Chapter - I

Domestic Violence:
A Theoretical Framework
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE : A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Violence against women is a global phenomenon. Their victimization and exploitation are very frequent in both the developed and developing countries all over the globe. The social, economic, physical, psychological and sexual exploitation of women which manifests itself in various forms of female-foeticide, infanticide, sexual abuse, incest, molestation, sexual harassment at work or on the streets, marital rape, domestic violence in the form of women assault, women battering, genital mutilation, beating for dowry etc. is nothing but to disempower/destroy the victim.

To define what exactly ‘violence’ means is not an easy task. There are different point of views regarding what constitute violence. Therefore to explain the concept of violence, different definitions of violence have been given at different sources.

The lexicon meaning of violence means,

“any physical force or any damage or injury to person or property”.

According to Chambers 21st Century Dictionary violence means -

“(a) the state or quality of being violent, (b) violent behaviour do violence to someone and something, to harm them or it physically, to spoil or ruin them or it. (c) to distort their meaning or significance”.

The Bloomsbury English Dictionary gives the meaning of ‘violence’ as-

“Physical force, the use of physical force to injure somebody or damage something threat of violence. Destructive force, extreme destructive, or uncontrollable force, especially of intensity of feeling or expression,
the violence of illegal use of unjustified force, or the
intimidating effect created by the threat of this, robbery
with violence, do violence to something to violate, harm
or damage something".3

NTC’s American English Learner’s Dictionary defines ‘violence’ as -

“rough force, forceful actions that hurt or damage
people or things” 4

While the same dictionary defines cruelty as,

“harshness, the qualities of causing pain and distress
cruel act, an act of meanness, a brutal act”.5

Black’s law dictionary defines violence as,

“Violence means unjust or unwarranted use of force
usually accompanied by fury, vehemence or outrage,
physical force unlawfully with the intent to harm”.6

Oxford dictionary and Theasaurus means violence,

“being violent, violent conduct or treatment, unlawful
use of force” 7

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary the meaning of
violence is,

“Violent conduct especially of an unlawful kind, crimes
acts, outbreaks etc.” 8

Samely, L.B. Curzon’s Dictionary of law defines, violence as,

“any conduct so that towards property as well as
towards persons and it is not restricted to conduct
causing or intended to cause injury or damage but
includes any other violent conduct”.9

The New Collin’s Dictionary and Thesaurus defines violence as,

“bestiality, bloodshed, blood-thirstiness, brutality, brute
force, cruelty, destructiveness, ferocity, fierceness,
fighting, force, frenzy, fury...”.10
According to Cambridge International Dictionary of English, the meaning of violence is,

"actions or words which are intended to hurt people, extreme force".\textsuperscript{11}

Similarly, Webster's Illustrated Contemporary Dictionary Encyclopedic Edition defines violence as,

"physical force exercised to injure, damage, or destroy, an instance of such exercise of physical force, an injurious or destructive act, intensity, severity force..".\textsuperscript{12}

Similarly, 'Encyclopaedia of Crime and Justice' defines violence as,

"Violence is a general term referring to all types of behaviour either threatened or actual that result in the damage or destruction of property or the injury or death of an individual".\textsuperscript{13}

The 'Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences' defines violence in the social context as,

"The illegal employment of methods of physical coercion for personal and group ends... which is distinct from force or power".\textsuperscript{14}

G.T. Hotaling and others in their book 'Family Abused and Its Consequences' (1988) hold that,

"Violence is an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of causing physical pain or injury to another person".\textsuperscript{15}

Gelles (1992) has also defined family violence as,

"day to day patterned and recurrent use of physical violence like pushing, stapping, punching, knifing, shooting, and throwing objects by one member of the family at another".\textsuperscript{16}
Similarly, the social psychologist Moyer defines violence as,

“A form of human aggression that involves inflicting physical damage on person or property”.\textsuperscript{17}

The operational definition of violence can include all cases of violence against women,

