

Some Case Studies of Gender Violence in Rural Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Violence is a very common scenario in the household level of a third world country like Bangladesh. One of the most common forms of violence against men and women is that perpetrated by a husband or an intimate male partner or by family members. Women and men face the threat of violence in various forms throughout their lives but due to patriarchal family structure men always try to hide that because of shyness. Not only illiterate but also educated person is victim in their everyday life. Most of the people believe that only financial condition and lack of education are only liable for the domestic violence against the women but I think that lack of religious concept, lack of rules of law also liable for that.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Case study, Wife beating, Dowry, Psychological abuse.

INTRODUCTION

Gender violence is a global phenomenon and involves a spectrum of physical, sexual, and psychological acts of control, threat, aggression, abuse, and assault. And it increasingly focuses on violence against women at local, national, and international levels. There is a greater need to examine the experiences and effects of violence among men in the household level (CIC, 2010). **Violence** is defined by the World Health organization as "the intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation," although the group acknowledges that the inclusion of "the use of power" in its definition expands on the conventional understanding of the word (Krug et al., 2002).

Awareness, perception and impact of domestic violence differ from country to country, and from decade to decade (Tjaden, 2000 and Kritof, 2009). Domestic violence or household violence is also known as domestic abuse or intimate partner violence (IPV) which can be defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, friends or cohabitation. Though patriarchal family structure prevails in

Bangladesh, not only women but also men face the violence. Around 72.6 per cent of women who are married in Bangladesh experience one or more such forms of violence in the hands of their husbands at least once during their marriage and 49.6 percent of lifelong married women suffered physical violence, 28.7 percent emotional violence, 27.2 percent sexual violence and 11.4 percent financial violence according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. Most of the victims, around 39.7 percent, of forced or coerced sexual intercourse, are aged between 15 and 19 (Moon, 2018). Domestic or household violence has many forms which includes physical aggression (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, slapping, throwing objects etc.) or threats, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, controlling or domineering, stalking, and economic deprivation (Goode, 1971). This paper presents beside women, man's experience of violence throughout the lifespan in the rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

I've collected the information from the household level of rural areas of Bangladesh by using random sampling. After collecting information I've prepared it which also crosschecked by recorder. And I've taken help of the secondary sources such as features, reports published in different national articles or journals.

DISCUSSION

Case Study 1

Dowry Related Violence

The practice of dowry demand (joutuk) is not deeply placed in Bengali Muslim tradition but it has emerged from several social evil in recent years. Generally we can say that dowry means the property that the bride's family gives to the groomer his family that depends upon marriage. Due to this culture, women face lot of problems in their everyday life not only in the rural area but also in the urban areas.

Hafiza Khatun a housewife lives in the Bishwashbari village under the Belkuchiupazilla of Sirajganj district. She is 18 years old. They are four brother and sister. Her father is a fisherman and her mother works as a maid-servant. Due to poverty, she is unable to continue her study after completing the primary education. She worked 4/5 years in her school teacher's house for getting food three times in a day while she was studying in primary school. When she has reached her teenage they sent her in her home. After coming back to her home, she has faced more terrible situation. She has been starving for many days. In the past she worked with her mother.

"My father did not work properly thus we have faced many terrible condition and still now he is spending his money in gambling which he earned and he does not work regularly".

Her home is adjacent to her uncle and aunt's house. Thus she was involved in an affair with her cousin.

"After some days I had involved in an illegal physical relation and thus conceived".

Three months later when the matter came in front of her relatives, they arranged marriage with her cousin. But her father did not accept that. That's why she went to her in-laws house. Her husband is a weaver and sometimes catches fish and sells in the market.

"My husband gave all of his earnings to my father in-law and didn't spend any money for buying my necessities. I was forced to do every household work by my mother in-law but deprived of getting sufficient foods".

Her in-laws member tortured her day after day and there was no change after the birth of her child.

"They forced me to get 30000 Taka from my father to bear all expenses for my baby. If I

wouldn't give money to them then they wouldn't accept me".

With her small baby she was rambling house to house. After seeing her father took her in his house and she was staying there for 7/8 months. Now the age of her child is 13 month and her husband never came to see her.

