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Discrimination and Domestic Violence on Women in Nepalese Families: Unsolved Social Responsibility

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to present domestic violence existing against women in Nepalese families and societies. Although people are educated, domestic violence against women is not minimized and appears in many families as before. This research study also shows that patriarchal families and societies are extremely dominating women.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Furthermore, regarding methodology, this is a qualitative study, and data are collected through interviews and document analysis. This is an ethnographic design under qualitative study. The study maintains convenience sampling under purposive sampling related to a qualitative study. A woman fallen victim to domestic violence will be identified and interviewed and through her another woman of a similar category is identified to interview and collect data.

Findings: Nepal is a small country situated between two large countries, China and India. Nepal is surrounded by China in the northern part and by India in the eastern, southern, and western parts. So, the lifestyle of the people in the northern part of Nepal is like that of the Tibetan tribes; and similarly, the lifestyle of the people in the eastern, southern, and western parts is similar to that of Indian people. The findings of this study show that society has not taken responsibility to control discrimination and domestic violence taking place against women. This is an unsolved social responsibility.

Research Limitation: This research study is ethnography in research design that does not cover more aspects of the male population. And also it is a qualitative study and does not point out any statistical tools and numerical data.

Managerial Implications: This research implies that women need equality in family and society, maintaining a humanistic view of women and implications for further research.

Originality/Value: This research study has maintained its originality and it has also got great value. The delimitation of this study is that it concerns the discrimination and domestic violence against women in families and societies.

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Introduction

The family pattern in Nepal is patriarchy, known as families dominated by men only. Regarding this situation, in my opinion, and experience, there are other aspects also which enhance discrimination and domestic violence in Nepalese family systems. Many people have false beliefs about how and why violence against women happens. For us to effectively respond to violence against women, we must confront these myths. Not just physical violence is considered to be violence against women. It covers financial, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse in addition to other types of abuse. Violence against women refers to any gender-based act that causes or is likely to cause bodily, sexual, or psychological injury or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrarily denying them their freedom, whether it takes place in public or private life.

Feminism also has a connection to violence and prejudice against women. [Pluckrose & Lindsay \(2020\)](#) have examined the relationship between feminism and gender and found that for well over a century, feminism has been one of the most important social movements in human history, working to improve the lives of slightly over half the planet's population; it has always been divisive and extremely unpopular – possibly not least because of its triumphs; but by the year 2000, however, something in feminism altered.

It can be imagined that women got something as freedom in NGOs' and INGOS' documents, but it remained a dream in reality. In the life of women, a significant threat to many women is domestic abuse to learn how to escape a risky situation and recognize the warning signs of an abusive relationship. One of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world, violence against women and girls occurs daily, numerous times, all across the world. It prevents women and girls from participating in society fully and equally because of the severe short-and long-term physical, economic, and psychological effects it has on them. There are no words to describe how much of an influence it has on people's lives, families, and society at large.

The following feminisms have also been highlighted by [Pluckrose & Lindsay \(2020\)](#) intersectional feminism, radical feminism, materialist feminism, and liberal feminism. They further added that

during the “second wave,” which took place between the late 1960s and the mid-1980s, liberal feminism was the most broadly based activist movement; similarly, the two prominent scholarly streams of feminism at this time were radical and materialist feminisms, which are somewhat overlapping and rival. From the middle of the 1990s on, intersectional feminism has supplanted the previous varieties in academic and activist circles; in the new millennium, intersectional feminism is firmly in control, and it is this perspective that has led to the tremendous change just mentioned. The above-mentioned analysis is a theoretical perspective regarding gender and violence.

The following is an excerpt from [Pluckrose & Lindsay \(2020\)](#) argument that the three primary feminisms in the 1960s were radical, materialist, and liberal. Progressively extending to women all the liberties and rights of a liberal society is the goal of liberal feminism. Materialist feminists were worried about how capitalism and patriarchy collectively limit women, particularly in settings like the workplace and the family. Radical feminists emphasized the patriarchal system and saw men and women as oppressed and oppressor classes, respectively. They were revolutionaries who sought to transform society, and destroy the idea of gender (but not sex), as well as capitalism and patriarchy. They have further added that the most crucial thing to realize is that, while the liberal feminist approach had the most support from the general public, radical and materialist (essentially socialist) feminism predominated in the academic, especially from the 1970s onward.