“Any aggressive behaviour of a person or persons hurting body or positive regard or both of another person or persons in human violence”.\textsuperscript{18}

The definition/meaning of violence through different sources makes it very clear, that the phenomenon of violence destroys the life of a person to a great extent. Thus violence means, an act, that is unjust and unlawful, that involves use of excessive force (physical) that result in the injury and damage to person and property respectively and the main characteristics of ‘violence’ as a phenomenon are,

- Illegality.
- non-justification.
- Uncontrolled.
- Results in pain and injury to the victim in extreme cases deaths also.
- It is savage without any pity or mercy.
- It is a ‘means’ to personal ‘ends’.

It is distinct from force or power due to two reasons:

(a) it is unlawful, and (b) ‘end’ is not common good.

There are different kinds of violence and domestic violence is one of them. ‘Domestic violence’ has again, very broad definitions. Generally,
domestic violence means violence within the home against a family member by other family members.

In spite of various attempts to study and define the phenomenon of the term, 'Domestic Violence' it has neither any precise definition nor universally accepted definitions. In fact its definition changes from country to country and region to region. So, it has almost various definitions and views which have been given by different scholars and sources.

Therefore, the various definitions of domestic violence help to understand the very nature of crime/violence, and the thorough understanding of these definitions is greatly required to understand the severity of the phenomenon.

According to Black’s Law Dictionary ‘Domestic violence’ means,

"Violence between members of a household usually spouses an assault, or other violent act committed by one member of a household against another".\(^{19}\)

U.N. General Assembly adopted a declaration in 1993 that define domestic violence as,

"Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, men spousal violence and violence related to exploitation".\(^{20}\)

In 1996, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Radhika Coomarswamy, submitted a report focusing on domestic violence to the commission on Human Rights. In that report she defined domestic
violence as,

“Domestic violence is violence that occurs within the private sphere, generally between individuals, who are related through intimacy, blood or law. Despite the apparent neutrality of the term domestic violence nearly always a gender specified crime perpetrated by men against women”.21

In India an attempt to draft a law to address domestic violence, the ‘Women’s Rights Initiative Of The Lawyers Collective’ evolved a legal definition which maintains that,

“Domestic violence means any act, omission or conduct which is of such a nature as to harm or injure or has the potential of harming or injuring the health, safety or well-being of the person aggrieved or any child in the domestic relationship it includes physical abuse or a threat of physical abuse, sexual abuse or a threat of sexual abuse, verbal and mental abuse, economic abuse”.22

The Government of India Bill-2002 defines domestic violence, under section 4(1) as,

“Habitual assaults or (one that) makes the life of the aggrieved persons miserable by cruelty of conduct, forces the aggrieved person to lead an immoral life or otherwise injures or harms the aggrieved person”23

Similarly, ‘Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005’ (Annexure), carries a broad definition of domestic violence which includes actual abuse or threat of abuse – physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic violence’ sections of the ‘Act’ maintains that,

“any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence in case it harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical of the
aggrieved or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce him or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other property or valuable security or has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her or otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.²⁴

The above discussed definitions of violence/domestic violence against women make it easier to understand the concept of violence, at the same time it is also that most of these definitions are shaking under some misconceptions, most of the time confused enough regarding which behaviours or manifestations should be considered violent, or what actually constitutes violence.

To sum up the various definitions, domestic violence includes the following attributes.

- Violence committed within the private sphere i.e. home.
- The victim and the perpetrator are in some way related to each other – by blood or by law.
- It harms the well being, physical and mental health of the victim as generally domestic violence is a conduct of cruelty.
- Domestic violence manifest itself in various forms, like wife battering, dowry – harassment and even dowry death, marital rape, female genital mutilations etc, which cause physical, social, mental and economic abuse.
- Domestic violence is a gender neutral term though women are the major victims.
Generally, most of the definitions of domestic violence have a narrow approach to the problem which focus only on some specific acts of violence like physical force, damage, violent treatment, use of force, physical coercion, human aggression and physical damage etc., as the acts of domestic violence.

