

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The spotlight of Development theories lies in investigating the factors that have a bearing on the development of an economy over time. Three essentials dictate the development discussions. Firstly, the decline of fertility is considered a key factor in the economy's growth and development. Second, enhanced health plays an influential role in enhancing economic growth. Third, education is an underlying factor for economic development via its impact on the labor force's skill and extended capabilities. These facts underlie the growth paradigm of Solow (1956), which puts equal prominence on both the volume and quality of labour. The position of gender and gender norms by which these facets of development arbitrate growth and development is a common theme which supports these discussions. While there are extensive contributions in the literature on the gendered impacts of development, little attention has been paid to the ramifications of gender norms at the level of the household and within the society, or their effect on the main driving force of development.

For many reasons, the connection between gender equality and sustainable development is significant. First, it could be a fundamental prerequisite for an inclusive society to achieve gender equality and uphold women's rights. Second, it's important to recognise the lopsided effect of economic, social, and environmental shocks on women, destabilising their independence in maintaining their families and communities. Third, and most importantly, in order to create a better cooperative interaction between gender equality and sustainable development, it is important to develop women's groups. For instance, community resources are more likely to be allocated for child health, better nutrition, and employment when women have greater say and participation in public management.

Until the 1960s, little attention was given to gender elements in development, assuming that the benefits of growth would eventually percolate to disadvantaged groups. In the seventies, in the development process of Third World countries, development theorists began to deliberate critically on

women's issues. An important groundbreaking work on the subject appeared in Ester Boserup's (1970) 'Women's Role in Economic Growth.' The knowledge of the differential impact of growth on women has risen steadily since the 1980s. Women's concerns began to be included in most aspects of development planning during the "UN Decade for Women" (1975-85), although very tangentially. Throughout this decade, social equality was the day's discourse, and several policy theorists with strong support from the international women's movement defined oppressed women as the focus groups. However, these initial attempts to include marginalised women in the development process received limited success. International Labour Organization (ILO) reported "women and girls constitute one-half of the world's population and one third of the official labour force and perform nearly two-thirds of work hours, they receive only one-tenth of the world's income and less than one-hundredth of the world's property" (Rounag Jahan, 1986). This suggests that they carry out substantial and, in most cases; an essential part of economic activities, yet their work is consistently undervalued. This is primarily due to the continued existence of patriarchal social structures that advocate that women are born to play 'specific roles'. These values persist and often treat women in disadvantageous ways.

The perpetuation of patriarchy locks them into poverty and subjugation (Najima Siddiqui, 1994). Discrimination and abuse based on gender is a sober problem, which ultimately means that half the human population is incapable of realising their full potential and resigned to lower standards of survival. This dilemma has attracted universal attention, and many attempts have been made to fill the ever-expanding void. Access to employment, health, education and political space for women remains a profound objective in many countries, despite efforts made to integrate women into the mainstream development process. The most significant barrier to women's advancement is increasing violence against women, which is a poorly understood and recognised factor in women's marginalisation in development processes. This includes a significant violation of women's rights as well. Gender violence is manifested in different ways, such as female foeticide, bullying, sexual assault, marital rape, domestic

violence, etc. The UN Declaration on Violence against women, adopted in 1993, stipulates violence against women as encompassing "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" (Sharma, 2004). Paragraph 117 of the Beijing Platform for Action quotes: "The fear of violence, including harassment is a permanent constraint on the mobility of women and limits their access to resources and basic activities. High social, health and economic costs to the individual and society are associated with violence against women. Violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men".

Article 2 of the UN Declaration of Violence against women (1993) recognises three areas in which violence commonly occurs. They are "violence occurring within the family", "violence occurring in the general community," and "violence perpetrated or condoned by the State". Family violence, known as domestic violence, occurs regardless of nationality, language, culture, financial status, sexual orientation, and physical ability to affect individuals from all walks of life. It is the most persistent type of violence against gender. Because of power imbalances between men and women, domestic violence often occurs and is perpetuated by factors distinct from violence against men. Male aggression, risk-taking, and drug and alcohol use are often thought to cause violence against women, which restricts women's options and limits their participation in growth.

