

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Discrimination against women is one of the most systemic and pervasive violations across culture, religion, class and ethnicity, happening in every region, affecting families, societies and reinforcing inequality and discrimination. UNDP (2009) stated that “worldwide, at least one in three women are beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner throughout her lifetime”. IIPS (2007) stated that “in India, 40 percent of women of reproductive age have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husband”. Given the high prevalence of domestic violence, this issue remains a concern for development practitioners, especially those seeking to resolve gender inequality and women's status.

Many gender and development studies have concluded that women could reduce their risk of spousal abuse by being motivated by involvement in occupations. The unique transformative impact of employment, however, is disputed by many other researchers, suggesting that the influence of employment on the bargaining power of women and the risk of violence is highly dependent on a variety of factors. The shifting roles of men and women have also produced relationship dysfunction, an outcome that has had varying effects on domestic violence in different environments. Narayan et al. 2000 reported that “in some environments, women's increased earnings led to a reduction in domestic violence, while in others, respondents reported that levels of domestic conflict and violence increased as men voiced frustration and humiliation over not being able to maintain their role as the household's main or sole breadwinner”.

National Family Health Survey, 2015-2016 reported that “domestic violence against women is a pervasive social problem in Tamil Nadu that fundamentally threatens women's physical and mental health and which prevents them from participating fully in social and cultural life. In all, 46 percent of women in Tamil Nadu have experienced physical or sexual violence. Among those who experienced physical violence since age 15, the most common perpetrator for ever-married women was the husband, and for never-married

women, it was a mother/step-mother, father/step-father, and sister/brother". Further, Coimbatore is one of Tamil Nadu's leading districts in the prevalence of domestic violence next to Chennai (NCRB, 2018).

RESEARCH GAP

Several scholars in the past have sought to analyse the situation of domestic violence in order to investigate its possible cause and subsequent consequences for society in general and women in particular. Research on women's empowerment indicates a relation between the perceived risk of domestic violence and women's engagement in empowerment initiatives. Many findings in empirical studies on this subject tend to be contradictory. Although some reports suggest that domestic violence against women and girls has increased as a result of their involvement in such programmes, others indicate a decrease in violence. To better contextualise seemingly contradictory results, this difference demands greater study.

A complex problem, such as domestic violence against married women, so deeply embedded in the socio-cultural context, is not an easy task to comprehend. Violence has been shown to lead to a decline in the involvement of women in labour, a decline in work productivity, and lower earnings that impact the quality of life of women. In this report, an attempt is made to predict the vulnerability of women vulnerable to domestic violence, to identify the risk factors involved and to establish an operational structure for estimating the interrelationship between domestic violence and women's empowerment in urban areas in the Coimbatore City, among Low Income Communities.

The contribution of the present study to the existing literature is two-fold. The first and foremost, the present approach contributes to the literature on the effects of female empowerment on domestic violence, focusing on a micro level subsample of subjects. Secondly, the study captures the possible dimensions relating to female empowerment if not all, on the prevalence of domestic violence in one encompassing model.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

c. General Objective

- ✓ To analyse the interrelationship between dimensions of women empowerment and the occurrence of domestic violence.

d. Specific Objectives

- ✓ To explore the socio-economic and marital profile of women victims of domestic violence belonging to low income communities living in urban slums.
- ✓ To examine the prevalence and forms of domestic violence perpetrated against women in low income communities in urban slums.
- ✓ To identify the nature and the causative factors for various types of domestic violence.
- ✓ To examine the association between domestic violence and the dimensions of women empowerment.
- ✓ To suggest measures to reduce the incidence and occurrence of domestic violence.

HYPOTHESIS

- Domestic violence against women is more prevalent among the lower socio-economic classes and women socially marginalised.
- Frequency and forms of violence were independent of socio-economic characteristics of victims of domestic violence.
- Psychological frustrations, poverty and unemployment, marital issues and cultural attitudes and beliefs emerged as the major triggers of domestic violence.
- Reactions to domestic violence were mostly mental trauma, emotional upheaval, behavioural alterations and suicidal tendency.
- There is a significant association between personal autonomy, decision-making, economic empowerment and social empowerment and frequency of violence.