Ideally, the areas of these definitions should be wider enough to cover all the minor or major activities which directly or indirectly lead to domestic violence. A broad definition of domestic violence must include not only physical but all types of mental, emotional, economic, social, political, behavioural and psychological violence like exploitation, the creation of an atmosphere of terror, a situation of threat in the form of verbal abuse teasing, all sorts of deprivations, obstruction imposed upon women in achieving their goals etc. Similarly various kinds of discriminations which always continue by different ways like access of medical facilities, burden of housework, care of siblings, prevention of education, isolation, little freedom of mobility, lack of personal contacts with friends and family, fear of physical assault for not performing wifely duties adequately, for not preparing meal exactly on time and for not properly taking care of child, should also come under the purview of domestic violence against women. Fear of occurrence of sexual assault both within or outside the family, sexual abuse of children, negligence of aged parents are also the forms of discrimination which ultimately lead to violence against women within the family. Similarly the perpetrators can be from ‘Natal’ and ‘Nuptial’ family.

These definitions again have a frequently wrong perceptions that domestic violence occurs only within a marital relationship with young
wives or wives for more dowry but reality presents a different picture. A woman may be of any age, she may be a girl child, unmarried daughter, sister, married daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, elderly women, mother, mother-in-law including a widow, single woman, a divorced one, women in all forms, play all the roles in the society equally are the victim of domestic violence.

There is also a false notion regarding domestic violence, which is highly required to be changed that only men are violent against women. But unfortunately women are also the victimizer of women. Women do not only practice discrimination but also are the main agents instrumental in socializing gender discrimination. Similarly in many cases of domestic violence women also play an active role to victimize the women.

Certainly, domestic violence is one of the most serious violations of women’s all basic rights manifested in various forms like foeticide, female child-killing, bride burning, dowry-murder, wife battering, witch hunting, verbal abuse and verbal rebuke. Therefore, domestic violence can well be seen as a violation of the women’s human rights like their fundamental right to live with dignity and of right to equality and equal protection of the law guaranteed under the Indian constitution.

Thus, it is catastrophic not only for the health and well being of the victim/woman at the same time it is also a tool to maintain their subjugation as a class. The worst part of the whole picture is that women of today are not safe and secure even under the four walls of their houses. They are victimized by their own protectors/caretakers that leaves no space/room for
women to raise their voices which are suppressed by their own near and dear ones. As Arun Jaitly Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs maintains the same that

"Domestic violence is in the majority of cases, violence against a woman by the members of the house where she resides. It can be husband his parents or siblings or any other resident who has the overt or covert latitude for actions that can cause physical and mental agony to the woman. But the most important aspect of this kind of violence is the fact that 'it happens behind the closed doors' and is most often denied by the very woman who has been the victim of violence. It is this aspect of crime that segregates itself from all other kinds of social violence".

Therefore, the notion of home as a protective place for women and man as a protector of women has now largely been destroyed. Men who were always and still are perceived as the protector of women are now the perpetrator of all kinds of violence and atrocities against their own women within the home. It is very unfortunate that domestic violence (wife-beating) has been identified as the major cause of injury to women in most countries of the world, and often this abuse is systematic and devastating. The same fact is also revealed by World Development Report 1993, according to which,

"In the United States domestic violence is the leading cause of injury among women of reproductive age. Between 22 and 35 percent of women who visit emergency rooms are victims of domestic violence".

According to UN report in October 2005,

"One incidence of domestic violence translates into women loosing seven working day in India".
Therefore, it can never be regarded the only loss of women rather its impact effects universally.

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 1993, defines the same consequences of violence against women as,

"Violence against women is manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women".28

The scope of the cases of ‘violence against women’ is not restricted to the threats only but it is being used in its severe forms and kinds.

