

“Lockdown: An Explosion to Domestic Violence Cases Globally”

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Introduction

The corona virus cases are on the rise globally, as of April 13, 2020, the no of infected cases globally are 1,777,666 and the number of cases in India is 8356 seeing as the COVID 19 taking a firm grip over the country with reaching the rural regions of the nation was an alarming situation for the state and central government¹. Acknowledging the prospective effects of the corona virus the central and state authorities have taken a series of actions. Because of the extraordinary circumstances, states have taken several steps as declaring health emergency in the hot spots where corona positive patients were found. As well as the central government took mass quarantine measures as an emergency step, on 23rd of march 2020 prime minister Narendra Modi has announced a nationwide lockdown of 21 days which could be extended. According to the scientists of Indian center for medical research has stated that the virus is still in the second phase of transmission and have requested for creation of specialized and isolated hospital for corona patients which would be active along the lockdown period.

Lockdown is a crisis convention that typically prevents individuals from leaving a zone and is implemented in the cases of an imminent threat to mankind either from infectious disease or in the situation of war, etc².

Meanwhile, the crime rates throughout the nation have fallen drastically as people are not allowed to move in a public space except for the necessities according to the data the number on cases like murder, robbery, kidnapping, vehicle thefts dipped around 44 percent since that of last year³ and according to the press release by Delhi police the crime rates in Delhi-NCR region have severely fallen to 80 percent⁴. on the contrary in the condition of lock down- isolation, social distancing are the condition for the which are creating frictions inside households. Now after the announcement of nationwide lockdown, victims of domestic violence are in unavoidable circumstances. Since the victims are forced to spend each day with their persons who carry out a harmful, illegal and immoral act. And this is a huge downside of lockdown for the victims who now have to live with their abusers.

What is domestic violence?

As per section 3 of the protection of women from domestic violence act 2005⁵, Domestic violence is explained as harms which injures the health or which hampers the safety of life

¹ Corona virus tracker,(April 13, 2020, 05:02 PM), <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus>

² “Lockdown.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, (April 13, 2020.) <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lockdown>.

³ Business today, corona virus lockdown, business today, April 04, 2020

⁴ Business today, corona virus lockdown, business today, April 04, 2020

⁵ THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005 NO. 43 OF 2005, sec. 3.

of a person, intrigues mental or physical well-being or which abuses causing physical,sexual abuse, emotional abuse or verbal or mental abuse.

Escalation in number of complaints of domestic violence:-

There was an increase in the number of domestic violence cases reported throughout the world. The increase in the numbers was already have been predicted by the world health organization's director-general Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus stated "sadly there are reports of an increase in domestic violence since the COVID 19 outbreak began. We call on countries to include services to end violence as an essential service that must continue during the response". there has been vided increase in the number of reported cases of the domestic violence globally. According to the survey by global experts the some of the major countries like India, united states, Saudi Arabia, democratic republic of Congo, Pakistan, Afghanistan were in the top countries which were enlisted as most dangerous countries for women⁶. The number of cases of domestic violence escalated quickly within a week of lockdown in India i.e. from march 23rd to April 2nd, 2020 national commission for women received a total of 257 complaints including 69 cases of domestic violence reported by women⁷. The national commission for women also claimed that the number of cases reported has doubled since the corona outbreak took place in India. Not only India but the major of countries who have implemented lockdowns or any other precautionary protocols which limit individuals from moving are facing the challenge of domestic violence issues. As far as statistics go in France domestic violence took a rise of 36% since the beginning of the lockdown⁸, Scott Morrison who is the prime minister of Australia announced there was a rise of 75 percent in Google searches for 'help' since the lockdown has begun⁹. Also, a domestic abuse calls were flooded on hotline number by the increase of 65 percent in united kingdom¹⁰. there is a crisis through which we are continuously grappling with although there is dire need to put efforts by policymakers in these times and make some unprecedented decisions.

The laws against domestic violence in India?

A 2015 study conducted by the planning commission of India surmised that 84 per cent of women have been abused at least once in their household¹¹ A 2015 study conducted by planning commission of India surmised that 84 per cent of women have been abused at least once in their household As this high number of the factual data that indicates the domestic violence cases in India policy makers have took various steps to prevent and take hold of the

⁶ Thomson Reuters foundation, fact box: world 10 most dangerous countries for women, , Reuters June 26, 2018.

⁷ Pritha dev, no lockdown for abuse, the Hindu, April 09, 2020

⁸ Ibtissem guenfoud, french women use code word at pharmacy to escape domestic violence during corona virus lockdown, ABC news, April 04, 2020.

⁹ Straits times, corona virus drives surges in Australia domestic violence cases, T.S. times, march 29, 2020.

¹⁰ Megha mohan, corona virus: I'm in lockdown with my abuser,BBC news, march 31,2020.

¹¹ Indian society for integrated women & child development, more on ministry of women and child development, february 28, 2015, https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Report_Study_of_women_safety_from_sexual_assault_0?/

adverse situation of country and have made laws more stringent towards protection of women against crimes. In any case, a greater part of this abusive behavior at home, the survivors are unreasonably frightened of social humiliation to reveal that they are victims of abuse. This is because of woman's poor social settling in Indian society, where beating a female for even the littlest points is viewed as a supporting act. The laws which are made to protect women against domestic violence and other heinous crimes are as follows-

The Indian Penal Code Amendment

The Indian penal code has officially made violence against the women as criminal offence which was added under special section 498-A¹² in the year 1983. which give special protection to women against cruelty against married women against their husband and their family.. under the definition of cruelty, this act covers wide aspects of abuses against women as not only physical or mental valence but also wide dynamics of mental torture through threatening of omens loved ones such as children, denying food to the abused or confinement of the victim in a form of punishment, even demanding perverse acts of sex against the consent of the women. This law also frames and charges the convicts with harsh punishment with up to three years of prison as well as exemplary forms of monetary damages. This section also safe gourd women against harassment of women and her relatives with intimidation relating of giving up the property of women.