METHODOLOGY

The location of the study was confined to low income communities living in Coimbatore city. To give representation to women who are victims of domestic violence and residing in different slum areas in Coimbatore city, the three-stage random sampling method was adopted for selecting 500 victims of domestic violence. In the first stage, Coimbatore city was divided into five zones, namely North, South, East, West and Central. In each zone, two slums having maximum households were selected. In stage II, in each slum, using the proportional sampling technique the total number of families to be surveyed was decided based on the proportion of households in each slum to the total number of households in all ten selected slums, making a total of 500 samples. In stage III, in each slum, women in the age group of above 18 years and who faced domestic violence were selected to form the sample. The samples were selected by adopting the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method, which groups research participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. The advantage of purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to home in on people who have good grounds in what they believe and so are critical for research.

The interview schedule was used to elicit data from the respondents, besides, informal discussions. Before this, a pilot study was conducted among 100 married women facing domestic violence from urban slums of Coimbatore to check for clarity and specificity and the necessary modifications were made based on the experience gained during pre-testing. Data for the study were collected during the period from November 2019 to January 2020. Besides percentages and graphs, statistical techniques like Chi-Square Test, Discriminant Analysis, Garrett's Rating Scale, Likert Summated Scale, Cronbach's Alpha, Empowerment Index, Factor Analysis, One Way ANOVA and Path Analysis using AMOS Graphics were used to satisfy the objectives of the study.

Empirical Findings

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Households and the Respondents

- The respondent household's religious structure indicated that the majority of families were Hindus (59 percent), followed by Christians (27 percent) and Muslims (14 percent) respectively. The Census Report (2011) has also reported the predominance of Hindu religion in Coimbatore.
- The respondent's community allocation showed that 61.2 percent of the respondents belonged to the SC / ST category, followed by 25 percent from OBC and 13 percent from the BC category. Thus, victims belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes face greater incidence of violence than women belonging to other classes. Saibanna Shailaja (2015) also noted that there was more violence among women belonging to backward castes and scheduled castes.
- Out of 500 respondents, a majority (46.4 percent) of women were living in Extended family that comprised of husband and children and In-laws, while the other 41.8 percent were living in nuclear families and the remaining 11.8 percent in the joint family system. The possible reason for the increase in domestic violence among extended and nuclear families could be the deterioration of social values and customs.
- Out of 500 respondents, 59.6 percent of participants belonged to the medium family (up to 5 to 8 members). In contrast, 27.9 percent belonged to the tiny family (up to 5 members), and 13.2 percent belonged to big (up to 10 members) households. Violence was seen more among families with 5 to 8 members.
- Out of 500 women surveyed, a good number of respondents (49 percent) belonged to the age group between 20-30 years, followed by 42 percent in age category 31-40 years and 5 percent and 4 percent belonged to age groups below 20 years and above 40 years respectively. Thus, it is clear that females between the 20-40 age groups are at a greater danger of being subjected to domestic violence than females from other age groups. Celine Sunny (2005) also reports that women in the age group of 20-40 years are at a higher risk of domestic violence than women of other age groups.

- A very high majority (around 76.8 percent) of participants were recorded as married out of 500 surveyed participants. Approximately 7.8 percent of participants lived independently, 7.4 percent were divorced, and 8 percent widows.
- An assessment of the spouse literacy rate shows that the victim's husband's academic level was quite low, with a majority (61 percent) completing school-level education and almost one-third being illiterate. Studies have also reported that those with poor education were also the greater perpetrator of domestic violence (Walton-Moss et al. 2005).
- The analysis of the victim's educational status showed that 45.8 percent of participants had completed schooling, 12.6 percent had completed Diploma/ITI, 8 percent had completed higher education, and 33.6 percent were illiterate. Though domestic violence was seen at all levels of education, it was more intense among low educated women. Ackerson, Kawachi et al. (2008) constantly demonstrates that “those with reduced educational levels are more prone to experience intimate partner violence”.
- Of the participants surveyed, 58.4 percent of husbands were employed in the private sector, 17.4 percent were employed in the government sector, 12.4 percent were self-employed, and the remaining 11.8 percent were unemployed. Majority of husbands were employed in the private sector, which had low and irregular income. Lack of job security would also have triggered domestic violence.
- Majority (57.6 percent) of the victims were unemployed followed by 24.6 percent were employed in the organized industry, followed by 11.2 percent in unorganized sector and 6.4 percent were in self-employment. Thus, irrespective of her employment status women face hostility and violence. Jejeebhoy (1998), observed that in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu there was no significant reduction in domestic violence associated with wage employment.
- Nearly 26 percent of the victims stated their family members (either husband/ in-laws) did not permit them to take up the job, followed by 23 percent for whom it was family constraints and for 12 percent it was health issues.