The above-mentioned text has shown that women need freedom for their identity. On the other hand, Liberal feminism is in favor of women but materialism and radical are in favor of keeping women under the control of male patriarchy under the two frames of oppressed and oppressor. Postmodern intersectionalism has mostly supplanted other types of feminists as well, such as radical and materialist ones. Postmodern feminists also outnumbered liberal feminists, who have historically been more active in political activism than academic research. Liberal feminism has been the clear, primary target of post-modernists because it adheres to modernist values of secular, liberal democracy, and individual agency within the context of universal human rights.

Similarly, women in Nepal have been living under high pressure of discrimination and domestic violence. Mostly, the victims are daughter-in-law, wife, and also girl child in a family. In many families, women have to live outside of the family's mainstream. Although some women have got freedom, they have extreme freedom in such a way that other women in the world have not got such type of freedom. On the other hand, most women are in such a situation that their human rights have been violated in such a way that they cannot be found in another world, I think. Any act of gender-based violence that causes physical, sexual, or emotional pain or suffering to women and girls is known as violence against women and girls. This includes threats of such actions, coercion, and arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether they take place in public or private life. The term "violence against women and girls" refers to a variety of crimes, including but not limited to physical, sexual, and psychological assaults committed against women and girls within the home or in the larger community and those crimes that the government either supports or condones.

Objective

The objective of this study is to show some examples of the nature of domestic violence against women in Nepalese families and societies.

Research Questions

The research questions framed for this study are:

1. What types of domestic violence do women face in Nepalese families?
2. What are the reasons for torturing women in Nepalese families?
3. How will it be possible to stop domestic violence against women in Nepalese families?

Methodology

The methodology of this study is qualitative. The data collection process was purposive including snowball sampling with five women who were from different parts of Nepal and they were living in Kathmandu, Nepal. The women had experienced domestic violence made on them as well as had got true experiences of domestic outbreaks of violence made on others in their locality and relatives. To collect data, some girl students studying Social Work subjects were used so that the women

could tell their stories without any hesitation. The data collecting tool was an open-ended interview and the technique of analysis was description and interpretation using language but no quantitative technique was used. A narrative approach is used to conduct this study. This study fulfills the gaps of the extreme nature of domestic violence made on women in the family, which was not exposed previously through other research.

Literature Review

The literature review made for this study is on domestic violence, discrimination of women, exclusion of women in families, and feminism theory.

Domestic Violence

It is generally known that women have been subject to domestic violence in Nepalese families. It may be the same in other countries and families. Women are found to have been tortured, burned to death alive, asked for dowry from their parents, and taken as not human beings by their married families. Regarding domestic violence, [Hilder & Bettinson, \(2016\)](#) referred to the moral and legal responsibility to address domestic violence and abuse (DVA) as a matter of current worldwide concern. This view shows that domestic violence against women is experienced in every country in the world. Regarding this concern, civil society has also been found to have remained outside the gate of the entrance of domestic violence.

Similarly, in light of the current circumstance, the [Council of Europe \(2011\)](#) has noted that at a regional level, the [Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Council of Europe \(2011\)](#) provides legally binding standards to enhance the prevention of violence, the protection of victims, and the prosecution of perpetrators through a set of integrated policies, calling for stronger coordination of legal and community-based response. Although different organizations make rules and regulations to stop domestic violence against women, it has not been much more successful.

Furthermore, according to [McQuigg, \(2016\)](#), a prevalent reluctance to regard the conduct of such behaviors as a fundamental violation of a person's human rights is maybe one of the

intrinsic weaknesses of societies in effectively addressing the issue of domestic violence; domestic abuse evidently violates a person's right to life, as well as their freedom from torture and other cruel or inhumane treatment, as well as their right to respect for their private and family lives. As mentioned above, however, it hasn't been until recently found that domestic violence has been acknowledged as a problem covered by human rights law. Although we talk of different organizations concerning the enhancement of women, they are on paper but not in the real world.

