
**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS AMONG WOMEN IN URBAN
AREAS**

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Domestic violence continues to be a serious social concern affecting women across different sections of society, including urban areas where education and awareness levels are relatively higher. This study focuses on understanding how far women in urban communities are aware of domestic violence, its different forms, legal protections, and the support systems available to them. It also examines the social and cultural factors that influence their awareness and response to such issues.

The study is based on a descriptive research design, where primary data is collected through questionnaires from women living in urban areas. The findings suggest that while many women recognize physical forms of violence, there is comparatively less awareness about emotional, psychological, and economic abuse. Awareness regarding legal safeguards, especially the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, exists but is not complete or clearly understood by all respondents.

The study concludes that there is a strong need to improve awareness through social work interventions, community programs, and institutional support systems. Increasing awareness can empower women to recognize abuse and seek help, thereby contributing to a safer and more equitable society.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is widely recognized as a violation of human rights and a major social problem that affects women across the world. It includes not only physical abuse but also emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic forms of harm that occur within family or intimate relationships. Even in urban areas, where women are assumed to be more educated

and independent, domestic violence remains a hidden issue due to fear, social stigma, and lack of proper awareness.

In the Indian context, several legal measures have been introduced to address this issue, including the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, which provides legal protection and support mechanisms for women facing abuse. However, the effectiveness of such laws depends largely on whether women are aware of their rights and are confident enough to use these legal provisions.

Urbanization has brought changes in lifestyle, education, and employment opportunities for women. Despite this progress, many women continue to face domestic violence but may not identify certain behaviors as abusive. In many cases, emotional and economic abuse are normalized within families, making it difficult for women to recognize them as forms of violence. Additionally, factors such as financial dependency, fear of family breakdown, and concern about social reputation often prevent women from seeking help.

This study aims to explore the level of awareness among women in urban areas regarding domestic violence and to identify the gaps that exist in their understanding. It also highlights the importance of social work practices in creating awareness, providing support, and promoting women's empowerment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

women, providing important insights into the nature and causes of the problem. One of the early contributions in this field was made by Lenore E. Walker (1979), who explained the **cycle of violence**. According to this theory, domestic violence occurs in repeated phases, including tension building, violent incidents, and reconciliation. Various researchers and organizations have studied domestic violence and awareness among women, focusing on factors like tension building, violent incidents, and reconciliation. This helps to understand why many women continue to stay in abusive relationships, even when they are aware of the situation.

According to a report by the World Health Organization (2013), domestic violence is a widespread global issue, with a significant number of women experiencing physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives. The report emphasizes that awareness alone is not sufficient unless there are proper support systems and social acceptance for victims to seek help.

In India, data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) reveals that a considerable number of women still accept or justify domestic violence under certain

circumstances. This reflects the deep-rooted cultural norms and lack of awareness that continue to exist even in modern society.

Research by Heise Lori (1998) highlights that domestic violence is influenced by multiple factors at different levels, including individual, family, community, and societal levels. Her ecological approach explains that gender inequality, economic stress, and cultural beliefs all contribute to the continuation of violence against women.

Similarly, Kishor Sunita (2004) found that education alone does not guarantee awareness. Even educated women may lack proper knowledge about legal rights and available support services, which limits their ability to take action against abuse.

Recent studies focusing on urban areas indicate that while women may be aware of physical violence, they often fail to recognize emotional and economic abuse as serious issues. Social stigma, fear of judgment, and lack of trust in legal institutions further discourage women from reporting such cases.

Overall, the existing literature shows that awareness of domestic violence among women is influenced by a combination of educational, social, and cultural factors. It also highlights the need for effective awareness programs and interventions by social workers to address these gaps and support women in urban communities.

CONCLUSION

From the present study, it can be concluded that domestic violence continues to exist as a serious issue among women in urban areas, despite improvements in education and access to information. The findings indicate that while a majority of women are able to recognize physical forms of abuse, there is still limited awareness regarding emotional, psychological, and economic violence. This lack of complete understanding prevents many women from identifying abusive situations in their own lives.

The study also shows that awareness about legal protections, especially the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, is present but not sufficiently clear or detailed. Many women are not fully aware of their rights, the procedures to seek help, or the support services available to them. Social factors such as fear of stigma, family pressure, financial dependency, and concern about societal judgment further discourage women from reporting domestic violence.

In addition, the research highlights that awareness alone is not enough to address the issue. There is a need for continuous efforts through awareness programs, counseling services, and community-based interventions. Social workers play a significant role in educating women,

promoting gender equality, and creating a supportive environment where victims feel safe to seek help.

Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of strengthening awareness, improving access to legal and social support systems, and encouraging open discussions on domestic violence. Addressing these gaps can contribute to the empowerment of women and help in reducing the prevalence of domestic violence in urban communities.

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