- Only 27 percent of the participants acquired some formal training, and the remaining 73 percent did not receive any training. The percentage of women who acquired training showed more than a two-fold increase from 8.4 percent before marriage to around 19 percent post-marriage. The main motivator for women to undertake training was friends (12.4 percent), followed by NGOs' (10 percent), husband (2.6 percent) and self (2 percent). It was the peer pressure, which made women undergo such training programme.
- The survey of the monthly income of the husband reveals that 57.8 percent of the respondents had a monthly income of below Rs.10,000 per month, followed by 24.6 percent earning between Rs.10,001 – Rs.20,000 per month, and 5.8 percent earning above Rs. 20,000 per month. About 12 percent of the respondents' husband was unemployed and had no income. Thus, the incidence of violence was seen more among victims whose husbands had no earnings and/or low earnings.
- Most of those employed (27.8 percent) earned income between Rs.10,000 - 20,000. There were around earned income below Rs.10,000. The percentage of participants who earned above Rs.20,000 was 5.2 percent post-marriage. Result showed that as the earning capability of the wives increases the men perceived their status as family providers as redundant which in turn escalate domestic violence (Ahmed 2008, Koss et al. 2007).
- The investigation of the monthly income of the households reveals that a large number of families, i.e., 45.6 percent of the families had a monthly income of below Rs.10,000 per month, followed by 32 percent earning Rs.10,001 – Rs.20,000 per month, and nearly 22.4 percent were earning above Rs.20,000 per month. In comparison with the high-income group (above Rs.20,000) and middle-income group (Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 20,000), the incidence of domestic violence was higher among the low income class. Several previous studies have also shown that domestic violence against women is cutting through class lines.

- The analysis of housing conditions shows that 59.8 percent of respondents lived in semi-Pucca house, while 12.8 percent lived in kutcha houses and 27.4 percent in Pucca houses. A study was undertaken by the Centre for Women's Studies and Development in Kerala (2005) have also reported the majority (59.4 percent) lived in semi-Pucca houses.
- Details on the ownership of dwelling indicated that 79.6 percent of families lived in their own houses and 20.4 percent lived in rented buildings. In short domestic violence was seen more among households living in own house than rented houses signifying lack of ownership of the house was not a risk factor for domestic violence.
- Possession of productive assets such as land and livestock was quite negligible among the surveyed households with 19 percent reporting ownership of land and nearly 31 percent reporting possession of livestock, of which 23 percent were beneficiaries under Government scheme and 8 percent through own funds. However, lack of income had not deterred the household in buying household equipments (92 percent), vehicles (81 percent), mobile/ landline (43 percent), tailoring machine (30 percent), laptop/ computer (26 percent), gold, silver (22 percent), refrigerator/ washing machine (21 percent) and furniture (19 percent). It is interesting to note that household equipments, Laptop, tailoring machine and gold and silver were acquired by 62 percent, 22 percent, 11 percent and 11 percent respectively under government schemes.
- Approximately 62 percent of the 500 families surveyed did not save, and the percentage of families reporting savings was 38 percent. A study was undertaken by the Centre for Women's Studies and Development in Kerala (2005) have also reported the majority (61.7 percent) of the victims of domestic violence did not have savings. While most households (26.2 percent) preferred bank deposit, 5.2 percent preferred to save in private banks, and 4.4 percent chose to hold their savings as liquid cash.

