

A Socio Legal Study of Domestic Violence against Women in Cuttack district of Odisha

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Abstract: *This socio-legal study examines the multifaceted dimensions of domestic violence against women in Cuttack district of Odisha, with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of the prevalence, causes, legal responses and socio-cultural factors that contribute to the perpetuation of such violence. This research employs a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative interviews, surveys, and legal analysis to gather data from both survivors and key stakeholders involved in addressing domestic violence. The study explores the socio-economic and cultural factors that contribute to women's vulnerability in domestic settings, highlighting traditional norms, economic inequalities, and power dynamics within households. Through in-depth interviews with survivors, the research seeks to amplify the voices of those affected and understand the coping mechanisms adopted by women in situations of abuse. Furthermore, the legal framework addressing domestic violence in India, particularly in the context of Odisha, has been critically analysed. The study examines the efficacy of existing legal provisions such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, and identifies gaps and challenges in their implementation. Insights from legal professionals, law enforcement and aid organizations contribute to a comprehensive assessment of the legal response to domestic violence in Cuttack district. The findings of this study are intended to inform policy makers, legal practitioners and civil society organizations working towards the elimination of domestic violence. Recommendations are provided to enhance legal mechanisms, community interventions and awareness campaigns with the ultimate goal of promoting a safer and more supportive environment for women in Cuttack district and contributing to the broader discussion on combating domestic violence across the country.*

Keywords: Domestic violence, Protection, Abuse, Policy makers etc

I. INTRODUCTION

Under Indian traditions and values, married life is a ritualistic way of life. Respect for women is the path to the welfare of society, family, nation and the entire world. The happy state of marital life is the foundation of the structure of civilization. The pleasant atmosphere of married life is said to be the life giver of the entire civilization. In Indian culture, wife is called Ardhangini. That is why the wife is also called a housewife and it has been made clear that a house without a wife cannot be called 'home'. It has been made clear in 'Shatapatha Brahmin, Aitareya Samhita', religious scriptures and smritis that unless the husband and wife live together and follow Grihasthadharma, they cannot attain the fourth effort i.e. salvation.

"सन्तुष्टो भार्यया भर्त्रा भार्या तथैवच।
यस्मिन्नेव कुले नित्यं कल्याणं तत्र वैधुवम्॥"

Similarly, it has also been said that in the family where women are respected, soft words are used towards them and non-violent behavior is practiced, the gods reside there.

"यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते मन्ते तत्र देवताः।
यत्रै तास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्रा फलाक्रिया॥"
"शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्याशु तत्कुलम्।
नशोचन्तितुय त्रैता व र्द्धते तद्धि सर्वदा॥"

Therefore, in a family where women are treated violently, that family gets destroyed by losing happiness and peace. The wife is the embodiment of faith, love, kindness, compassion, illusion and affection in the husband's life and acts as a source of nectar. The behavior of violence towards him turns the source of nectar into poison. The makers of our Constitution were fully aware of the ancient form of exploitation of women in the post-Vedic period. That is why he secured provisions for the all-round development of women in every sphere of their lives. The following paragraph is important in this context. Many sections of IPC and CPC provide them special protection. The Domestic Violence Prevention Act is a new page in the history of protection of the status of women.

Women have been given equal status to men in the Indian Constitution, 1950. Constitutional provisions have been made to provide them economic, social and political justice. Provisions have been made to prohibit gender discrimination along with special protective provisions for women and children. With this, they have been made equal participants in all the fundamental rights and social rights. It has been prescribed as the duty of all citizens to give up such practices towards women which are against the dignity of women.

Domestic Violence Prevention Act 2005 is such an important social component that to understand it, one has to think about its multi-dimensional impact including one's family structure. An important conclusion emerging from Census 2011 is that the ratio of men and women in the country is not balanced. What is even more worrying is that even among children between the ages of zero and six years, the sex ratio is tilted in favor of boys. The number of girls is less than that of boys. Working for a balanced population is a big challenge. If existing prejudices are to be overcome, women's rights will have to be protected. They have to be provided with education, health, development, credit facilities and decision making opportunities as well as legal rights so that they can become truly empowered and empowered. The right to equality between men and women includes the guarantee of equality for women. In this way, there is an opportunity to remove the problems of women who have been facing social and economic discrimination for years and create a meaningful environment in their favor. Under the democratic political system, the advancement of women has been our main goal in our laws, development related policies, plans and programs. There are many government programs which focus on women-sensitive welfare programmes, support services and spreading awareness. These programs complement programs in the health, education, agriculture and rural development sectors. The objective of all these programs is to empower women economically and socially so that they can play an equal and active role as men in national development efforts.

National Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women Act 2005 and three policy approaches have been said to be adopted to eliminate discrimination against women. It is necessary that the legal system becomes more responsive and more sensitive to the needs of women. Along with this, women should be empowered economically and socially through special efforts. Statistics show that the condition of women in India is worrisome as compared to men.

The Eighth Plan again emphasized on making women equal partners through the process of development. Today, our focus is on inclusive growth. Therefore, our awareness towards the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act 2005 has increased. There should be Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women Act 2005 of women from the lower strata of the society and for this there is a need to make them economically empowered along with change in values and behavior towards them.

An Act to provide for effective protection, under the rights guaranteed under the Constitution, of women who are victims of any kind of violence within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The phenomenon of domestic violence is widespread in India, but has remained invisible in the public domain. Civil law does not reflect this phenomenon in its entirety. To protect women from being victims of domestic violence and to provide remedies in civil law to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill was re-introduced in the Parliament.

According to the Domestic Violence Act 2005, domestic violence means mental, sexual, physical and emotional abuse of a woman by her husband or relative and includes demand for dowry. Dowry is one of the major causes of domestic violence in India. Domestic violence is a matter of public concern. India is one of the countries with the highest share of crimes against women. Crimes include rape, murder, violence, trafficking and more.

According to the latest survey of National Family Health 2019-20, women aged 15 to 49 years in India experienced 31.1% violence by their husbands and 4% violence during pregnancy. According to the National Crime Records

Bureau (NCRB) report, violence against women is higher than other crimes. Crime against women increased by 7.3% in 2019 compared to 2018. Around 4,05,861 cases of domestic violence were registered by the police in India. The reason for this is the cruelty of the husband or relatives. Statistics show that domestic violence is increasing day by day. In India, domestic violence is directly related to employment, education, spouse's alcohol consumption, status, religion, dowry and husband's affair. Evidence shows that violence against women increases during and after disasters. Rao's study is one of a body of evidence that shows a link between lightning violence and the status of women before and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Data shows that violence against women has increased by approximately 48% from 2005 to 2015. It shows how disaster becomes an issue of danger for women. Sri Lankan study shows that women in tsunami-affected areas are most vulnerable to physical or sexual abuse. Both studies show that domestic violence increases or continues during times of disaster. There is a lack of research about domestic violence during the pandemic in India.

At present, where women are subjected to cruelty by their husbands or his relatives, it is a crime under section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code.

1.1 Domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic

Although the prevalence of domestic violence has always been troubling in Indian society, it increased at an alarming rate during the COVID-19 pandemic. This aligns with the global increase in cases of domestic violence during this pandemic, often referred to as the 'double pandemic'. The 'shadow epidemic', the 'hidden epidemic' and the 'second epidemic'. In a recent review of gender-based violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mittal and Singh (2020) found a significant increase in cases of domestic violence. There was also a clear lack of supportive policies and resources for these women, as they were isolated from their support networks during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. But for these few attempts to study the prevalence and consequences of domestic violence, there are few studies on domestic violence cases in India and their potential impact on mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. The present paper attempts to fill this gap using a systematic review of newspaper reports of domestic violence cases during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2 Domestic violence in India during COVID-19

