



National Conference on Sustainable Developments in Engineering,
Science, Humanities and Management (NCSDESHM – 2025)
28th December, 2025, Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India.

CERTIFICATE NO: NCSDESHM /2025/ C1225967

Theoretical Framework of Domestic Violence Towards Sociological Prospects

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ABSTRACT

The sociocultural context of domestic violence is intricately connected to the patriarchal framework of society. Patriarchy legitimizes male supremacy and female subjugation, delineating gender norms that frequently restrict women to dependent and subordinate roles. In numerous traditional civilizations, women's identities are delineated in relation to men—as daughters, wives, or mothers—thereby diminishing their autonomy and negotiating power within the household. Cultural ideas and traditions frequently sustain domestic abuse by normalizing it. Domestic abuse transcends personal or private concerns; it is a profound societal issue that embodies structural disparities, cultural norms, and power dynamics within a community. In this article, theoretical framework of domestic violence towards sociological prospects has been discussed.

Keywords: Domestic, Violence, Sociological.

INTRODUCTION

In numerous communities, marital conflicts and instances of physical abuse are regarded as private issues that need not be publicly addressed. Dowry customs, premature marriages, and the expectation of female subservience perpetuate gender inequity and increase women's susceptibility to violence. Economic dependency significantly influences women's susceptibility to domestic violence. Women with restricted education or work prospects frequently lack the financial means and social support necessary to extricate themselves from violent situations. Poverty and unemployment can intensify familial tensions, resulting in increased occurrences of domestic abuse. Education profoundly impacts women's perceptions and reactions to domestic violence. Educated women are more inclined to identify abusive behavior, express their rights, and get assistance through legal or social support mechanisms. Nonetheless, insufficient information on women's rights and protective legislation remains a significant obstacle for many. Despite the existence of legislation like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) in India, numerous women remain uninformed about their rights or are deterred from pursuing justice owing to apprehension of societal stigma and institutional indifference. Inadequate enforcement of legal statutes and a deficiency in empathy among law enforcement organizations can dissuade victims from submitting complaints. Urbanization, modernity, and enhanced access to education and jobs are progressively altering women's social status. A growing number of women nowadays are increasingly assertive about their rights and exhibit diminished tolerance for abuse. This transition has provoked resistance in certain societal segments, as conventional gender roles are contested, resulting in novel manifestations of control and violence, including technology-enabled abuse (Dodenhoff, J., 2008).



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THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic violence against women is a complex social issue that can be analyzed through several sociological and psychological frameworks. This framework synthesizes essential theoretical approaches to examine the causes, patterns, and effects of domestic violence within the socio-cultural setting of Indian society, particularly in the Cooch Behar district. Feminist theory offers a fundamental framework for comprehending domestic violence as a manifestation of patriarchal power dynamics. It perceives domestic violence as a mechanism of male supremacy and control over women. The gendered distribution of power in families and society legitimizes violence as a means of preserving patriarchal order. Feminist researchers contend that socialization processes, cultural norms, and legal frameworks frequently sustain male dominance and female subjugation. In Cooch Behar, conventional gender norms, dependency, and socio-economic disparities exacerbate women's susceptibility to abuse.

Social learning theory posits that aggressive conduct is acquired through observation and imitation. Children exposed to domestic violence are more prone to emulate analogous behaviors in adulthood, either as offenders or victims. The intergenerational perpetuation of violence facilitates its continuation. In the rural and semi-urban regions of Cooch Behar, where extended family systems dominate, such behaviors frequently persist unabated due to societal acceptance and the normalization of violence.

Conflict theory views domestic violence as a consequence of power dynamics and inequality inside the home. The family is regarded as a microcosm of society, characterized by the unequal distribution of power and wealth. Men frequently resort to violence to assert dominance when their authority is jeopardized—be it economically, socially, or emotionally. This viewpoint elucidates the emergence of domestic violence stemming from financial strain, unemployment, or threats to conventional male roles in the Cooch Behar district.