Marital Background of the Respondents

- A majority (50 percent) of the sample participants enjoyed the status of wife. Of the remaining sample participants, 46 percent were daughters-in-law, 3 percent were daughters, and 2 percent were sisters-in-law. The incidence was seen more among wives and daughters-in-law and negligible among their family members.
- Out of 500 participants surveyed, the bulk (43.8 percent) were married at 21-25 years of age, followed by 28.6 percent at 18-20 years, 19.4 percent below 18 years of age, and 8.2 percent above 25 years. While still young, an overwhelming number of respondents had experienced domestic violence. While the theoretical background is complicated and interconnected with many other factors, global and India-based research indicates that previous married females are at greater risk of violence than later married women (Kishor and Kiersten Johnson 2004).
- Of the 500 victims, 45 percent of the respondents had arranged marriage, 23 percent had marriages as per the respondent's own choices, and 32 percent had love cum arranged marriage. Most instances of domestic abuse have been discovered in arranged marriages rather than in marriages of love as per the study. Duggar and Pradhan (2014) have also recorded similar results in their research.
- Majority (86 percent) of the respondents agreed that their opinion was sought before marriage, and only 14 percent have stated otherwise. Mehta and Mehta (2007) have also reported that for the majority of women respondents (74.1 percent) marriage was a choice of their families with their consent.
- Analysis of respondent's marital period reveals that 29.9 percent of respondents lived with their spouses for 11-20 years, 28 percent for less than ten years, 26 percent for 21-30 years, and 17 percent for over 30 years. It is quite evident that with the rise in length of wedded life, the danger of being exposed to domestic violence reduces.

- The bulk (72 percent) of the victims had an age difference of 5 -10 years, followed by 20 percent between 0 - 5 years, and 8 percent more than ten years. In instances where intimate partner violence happens, the average age gap between males and females at marriage age is significant in a few cases (Abramsky et al. 2011). The incidence of violence was found to be lesser when the age difference was less than five and more than ten years in the current research.
- Majority of the participants (58 percent) had married the father side relative, whereas 27 percent had married their mother side relative and 15 percent had opted for non-related partners. The results also proved incorrect the overall view that the incidence of abuse among associated spouses was lower; in reality, when spouses are related, intimate partner abuse was greater.
- The research showed that 53 percent of the participants had provided dowry during their marriage in the form of gold (23 percent), money (14 percent) vessels (8 percent), property (3 percent) and vehicles (5 percent). It is interesting to note that 47 percent of the victims have stated that they have not given any form of dowry.
- About 32 percent of respondents reported that their spouse and in-laws were happy with the dowry they got, while 21 percent stated their spouse and in-laws were not happy with the dowry given.
- A majority (76 percent) of the respondents indicated that their spouse family requested dowry after marriage, while 24 percent of them reported that there was no dowry demand after marriage. Hence, the issue of dowry emerged to be a concern for domestic violence among the surveyed population.
- A majority (34 percent) of the victims reported that their spouse/in-laws demanded cash dowry and about 33 percent stated the demand was gold. The other forms of dowry asked by the husband's family after marriage were property (6 percent) and vessels (3 percent). Thus, there were pressures on the women to bring dowry even after marriage and this, in turn, caused domestic violence. Hossain (2016) also reported that “nearly 50 percent of the husbands create pressure on the wives to bring money from natal home”.

- A majority (65 percent) of respondents indicated that their socio-economic status did not differ, while 35.2 percent of victims reported that their status differed. Thus, the abuse in the family was prevalent regardless of whether or not there was any distinction in their socio-economic background.
- Majority of the victims (40 percent) opined that the control over family matters rest with husband and wife, while 32 percent reported that the control rests with husbands, about 14 percent said control rests with self, and the remaining 14 percent said control rests with their in-laws. Despite their control over family affairs, the women had no respite from domestic abuse.