On 22 March 2020, the Prime Minister of India announced a nationwide lockdown for one day. This lockdown was later extended for a week, then for 21 days and finally till 3 May 2020 to prevent the spread of COVID-19. India declared COVID-19 a "notified disaster" under the Disaster Management Act, 2005. Extended lockdowns and other social distancing measures imposed to curb the pandemic made women more vulnerable to domestic violence. Women were fighting a shadow epidemic inside their homes. Data from the National Commission for Women (NCW) has revealed that complaints of domestic violence doubled after the nationwide lockdown was imposed in India. Tamil Nadu Police reported an increase in domestic violence complaints. They received around 25 calls every day during the lockdown period and recorded at least 40 such cases. Similarly, Bengaluru Police has reported an increase in complaints from victims of domestic violence from 10 calls to 25 calls every day. These figures obtained from different sources show that incidents of domestic violence increased across the country during the lockdown. In contrast, organizations like Jagori, Shakti Shalini and AKS Foundation have reported a decline in complaint calls related to domestic violence. This reduction may be due to home confinement, constant monitoring and control of decision making by the abuser, social isolation of victims from friends and family members, and fewer options for support. Some studies explored the incidence of domestic violence during and after disasters in India such as Hines (2007) and Rao (2020). However, existing literature on domestic violence during lockdown is scarce. Furthermore, the lockdown situation is different from other types of disasters. Almost all states were affected by the presence of this virus at the same time. The question is, what factors are associated with an increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic? Can any theoretical framework explain these factors? Limited studies have used routine activity theory (RAT) to uncover the complex phenomenon of domestic violence. To our knowledge, there has been no study to date in India that has applied the RAT framework to understand the drivers of domestic violence, especially during a pandemic. Several authors advocated the application of criminological theories such as RAT to predict increases or

decreases in crimes during COVID-19, by linking them with specific changes in routine activities. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the factors that have resulted in an increase in cases of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in India by incorporating the routine activity theoretical model.

1.3 National and International Acknowledgment

The Vienna Convention, 1994 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995 have acknowledged that domestic violence is undoubtedly a human rights issue. The United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in its General Recommendation, recommends that States Parties take steps to protect women against all forms of violence, particularly that which occurs within the family.

1.4 Objectives and reasons

(a) Domestic violence is undoubtedly a human rights issue and a serious hindrance to development. This has been acknowledged by the Vienna Convention, 1994 and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). The Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of the United Nations in its General Recommendation No. 12 (1989) recommends that States Parties should prevent all forms of violence, especially within the family. Work should be done to protect women against violence.

(b) The phenomenon of domestic violence is widely prevalent but is largely invisible in the public sphere. Where a woman is subjected to cruelty by her husband or his relative, it is a crime under section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code. But, civil law does not make complete provisions regarding this incident.

(c) under articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution to provide for remedies under civil law which are intended to protect women from being victims of domestic violence and to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society; It is proposed to be enacted keeping in mind the rights guaranteed under.

(d) The Bill, inter alia, seeks to provide for the following: -

(i) It covers women who are related or have been related to the abuser, where both the parties are living together in a shared household and are related through consanguinity, marriage or relationship in the nature of marriage or adoption. Apart from this, the relationship with the family members living together in the form of joint family is also included. Women who are sisters, widows, mothers, single women or living with abuse are also entitled to legal protection under the proposed legislation.

(ii) Provided that this Bill enables a wife or a woman living in a relationship in the nature of marriage to file a complaint under the proposed Act against any relative of the husband or male partner, hence it will not affect any female relative of the husband or male partner. Does not enable filing of complaint against wife or female partner.

(iii) This term defines “domestic violence” which includes actual abuse or threat or abuse i.e. physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic. Harassment by a woman's relative by demanding illegal dowry is also included under this definition.

(iv) It provides for the right of women to secure housing. It provides for the right of women to reside in their marital home or shared household, whether or not she has any title or authority in such home or household. This right is ensured by a residence order, which is passed by a magistrate.

This allows the Magistrate to punish the respondent for aiding or abetting an act of domestic violence or any other specified act in favor of the aggrieved person, entering the place of work or any other place used by the aggrieved person, attempting to communicate with him, using any means used by both the parties. Empowers the Magistrate to pass a protection order for depriving the aggrieved person of any property and restraining him from committing violence towards the aggrieved person, his relatives or others who assist him in domestic violence.

(vi) It provides for appointment of protection officers and registration of NGOs as service providers to assist the aggrieved person in relation to his medical examination, obtaining legal aid, safe shelter etc.