WHO, 2013 reported "Domestic violence is one of the decisive factors that sustain gender norms. Violence against women and girls (VAWG), a crucial human rights violation, is a global issue with one in three married women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner". Similarly, there is the evidence of the effect of violence on physical and mental health, the reproductive health of women, the well-being of children and household members, and the loss of earning opportunities for victims of violence). These empirical shreds of evidence, however, remain outside the scope of gender-

neutral macroeconomic models or considerations for development policy. The need to tackle the problem and complexities of domestic abuse in recent years has been particularly stressed. Advances have been tardy because behaviours are deeply rooted, and there is still a concept of appropriate methods to combat domestic abuse. As a result, women continue to endure domestic violence worldwide, with forecasts ranging from 20 to 50 percent from country to nation. The need to understand the causes and consequences of violence against women and the constructive actions needed to address this challenge has been stressed by this growing impetus.

Domestic Violence in Global Scenario

At the global level the incidence and occurrence was found to be quite disturbing as highlighted in many empirical research work. No nation is safe from such violence; in various nations, the only difference is in the trends and innovations. More vulnerable to such family violence have been found to be women belonging to ethnic groups, indigenous and migrant women, migrants, and elderly women. While dependable data are hard to come by, WHO (1996) reckon that “between 20 and 50 percent of women have experienced physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner or a family member”. United Nations Children’s Fund, 2000 stated that “looking at physical violence from a partner alone, UNICEF and the World Health Organization have compiled several studies, opine that their partners have abused between 20 - 29 percent of women in the industrialised countries like Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA. In Japan, it is 59 percent. In Cambodia, India, Korea, and Thailand, it varies from 16 percent to 45 percent. In Egypt and Israel, the figures are 35 percent and 32 percent, respectively, while in Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, it varies between 32 and 42 percent. In Estonia and Tajikistan, intimate partner physical violence ranges from 23 percent to 29 percent, and in Poland, it is 60 percent among divorced women”. According to WHO (2013), “the most adversely affected regions are South-East Asia (37.7 percent), Eastern Mediterranean (37 percent), and Africa (36.6 percent)”.

The Adams & Reynolds (2002), opine that “25 percent of women have experienced domestic violence and that 9,60,000 number of domestic violence incidents per year were reported. Approximately 1.3 million women and 8,35,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States. Of the almost 3.5 million violent crimes committed against family members, 49 percent of these were crimes against spouses”. The World Health Organization (WHO) report (2013) observed that “globally 42 percent of women have experienced physical or sexual violence at the hands of a partner and that partner violence is a major contributor to women’s mental health problems, with women who have experienced partner violence being almost twice as likely to experience depression compared to women who have not experienced any violence”.

The Global Study on Homicide(2019), reported, "more than half (58 per cent) were killed by intimate partners or family members, meaning that 137 women across the world are killed by a member of their own family every day. One-third (30,000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 was killed by their current or former intimate partner".

Domestic Violence in India

According to Kapil et al. 2018 “the magnitude of domestic violence in India is difficult to gauge due to two basic problems. First, it relates to the environment of domestic violence, which takes place behind closed doors, hidden from the public eye, and often obscure to anyone outside the immediate family. Second, either government or nongovernmental agencies have taken efforts to collect data on this issue. This results in the nonexistence of macro-level data”.

According to NFHS-3, “every third Indian woman aged between 15 and 49 years had encountered sexual or physical violence in her lifetime”. This highlights extent of women's deficiencies in Indian society, compared to other gender-related indicators in India, such as the sex ratio or women workforce participation. According to United Nations Population Fund Report, “around two-third of married Indian women are victims of domestic violence and as many as 70 per cent of married women in India between the age of 15 and 49

are victims of beating, rape or forced sex". "More than 55 percent of women suffer from family violence in India, especially in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and other northern states" (Ankur Kumar, 2010).