Nature and frequency of Domestic Violence

- Nearly all respondents claimed that after their marriage, they experienced domestic abuse. The high post-marriage percentage can be due to the fact that the research focused exclusively on women who have witnessed domestic abuse.
- The frequency of domestic violence was spread equitably across distinct types of occurrences. Out of 500 participants, 165 participants experience regular violence in their family, followed by 130 respondents experience frequent violence, 115 participants experience violence rarely, and 90 respondents experience violence occasionally. Manzoor Hussain and Rehana Bashir (2017) opined that “the majority of participants who had experienced intimate partner violence indicated that the violence happens every day”.
- Results of Chi-square test reveals that family type, family size, number of children, age at marriage, age differences between husband and wife, occupation of the victim and household income were significantly associated with the frequency of violence. Pal et al. (2017) have identified “violence was higher among women belonging to families with low per capita income and with the higher spousal age difference”. Saffari et al. (2017) opined that “crowded family situation and lower socio-economic status increased the risk of domestic violence”.

- The result of the frequency of violence with vocational training indicates that the frequency of violence was closely associated with vocational training statuses of respondents at one percent level. Haneef et al. (2014) also found that “the training component of SHG's programme raised women's and men's awareness of the negative consequences of domestic violence”.
- Discriminant analysis carried out to shed light on the relationship between socio-demographic and cultural factors and the incidence of domestic violence found that when the husband was unemployed / underemployed, there are age differences, the persistence of dowry problem, a greater number of children, and illiterate / low literate women, and in the age group of 31 to 40 years, the severity of violence was greater. The occupational status of the husband was found by Florinda Golu (2014) as a significant predictor of domestic abuse. Pal.J. et al. (2017) and Ali and Radwan (2017) found that violence was higher among women with a higher spousal age difference. Rao (1997), INCLLEN (2000) and Hossain A (2016) found that dowry harassment was seen as the major precipitating factor of domestic violence. Saffari et al. (2017) found the lower number of children lowered the risk of domestic violence.
- The main perpetrators were husband (34), followed by mother-in-law (31 percent), father-in-law (17 percent), husbands' siblings (16 percent) and relatives (2 percent). Domestic violence is, in most cases violence perpetrated by men against women. However, in the present study, it was found that women (as mother/ mother-in-law) played a significant role in perpetuating violence against women. Manzoor Hussain and Rehana Bashir (2017) also observed that the major perpetrator of domestic violence after marriage was husband and in-laws.
- For more than 20 years, the majority of respondents (about 30 percent) have faced domestic violence, and for the last 10 to 20 years, about 25 percent have encountered the issue. For 24 percent of respondents, the suffering duration ranged from 5 to 10 years, and for about 21 percent, less than five years. A research report submitted to the Planning Commission (2003) also stated that for more than five years, 35 percent of victims have been exposed to domestic abuse.

- The most commonly used methods of physical abuse were sexual abuse (97 percent), hitting / slapping (92 percent), punching / beating (91 percent), burning/ kicking/ pushing (82 percent) and throwing objects / hitting with objects (81 percent). These forms of violence were reported to be occurring on a daily to once in a while basis for the surveyed victims. The extent of physical abuse found in this study is in line with the findings reported by Pal, J. et al. (2017), have stated “physical violence was the most common type of violence faced by women in India”.
- Factor analysis done to examine the underlying dimension among the various indicators of physical abuse reveals that the major form of physical violence faced by the surveyed victims was physical harm, physical torture and forced sex. NFHS-3 Report also highlights that “nearly two in five (37 percent) married women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their husband”.
- The forms of emotional abuses which surveyed victims faced were divorce threats (97 percent), recalling victim’s past mistake (94 percent), unreasonably ordering around (94 percent), verbal threatens (92 percent), inappropriately controlling their activities (92 percent), calling names (90 percent), compelling them to feel guilty (87 percent), threatening to commit suicide (87 percent), suspecting extramarital relationship (84 percent), making them feel isolated (84 percent), treating them as a servant (81 percent), isolating them from parents, relations and friends (81 percent) and expressing negative expectations (81 percent). Available community-based studies suggest that psychological violence ranged from 23 percent to 72 percent (Jejeebhoy,1998; Visaria,2000; Duvvury et al. 2002)
- Factor analysis done to examine the underlying dimension among the various indicators of psychological/emotional abuse disclose that the major tactics used by the perpetrators of domestic violence resorting to humiliation, mental torture and blaming behaviour all of which undermined the self-esteem of the victims and created more insecurity in

them. Panda (2004) also reported that “443 women, about one-half (218 women) had experienced at least one of the psychological abuses like an insult, demeaning behaviour, threatening some whom the wife cares about, frightening the victim, abandoning them, etc”.

