

# **DOMESTIC VICTIMIZATION OF MARRIED WOMEN IN URBAN SRINAGAR OF KASHMIR VALLEY**

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**Abstract:** The gender stratification in the traditional Indian society is a visible truth, which may be hard to deny. Every religion has given an equal status to both male and female, and does not allow any sort of discrimination on the basis of sex. The traditional Indian society was living under their norms and beliefs have always played a negative role towards the women. They have degraded their importance in the family, as well as in the society right from her birth. Although advancement of technology and modernization process has brought various changes both in the structure and function of the family system in the society, but failed to completely change the traditional mindset and belief on the superstitious ideas. The general concept that violence against women starts after marriage, but in reality, it starts right from her birth. They are not only subjugated to physical violence, which is quite visible, but also to psychological violence, which often remains invisible. The attitude in majority of traditional families towards females has remained hostile. They were denied to have an equal status at par with men as well as to acquire the modern education. The role of women was mainly associated with domestic work, who was supposed to obey the orders of others without questioning. The modernization process in the form of spread of modern education, especially among females has brought tremendous changes in their role in the family as well as in the society. They started to participate in various economic activities outside home, which helped in providing them a role in decision taking at home, which they were denied so far. Although modernization process helped in raising the status of women in the society, and removing discrimination against them in the society to a large extent, but they are still subjugated to both physical and psychological violence both at home and at their work place outside home. Dowry the major reason of the domestic violence against women is still very much prevalent in the families along with other reasons. The study is carried out in urban Srinagar to ascertain the different reasons and causes of domestic violence against women in the family system.

**Keywords:** Gender, Discrimination, Dowry, Violence, Modernization, Education, Work Place and Status in Society.

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**Introduction:** The domestic violence against women composes of all acts which hurt the women physically and mentally. It reflects in all practices related to wife beating, harassment of women, denial of basic rights and needs to women, demand of dowry, grabbing of women's money, threat of divorce to wives, eve-teasing of girls, sexual exploitation / harassment of women, psychological torture, denial of due property rights, abuse of women by in-laws families, attempt to kill women in these families, bride-burning and rape of women. Although the role of woman has been elevated in the family after the process of modernization, they broke the traditional barriers created by the society, which specified the nature of work both for male and females. The women were even denied to get the basic education, as their role of was confined within the four walls of her home, especially doing the domestic work and taking care of children. The process of modernization especially through spread of modern education, the enrolment of women in educational institutions helped in improving their socio-economic condition in the society, but did not eliminated the discrimination against them in the society. The major problem of the women in the traditional society was to undergo through different kinds of violence, both physical and psychological at home. Though every single atrocity on women is bad, the worst and the most serious maltreatment of them, however, is when they are victimised, not outside, but within the four walls of their own house and not by strangers, but by the same people whom they call their own. The major reason of such violence against women has always been found the demand of dowry. The traditional dowry system in the society, which still prevails in the society, if not to that extent, is the main reason of violence against women. At the domestic level the married women were mostly subjugated to different types of violence like harassment, physical torture, beating, etc either by their husband or by in-laws. The Kashmiri society, which is an orthodox society, living under their own traditions and customs, are facing the same problems of violence against women, on the basis of different issues. Dowry has been defined as the main issue of violence against women in the society, since decades. Although changing economy, legislation, and social movements helped in bringing down the ratio of dowry seekers and receivers, but this menace still prevails in

the society. The dowry is observed as a root cause for the violence against women in all families in Indian society. The Kashmiri society is also caught in such menace, despite having a greater influence of their religion.

**Dabla, B. A. (2009).** In his study “*Domestic violence against women in the Kashmir valley*” has described that the practice of domestic violence against women, still prevails in both rural and urban areas of Kashmir valley, though not in high degree / density. The married women are subjugated to both physical and psychological violence, although only 15 percent of married women are facing such problem as per the author. It has been observed that separation, divorce, maintenance, inheritance rights, torture, dowry deaths, molestation and physical beating undesirable practice in the society has increased qualitatively as well as quantitatively, but there is dearth of the information, especially of the statistical nature regarding the subject. The issue of dowry has been the main reason for violence against women in the society.

**Methodology:** The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is based on the field work carried out in urban Srinagar. The various research tools like Interview schedule; observation method etc have been used to analyze the phenomena in a broader way. Whereas for the secondary data collection, different published research articles, books, magazines etc were used. The study was carried out in urban Srinagar of Kashmir province. A sample of 50 married woman respondents were selected to ascertain the major reason of domestic violence against women. The sample was selected by using simple random sampling technique.

**Field Findings:** The analysis of data reveals that the violence against the women has considerably decreased as being reflected by the Table 1. Only 10 percent of the respondent reported that they are regularly subjugated to physical torture both by husband as well as by in-laws, where as 8 percent said that they are subjugated to the violence in the form of using bad language, especially abusing them by their in-laws including their husband. Majority of respondent, i.e. 12 percent reported that different kinds of the violence they are facing at their home. The major reason of domestic violence has been reported by the respondents is demand of more dowry. The process of modernization has although transformed the traditional concept about women and the marriage, but it was developed a professional approach among the younger generation, for them the socio-economic status is more important than other things. They are looking for the rapid growth in the society economically, without thinking the path they have adopted. This changing approach, although decreased various evil customs and norms in the society, but has not been able to eradicate the menace of dowry system, which is the main reason for the suffering of women. The different reasons for violence against women are as reflected by the Table 2. The major reason for the violence against women is the dowry system as being reported by 80 percent respondents. The younger generation are still very much ambitious and want to have rapid growth economically in the society, for them the money is more important than human and religious values. Only a least percent of respondent i.e. 20 percent reported other reason for domestic violence. Although the spread of modern education and modernization process succeeded in bringing down percentage of violence against women, but not succeeded in completely stop any kind of violence against women.

**Table 1: Nature of Violence against Women**

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Nature of Violence Against Women	Beating by husband/in-laws	5	10.00
	Abusing by husband/in-laws	4	8.00
	Any other kind of violence	6	12.00
	No violence	35	70.00
<b>Total</b>		50	100.00

Source: Field work carried out in urban Srinagar, 2017

**Table 2: Reason for Violence against Women**

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Reason for Violence against Women	Demand of dowry	12	80.00
	Any other reason if any	3	20.00
<b>Total</b>		15	100.00

Source: Field work carried out in urban Srinagar, 2017

**Conclusion:** The study depicts that the advancement of scientific technological development and the process of modernization have helped in raising the status of women in the society, but not succeeded in eliminating the old age traditional concept about women in the society. The women are still living under the fear psychosis in the society right from her birth. They are still facing different kinds of atrocities, especially after marriage on the pretext of different reasons. The dowry has been observed as the main reason for the violence against women, although the changing traditional economy and modernization helped in controlling this menace in the society, but not succeeded in eradicating it completely.

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