The degree of complexity tends to rapidly rise when it comes to understanding domestic violence, according to [Ross \(2017\)](#), who claims that humans are the most complex species on the planet; also, domestic violence has been the subject of several theoretical explanations that have developed over the years. As mentioned here, these explanations offer fresh perspectives on actions that are seen to be exceptionally terrible and cruel. Sociological explanations of the causes of domestic violence have received more recognition among academics from many intellectual traditions despite their divergent views. In Nepalese families also, violations against women are highly increasing despite a modern system of family.

Discrimination of Women

From the very time of birth, girl children are discriminated against in their beginning family. It is known that sons and daughters are treated differently. Regarding women, [Haralambos & Holborn \(2013\)](#) have stated that women are generally underrepresented in high-prestige jobs and positions of power, although females have children, and are mothers, spouses, and caregivers for all home tasks. Similarly, women everywhere feel discrimination; in families, girl children are provided cheaper clothes than sons/boys; daughters are sent to cheap schools but sons are sent to costly schools. Ways of dealings are also different for a son and a daughter. As a whole, women are devaluated in family and community.

[Ortner \(1974\)](#) referred to this circumstance by stating that culture is valued more highly in every community than nature. Man's ability

to govern and regulate nature is mediated through culture. The fundamental justification for the undervaluation of women is the widespread belief that culture is superior to nature. Women are thought to be less superior to males since they are perceived as being closer to nature. [Ortner \(1974\)](#)

argument is supportive of the present situation. The husband and his family relatives beat her and abuse highly thinking that she has not got any credit. Although this view was framed long ago, it seems as relevant today as it was in the past.

In Nepalese families, women have been looked at in a very narrow background. Furthermore, a daughter-in-law has no any credit in many families. Regarding this situation, [Rao \(2019\)](#) has stated that men and women have never been treated equally or given the same statuses throughout the history of the human race. Despite their desire for equality, women have not been able to live lives exactly on par with men but women face inequality, discrimination, and exploitation everywhere. As mentioned by Rao, the gender role in India and Nepal is the same because of cultural similarities. On the other hand, Swami Vivekananda has mentioned that in any community, the kind of status given to women reflects the nature of that country's cultural diversity and the degree to which its civilizational ideals have been attained; also, neither can the nation or the country that does not appreciate women ever rise to greatness [Rao \(2019\)](#). The view of Swami Vivekananda is highly acceptable. As we say human beings, it composed of both men and women so keeping women back, progress is not possible.

Theoretical Review

Theory helps to build the direction of a person's opinion about what works and how it is done. In this way, the theory applied to this study is gender inequality. Regarding this situation, [Ritzer \(2011\)](#) has stated that men and women are situated in society differently and unequally; women, in particular, receive fewer material resources, social status, power, and opportunities for self-actualization than do men who share their social location; furthermore, this inequality is caused by the way society is set up, but not by biological differences between men and women.

Liberal feminism: Similarly to the feminist theory, this study adheres to liberal feminism. According to [Ritzer \(2011\)](#) liberal feminism is the main manifestation of gender inequality theory; it asserts that women can make a case for equality with men based on a fundamental human ability for reasoned moral agency and that sexism and patriarchy are the root causes of gender inequality in the workplace. As mentioned above, liberal feminism, which asserts that women's inferior standing in society is based on uneven opportunities and isolation from males, is one of the first versions of feminism, as was previously established. This corpus of feminism, which sprang from the abolitionist and women's movements in every nation, is concerned with eradicating gender inequity.

Data Presentation and Discussion

To collect data about domestic violence and discrimination, five women were selected and they were interviewed. Their pseudo names are mentioned here. Some girl students were managed to interview them. The pseudo names of the participants are – Goma, Harikala, Janaki, Dil Kumari, and Astha.

Regarding domestic violence experienced by Goma said that she had been married to a very cruel Brahmin caste person. If she had known the person was so cruel, she would not get married to him. Her marriage was arranged marriage. There was a widow sister of her husband in the family. She always put the blame on her before her husband; and immediately, her husband would become fire with anger and used to beat her using whatever things were handy for him. He used a fist and stick to beat her. Once, after many years of torture like this, she thought it would be better to die rather than to live and be alive; thinking so, she picked up a strong rope and went to a forest to hang up and die rather than be alive with such torturous life; but some other people knew about it and stopped her from hanging and die; the people brought her home and her husband was so much afraid that he left home and did not return for some years. The reason for the domestic violence against her was his husband's sister and also her mother-in-law.

