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## Narratives of domestic violence against married women in Manipur

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### Abstract

From early centuries till today the plight of women is not likely to change. Women are suffering from discrimination, oppression, exploitation, degradation, aggression and humiliation. A vital position and venerable place were occupied by Indian women in the society. Women were seen as the mother, the creator, and one who gives life and worshipped as a Goddess and also their glorification was rather mythical. India being a patriarchal society, women found to be suppressed and subjugated. Male violence against women is worldwide phenomenon. In every sphere of life the cause of lack of participation by women is fear of violence.

There are various forms of crimes against women. These include domestic violence, female feticides, dowry death, eve-teasing, molestation, sexual harassment, abuse at work place, honour killing, rape etc. The meaning of the term violence is striking someone physically causing injury and atrocities on women have their roots to some extent, in their weaker social position

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, women, violence, society

### 1. Introduction

In the ancient times Indian women enjoyed high and respective position in the society. In the Brahminic age, women position began to decline and she was pushed into the background. Gradually women were forced to live a life without individuality and identity. Women had to face evil practices of sati, child marriage, and ban on widow remarriage etc. In the Indian society, position of women is always perceived in relation to the man <sup>[1]</sup>. This perception gives birth to women violations both inside and outside of their home. Nearly half of the Indian populations are women and are living under the socio-cultural, religious norms of a patriarchal society. One gender has been controlling the space of the India's social economic, political and religious fabric since time immemorial <sup>[2]</sup>. In the society today trend of crime against women is still increasing.

Women in India have been victims of violence from many years in almost all the societies, regions, cultures and religious communities. Women generally face various kinds of crime like dowry death, sexual harassment, cheating, murder, girl child abuse etc. Violence against women which are counted as crime under the Indian Penal Code are rape, kidnapping, abduction, physically and mentally torture, dowry death, wife battering, sexual harassment, molestation, importation of girls etc. Some of the social violence cases against women are eve-teasing, forcing wife or daughter-in-law for female infanticide, honour killing, and acid attack etc. These cases are giving rise to other violence in the society. Simultaneously increase in violence against women is hindering the social, economic, political and cultural progress in the country.

Recently, in India, to cope with the situation, a campaign, called 'bell bajao' was launched. The main motive of the campaign was to motivate the individuals of the society to raise their voice against the domestic violence happening in home and around <sup>[3]</sup>. These issues draw the attention of crowds towards and the campaign was successful.

Government has also made and enforced domestic violence act. In section 498-A of Indian Penal Code the rules and regulations of Domestic Violence have been introduced. People need to know their rights and duties and deserves the basic honour and respect as human being.

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In India the actual prevalence of domestic violence, statistical evidence is scant however. The few studies available indicate that physical abuse of Indian women is quite high, ranging from 22 percent to 60 percent of women surveyed [4]. The only large-scale indicator of violence against women is the data relating to crimes against women published by the National Crimes Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Government of India. The records of the bureau reveal a shocking 71.5 percent increase in cases of torture and dowry deaths during the period from 1991 to 1995 and may reflect increased reporting of violence. In 1995, torture of women constituted 29.2 percent of all reported crimes against women. According to Narayana's study (1996), 18 to 45 percent of married men in five districts of Uttar Pradesh, a large state in northern India, acknowledged that they physically abused their wives. And in a study by Ranjana Kumari (1989) of dowry abuse it was revealed that one out of every four dowry victims was driven to suicide [5].

There are very few studies available of the theme though Manipur has a high rate of prevalence of domestic violence.

## **2. Narratives of some case study of domestic violence victims**

### **2.1 Case Study**

Memme (name changed) is a wife of Mohan (name changed). They had two children, son and daughter. After the death of Mohan, Memme was forced by her mother-in-law and brother-in-law to sign a document written on Non-Judicial Stamp paper which clearly says that, Memme had no objection on her mother-in-law receiving the monthly pension of her husband which Memme is lawfully entitled to receive. On refusing to sign the documents, her mother-in-law started harassing Memme in various ways. She was frequently asking her that "she can't stay at her home and asked her to leave as soon as possible". Memme was not allowed to sleep at her matrimonial house.

