

# Periodic Research

## Level of Awareness and Exercise of Legal Rights Regarding Domestic Violence among Medium and Highly Educated Hindu and Muslim Women

### Abstract

This study was carried out to compare the level of awareness about domestic violence among highly and medium educated hindu and muslim women. The tool used to conduct the research was self constructed semi structured questionnaire regarding the awareness about domestic violence. The findings indicate that there is the significant difference in the level of awareness about domestic violence between medium and highly educated hindu and muslim women both medium educated hindu and Muslim women are found aware above average to their legal rights against domestic violence. Among these also, medium educated muslim women were found more aware than hindu women which shows that the muslim women whether they are highly educated or medium educated want to take the help of law to protect themselves against the cruelties imposed on them. In the same way, datas of highly educated hindu and muslim women show that the awareness among highly educated Hindu women related to area of domestic violence is below than average while the legal awareness of highly educated Muslim women related to domestic violence is above average. So their is a significant difference between the legal awareness about domestic violence among these women.

**Keywords:** Level of Awareness, Domestic Violence, Legal Rights, Medium Educated Women, Highly Educated Women.

### Introduction

Women constitute almost half of the total world population. As compared with past women, in modern times they have achieved a lot but in reality they have to still travel a long way. Their path is full of roadblocks. If one hand she is at the peak of leader of success, on the other hand, she is mutely suffering the violence caused by her family members. Moreover, they are not safe anywhere, neither at home nor at workplace. Every hour a women is raped in India and every 93 minutes a woman is burnt to death due to dowry problem. The six ratio of India shows that the Indian society is still prejudiced against female. There are 933 females per thousand males in India according to census of 2001, which is much below the world average of 990 females.

The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few years. Through the low points of the medieval period to the promotion of equal rights by many reforms, the history of women in India has been eventful. History shows that women have never had an opportunity to express their view individually, since their freedom has always been suppressed by their immediate society. In modern India too, women have adorned high offices in India including that of a president, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of opposition etc. but, on an average, the condition of women is not satisfactory and they are still forced to bear the violence caused by society or family members.

In this regard, though there are number of legal rights enforced for the betterment of citizens of India and also to check the domestic violence against women but there seems a lack of awareness among women regarding this law.

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Domestic violence has been described as the most prevalent violation of human rights. Many women do not realize that they are living in abnormal conditions and normally blame themselves for problems in their relationship. Many of them believe that their partners have a right to use violence against them. According to the Encyclopedia of crime and justice, violence is a general term referring to all types of behaviors either threatened or actual that result in the damage or destructing of property or the injury or death of an individual. Thus violence against women serves to control and restrict women to preserve social order and becomes a means of reproducing and reinforcing male dominance at home and at the state level. Domestic violence is the most common form of violence and the most common form of domestic violence is wife assault.

Domestic violence may include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and economic abuse. Physical abuse includes inflicting or attempting to inflict physical injury and/or illness, for example grapping, pinching, shoving, slapping, hitting, hair-pulling, biting, arm twisting, kicking, punching, hitting with blunt objects, shooting, withholding access to resources necessary to maintain health, for example, medication, medical cure, wheel chair, food or fluids, sleep, hygienic assistance, forcing alcohol or other drug use, sexual abuse includes coercing or attempting to coerce. Any sexual contact without consent, for example marital rape, acquaintance rape, forced sex after physical beating, attacks on the sexual parts of the body, bestiality, forced prostitution, unprotected sex, fondling sodomy, sex with others, use of pomography. Attempting to undermine a victim's sexually, for example by treating her in a sexually derogatory manner, criticizing her sexual performance and desirability, or occurring her of infidelity and withholding sex. Psychological abuse includes instilling or attempting to instill fear, for example, intimidation, threatening physical harm to self, victim, or others, threatening to harm, blackmailing, or harassment, it also includes isolating, attempting to isolate victim from friends family, school and/or work, for example, withholding access to phone, and / or transportation, undermining victim's personal relationship, harassing others, constant checking up, constant accompaniment, use of unfounded accusation, forced imprisonment.

Emotional abuse includes undermining or attempting to undermine victim's sense of self worth, for example, constant criticism victim's abilities and competency, name-calling, insults, put down, silent treatment, manipulating the victim's feelings, and emotions to induce guilt, subverting a partner's relationship with the children, repeatedly making and breaking promises.