The Indian Family Health Survey-III, in 29 states during 2005-06, revealed that at some point in their lives, their husbands had physically or sexually abused them. The survey showed that after marriage, "37.2 percent of women nationwide faced violence. The highest abuse rate in Bihar was found to be 59percent, followed by Madhya Pradesh (45.8percent), Rajasthan (46.3percent), Manipur (43.9percent), Uttar Pradesh (42.4percent), Tamil Nadu (41.9percent) and West Bengal (40.3percent)".

The National Family Health Survey ([NFHS-4](#)), 2015-16, highlighted that "30 percent of women in India in the age group of 15-49 experienced physical violence since the age of 15. About 83 percent alleged that their husbands were the main perpetrators of such abuse, followed by mothers (56 percent), fathers (33 percent) and siblings (27 percent) of the husbands". The National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) (2018), reported "every 4.4 minutes, a girl is subjected to domestic violence. The major crimes reported by women in India are cruelty by husband or relatives (32.6 percent), assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (25 percent), kidnapping and abductions (19 percent) and rape (11.5 percent)". The pandemic lockdown has reported more than 50 percent rise in women abuse. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA,2020) stated "total of 144 cases of abuse were filed in Uttarakhand alone, followed by Haryana and New Delhi". The National Commission for Women also reported, "a spike in the number of complaints received on domestic violence and between March and up to 5th of April 2020, received a total of 310 grievances on domestic violence".

Domestic violence and women empowerment

Women empowerment has become akeyconcern for developmental efforts worldwide (Upadhyay et al. 2014). According to Kabeer (2001), empowerment is defined as "the expansion in peoples' ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". Medel-Anonuevo, (1995) in his study measures women empowerment both at

the individual and household level by several indicators such as “(i) participating in crucial decision-making process; (ii) sharing of household activities with men; (iii) reproductive decisions; (iv) spending of own income; (v) self-confidence and self-esteem; and (vi) capability to prevent abuse”.

Sen (2018) opines that “empowering women and girls with more choices and more freedoms is crucial to achieving a better future for all”. “Theoretically, violence is a human rights issue, and human rights are fundamental to values of dignity, equality, non-discrimination and non-interference, and these cut across gender, social, cultural, political, class, religious and geographical issues” (Uzuegbunam, 2013). Research has shown that spousal abuse is related to variables of female empowerment (Sethuraman et al., 2006). Women have few opportunities for jobs, and the lack of property rights and income prevents them from leaving their marital home (Murshid, 2017). Along with strained economic resources, their inadequate decision-making power can prevent them from accessing health care services, leading to serious health consequences.

There is no unanimity among the researcher regarding the relationship between domestic violence and women empowerment. Schuler et al. (2013) opine that “the Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) rate declines as women’s economic role expand, and women have a heightened sense of their rights”. Dalal (2011) opined that “economic empowerment, higher education, and changing cultural values will help women from IPV”. In contrast, Tuladhar et al. (2013) argue that “empowerment does not necessarily lower the odds that a woman experienced spousal violence and the relationship between women’s empowerment to decrease or increased spousal violence is context-specific”. In its Beijing declaration, the United Nations strongly recommended “the economic empowerment of women as a shielding factor for violence against women”. Industrialized country studies focusing on working status and women’s empowerment as protective factors for spousal violence have called for further studies to argue for these advocacies, especially from developing countries.

Despite the emerging body of literature on domestic violence and women empowerment, there is insufficient evidence of how women

empowerment is affected by abuse against them. The present research explores the liaison between domestic violence and women empowerment by integrating various dimensions of women empowerment. The outcome would be to formulating measures to combat violence by enhancing women empowerment.

Research Gap

Domestic violence has become a subject of mounting importance, and a number of researches have arisen in recent years, exploring its possible causes and repercussions for society in general and women in particular. While many facets of DV are akin across cultures, recent studies portray how some features of the DV experienced by Indian women may be unique. The earlier studies address the various issues relating to domestic violence like the frequency of violence, forms of abuse, the abuse among the young and old women, dowry harassments, control over reproductive choices, and family planning.