"They will accept me if my father give money but my father is afraid about them. He thinks that they also do the same after getting the money. My father in-law is a greedy man. He bears all of his expenses with the dowry. My husband never thinks about me and my daughter. He wants only money".

She is now bearing all of her daughter's expenses by the charity of others. She never complained to any arbitrator due to her blemish. She cannot tolerate this pain.

"I want to go back to my husband's house but it's not possible for my father to give the money. Only God knows what would happen to me and with my daughter".

Case Study 2

Tortured by Husband

Wife beating is the most commonly practice of domestic violence in Bangladesh. As patriarchal family structure prevails in Bangladesh; men think they have all the power by which they can do anything upon their wife. They grow to believe that they are more valuable and more deserving than women that their opinions and views should have more weight than any woman's.

Morgina is 28 years housewife left her 'in-laws' house because she could not bear mental and physical harassment by her in-laws' family. She came to her parents' house in East-purnimagati village under the Ullapara Upazilla of Sirajganj district with her three-year-old daughter.

"My in-laws asked me to bring jewellery and cash from my parents. My husband suffered a loss in money market and asked to bring 1 lac from my father".

She refused to do so. As a result she was severely beaten with a stick.

"As the harassment grew more, I informed my parents and left husband's house. They contacted social activists group".

The in-laws sent a notice and asked to be present in the meeting. They did not appear. So one more notice was served and they were

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informed of the possible legal action against them. At last, her in-laws, husband and other relatives and community members came. She narrated how she was ill-treated. The discussion was quite hot. In addition to the activists, the community leaders also participated in the discussion.

At last the activists' group leader and director of the organization asked "what does she wish?" Does she wish that her home will broke? Can they find some way out for the couple to live peacefully?

"At last my husband consented not to make demands for jewellery or money and expressed willingness to stay separate".

By the persuasion of leaders, her parents – in laws also consented to let the couple live separately from her husband. A compromise agreement was made and was signed by the all parties. She straight away went with her in-laws and now she stays in her separate house. I have done some focus group discussions (FGDs) where many causes of gender violence are mentioned. Respondents have told about various causes of gender violence. These are as follows:

"Most of times after returning home, husband starts to quarrel and hassle because of the absence of his wife there".

"We also suffer from several types of violence's which includes-beating, slapping, throwing the plate of the curry if not tasty, using slang words if the curry is not tasty etc."

Some causes are also indicated in the key informant's interview (KII).The most common findings about the causes of gender violence that I have examined in the key informants interview are given below:

"Women mostly complains to us for several facts- beating by husband, husband is unable to fulfill or bear his wife's needs, gambling, husband taking alcohol, family hassle etc".

"The main reason behind such violence are dowry, illiteracy etc. As most of the village people are uneducated and poor thus they don't know how to take family planning, how to use resources thus it is difficult for them to maintain the basic needs regularly".

Case Study 3

Psychological Victim of Violence

It's a common practice that we can see that besides the illiterate women, educated women

also tortured in several ways. Psychological violence is one of them where husband would not give any decision making power to their wife in the household level.

Nasima Sultana a housewife lives in the Bishwashbari village under the Belkuchiupazilla of Sirajganj district. She is 29 years old. Her husband works in a private company. She has completed her Master's degree but could not find a job. Now she is a housewife & has a daughter of 1 year and 2 months old. She was well in her father's home. Her family member arranged marriage for her after the death of her father. After passing some good time, the relation with her husband began to fade.

"My husband has not given me any importance to take any decision. My husband considers only others decision without any justice. I have been cooking always as my husband wished where my choice was not granted".

The good foods always given to her husband. He doesn't show any care about her either she eat or not. If the foods are not delicious then he refuses to eat it.

"My husband always has given me only one dress in the Eid occasion and obviously without my own choice. My husband has taken every decision to provide dresses occasionally to the relatives. In every occasion he is being busy to purchase cloths for his own family and if I ask him to purchase anything to my family member he said, he doesn't have enough money to purchase those".