1.5 Preamble of Domestic Violence Act

Before initially dismissing the petition, it is necessary to see whether the aggrieved person is not facing the situation of non-decision under such legislation. The Preamble of the Act makes it clear that the scope of the Act includes violence

whether physical, sexual or otherwise. Be it verbal, emotional or financial, all should be redressed by statute. It is clear that the perpetrators and instigators of such violence, in a given situation, can be women themselves.

The specific purpose of enacting the Domestic Violence Act is to provide for the remedy which is a convention of the civil rights of the complainant, i.e. the aggrieved person. The intention was to protect women against any form of violence, especially violence within the family, as civil law does not fully consider this phenomenon. It has been considered as a crime under Section 498-A of the Penal Code, 1860.

The purpose of enacting the law is to provide for remedies in civil law for the protection of women from being victims of domestic violence and to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society. It is for this reason that the scheme of the Act provides that in the first instance where the order is contravened by the aggrieved person, it will acquire the character of an offence.

1.6 Nature of legislation

Keeping in view the nature of the legislation, a very sensitive approach is required from the courts, where no relief can be given under the 2005 Acts, it should never be envisaged but the petition should be tried at the very initial stage on the basis of maintainability. Before cancellation, there should be relevant discussion and deep consideration on the issues raised. It should be kept in mind that the "aggrieved person" who is destitute and down on his luck, comes to the court under the Act of 2005 under great compulsion.

It is the duty of the court to consider from all points of view whether the argument presented by the respondent is actually legally strong and correct to end the suffering of the aggrieved person. The principle "Justice to the cause is equal to the salt of the sea" should be kept in mind. The court of law is bound to validate this truth which shines when justice is done.

Initially, before dismissing a petition, it is mandatory to see that the aggrieved person does not face a situation of indecision under such legislation, the Act of 2005 as the Court has said is for the realization of the constitutional rights of women and to ensure that This is a beneficial as well as strongly positive act to ensure that they will not be victims of any kind of domestic violence.

1.7 Cruelty towards women in Indian society

In the Indian society, women are subjected to cruelty, discrimination, abuse and ill-treatment not only outside the home but also inside the home, because the prevalence of such violence is increasing rapidly, that is why the Legislature made this Act. There are three main reasons for their plight: -

- (i) Illiteracy,
- (ii) Economic dependence on men and
- (iii) There is insensitivity towards their rights and their dignity.

Even the working woman, whether she is a construction worker who works alongside her husband or a well-educated and properly employed professional, is not always given the dignity and respect that she should be given on the domestic front. This law has been enacted keeping in mind the rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution of India and to provide for more prompt treatment under civil law through the magistrate class.

In the presented synopsis, the most important and latest case law on this subject has been selected and widely considered, paying special attention to domestic violence, cruelty and harassment towards women during COVID-19. The law should be provided under the specific sections of the Act as a proper framework for those women who are victims of any kind of violence within the family. An Act to provide for the effective protection of the rights guaranteed under the Constitution and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, is it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Republic of India in the following form: -

1. Domestic violence is undoubtedly a human rights issue; the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women expressed the view in its general recommendation that States Parties should, in particular, protect women against all forms of violence. One must act to preserve the form that occurs within the family.

2. The phenomenon of domestic violence is widespread in India, but has remained invisible in the public domain. Civil law does not reflect this phenomenon in its entirety. At present, where women are subjected to cruelty by their husbands or his relatives, it is a crime under section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill was re-introduced in the Parliament to protect women from being victims of domestic violence and to provide remedies in civil law to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society.

1.8 Crime against women and domestic violence

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various aspects of society, including an increase in crimes against women and incidents of domestic violence. Several factors contributed to the increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic:

Lockdown and Isolation: The lockdown imposed in many areas to contain the spread of the virus led to increased isolation for many individuals. Women victims of domestic violence found themselves imprisoned by their abusers, without the usual opportunities for relief or escape.

Financial stress: Economic difficulties caused by job loss and financial instability during the pandemic have been linked to an increase in domestic violence. Stress and frustration related to financial struggles can increase tensions within households.

Limited access to support services: Stay-at-home orders and restrictions on movement have limited the ability of victims to seek help or escape abusive situations. Access to support services such as shelter and counseling became more challenging.