Memme was forced to sleep at her elder brother-in-laws house. After 2 month, Memme was again forced to sign on a blank Non Judicial Stamp paper by her mother-in-law and younger brother-in-law who she refused to sign again after the failure of the second attempt, their harassment increased and Memme was thrown out of her in-laws house. Younger brother-in-law threatened to kill Memme or anybody who came on their way from getting the pension of late Mohan on their name. After the death of Mohan, she didn't receive the pension money till the filing of this case as the document required for claiming pension was taken away from Memme by her mother-in-law. She was deprived of the financial resources to meet the financial expenditure of her two minor children and to maintain herself. Not only this, she wasn't allowed to live at her husband's house. Memme is facing hardship in maintaining herself and her two children. She took the help from the Meira Paibi and the Meira Paibi called both the party for counseling. Meira Paibi helped Memme not only to get her rights but also helped her to get the share of her husband's pension.

### **2.2 Case Study**

Thoi (name changed) is a businessman husband of Rome (name changed). She is a simple house wife having no source of income. Soon after marriage, the happy new life of Rome was out of the marriage with her husband ended with the unexpected change of behavior of her husband towards

Rome. Thoi started returning home drunk and scolding her without any reason by saying that she was not allowed talking with any male persons. Thus, Rome came to know that her husband is a habitual drunkard. Thoi blamed Rome by saying that she had love relationship and started beating by pulling her hair. At the matrimonial home of Rome, while she was watching movie with her husband told Rome that she was not allowed to go to and enter her parental home. In that Rome requested him to allow her to visit her parental home every now and then as her mother was also sick. On hearing that, Thoi suddenly pulled down Rome from the sofa, beat her by shouting and he broke the four stands of the bed. Rome was never allowed to move out of her matrimonial home and cannot talk with anybody. After some days, when she returned from a nearby shop having purchased some eatables, her husband beat her for going shop without his permission.

In the morning, while her husband was sleeping, the elder brother of Rome turned up and took the Honda active of her husband as he had an urgent work. After her husband had waked up, her husband beat and scolded Rome by saying she did not have any respect for her husband that she had given away her vehicle to her brother without the permission of him. He further threatened her to leave his residence and remain at her parental home. Rome left behind all the stridhans in the custody of her husband and she has no far not collected any of them from matrimonial home. She has been struggling for survival since she has not been looked after and cared by her husband. She being afraid of her husband thus return parental home without taking anything from her matrimonial home. Rome repeatedly rang up to her husband and her husband threatened her that she would face unwanted consequences if she returned to her matrimonial home. He drove Rome and their 5 month old (at that time) daughter out of her in-laws house. She along with her daughter was taking refuge at her parental home.

### **2.3 Case Study**

Eliza (name changed) is a wife of Amar (name changed). Eliza and Amar lived as husband and wife for 17 days at Amar residence. Then Amar didn't come home and remained silent for more than 1 ½ year and neglected Eliza. Amar in a collusion manner conservatively tortured Eliza. Eliza sent many messages to Amar so that he might come and take her but in vain. Later on, helpless Eliza went along with her relative to find Amar. As such Eliza was jointly living with Amar for 5 month with several abuses. Eliza was abused by Amar whole family asking her to return to her parental house and sometimes slapping her attempting to drive her away. And thus Eliza couldn't stay for long times at Amar house due to several domestic violence. As a result of which, Eliza was returned to her parental house and stayed for about 7 months. All treatment and expenditure was bourned by her owned parent.

Again, Eliza requested many a times to Amar to accept her as a wife by sending information saying she was able to delivery. Later on two sister of Amar came and took her to Amar house and allowed to stay for about 20 days. And Eliza was given signal for delivery to district hospital and Amar was also agreed to go to the hospital. Thus Eliza was hospitalized and news was given to Eliza parent by Amar and they escaped from the said hospital and none turned up from Amar side at the delivery. On the other hand, Amjar is

living happily by taking his second wife. Eliza has no alternative remedy except filing case against Amar. Eliza has no income to maintain her baby and herself. Her health condition has become very weak.