Economic abuse includes deprivation of all or any economic or financial resources to which the aggrieved person is entitled to under any law of custom whether payable under an order of a court or otherwise or which the aggrieved person requires out of necessity including, but not limited to, household necessities for the aggrieved person and her children,

or in the case of any property, jointly or separately owned by the aggrieved person, payment of rent related to the shared household and maintenance: disposal of household effects, any alternation of assets whether moveable or immovable, valuables, shares, securities, bonds and the like or other property in which the aggrieved person has an interest or is entitled to use by virtue of the domestic relationship.

There are many reasons for violence, but the biggest reason is economic dependence. If a woman is economically dependent then she can be exploited in many ways. As housewives, financially dependent on their husbands, they are mentally conditioned and resigned to accept mistreatment. If they have children, women are prepared, for their sake, to be abused and maltreated for fear of breaking up the family and exposing the children to financial hardships, such as lack of education, lack of a home and more, resulting in a dark future for the children.

Women's economic status is a significant predictor of the likelihood of abuse. More educated women and women who live in high-income households are less likely to be victims of abuse. Younger women, women with young children, and women who live in low-income households are more likely to be victims of intimate-partner abuse. Farmer and Tiefenthaler found that a woman's own formal schooling (college degree) and the educational attainment of women in her community lower the likelihood of being subjected to abuse. Therefore, improving women's education will likely play an important role in eliminating domestic violence.

The inferior status of women and their economic dependency confine women to a situation, where they can hardly escape domestic violence and abusive relationships. And if the family is living under economic stress then the women of the family become more of the risk of domestic violence. Violence against women particularly violence in the family is often accepted by the community at large on the basis of family honor, tradition and religion.

This study aimed at understanding and distinguishing the levels of awareness about domestic violence among medium highly educated women and highly educated women in a stranger position than medium educated women to take any steps against domestic violence. To what extent are housewives, dependent on their husbands, unable to take any steps against domestic violence. Additionally, the research explores the impact of education, economic empowerment and financial situation on levels of awareness about domestic violence.

## **Operational Definition of Keywords Used**

### **Level of Awareness**

Is operationally defined as how will the respondents were aware about domestic violence

### **Domestic Violence**

In the present study, domestic violence is taken as physical, verbal and psychological abuse committed by the husband against the wife.

## Legal Rights

The rights given to women by executing various acts or laws to protect them against crimes.

### Medium Educated Women

The women who are educated at secondary or higher secondary level.

### Highly Educated Women

The women who are graduates or post graduated / professionally qualified.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the Legal awareness regarding domestic violence among medium educated Hindu and Muslim women.
2. To compare the Legal awareness regarding domestic violence among highly educated Hindu and Muslim women.

### Hypothesis

1. There exists no significant difference in awareness of legal rights regarding domestic violence among medium educated hindu and muslim women.
2. There exists no significant difference in awareness of legal rights regarding domestic violence among highly educated hindu and muslim women.

### Method and Sample

Descriptive Survey method was used by the investigator to collect the relevant information for research. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the main features of collection of data.

### Sample

A sample of 97 highly educated Hindu women, 97 medium educated Hindu women, Highly educated Muslim women & 98 Medium educated Muslim women were selected by random purposive sampling.

### Tools Used

A self structured legal rights awareness and exercise questionnaire regarding domestic violence was used for present study.

### Statistical Technique

Mean, SD, Confidence Interval and CR used to study the awareness among medium and highly educated hindu and muslim women.

### Results and Interpretation

Awareness of legal rights related to domestic violence among highly educated Hindu and Muslim women.

Table – 1

Statistical Datas Related to Awareness of Legal Rights Related to Domestic Violence among Highly Educated Hindu and Muslim Women

S. No.	Class	Frequency of Scores among Highly Educated Hindu Women	Frequency of Scores Highly Educated Muslim Women
1	19 – 21	3	19
2	16 – 19	17	49
3	13 – 15	53	14
4	10 – 12	21	12
5	7 – 9	3	4
	Total	97	98

Table – 2

Statistical Analysis of Data

S. No.	Statistical Calculations	Frequency of Scores Among Highly Educated Hindu Women	Frequency of Scores Highly Educated Muslim Women
1	Total	97	98
2	Mean	14.02	16.20
3	SD	2.61	3.11
4	High Confidence Interval	14.31	16.55
5	Low Confidence Interval	13.73	15.85

Table – 3

CR of Status about Domestic Violence among Highly Educated Hindu and Muslim Women

Group	CR	Significance of Difference
CR between highly educated Hindu and Muslim Women	9.49	Significant

On the basis of above data, it can be predicted that the awareness among highly educated Hindu women related to area of domestic violence is below than average while the legal awareness of highly educated Muslim women related to domestic violence is above average. So their is a significant difference between the legal awareness about domestic violence among these women.