- The most frequent complaint of economic abuse made by 97 percent of the respondents was not providing money for necessities by their husbands, followed by pressurising to bringing money from natal home (95 percent), forcing to sign financial documents (95 percent), taking loans in the name of the victims (94 percent), controlling their choice of occupation (94 percent), selling or pawning their jewellery (93 percent), taking their salary (86 percent), misusing of power of attorney (81 percent) and preventing them from attending work (87 percent). It appears that in maximum cases, the respondents were exposed to such types of violence either very often or frequently. These findings are similar to results reported by Savita (2015) that while 16.66 per cent respondents faced snatching of money, 29.16 per cent respondents were not given money for their needs.
- Factor analysis done to examine the underlying dimension among the various indicators of economic abuse expose that for the surveyed victims, economic abuse was characterised by employment-related abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour and financial abuse.
- The physical abuse was significantly associated with the education of the spouse, education of the respondent and occupation of the spouse. The physical violence score was found to be higher for the husband who has completed a diploma or ITI and for women diploma holders and spouse employed in the organised sector.
- The risk of psychological abuse was significantly associated with the community, age of the victim, education status of the spouse and victim, occupation of the spouse, type of family and age differences. The psychological violence was more among the backward community, more educated husbands, women with formal education; spouse employed in the formal sector, extended family and increased age difference.

- The risk of economic abuse was found to be associated with the community, education of the spouse, type of family and age at marriage. Financial abuse was more among the backward community, illiterate husband, extended family and early marriage.

Causes of Domestic Violence

- Factor analysis was used to identify the underlying dimensions among the factors which cause domestic violence found that psychological frustrations, poverty and unemployment, marital issues and cultural attitudes and beliefs emerged as the major triggers of domestic violence. Sanjay (2013) also found monetary problems, alcoholism, extramarital affair, family conflicts, and dowry were the most common causes of domestic violence. Rasha Abd Elhamed Ali and Rania Ahmed Radwan (2017) also found that money was the most frequent cause of fights between the abused women and her husband.
- The reactions to domestic violence examined through factor analysis showed that victims reaction was in the form of mental trauma, emotional upheaval, behavioural alterations and suicidal tendency. Studies have shown that psychological abuse decreases a woman's self-esteem and self-respect when hitting and beating physical violence to the point where she thinks she respects nothing. Choudhary et al. (2014) in their study opined that 44 percent of the respondents face mental depression as a consequence of domestic violence.
- For 88 percent of the victims, victimisation has affected their access to basic needs. A majority (87.4 percent) reported that there was an uncomfortable relationship with their husband. Victimisation has also affected the victims' association with children (82 percent) in terms of direct effects from the experience of witnessing abuse as well as indirect effects from parenting that is compromised by abuse. Up to 80 percent of the victims, stated domestic violence had affected the education of their children. Similarly, 86 percent of the victim's victimisations have resulted in infertility/ sexual dysfunction.