Harikala had also the same type of domestic violence in her family. Her husband was also very rude and always looked down on her with his male

superiority. True patriarchal power was visible in her family. She was almost daily beaten and given mental torture by her husband. She always lived in extreme terror and fear until the death of her husband. She rather told that she was not worried about her husband's death. It was because of the torture given to her by her husband.

Janaki reminded her sister's story and added to her story that her sister's husband was also very cruel and dangerous. According to her story, when her sister's husband had time to take food, she had to give fodder to the cattle, and the cattle had to finish eating fodder by the time he would finish eating food; and, otherwise, if the cattle would not finish eating fodder, he would beat her very harshly and dangerously. At last, she thought it difficult to stay there and left the house and family along with a son. The son was separated from her. After a few years, she died but her husband and son were alive. It was also heard that the father became harsh with his son, too.

Dil Kumari also added to her story that she got married to an educated person who had not got so much property. He had got only a mother in the family. But Dil Kumari had not known that a widow can be so much dangerous. It means that her mother-in-law was very active in the matter of domestic violence, and could not see her daughter-in-law with her eyes; she dominated her daughter-in-law- from the very time of the day of marriage; but the marriage was arranged marriage. She forced her son to abandon Dil Kumari and the reason was that Dil Kumari had not got a dowry from her parents. But her husband being an educated person and without greed for property, he could not accept his mother's force being put on him to leave his wife forever and get married to another woman. She further added that her mother-in-law managed to feed a herbal medicine with the help of a witch doctor which could stop the birth of a child so that she would be barren all her life, but she was clever and did not eat the medicine, but also the effect of touching the medicine with magic chanting of the witch doctor-affected her, and she had to take help of another witch doctor and herbalist to return her condition to give birth to a child, and now she has got a son and a daughter; they are grown up and her daughter is now married and her son has completed higher education in an Engineering program.

According to her story, when her mother-in-law could not convince her son to leave her (daughter-in-law), she stayed alone to blame both her son and daughter-in-law. Now Dil Kumari's mother-in-law is dead and she remembers the harsh situation got from her mother-in-law. But her husband was a polite and educated person so he did not follow domestic violence as forced by his mother.

Astha also told a serious story about her husband that he always used to beat her in the small matter, but her sons took favor of her and he was made a bit under control. But when he died, she says, she got some relief. Now she does not even remember him because of his habit of giving torture to her.

Findings

The above-explained data show that domestic violence is often made to the daughter-in-law and wife. This is male dominant family supported by the husband's family members, and a married woman's mother-in-law becomes jealous of her daughter-in-law thinking of her as a piece of metal object and a piece of wood, an object. In such a situation, domestic violence takes the highest strength so a married woman goes for suicide. An important finding of this study is that if a mother-in-law – becomes friendly with her daughter-in-law, all types of domestic violence can be taken into control; this is the point of a gap this research tries to fulfill; it is because, only sons and daughter-in-laws – have been on the blame because of disciplinary barriers; civil society also does not take favor of a daughter-in-law and her innocent behavior. In this way, a family becomes hell due to the high level of domination made on a daughter-in-law and a wife in the family. The main reasons for domestic violence are the greed for money to obtain from the wife's parents with the support of a husband's family members.

Conclusion

In terms of domestic violence, it can be said that an innocent girl gets into a deep hole of hell which is very difficult to cross and jump out of as well. In our community, civil society also does not make convinced people that a girl brought into a family

through the process of marriage is also a human being and should be treated as a human being, but not like an iron nail. If a married girl's mother-in-law supports her, the husband also does not dominate her. But thinking of a girl in her husband's family as good as possible is a nightmare dream so I have mentioned this situation as an unsolved responsibility. It means that events are taking place but no society goes to solve it in favor of the victims of the event, but members of the community burn a fire for such a situation.

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