#### 2.4 Case Study

Nungsi (name changed) is a wife of Asingh (name changed). After the birth of first child, some change has come to the character of Asingh and he started treating cruelly to Nungsi. Nungsi has peruse the cause of this cruelty and found that her husband had illicit relationship with some other women. Asingh is so mad on calling any women through his phone and he didn't even know the voice of his wife. From the date on which Asingh had illicit relationship with other women, he had stopped hard working. He stopped earning and started demanding money from his wife. To fulfill the demand his wife sold all gifted articles from her parent. Asingh treated Nungsi so cruelly that he beat several times with many silly reasons for not knowing what curry her husband wants to eat on different dates.

Asingh beat his wife whenever she asks him to maintain decorum of family. The root cause of the beating is that Asingh is ready to take other women as wife. Nungsi requested Asingh elder brother to run the family well but in futile. One night while sleeping near Asingh, Nungsi has been suffering from nightmare but later realized that her husband was trying to kill her by holding her nose. Asingh beat up Nungsi to her face, nose and eye. On beating, his wife shouted for help and on hearing the shout, Asingh pick up one spade and try to kill her but Nungsi ran faster to save her life.

From that night, Nungsi left the house of Asingh and live with her sister. No person from Asingh side has come to settle the matter. Nungsi take the help from the NGO's (Environment and Economics Management Association) and the NGO's (EEMA) called for counseling both the parties. After counseling the case was settled and lives with harmonious married life.

#### 2.5 Case Study

Rekha (name changed) and Kumar (name changed) lived together as husband and wife for about a week after which the behavior of Kumar suddenly changed and he eloped with another women name Devi (name changed). Just after 11 days of her marriage Kumar and his family started neglecting Rekha. After that parents of Devi filed a case against Kumar for kidnapping their daughter and demanded a sum of Rs. 1, 50,000/- as compensation to which the demand was fulfilled and the eloped women was taken aback by her parents to their house.

Thereafter Kumar used to get angry without giving any reason to Rekha stating all these things happened by her. Kumar family members used to abuse Rekha in possible terms as she is unfit of being a wife. Kumar used to beat Rekha and asked her to go to her parental home. Frequently Rekha cooked food for the whole family but the family members did not eat and all food prepared by her used to be throw away. Rekha mother-in-law started abusing and ill-treating her for not carrying her valuable electronic items like refrigerator, washing machine and inverter. Tulu and others items as dowries at the time of marriage. Rekha is a simple housewife and she looked after all the household chores and maintained the family. Being young and energetic, Rekha (21 years old) always tried to fulfill the

wishes of the whole family. On the contrary the whole family used to torture her mentally and physically harassing and consequently she started to become physically weak. Kumar didn't treat Rekha well and she wasn't even allowed to share bed with Kumar they slept separately. The in-laws kept a vigilance that the two should not get close.

So Rekha returned back to her parental home unable to bear the torture and ill-treatment meted out by the in-laws family members. Rekha has a serious apprehension that the family might disposed off the Aun pot (gift) at any point of time. An immediate and appropriate order to give possession of all items of gift to Rekha is immediately required. Life of Rekha is totally destroyed by Kumar and his family. She asked help from the NGO's (Environment and Economics Management Association) and the NGO's (EEMA) called both the families for counseling after counseling the case was settled.