2013 criminal law amendment

The small commission was named and headed by one of nations most highly regarded jurists on the requests made by the committee of justice verma in response a long lists of amendments were made in the Indian penal code, code of criminal procedure, and in the Indian evidence act in this act of 2013. another series of changes and validation was made such detail of sexual assaults and that of rape were clarified and added. The act of rape was given a better exhaustive legal definition to include non consensual penetration using non sexual objects as well as noon sexual penetrative acts.

The sole aim of amending was to increase the terms and provide more harsh punishments too set an examples in the society. The amendments also helped in swifter and fast delivery of judgements to provide the relief in time. Even death sentences were included for rapists and sexual assaulters in extremely disturbing cases for instance where the victims were severely traumatized and went into a vegetative state after the crime also various other new offences were taken into the ambit of these amendments like acid attacks, stalking, voyeurism, and publicity or forcefully disrobing or sharking of women. But the only downside was despite of commissions' recommendations the amendments were failed to make changes onto the laws of marital rape.

¹² Indian penal code,1860, ch.20 sec.498A

The protection of women against domestic violence act,2005¹³.

This was law which was first of its kind which was constituted that it was a right of every to be in a home which is of without violence, this was regarded as one off major step which were taken to secure the rights of women and protect them against violence. This law is long drafted after a long comprehensive procedures and have detailed several important polices of which are in the nature of safe guarding of women. The protection of women against domestic violence was drafted in year 2005 but was enacted in the year 2006. one of the other special feature of this law is it gives and point specific definition of domestic violence which is recognized by the Indian judicial profanity. Secondly it also help women as a third person who has reason to believe that there is some abuse against the women can also complaint the matter to authorities without facing any of the liabilities and getting troubles from police or any other officials. This law a recognize the right of women to reside in their respective matrimonial households as this is her right full house which she share with her husband and she cannot be forcefully evicted from the house. In any cases of eviction from her matrimonial house women have a right to demand monetary compensation and also right to seek safe shelter with free legal and medical aid. The violators of these law a in general provided with the restraining orders from the courts which keep them away from the from the complainants.

What are the counter measures taken by various governments internationally?

In the view of increased help calls Internationally, several approaches are taken by several countries to protect the abuse against women, as this was the necessity of the time to take precautions and create awareness in the society because the victims are despite their will are forced to spend the increased number of hours with their abusers. Also during the time of lockdown, people are sort of aimless and free as their daily work life is affected and are bound to live in a closed environment, this aimlessness is new to everyone as people are facing these situations for the first time in more 100 years, in accordance to s.o.s. calls countries took the step like -

The pop-up counseling centers were installed in shops so that women going for shopping can easily access them in case of need, also the French government will be paying to stay in hotels to the victims of domestic violence¹⁴.

Another European country has developed a secret way for women to ask for help, in the united kingdom the women who are in need of help can inform police authorities by making a silent call by calling on an emergency number '999' and then dialing '55' and the authorities will be informed and recognize the call as a cause of concern¹⁵.

¹³ THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005 NO. 43 OF 2005, sec. 3

¹⁴ Melissa godin, COVID 19, Time, March 31, 2020

¹⁵ Megha mohan, corona virus: I'm in lockdown with my abuser,BBC news, march 31,2020.

Also, Australia sees similar concerns have increased its funds and have invested 142 million dollars for the protection of women against household abuses¹⁶.

India's escalating reports and counter measures are taken. Even in the contemporary world, nations like India which are rich in their culture and heritage have been always in a bad situation because of its silent domestic abuses which have not been published into the nation's mainstream media. As the researcher says Domestic violence in a nation is in accordance with its social-economical aspects, domestic violence is widely impacted by nation's culture, economic situations, social norms. The numbers of cases reported are decreasing gradually as with situation getting better as factors like per capita income, education, and awareness were increased. But analyzing the present scenario there is no proper measure are taken against the prospects of domestic abuses. No actions or policies have been formulated for the abuses during the lockdown, all the previous women helpline numbers are active but no special emphasis and strategies have been formed by the government in these times of crisis. On contrary various non-governmental organization have come forward across the nation for providing a helping hand towards the victims of the violence and created awareness through online channels and share other helpline numbers and email addresses and have been active since the lockdown and also have become a supporting factor to police authorities and also women, they are also providing online counseling session for women who require any mental or emotional support.

Conclusion:-

What are the approaches and measures which should be taken internationally? As of seeing the present situations, there must be a pro-active approach towards woman's safety and all the countries which have or going to implement the lockdown must come with strategies to fight and supports the victims.

Also, several temporary steps must be taken seeing the heat and in need of the hour such as

1. providing a separate and safe shelter to the women and children who are the victims of abuse until the situation gets better and their abusers are tried before the court.
2. A hotline number must be created with hand in hand with appropriate authorities for online or telephonic counseling of women who are psychologically abused.
3. Non governmental organization working for women physical and mental safety must be included under 'essential services' so that they can keep a check through their strong channels and also be helping police in these times of crisis, also they can voluntarily move to slum areas or areas with low education and economic situation where these women are unable to inform their situation either because of lack of access or of social stigma or fear. Taking some of these steps would save victims who are going daily through the unwanted abuses in their households.

¹⁶ Straits times, corona virus drives surges in Australia domestic violence cases, T.S. times, march 29, 2020.