The ecological model perceives domestic violence as the outcome of interactions among individual, relational, community, and systemic forces. This extensive approach is especially appropriate for examining regional disparities and community-oriented initiatives in Cooch Behar.

The patriarchal theory posits that domestic violence is a systemic result of a male-dominated societal structure. Patriarchy confers power upon men and legitimizes the oppression of women in both private and public domains. The economic dependency of women, restricted access to education, and societal stigma surrounding divorce sustain their persecution. This idea is well aligned with the sociocultural realities of rural West Bengal, where patriarchal practices persistently influence gender interactions.

Sociological frameworks are fundamental, although psychological approaches elucidate the specific behavioral traits of perpetrators, such as anger, stress, or low self-esteem, that may precipitate violent acts.

The study synthesizes the aforementioned ideas to examine domestic violence as a socially manufactured, culturally reinforced, and psychologically affected issue. This multi-theoretical approach facilitates a detailed analysis of the interplay between individual behavior, social structure, and cultural norms that perpetuate domestic violence in the Cooch Behar district.



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A sociological perspective on domestic violence against women indicates that it is not solely a private or individual concern but a widespread social issue fundamentally entrenched in structural inequities, cultural norms, and institutional power disparities. It constitutes an expression of power and dominance by a perpetrator, typically a male spouse or family member, over a woman (Mahapatro, M. et al., 2012).

Patriarchal institutions, which prioritize male authority and domination over women, are a primary source of domestic violence. In these communities, violence serves as a mechanism to uphold male dominance and reinforce conventional gender norms. This cultural framework perpetuates the notion that men possess the authority to reprimand or dominate women.

Domestic abuse continues to be a significant social issue impacting women across various societies, regardless of class, caste, religion, or educational attainment. From a sociological standpoint, domestic violence transcends individual or familial concerns, representing a representation of entrenched systemic imbalances and patriarchal practices within society.

The acceptability and normalization of violence are significant variables that facilitate abuse. Certain cultures regard violence as an acceptable means of conflict resolution, as evidenced by studies inquiring whether a husband is justified in physically assaulting his wife for reasons such as disputes or culinary mishaps. The societal shame linked to divorce or seeking external assistance compels women to endure harsh circumstances.

The financial dependence of women on their boyfriends constitutes a substantial obstacle to exiting an abusive relationship. Economic abuse, when offenders regulate access to financial resources or employment, confines women within households and restricts their avenues for escape. Studies indicate that women with restricted economic prospects are more susceptible to violence.

Social learning theory posits that domestic violence is a behavior acquired and transmitted across generations. Children who observe or endure familial violence are more inclined to perpetuate or fall victim to violence in their adult relationships, thereby normalizing such conduct throughout their lives.

Abusers frequently seclude women from their friends, family, and social networks, so constraining their access to potential assistance. This seclusion, coupled with adverse cultural responses to revelations of abuse, may hinder women from seeking assistance.

The experience of domestic abuse is not uniform and is influenced by the intersection of several socioeconomic groups. In civilizations characterized by rigid racial or caste systems, such as India, domestic violence is intensified by overlapping forms of oppression. Dalit women face a confluence of caste, class, and gender hierarchies that render them susceptible to severe assault (Zamani, R., 2009).

Women from marginalized communities, including individuals with disabilities, divorced women, and those with diverse sexual orientations, face an elevated risk of violence and discrimination. Societal discrimination and stigma exacerbate their vulnerability and establish considerable obstacles to obtaining assistance.



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Domestic violence differs between urban and rural regions, frequently exhibiting elevated rates in rural areas where traditional patriarchal standards may be more prevalent. During situations such as the COVID-19 epidemic, lockdowns exacerbated isolation and heightened women's vulnerability to violent spouses while restricting access to help.