If her husband purchases any new land he gets it's registered with his own name. He never recognized her as his better half. He creates pressure on her to get money from her father if she needed to get her a job. Both her husband and she want that their child will be highly educated. She wants her child would never suffer like her. When she was getting sick, her husband never cares about her. He dislikes seeing her on the bed. He hasn't purchase medicine for her.

If I took medicine from others then my husband says, I don't waste my money by buying your medicine per month. He never treats me as his family member".

In this situation she thinks that, there is no solution to solve this problem without any job. Thinking this she became sick physically and mentally day by day. In family planning all decision is taken by her husband.

“After marriage I have decided to conceive after managing a job but my husbands don’t give any importance on my decision and I conceived without my desire”.

Although her husband does not create any direct pressure to her for dowry but always compare himself with his friend who were given TV, refrigerator and other furniture’s as dowry from their in-laws.

“My husband spends his income for his own family (parents, sister and brother) without taking any consent from me. If he has no money in hand, then he borrowed money from others to spend on”.

Thus at the end of month, they have no money in hand to carry on and then it turns out difficult for them to fulfill their households daily basic needs.

“If I asked him, why he borrowed money when he is unable to repay it and why he spends it so carelessly? Then he answered that it’s his money and he has full right to spend it according to his wish and not to interfere in it. He also asked me to do any job to fulfill my basic needs and he does not have any concern about it”.

For this reason, she cannot have asked him for any necessary or luxury needs of her. As she is unemployed thus she has to depend on her husband’s income to live on and that always opened up a scope for him to reproach her. For her, it is the worst mental torture that she ever has.

“Many times, I considered separation as the best way to live with dignity but then it also comes in my mind that if I go away with my daughter then she will have to live her rest of life without affection of her father. For this reason, I have to pursue my life until death”.

She often curses him for his bearish torture. Even now she gets delight and joy when her husband is in pain. When his relation was not better with his parents, it gives her pleasure because most of time he misbehaves with her for his parents.

“I got mentally sick for his inhuman torture”.

She already informed her parents about all of his occurrences but they are helpless and of course her in-laws get pleasure in this matter because they are always in favor of their son.

“Although I’m an educated person, I’m not free for such violence”.

In some cases, men are tortured by their wives. But they do not express this because of some

Case Study 4

Family Violence

Besides women, men also the victim of gender violence in the household level. Where the main factors that I identified is that suspicion. As far as I see, when women are the homemaker then it’s very common to those that they always hold such a concept that their husband might be engaged with someone that’s why many families are decided to get divorce. Sirajul Khan a service holder lives in the East-purnimagati village under the Ullapara Upazilla of Sirajganj district. He is 36 years old and has a son of six (6) years old. His wife is a housewife. Most of the times they are involved in quarrel with each other. They had much doubt for each other because they had huge age difference between themselves.

“My wife started to call me again and again during my office hour. She doubted me about where was I, what was I doing, whether I was talking with female colleagues or not etc. type of questions. Even after coming home she checked my phone call list and started to interrogate me.”

He felt annoyed with those matters. When he returned home after office hour, his wife never keep himself in peace for a single moment. As a result they were always in quarrel with each other. His wife is now staying in her father’s house. He has tried his best to make his wife understood but in vain.

“My wife always says me that you will not give any opportunity to continue a job where any female colleague is present. Due to her excessive doubtless already I have left a job but how many days I have to wait to get freed from this mental pressure? Sometimes it seems to me that it is better to live alone than staying with her. My son is now staying with me. He does not want to go to his mother’s house.”

Their son used to see that his mother was always quarreling with his father. That’s why he did not want to go to his mother.

“My son says to me that he does not want to go with his mother rather he wants to stay with me. Once he (son) did not go to his mother for two months long.”

Day by day his son’s feeling about his mother is declining. As a result negative impression is creating automatically in his sons mind.

CONCLUSION

The findings that wife-beating is more common among young couples may not be due to the recent increase in the level but may be due to changes in the life-stage, such as having had grown up children and old age. Besides these, due to suspicion men also the victim in the household level. Social workers can also introduce non-formal education programs for training in technical Skills. These programs can empower women by offering them practical skills and an opportunity of increasing their confidence and courage in challenging the oppressive social structure.

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