Among the diverse grounds for the high frequency of domestic violence in India are the deep-rooted patriarchal roles and cultural norms that propagate women as subordinates to men, and asymmetrical gender expectations. These norms can perpetuate notions that violence is justified. The earlier studies on health and social consequences of family violence highlight the adverse effects of women abuse in health, employment, inter-generational impacts, and intra-household gender relations.

Hughes et al. (2015) concluded that “these initiatives could have positive impacts on marital and family dynamics, but also create adverse effects that may increase domestic violence”. Earlier research pointed out that participation in empowerment initiatives could increase violence against women, and this disagreement deserves an in-depth study to better understand the contradictory results.

Understanding the domestic violence deeply engrained in the social, cultural facets of India is a difficult task. The present research attempts to prognosticate women's vulnerability to domestic violence by identifying the risk factors involved and developing an operational model for estimating the

interrelationship of domestic violence and women empowerment among low income communities in Coimbatore City of Tamil Nadu state, India.

The present research contributes to the existing literature in two ways. First and foremost, the current approach contributes to the literature on female empowerment's effects 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 domestic violence prevalence in one encompassing model.

Rationale for the Study

The most common form of abuse affecting women throughout their lives is family abuse and is evident in every region. The World Health Organization estimates that “the magnitude of women witnessing spousal physical or sexual abuse ranged from 15 percent to 71 percent”. National Family Health Survey-III of India in 29 states during 2005-06 found that “their husbands had physically or sexually abused their spouse at some point in women's lives and about 37.2 percent of women witnessed abuse nationally after marriage. Oddly, 63 percent of these incidents were registered by urban families rather than by the state's most backward villages”.

According to India's National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the average number of women facing domestic violence, which was 125 in 2000, increased to an average of 160 in 2005. Kaur and Garg (2008) observed “the incidence of violence was found to be more among women between the ages of 15 - 44 years, and its impact on women's health surpasses that of traffic accidents and malaria”. The given data are prone to be underestimated, given that violence within families is a less recognised issue worldwide. Hence, there is a burning need to resolve domestic violence by developing and implementing appropriate policies and programmes.

Scope of the Study

In India, Women are subject to violence not only from their spouse but also from members of both the natal and marital home. Women abuse spans all geographical region, economic strata, education levels, and age and

employment status. There are also regional and community variations in the incidence of violence. According to Jejeeboy (1998), “Spouse disparity in educational attainment level or marital age, lack of freedom within the home, dowry pressure, child hood abuse, unemployment, alcoholism and poverty are all linked to high rates of domestic violence in India”. In India domestic violence is not to be perceived as a law and order problem alone but more a socio cultural problem. Its impact has far reaching effects on the life of women and the family institution. Studies such as these which examine the causes, its nature and manifestations and consequences would assist the general society to understand the magnitude as well as its policy implications.

Examining the characteristics of the women who experience violence and the contexts in which they live helps to identify some of the common risk factors for violence. Similarly, protective factors, which buffer against the risk of becoming a victim of violence, may need to be fostered-including through structural and other interventions for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women. There is a need to investigate why the problem occurs by determining its causes and correlates, the factors that increase or decrease the risk of its occurrence (risk and protective factors) and the factors that might be modifiable through intervention. This cross sectional study aims at providing a snapshot of how frequently domestic violence occurs and its associated factors and to what extent women empowerment mitigate against the menace and chalk out meaningful and effective measures to create a blockage to the lives of victims as well as the institution of family.

Research Question

- What is the magnitude and prevalence of domestic violence among married women in low-income urban communities in Coimbatore?
- What causative factors are associated with domestic violence against women?
- What is the association between the forms of violence and the socio-economic factors?
- To what extent women empowerment reduces domestic violence among low income urban families?

Objectives of the Study

a. General Objective

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

b. 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 the 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.

Current research can help local authorities, government and community in general to consider the concerns and facets of domestic violence and enable to devise effective measures / strategies that could lead to reducing domestic violence in society.