One of the most significant achievements of the last decade of the last millennium was the recognition by the United Nations and a growing number of governments that domestic violence against women is a human rights issue. Credit goes to United Nations for giving a gender dimension to the definition of domestic violence. In 1993 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a declaration which very fortunately for the first time offers an official U.N. definition of gender based abused, that maintains,

“any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public and private life”.29

To sum up, the definitions of domestic violence have undergone lots of changes both in terms of acts/forms of domestic violence to actors/perpetrators of domestic violence. The broadened definition of domestic violence, its nature and impact compelled the global community to
acknowledge it as a crime, something that destroys the dignity and violates the rights of women who are worst and most common target of domestic violence. Though domestic violence is still not accepted as a crime, both by the victim as well as perpetrator, in fact it adversely affects the gender equation and negatively affects the well being of family, society and the economy.

The acknowledgement of domestic violence has destroyed many myths like man is not a protector rather a perpetrator/destroyer of the rights, dignity and well being of women; regarding ‘home’ as ‘poor mans’ castle’ is no more absolutely correct as it is equally a site of gender based opposition, exploitation and discrimination. Lastly domestic violence is a product of human cruelty and the urge to maintain male dominance and chauvinism and not a natural, religious or cultural practice since time immemorial.

**Feminist Theory : The social problem approach.**

This approach emerged during the decade of 1970s when women’s movement was on its heights. The theory looks upon ‘violence’ as male coercion of women. The forms of violence may vary from each other like various forms of violence are rape, sexual assault, female infanticide, marital rape, and female circumcision etc. This theory believes that domestic violence prevails due to unequal power relations of men and women in the society and the family. Feminist theorists never use the term such as ‘family violence’ ‘spousal abuse’ ‘marital violence’ and ‘conjugal violence’ rather they advocate terms such as ‘wife beating’ ‘domestic violence’ ‘battered women’ and ‘women abuse’ to depict the phenomenon of
The theory is critical of patriarchal structure that facilitates and supports male dominance in society, violence is a means to maintain male hegemony in the family. The consequent social structure, based on patriarchal values, male power and status, and devalues of the feminine, ultimately lead to the victimization of women. Also women’s economic dependence is identified as the major cause of subordination as well as violence against them.

The Family System Theory:

This theory emerged during the decade of 1960s to 1980s when more and more scholars and researchers began to understand and analyse domestic violence from a sociological perspective which maintains that domestic violence or spousal abuse is one form of family violence. Other forms of domestic violence include child abuse, sibling abuse and parent abuse. This theoretical perspective asserts that the cause of spouse abuse lies in the structure of the contemporary family institution which is a fertile ground for violence. Though family is a private place so it hides violence which is due to lack of control on behaviour.

Physiological Theory:

This theory focuses on nature of evolution and the genetic reasons which are responsible for violent male behaviour. It also emphasizes on brain structures, chemical imbalances, dietary deficiencies, and hormonal factors such as testosterone, for violence committed by males. Genetic and hormonal factors explain the reasons for the greater pre-disposition towards violence in men than in women.
There are also some identified theories which have same relevance for understanding violence committed by an individual. These theories can be classified on the basis of three theoretical level of analysis,

- Psychiatric or psycho-pathological analysis.
- Socio-psychological analysis and
- Sociological or socio-cultural analysis

**Psycho-Pathological Theory**:

The psycho-pathological model focuses on the personality characteristics of offenders and victims as chief determinants of criminal violence. This model includes analysis that links mental illness, alcohol and other intra individual phenomenon to acts of violence. So, according to this theory causes of violence against women arise from the offender’s psychological problem like depression, impulsiveness, uncontrolled emotions. This theory also urges that violence against women arises out of psychological problems of victims. This theory defines the characteristics of perpetrators as weak, pathologically jealous men with low self-esteem and experiencing insecurity about their masculinity.