Overburdened support systems: Healthcare systems and support services were overwhelmed by the demands of responding to the pandemic. This tension made it difficult for victims to receive timely assistance and for authorities to effectively address cases of violence.

Increase in substance abuse: There has reportedly been an increase in substance abuse, including alcohol consumption, during the lockdown. Substance abuse is often associated with an increased risk of domestic violence incidents.

Underreporting: Many cases of violence against women go unreported under normal circumstances and the pandemic has exacerbated the problem. Victims may be hesitant to report abuse due to fear, shame or lack of privacy during the lockdown.

There have been efforts globally to address the increase in gender-based violence during the pandemic. Governments, NGOs, and community organizations have worked to expand support services, raise awareness, and implement measures to prevent and respond to domestic violence.

Continuing to advocate for women's rights and safety, ensuring that support services remain accessible, and addressing the root causes of domestic violence are essential to creating a safe environment for all, especially during challenging times like the global pandemic.

(i) Domestic violence is undoubtedly a human rights issue and a serious hindrance to development. States parties should work to protect women against all forms of violence, especially violence within the family.

(ii) The phenomenon of domestic violence is widely prevalent but is largely invisible in the public sphere. At present, where a woman is subjected to cruelty by her husband or his relative, it is a crime under Section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code, but the civil law does not make complete provisions regarding this incident.

(iii) Articles 14, 15 of the Constitution of India thus provide for remedies under civil law which are intended to protect women from being victims of domestic violence and to prevent the occurrence of domestic violence in the society and it is proposed to be enacted keeping in mind the rights guaranteed under Article 21.

1.9 There is a provision related to women victims of domestic violence.

It covers women who are or have been related to their abuser. Where both the parties are living together in a shared household and are related by consanguinity, marriage or through relationship in the nature of marriage or adoption. Apart from this, the relationship with the family members living together as a joint family is also included.

Women who are sisters, widows, mothers, single women or those living with abuse are also entitled to legal protection under the proposed legislation, however, since the Bill would not allow a woman living in a relationship in the nature

of marriage to her husband or While it enables a complaint to be filed under the proposed Act against any relative of the male partner, it does not, therefore, enable a complaint to be filed against any female relative, wife or female partner of the husband or male partner.

1.10. Under the term 'domestic violence'

Actual abuse, threat, or abuse i.e. physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or financial abuse is domestic violence. Harassment by a woman's relative by demanding illegal dowry will also be covered under this definition.

(i) It provides for the right of women to secure housing. It provides for the right of women to reside in their marital home or shared household, whether she has any title or authority in such home or household. This right is ensured by a residence order, which is passed by a magistrate.

(ii) This Magistrate is not guilty of aiding or abetting the respondent in committing an act of domestic violence or any other specified act in favor of the aggrieved person, entering the place of work or any other place used by the aggrieved person, attempting to communicate with him, or Separation from any property used by the parties and against the aggrieved person, his relatives or others who assist him in domestic violence.

(iii) It provides for the appointment of a protection officer and the medical treatment of the aggrieved person.

Provides for registration of NGOs as service providers to provide assistance in relation to examination, obtaining legal aid, safe shelter etc. In other words, it empowers the magistrate to pass protection orders to prevent people from committing violence. The Bill seeks to achieve the above objective. The Notes on Clauses explain the various provisions contained in the Bill."

The purpose of the Act is that before initially dismissing the petition it is necessary to see that the aggrieved person is not facing the situation of non-decision under such legislation. The Preamble of the Act makes it clear that the scope of the Act is that violence whether physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic, all should be countered by the statute. It is clear that the perpetrators and instigators of such violence, in a given situation, can be women themselves. Initially, before dismissing a petition, it is mandatory to see that the aggrieved person does not face a situation of indecision under such legislation, the Act of 2005 as the Court has said is for the realization of the constitutional rights of women and to ensure that This is a beneficial as well as strongly positive act to ensure that they will not be victims of domestic violence at any cost.

