domestic violence" is deeply rooted in our society, whatever it is higher educated society or uneducated society. Domestic violence, generally means the violence taking place within the four walls of homes among the family members has become a common phenomenon in our lives to such an extent that it does not make a big deal whenever we see news of women being tortured, murdered or raped in the newspaper (Sarbin, 2020), television channel and various online media. Violence differs from time to time, place to place and people to people in varying degrees. Whenever it is happened, either inside the house or outside of it, women violence is gender discrimination based violence.

In a report of CPD (Centre for Policy Dialogue) showed that women have experienced mainly four kinds of violence: **Physical violence** which included hitting / punching / kicking, hitting with an object, choking, burning, acid throwing, hitting with a weapon, forced abortion; **Psychological violence** included threat of physical violence, insult, restricting mobility, abandonment; **Sexual violence** included marital rape, forced prostitution, refusal to have sex; **Economic violence** included stopping food, stopping maintenance for victim, stopping maintenance for children, dowry / dowry demand, not permitting to earn income, forcing to earn (Centre for Policy Dialogue, January 2009).

2. Objectives of the Study

The research has a broad objective that is:

- i. To know and perception about domestic violence among the rural women.
- ii. To know the nature of domestic violence against women.
- iii. To know the reasons of domestic violence against women.
- iv. To try a solution for combating domestic violence against women.

3. Research Methodology

In this study, descriptive research design has been followed so that it would be able to know and analyze the perception about domestic violence against women, nature of violence and reasons of violence through personal interview.

4. Laws regulating domestic violence

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal rights for both men and women in all spheres of state and public life. Even some of the articles in the Constitution are firmly patronizing towards women rights (Hossen, 2014). According to Article 28 (1) states, The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. In addition the Article 28 (4) states: Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making special provision in favour of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens (Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 1972).

And the most importantly, in 2010, for combat the domestic violence the Governments of the People's Re-public of Bangladesh enacted newly law named, Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act-2010. Before enacted this law, there is no clear definition of domestic violence in any laws of our country. For the first time, it provides the definition of domestic violence.

According to this Act, Domestic violence means physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse or economic abuse against a woman or a child of a family by any other person of that family with whom victim is, or has been, in family relationship (Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2010).

The Penal Code 1860, which has been considerable the main criminal law, has the following sections for the prevention of violence and violence against women: section 286; 312-338; 359-374; 493-498 and 509.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 2018, newly enacted which abolished the Act of 1980, which forbids anyone from giving or receiving dowry. The Nari-O-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2000 for the first time expanded the definition of rape considerably and the sexual assault and sexual harassment, it has been made punishable offences. The Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2002 and The Acid Control Act, 2002 to prevent from the acid violence.

5. Present situation of domestic violence

In 2011, the UNEPA together with the National Statistical Office undertook the first ever Violence Against Women Survey, which brought to light unexpectedly high levels of violence. 87% of ever married women reported to have experienced some form of violence in their life time (UNFPA Bangladesh, 2020).

Recently, Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) published a report which shown that totally 182 women faced domestic violence from January to May, 2020. In that report, tortured by husband is 19, tortured by husband's family 4, murdered by husband 86, murdered by husband's family 21, murdered by own family 16, tortured by own family 11 and suicide 25 (Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), 2020).

A survey has been conducted in 04 districts of Bangladesh, named: Jashore, Satkhira, Barishal and Netrokona, among 300 females. This survey categorized the domestic violence in 03 (three) fields, i.e. torture by own family (father's linked), torture by husband and torture by husband's family. In that report, the rate of domestic violence is totally dangerous. But, it is a great news that the rate of non-victims by her own family is good (58.59%). That is to say, the females are more safe then by her own family than by her husband and by her husband's family. The alarming rate of violence is torture by husband's family (72.27%) and the percentage of torture by husband is 70.71%. The total percentages of victims are shown in a chart below:

Fields of Violence	Victims (Percentage %)		Total
	Yes	No	
Torture by Own Family	41.41	58.59	100
Torture by Husband	70.71	29.29	100
Torture by Husband's Family	72.27	27.73	100

Char 1: percentage of victims

In the survey report, the victims female are faced five (05) types of torture. That are as physically torture, mentally torture, physically and mentally torture, torture through words and others. The high rate of percentage is physically and mentally torture (44.34%), that is to say, most of the females are faced physically and mentally torture, whether it is by her own family or by her husband or by her husband's family. And the lowest rate of percentage is others types of torture (7.66%). The total percentages of nature of torture are shown in a chart below;

Nature of Torture	Percentage (%)
Physically Torture	10%
Mentally Torture	17.34%
Physically & Mentally Torture	44.34%
Torture through Words	20.66%
Others	7.66%
Total	100%

Chart 2: percentage about nature of torture

The nature of others types of torture includes showing fear, trafficking, denial of earned income, sexual violence, acid throwing etc.

6. Reasons for domestic violence

The reasons for domestic violence against female are changing day-by-day. In the past times, legal thinkers / social policy makers considered that dowry is the main reasons for domestic violence, but the situation is changed. The recent survey report showed that females are faced domestic violence for expressing her owns opinions (25%). The reasons for this situations is that female society are getting educated day-by-day. Now, they are enjoined freedom more than the previous times. They joined various job sectors with competition the male-partners. And they want to expressed their own opinions towards the society, which is dominated by the male. And male dominated society is also a one of the contributor for violence against women (13.54%). For their expressing opinions, the male dominated society caused violence against female.

Dowry is the 2nd most common reason cited for violence (18.39%), which indicates that dowry is still demanded despite the fact that it is illegal in Bangladesh. This is not surprising considering that parents traditionally try to marry their daughters as early as possible in order to end their economic responsibility. It is not uncommon for poverty to prevent the bride's family from paying the full dowry price, resulting in the groom and his family inflicting physical and psychological torture on the bride in hopes of coercing the natal family to deliver the promised dowry payment (Siddique, June, 2011).