Above these data, show that highly educated hindu women are not aware about domestic violence law. So they used to bear this physical, mental and emotional harassment silently because it is difficult task to present evidences related to domestic violence. So, considering husband as a 'God' or 'Pati-Parameshwar', they do not take any legal aid or treatment against them and inspite of being victimized by husband, physically, economically, sexually, orally and emotionally they do not try to protect themselves. Although govt. has given many rights to these women against domestic violence. These women also do not know that they can file a petition against demand of any expensive thing as dowry. One more probable reason may be that they are learnt since their childhood that they should bear everything silently in their husband's house as after marriage they have to live there only. On the Contrary, legal awareness related to domestic violence act was found above average among highly educated Muslim women. These women are fully aware by the fact that they don't have to bear all kinds of violence silently because they have a right to live with dignity. The main cause behind this may be that the main source of Muslim Vidhi is Kuran' and they are learnt the 'Aayetas' v;krs. since their childhood. Besides this, on account of seeking protection with 'Mehtar' they do not bear the cruelty beyond the limit. This is the reason that on doing research of these highly educated Muslim women, they were found comparatively more aware on their rights. They also know the fact, that they can not only appeal against the husband for torturing them emotionally or physically but also they can appeal against their inlaws or relatives too on doing such things but they do not know that in this

regard, Government appoints a protection officer in each district who helps them to protect them against the violence. So, there is found a significant difference between the legal awareness of highly educated hindu and muslim women.

**Table – 4**  
**Statistical Data Related to Awareness of Legal Rights Related to Domestic Violence among Medium Educated Hindu and Muslim Women**

S. No.	Class	Frequency of Scores among Medium Educated Hindu Women	Frequency of Scores among Medium Educated Muslim Women
1	19 – 21	13	18
2	16 – 19	43	41
3	13 – 15	21	27
4	10 – 12	16	8
5	7 – 9	4	4
	Total	97	98

**Table – 5**  
**Statistical Analysis of Data**

S. No.	Statistical Calculations	Frequency of Scores Medium Educated Hindu Women	Frequency of Scores Medium Educated Muslim Women
1	Total	97	98
2	Mean	15.46	15.84
3	SD	4.36	5.89
4	High Confidence Interval	15.95	16.50
5	Low Confidence Interval	14.97	15.18

**Table – 6**  
**CR of Status about Domestic Violence among Medium Educated Hindu and Muslim Women**

Group	CR	Significance of Difference
CR between Medium educated Hindu and Muslim Women	0.76	Significant

According to this table, data manifest that both medium educated hindu and Muslim women are aware above average to their legal rights against domestic violence. Among these also, medium educated muslim women were found more aware than hindu women which shows that the muslim women whether they are highly educated or medium educated want to take the help of law to protect themselves against the cruelties imposed on them. Besides this they even do not hesitate to raise their voice against injustice on account of being immature also because they are familiar with practical life and do not come under the pressure of socially and family life. So they are more aware in this regard too. In my view, the credit of making them more aware goes to media channels, Radio, T.V. Newspaper etc. communication resources as they may get the knowledge of domestic violence act via these mediums.

## Conclusion

We often see that after marriage the newly married girl has to bear many type of taunts – such as not bringing handsome dowry, checking from service, taunting against not giving birth to a boy child etc, and thus have to bear many types of oral and emotional violence. But according to article 2(A) of this Act, this is punishable offence. Thus, Medium educated hindu and Muslim, women were found to be more aware in this regard. This also proves that education does not play the dominant role in awaring legally to these women. Because sometimes we also see that a highly educated hindu muslim woman also bears the cruelties imposed upon her and keeps silent on account of dignity or honour of her family. This should be checked and the Government, family or society should take the responsibilities of protecting our women power by making them aware of their legal rights. So that they may be aware of their legal rights..

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