1.11 Domestic Violence – Update from the Past

Among family problems, domestic violence is also a major problem in the modern era, although domestic violence can happen against any member of the family. But family violence is mainly related to violence against women. The reason for this is that women come here as wives from other families. Sometimes it becomes difficult for them to adjust to new family circumstances. Sometimes dowry also becomes a major reason for violence against them. Under family violence, incidents of violence against other members also occur, but this happens due to different reasons. Violence against women is not a modern phenomenon but there are many examples of it even in ancient India.

From the historical context, during the Mahabharata period, Yudhishtir had put his wife Draupadi at stake in gambling and Duryodhana had humiliated him by disrobing him in a public gathering. Burning or killing women over dowry is the biggest tragedy of today's era. In the name of chastity, women have been burnt alive in this country. In this way, harassment and exploitation of women, beating them, abusing them, burning them, and murder etc. are the main examples of family violence.

Domestic violence includes violence that is perpetrated by women's close relatives such as parents, brothers-sisters, in-laws, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, sister-in-law or any other family member or other persons who harm the woman. Causes physical and mental trauma. Under domestic violence, a woman was raped in the family area. Dowry death includes torture of wife and sexual harassment etc.

1.12 The basis and motive behind violence against domestic women can be as follows:

- (1) Violence by beating and torturing the wife for dowry.
- (2) Violence whose purpose is to establish power over the weak.

- (3) Violence with an objective to obtain sexual pleasure.
- (4) Violence which is committed due to personality related deformity of the perpetrator.
- (5) Violence which is caused by stressful domestic situations.
- (6) Violence which is inspired by victimized women.

Gupta and Sharma (2012) believe that in the classification of violence against women, violence can be divided into the following four parts - (1) Criminal violence - like molestation, rape and kidnapping etc. (2) Domestic violence - like dowry death, wife beating, sexual abuse etc. (3) Social violence – Forcing the wife and daughter-in-law to kill the female foetus. (4) Forcing a widow to commit Sati, harassing her for dowry etc.

Women have been oppressed in the family sphere in India since ancient times, details of which are found in ancient religious texts and books. The Deorala incident of Rajasthan is a strong proof of this in the society. Prevailing customs, values, beliefs and ideologies have also contributed to family violence, especially women's oppression. Even today, incidents of rape, dowry deaths, burning of women, abduction, kidnapping and beating of women remain in the headlines of newspapers.

1.13 Result Analysis

This study attempts to empirically analyze and assess the nature and trend of domestic violence as well as the social and legal consciousness regarding its prevention in the context of Cuttack district. It will be based on survey research methods, which will be conducted through interviews of targeted respondents, basically victims of domestic violence, with the help of a structured interview schedule. To obtain information from the respondents, a detailed interview schedule is the main technique. The respondents, i.e., victims from selected areas of both rural and urban categories will be interviewed face to face (direct) as such method is the useful one to collect detailed information from them. The researcher will be visiting different places several times to locate the respondents and interview them directly.

Overall, the effort will be to make the respondents feel consoled with a ray of hope amidst the crisis caused by the violence inflicted upon them which will also enable them to cooperate with the scholar. The structured interview schedule will cover important dimensions of domestic violence and is divided into three main parts: i) Profile, ii) Side effects and iii) Perception on socio-legal system for redressal. The awareness questions of PWDVA, 2005 will be equipped with possible alternative answers (closed-ended and multiple choice) to facilitate quantitative treatment of responses. However, some open-ended items will also be included to gain in-depth understanding of respondents' views and provide more descriptive content to the study. For a thorough and critical evaluation of the survey, three specific types of schedules will be prepared for three categories of respondents, i.e., i) victims, ii) police/security officials and iii) NGOs. The quantitative data will be collected and presented in tabular form and analyzed appropriately to find out the cause-and-effect relationship.

In this particular work, a sample of respondents (victims) will be taken along with police officers, District Protection Officer and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) from Cuttack district through stratified random sampling (strata have been identified on the basis of regions, gender, income, education, etc.). For comparative study, some samples will be taken from rural background and some from urban background.

Thus, the method is largely empirical and scientific. The profile and perceptions of the victims and other respondents can also be explored with regard to the extent of legal awareness among victims leading to domestic violence and its prevention. However, it should be mentioned that along with the empirical method, importance will be given to the historical method. The study will be descriptive, explanatory, analytical and empirical in nature. Theoretical research will be carried out simultaneously. Apart from this, various laws, agencies, NCW will be evaluated along with NHRC, conventions and judicial pronouncements regarding the subject.