- The primary response to domestic violence was to "fight back", which had a maximum score of 55.39, followed by "use of abusive words" (53.47), "neglect household works" (48.03), "going to parent house" (47.20), and "beating children or hurting themselves" (43.89). This is contrary to the findings reported in earlier studies very few women fighting back are seeking control or causing fear in their partners (Kevin et al. 2001) and are even less successful (Dasgupta, 1999). Savitha (2015) also observed that most of the respondents (33.5 percent) remained passive after violation to avoid a further increase in violence.
- More than half of the respondents (64 percent) stated that they had left their house and stayed away from their husband due to the violence initiated by their partners and the remaining 36 percent continued their stay with the perpetrators of violence.
- Majority of the respondents (46 percent) had sought refuge with their parents, and only a negligible proportion (9 percent) stayed with relatives, and 9 percent sought help from friends. Thus the important source of support for women exposed to domestic violence was parents. Panda (2004) also observes that "the two potential sources of support considered important for a woman's ability to negotiate conflict in marriage are natal family and neighbours".
- A majority (27 percent) of the victims stayed only for one or two days away from their husband. The need to take care of their off-springs and lack of alternative asylum may have prompted the victims to stay in an abusive relationship.
- A common feature among the victims of domestic violence in Coimbatore was the denial of basic needs in the form of food and the intensity varied from one meal to more than two days (79.4 percent).
- Around 75 percent of the respondents have stated that efforts were made to find a solution to the domestic violence problem. About 32 percent have approached formal sources to solve their problems, and 43 percent have approached informal sources to solve their problems.

- A majority (98 percent) of respondents asked parents for assistance in handling the abusive situation. The majority of victims (24 per cent) were urged to make up with their offenders by the members of the informal community. In comparison, about 11 percent of respondents were also encouraged to break up the marital partnership, and about 8 percent were advised to report the issue to formal authorities.
- Approximately 161 victims of violence (19 percent) were contacted by the police, and 6 percent reported the matter to legal advisers. Just 5 percent had sought assistance from social organisations that operate in the field of women's welfare, and 2 percent had taken their cases to Local Panchyat. Out of 161 victims, physical protection was provided to 37 victims (7.4 percent) who reported their cases to a formal source. Of the 161 victims (11 percent), moral support was provided and 14 percent of the victims received therapy and moral and social support from women's NGOs working for women's welfare at the local level.
- The reasons stated by the victims for staying in an abusive relationship were varied: no alternative places to go (23 percent), for the sake of the children (20 percent), protecting family reputation (19 percent) and accepted way of life (17 percent). Panda (2004) had stated “the common cause to be normal behaviour in a marital relationship (44 percent), lack of alternative means of support (40 percent), concern for children (29 percent), and family honour (28 percent)”.

Women Empowerment

- Out of 500 respondents, a majority (61.2 percent) of the respondents belongs to 'empowered' category, 25 percent of the respondents belong to 'partially empowered' category, 10 percent belongs to 'not empowered' category and 4.2 percent to 'fully empowered' category. Thus, though nearly two-thirds of the women victims were empowered in terms of their involvement in personal freedom, decision-making, family involvement, social involvement and economic freedom, they were not free from domestic violence. Tuladhar et al. (2013) point out that “empowerment does not necessarily lower the odds that a woman

experienced spousal violence and the relationship between women's empowerment to decrease or increase spousal violence is context-specific”.

- An attempt made to examine whether there was any association between women empowerment and frequency of violence using chi-square analysis reveal there was a significant association between the frequency of violence and empowerment index. The findings are in tune with the results reported by Kabir and Khan (2019) that empowered women are more at the risk of domestic violence than less empowered women.
- The structural equation model was developed to examine the interrelationship between different dimensions of empowerment and the occurrence of domestic violence mediated through empowerment index. From the standardized values for the variables, it was evident that the exogenous variable physical autonomy (0.049, $p=.032$), decision-making (0.180, $p=0.000$), social empowerment (-0.013, $p=0.024$) and economic empowerment (0.772, $p=0.000$) had significant impact on women empowerment index, which in turn significantly influenced frequency of violence (0.988, $p=0.000$). From this, it could be concluded that the all dimensions of women empowerment like personal autonomy, decision-making, social empowerment and economic empowerment had a significant positive impact on the frequency of domestic violence mediated through women empowerment index. Thus, an increase in women empowerment caused a significant increase in the frequency of domestic violence. The above is in line with the findings reported by Sanawar, S.B. et al. (2019) that more empowered women were more vulnerable to physical violence than less-empowered women. Similarly, as reported earlier, many studies (Kocacik et al. 2007; Wandera, Ntozi and Kwagala, 2010) have reported an increase in violence with an increase in women empowerment. Thus in low income communities in urban Coimbatore empowerment of women was a risk factor for domestic violence.