**Socio-psychological theories**:

This model examines the types of everyday interactions, stressful situations or family interactional patterns which lead to violence. Whenever there is failure to achieve certain goal or end, frustrated perpetrator and his frustration turn into aggression. According to this theory aggression is always directed towards the source of frustration.
**Frustration-Aggration Theory:** This theory is stated by Dollard in 1939 to explain how frustration is linked to aggression. Whenever there is failure to achieve certain goal or end, perpetrator is frustrated and frustration turns into aggression. According to this theory aggression is always directed towards the source of frustration.\(^{37}\)

**Perversion Theory:**

According to Freud's early theory, 1949 perversion means essentially the persistence in the adult of infantile behaviour instead of adult behaviour. Infantile traits fail to undergo the normal process of integration during puberty but are not converted into neurotic symptoms. Violence can be the product of strong inborn derives or of pathological experiences in infancy or early childhood.\(^{38}\)

**Self Attitude Theory:**

This theory maintains that in a society culture or group that value-violence, persons of low self-esteem performs the act of violence to maintain their images in the eyes of others and themselves too.\(^{39}\)

**Motive Attribution Theory:**

This theory specifies the process used by actors to impute the motivations (dispositional state) of others. It explains how the structure of relations is such that there is a high probability of male violent intent being attributed to the actions of other individuals thereby setting in motion an escalating cycle of resentment and aggression.\(^{40}\)
The Cycle Theory of Violence and Psycho-social theory of Learned Helplessness:

Both of the theories are developed by Lenore Walker’s. The cycle theory defines three distinct cycle or phase of violence like tension building stage, the acute battering incident and kindness/living behaviour. According to this theory in first stage when minor battering occur the women adapts, rationalizes and externalizes the problem. In second phase actual battering physically, emotionally and psychologically starts, whereas third phase includes love, affection, and promises by the husband never to repeat the incidents again. This phenomenon keeps on repeating in all battered women. The psycho-socio theory of learned helplessness focuses on the factors which reinforce battered women’s victimizations. According to this theory the ‘helplessness’ of battered women compels them to accept the exploitative situations.41

Socio-cultural Theories:

This model provides a macro level analysis of criminal violence. It also examines criminal violence in terms of socially structured inequality and social and cultural attitudes and norms regarding anti-social behaviour and interpersonal relations.42

Structural Theory:

This theory is developed to represent those social groups, which have typical levels of stress, deprivation and frustration and the sources of their disposal. According to this theory, individuals who have high stress with low resources would be more aggressive. The main cause of stress is being
regarded as 'economic conditions', 'bad housing', 'poverty', lack of job
opportunities and unfavourable and frustrating work conditions.\textsuperscript{43}

**System Tension and Feedback System Theory:**

This theory is developed by Straus in 1973 to explain intra-family
violence. According to this theory violence is precipitated by factors such as
stress and inter-individual conflict and is followed by consequences which
maintain violence in family and in society.\textsuperscript{44}

**Anomie Theory:**

This theory is developed by Robert Merton in 1938. According to
this theory, some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain
persons in the society to engage in non-conformist rather than conformist
conduct. When there is a tendency to overemphasize the goals without
sufficient attention to institutional means, it leads to a willingness to use any
means to achieve the goal, regardless of their legality. The theory delineates
the relationship between one’s social position, the strain which accompanies
that position and the resulting deviant and non-deviant adaptations.\textsuperscript{45}

**Theory of subcultures of violence:**

This theory explains the life circumstances of certain groups which
compel them to commit violence. Infact violence is hidden in the values and
norms of such people. The group living in such conditions quickly use force
in inter personal relations. Those people are basically the members of slum
areas, living a disorganized family life in absolute poverty, suspicion of
other difficulty from police and fellow citizen etc. Therefore, this theory
suggests that the situations of those people compel them to commit the act of violence.46

**Resource Theory:**

This theory is developed by Goode in 1971 as the first theoretical approach to apply family violence. Goode states that all social systems rest to some degree of force or threat of violence, is used as a last resort when all the resources are exhausted to maintain or advance their interests. By applying this set of assumption to the family, Goode explain that a husband who wants to be the dominant family member but had little education, job prestige or income and lacks interpersonal skills may be likely to resort to violence to be the dominant persons.47