Then the most reasons for violence is for maintenance from the husband or husband’s family (16.37%). In many cases, female faces violence as a consequence to poverty (10.91%), whether from their own family or from her husband or from her husband’s family. Chart 3 showed the reasons for violence against women: which is found in the survey report,

Reasons for violence	Percentage
For expressing her own opinion	25%
For establishing authority	8.62%
Dowry	18.39%
Poverty	10.91%
For getting maintenance	16.37%
By male-dominated society	13.54%
Others	7.17%
Total	100%

Chart 3: Reasons for violence

7. Recommendations to combat the domestic violence

In our society, women of upper class don’t reveal their vulnerable situation because of their social status and they themselves try to solve the problem privately. Women of middle class do not try to file case and feel hesitation to disclose it to others because they are very much concerned about their self-respect (Md. Abul Hasam, 2016). And the question of lower class un-explainable. They cannot try to take reveal and can interest to file a suit. As a result, there are no possible ways to combat the domestic violence against women.

Dr. Shahnaz Huda has laid down ten of the most significant issues impeding the success of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act: lack of national awareness, dearth of community investment, limited access to legal services, poverty and economic insecurity, inadequate social safety nets, absence of accurate domestic violence data, inadequate provision for domestic violence against children, no provision for counseling, limited legal terminology, confusion regarding offenses and punishments (Huda, 2016).

Together with the improving legal remedy, this paper would like to propose general recommendations to combat the domestic violence against women:

1. **Established Secularism State:** It is very important to sustain the secularity of the state. Civil society must be careful about fostering democratic rule in Bangladesh and dis-courage any authoritarian take over. There is not a single example in the world where citizens’ basic rights are respected in the absence of elected government officials, let alone non-discrimination towards women (Afrin, 2017).
2. **Proper Implementation of the Laws:** The Government of Bangladesh promulgate a specific law [Domestic Violence (prevention and Protection) Act, 2010 (Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, 2010)] to combat the domestic violence from the society. But, there is inconvenience to implement the laws. In the survey report, it has been seen that, majority percentage of the victims have no knowledge about the promulgation of the Domestic Violence (prevention and Protection) Act, 2010. And it is a barrier to implement the laws properly. If the law is not implemented properly, the intentions of the law makers do not come to end. So, proper steps should be taken to implement the law in properly.
3. **Raise Public Awareness:** Governments must take steps to inform its citizens about issues of violence against female; public awareness builds momentum around behaviours to prevent, report and respond to violence and invites citizen responsibility (Warren, 2019). Because, in the report, I found that majority women have no awareness or knowledge about the issues to combat domestic violence. So to raise public awareness among the women as well as male, an office or desk can be opened in every Upazila Social Service Office or every Police Station, whose main task is to raise public awareness in the very root levels.

4. **Promote Accountability:** Accountability can reform a society in proper. Because, the provision of the accountability gathered the society in parallel. The reason is that everyone has the responsibility for their every task towards the society. So, if there is any possibility to promote accountability in society or family, as there is need, then the domestic violence may be reduced.
5. **Adherence to Religious Discipline:** No religion has permitted violence against women, whether the religion is Islam or Hindu or otherwise. As the majority population of Bangladesh is Muslims, so here the Islamic observations can be mentioned. Islam must not be avoided in women's rights awareness education. For the first time, Islam is the only religion, which recognized the rights of women in parallel with women. As we move ahead with technological advances, harmful messages become easier to deliver. It is high time to take Islamic education seriously and focus on the aspects that will foster ensuring human rights for all.
6. **Bringing Change in Patriarchal Attitudes:** As we know that our society is ruled out by patriarchal attitudes. Here, everything is commanded under the male. The views of the women are not acceptable here. However, their views often become important. The patriarchal society considers that women views are valueless and women can do nothing, so they (women) should be under control of them (male). But, the time is being changing, now women want to come out from the control of patriarchal attitudes. They put steps various sectors of the society with competition of male. The problem is there. Male society cannot able to take it easy. As a result, they(male) leave bad comments towards the women. And then, if any women want to protest it, then the violence come down upon them. In the survey report, it has been seen that even a higher educated women, who put contribution in the maintenance of the family, face violence whenever she does different in the society or family. So, bringing change in patriarchal attitudes is one of steps to combat domestic violence.
7. **Bringing Change in Existing Criminal Law:** Though our existing various criminal laws recognized the punishment for committing domestic violence. But, it is not suitable for the present times. Because, the types of occurrence of domestic violence are changed from the time immemorial when the laws are promulgated. Now-a-days, domestic violence are committed in various ways, for example, it may be said that domestic violence are also committed by using of modern technology. But it may not be able to find out solution under the existing laws. So, it is high time to up-to-date the existing criminal laws to combat domestic violence against female.

8. Conclusion

As we know domestic violence is considered as a social curse in our society. Every year many families are broken down for domestic violence. It has been said earlier that Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) published a report which shows that a total of 182 women faced domestic violence from January to May, 2020 (Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), 2020). As we know the reason for domestic violence is described earlier. But the main point is that mainly violence comes from first family. For this reason, to combat domestic violence, as we know, in 2010 Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act was made. But, since the promulgation of the Act, we have passed one decade but the percentages of domestic violence are not decreasing. What the reasons behind this? It may be due to the lack of sensibility or humanity of the family members. So, national laws alone are not enough to solve this issue. Sensibility and Humanity have to be practiced from the very beginning in every single family and only then, the increasing percentage of domestic violence can be ceased to exist (Sarbin, 2020).

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