The societal response to domestic abuse is a critical component of the sociological landscape, frequently compounded by structural concerns. Dominant societal perceptions often attribute responsibility to women for the abuse they endure. Guidelines advising women on conduct to "evade attention" or conventional views that endorse violence as a permissible retribution foster a culture of impunity for offenders. Despite progressive legislation like India's Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, enforcement frequently proves inadequate. Insufficient training within law enforcement, societal biases, and a pervasive culture of corruption can undermine or disregard reports of domestic abuse. Although informal familial support might be crucial, it is frequently transient and may compel women to reunite with abusers to preserve familial honor. Formal support systems, such as shelters and legal help, while essential, may be underutilized owing to stigma, fear of retaliation, and accessibility challenges. Media portrayals of violence frequently minimize or misrepresent the issue by depicting it as a familial conflict, thereby reinforcing patriarchal ideologies and diminishing its gravity (Coll, C.V.N., Ewerling, F., García-Moreno, C. et al., 2020).

The sociocultural context of domestic abuse against women has catastrophic and enduring effects for women's welfare and societal engagement. Victims encounter significant physical and psychological health challenges, including despair, PTSD, chronic pain, and an elevated risk of suicide. Psychological abuse and domineering conduct can undermine a woman's self-esteem and result in isolation. Domestic abuse has significant repercussions for society. This encompasses isolation, wage loss, and restricted social engagement for women. This leads to elevated expenses for healthcare and the criminal justice system, while also limiting the potential of half the population. Domestic violence can profoundly affect children, resulting in developmental, emotional, and behavioral problems. It may also sustain a cycle of violence by normalizing violent behavior for subsequent generations.

SOCIOLOGICAL PROSPECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

From a sociological standpoint, domestic violence can be perceived as a symptom of the overarching social, economic, and cultural forces that influence gender roles and familial dynamics. Domestic violence frequently occurs within patriarchal societal frameworks where males usually possess power and women assume inferior positions. Gender hierarchies are perpetuated by cultural norms, socialization, and institutional practices. This relationship is perceived sociologically as a system of social control, wherein violence serves as a means to uphold power within the family. Social learning theory posits that individuals can absorb violent actions through observation and experience. Children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to perceive it as a normative aspect of familial existence, thus continuing a cycle of abuse across generations. Consequently, domestic violence is both an acquired behavior and a cultural norm perpetuated by silence and societal acceptance. Economic dependency significantly contributes to the perpetuation of domestic violence. Women with restricted access to education, careers, or financial



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autonomy frequently find it challenging to extricate themselves from violent relationships. From a Marxist or conflict perspective, domestic violence embodies class oppression and economic disparity, wherein material hardship constrains the autonomy of victims. Functionalist theorists may contend that domestic violence undermines familial cohesion and societal stability. Nonetheless, they observe that the enduring nature of such violence indicates society's occasional tolerance of dysfunctions that uphold the prevailing social order and gender hierarchy. Feminist sociology perceives domestic abuse as a manifestation of gendered violence entrenched in patriarchal power dynamics. This is perceived as both a personal and political matter, embodying society norms that validate male supremacy and female subjugation. Feminists promote legal reforms, gender awareness, and empowerment to confront systemic injustices. Contemporary sociological viewpoints highlight social change via education, community engagement, and policy modification. As awareness grows, civilizations are redefining gender interactions and familial roles, fostering equality and mutual respect. The influence of media, non-governmental organizations, and social movements is essential in transforming perceptions and addressing the silence surrounding domestic violence (Tyagi, M., 2015).

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of domestic violence signifies entrenched gender inequality, social injustice, and the inadequacy of social institutions in safeguarding women. It has profound psychological, social, and economic repercussions—affecting not only the victims but also their families and communities. Domestic violence sociologically underscores the convergence of gender, power, and culture, necessitating collective action via education, empowerment, and policy reform. The sociological context of women's experiences with domestic violence illustrates that it transcends individual issues, serving as a manifestation of wider social structures and disparities. Addressing domestic abuse necessitates a multifaceted strategy encompassing gender sensitization, socio-economic development, legal awareness, and community engagement to foster a culture in which women can exist with dignity, equality, and freedom from fear.

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