The result analysis of socio-legal study on domestic violence against women in Cuttack district of Odisha is necessary for several compelling reasons:

Addressing a broader social issue:

Domestic violence against women is a widespread social issue with far-reaching consequences. It is important to understand the specific dynamics of Cuttack district to develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms.

Filling the knowledge gap:

While domestic violence is recognized as a serious concern, there may be differences in understanding of its prevalence, forms and factors that contribute to its perpetuation in local contexts. The proposed study aims to fill these knowledge gaps.

Information Policy and Legislation:

The findings of the study may provide valuable insights to policy makers and legislators, helping them formulate interventions and policies responsive to the unique socio-cultural and legal landscape of Cuttack district.

Empowering survivors:

By exploring the experiences of survivors, the study attempts to empower women affected by domestic violence. Sharing their stories can contribute to a collective understanding of the challenges faced and the strategies adopted to cope with or escape abusive situations.

Escalating Legal Responses:

The study includes a critical analysis of the legal framework addressing domestic violence in Odisha. Identifying shortcomings and challenges in the implementation of existing laws is essential to recommend improvements and ensure that the legal mechanisms effectively protect victims.

Community Awareness and Education:

The research can serve as a catalyst for community awareness and education programs. By disseminating the study's findings, it is possible to raise awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence, challenge harmful norms, and promote a culture of respect and equality.

Supporting Stakeholders:

Stakeholders such as law enforcement, legal professionals, and aid organizations play an important role in responding to domestic violence. The study aims to provide them with insights that can enhance their understanding and effectiveness in addressing this complex issue.

Contribution to academic discourse:

This study adds to the academic discussion on domestic violence, especially in the context of Odisha. Its findings can contribute to the existing body of knowledge, which can serve as a resource for future research and discussion on gender-based violence.

In brief, the proposed socio-legal study is motivated by the recognition of the urgent need to comprehensively address Domestic violence against women in Cuttack district. Through a multidisciplinary approach, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can lead to positive social change, better legal responses, and better support systems for survivors.

1.14 Conclusion

The study examines the prevalence, causes, and impacts of domestic violence against women in Cuttack district of Odisha from both social and legal perspectives. It explores socio-economic factors that contribute to domestic violence, including poverty, lack of education, patriarchal norms, and cultural beliefs. The research also examines the effectiveness of legal mechanisms such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) in addressing and preventing domestic violence. The study identifies shortcomings in law enforcement, lack of awareness about legal rights, and social stigma as major barriers to justice for victims. It advocates for strong legal interventions, public awareness campaigns, and support systems such as shelter and counseling services to empower women and reduce domestic violence in the region. The impact of the said study on the social and legal life of women and their children has been quite significant. Also, this research can be used by planners and policy makers in making plans related to protecting the domestic and socio-economic interests of women, children, and men. Government policies and non-governmental organizations that are specifically created to improve the status of women and children. While making this, which essential aspects should be included and which should be left out. It will be possible to consider this fact only after this research work. Not only this, cooperation will be available in making various projects related to the development of children and women. The study highlights the causes of domestic violence and types of abuse. It describes the laws and rights implemented in Cuttack, Odisha to protect women from this unbearable silent crime and

discusses the factors that aid and abet this scourge from women's lives. This study detailed judicial trends and an empirical survey that opened a window to the real happenings behind the doors. This introductory chapter shows the entire play like a movie trailer to help leaders navigate the entire text. This study has been carried out with the strong belief that despite a thick wall of laws and a huge kind of act providing or protecting women called "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005" women in Cuttack, Odisha Domestic violence is still a big issue. Through this thesis I will attempt to point out the shortcomings of this Act, its non-implementation and its resulting inability to reduce domestic violence in Cuttack, Odisha. While giving concrete shape to the presented research work, many more facts will help in seeing and understanding the direct and indirect circumstances. In this context, the researcher believes that the proposed research work will definitely have great significance, importance and usefulness in the legal field, social field and domestic field etc.

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