CONCLUSIONS:

To sum up, the study confirms that the level of violence experienced was high and pervasive among the low income communities in urban slums of Coimbatore. Women are constantly facing violence in the form of physical, psychological and economic abuse for a long time in their marital house but still don't ask for support. The basic reason is socio-cultural and economic, illiteracy and ignorance, about rights and remedies. The other reasons for not opting out of domestic violence are fear of being socially isolated, lack of alternative means of economic support, concern for the children and emotional dependence. Living in a violent relationship affects the sense of self-esteem of a woman and her willingness to engage in society and contribute to the economy's growth. Via vocational training, job opportunities and support networks, programmes to help women empower themselves need to recognise the possible negative effects for these women, such as an increased risk of domestic violence. Therefore, appropriate approaches and policies that can help effectively reduce domestic violence need to be created.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Attempts are being made by the government and voluntary organisations to end or reduce violence against women. The government's measures are in the form of enacting suitable legislation, issuing orders and introducing different welfare schemes for women. Their execution, however, still remains tardy, and government officials are not gender responsive at the lower level. The following recommendations to reduce / mitigate domestic violence are made in light of the above findings:

- ✓ Massive campaigns against Alcoholism, Dowry, drug abuse etc. should be organised to minimise the incidence of domestic violence.
- ✓ In order to move forward as a nation, significant changes in the socio-cultural structure of the country are required and can only be achieved by generating general awareness among the masses about the role of women and their empowerment and gender balance in society..

- ✓ A statutory legislation that includes a wider concept of domestic abuse should be in place. The term should include all physical, psychological, mental, sexual, and financial violence activities that injure or degrade the woman. Laws on the safety of women's rights and the prevention of domestic abuse without any loopholes should be made more stringent and enforced.
- ✓ Laws on the protection of women rights and the prevention of domestic violence should be made more strict and enforced without any loopholes.
- ✓ In order to eliminate gender inequality, policies and programmes should be developed and women should be given equal opportunities in all facets of life.
- ✓ Media should be used to sensitise the officials and the public percent regarding domestic violence and develop a constructive mindset towards women victims.
- ✓ Domestic violence victims are often uneducated, backward and economically deprived. It is important to make legal aid and advice accessible to them at no cost.
- ✓ Policies and developmental projects should be designed to give women more say in political, economic, and social matters. Strengthening communities around women in urban areas can foster a social norm against domestic violence.
- ✓ Given the potential of economic empowerment to increase conflict in the short term, programmes must predict these risks and integrate training for staff and safety preparation for women to minimise the negative effects of changes in household gender roles.
- ✓ Gender sensitisation and awareness generation programmes on domestic abuse should become a part of the school and university curriculum. This will help bring about a change in the mindset of generations to come.

- ✓ More counseling centers with highly trained counselors should be started in rural / urban areas that focus more on victims of domestic abuse. It is necessary to make pre-marital and post-marital counseling compulsory, resulting in the breaking down of families being mitigated.
- ✓ In order to recognise and respond more effectively to cases of domestic violence against women in particular and crimes against women in general, the federal and state governments should conduct annual training programmes for law enforcement officers, judges, other court officials and prosecutors.
- ✓ Data collection and coordination mechanisms should be implemented at the earliest, connecting police, prosecutors and courts to detect sexual harassment against women.

Domestic violence prevention at the national level relies on the level of public and government involvement to make prevention a long-term priority and to establish a cohesive, coordinated and integrated plan for each community. A national zero tolerance policy for domestic violence, taking into account the pervasiveness and risks of domestic violence, is required.

Future Research:

Some of the areas that need to be discussed are:

- ✓ Domestic abuse among elderly women.
- ✓ Effects of domestic violence on children.
- ✓ Domestic violence among females in live-in-relationship.
- ✓ Health effects of domestic abuse
- ✓ Community responses to the domestic violence issue.
- ✓ The attitude of women towards abuse.
- ✓ Domestic Violence among rural and urban women.