#### 2.6 Case Study

Inaoba (name changed) is the husband of Romila (name changed) after their marriage; they have been living together as husband and wife at the shared household of Inaoba. Through out of the said wedlock, they have a daughter named Thoi (name changed). And the child is now living with Romila. Just after the birth of the child, Inaoba started torturing Romila mentally by using many abusive words. When Romila asked about the reason of behaving in such manner, Inaoba beat Romila without any valid reason. Inaoba left the shared household and started living at his aunty house without giving any reason and never returned to Romila and his minor daughter. Since then, Romila and her minor daughter are staying alone without any help or support from the side of Inaoba. Having no alternative Romila went to the house of aunty where her husband is stating and asked for financial assistance for her day to day expenditure and medical expenses which come across to Romila but Inaoba carelessly without showing any sympathy and love towards his wife and minor daughter, refused to give any kind of help and force her to bear all expenses at her own cause without asking help from Inaoba. Instead of giving helper solution to day to day problem of Romila, Inaoba threatened her to go to her parental house if she can't bear all such responsibilities in her head. Such act of Inaoba caused physical and mental harassment to Romila and her minor daughter.

As a last resort for survival, Romila along with her minor daughter came to Inaoba place but he started beating Romila with a Bamboo stick by using many abusive words thereby causing injuries on body, legs and head. Thus Romila was driven out by Inaoba thereby threatening not to show her face again and also gave warning to face a dire consequences as well as threatened to kill her. Romila seek help from the NGO's (Young Women Help Organization) and the NGO's (YWHO) did counseling both the husband and wife and it was settled.

#### 2.7 Case Study

After Montina (name changed) and Raja (name changed) had lived together as husband and wife at shared household, daughter named Thoinu (name changed) was born to them. After the birth of the daughter, the blissful happy married life of Montina ended and turned into a woe life. Raja started torturing Montina for giving birth to a female child. The whole family starts boycotting her by not eating food

prepared by Montina and as such she was forced to cook her food separately. Montina mother-in-law harassed her physically and mentally all time in order to turn her out from the shared household. Whenever Montina did domestic work, mother-in-law created disturbances for her. Mother-in-law didn't even allow Montina to dry her clothes in a hanger. Mother-in-law washed out the hanger with a bucket of water whenever Montina used it. Mother-in-law would spill a bucket of water on the floor which Montina had just cleaned and washed and she would always use abusive language to irritate her.

When Montina came to know about her second pregnancy and the same news reached Raja. He forced her into abortion and also threatened that he will not return home if she refuses to abort the child. But Montina refused to abort the child. Raja beat Montina black and blue for refusing to abort and used a iron rod resulting to serious injury on the right leg. Being afraid of such aggressive nature of Raja, she never disclosed such incident to anybody. Montina requested Raja to allow her to give birth of the said child thinking child may be a baby boy and may also carry forward the legacy of the Clan.

But to utter surprise, Raja left the shared household and never returned to Montina thereby causing mental, physical and financial abuse to her and as such she learnt that Raja is staying with another woman named Radha (name changed). That caused Raja treat Montina and caused various form physical as well as mental torture the minor child including the baby in the womb. Her in-laws forced Montina to stay in the storeroom and were not allowed to enter the shared household along with her minor daughter in such condition of the initial stage of pregnancy nor did they give any financial assistance. As such Montina was not allowed to take bath in the bathroom and also not allowed to use washroom of the shared household. Montina was tortured mentally and physically by Raja and she had been trying to stay with him by thinking that one day they will realized their misdeeds and would lead a peaceful life. However, the attitude of Raja never changed and on contrary the degree of tortured increased day by day. Montina was forced to leave the shared household.

Thereafter, Manda took the help from the NGO's (Women Action for Development) and the NGO's (WAD) counseled all of them. After counseling everything was settled. Her in-laws realized their mistake and the husband realized his folly then they lived happily.

### 3. Conclusion

The causes of violence among the victims are alcoholic, dowry, son preference, and extra-marital affair and also the common forms of violence suffer by the victims are physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse etc.

From the victim's point of view, we need to change our attitude. Gender equality and respect for women awareness should be imparted at home, schools and colleges. Adding new law will not going to solve our problems. We need social awakening and for this media is the only important social networking which can make people aware of the laws. Man and women are the two wheels of life. Life can never be a smooth ride if one of its wheels is neglected. So man and women should be equally treated for the progress of the nation.

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