**Patriarchy Theory:**

This theory is developed by Dobash and Dobash in 1979 maintains that throughout the history, violence has been systematically directed towards women. Economic and social process operate directly and indirectly to support a patriarchal social order, and family structure. According to this theory, patriarchy leads to the subordination of women, supports a systematic violence against wives.48

**Social Learning Theory:**

This theory which is developed by Albert Bandura asserts that human aggression and violence are learned conduct through direct experience by observing the behaviours of others and through imitation. Individual pick up such behavioural pattern, and act like the same.49 Therefore, Steele and
Pollock (1974) and Bennie and Clare (1969) have maintained that abusive male adults are likely to have been raised in abusive homes. Being abused or ill treated as a child produces a personality disorder which socializes an individual a life pattern of violence and aggression.  

**Conflict and control Theories:**

Scholars like Foucault (1975), Thompson (19770 and Rothman (1980) have presented a domination model of deviance. They highlighted the rules imposed on the powerless by the powerful. Radical and conflict sociologists like Quinnery (1977) have argued that this attitude is to protect the interests of the dominant classes and to prevent them from pursuing their interests to monopolize it by the powerful. Similarly imposing various restrictions on women and compelling them to remain dependent on men economically, socially and emotionally is to make them realize that they are weak, powerless and ‘others’ in all respect stand as an example of this argument.  

**Exchange Theory:**

This theory integrates the key elements of the diverse theories of human violence. This theory explains the growth of resentment, anger, hostility and violence when the principle of distributive justice is violated while applying the principle of exchange theory to explain violence in family (wife-beating, dowry death, and rape by a family member) Goode suggests that force is used more by those in the poorer classes partly because they have less alternative resources and partly because their socialization experiences lead them to depend more on force.
**Interactionist Deviance Theory:**

This theory exemplified by theorists such as Erikson (1964) Becker (1963), Chuer (1971) and Lemert (1978) explains family violence in terms of sex role or gender norms, i.e. differential expectation for values, attitudes and behaviours as a function of one’s gender. According to this prevalent sex role norms, a husband expects a ‘good wife’ to run the household smoothly, ensure children’s well mannered behaviour, avoid assertiveness and remain submissive to elders in the family. When women do not behave like male’s ideal of wife, husbands use violence against them to make them conform to norms.\(^3\)

**Multi-factor Theory:**

An attempt has been made by Dr. Ram Ahuja (1998) to develop a theoretical model which would explain all types of violence against women. This model concentrates on the sociological analysis of social structural conditions. According to this model, the important condition which leads a person to women’s victimization are status, frustrations, life stresses, career crisis and structural opportunities. Therefore, the man who assaults a woman physically or mentally is often the man who either feels at a disadvantage with women or who feels at an advantageous position in demanding a specific thing from a women. He further maintains that violence is used by the people who are either frustrated or develop a superiority ego due to lack of adjustment, attachment and commitment under specific circumstances.\(^4\)

Thus domestic violence according to various theories means the following:
Domestic violence is a kind of male coercion largely a product of patriarchy. It persists in a society governed and dominated by males that values male power due to its control over economic resources.

The patriarchal structure of family creates and sustains the domestic violence.

Domestic violence is a behavioural problem as a result of male harmones like testosterone.

Violence often has roots in psychological reasons.

Stressful situations in family and society lead to frustration that manifest itself in form of violence.

People with low esteem in most of the cases take recourse to violence in order.

Domestic violence against women is most of the time a cultural practice.

The economic and physical weakness make women helpless and vulnerable to violence.

Many time stress and tension creates frustration resulting in aggressive behaviour particular in intra-family relations.

However, most of theories explaining violence against women, in fact, focus on violence in general. Though many of them are applicable in case of domestic violence against women, but there is no single theory explaining the entire ‘political economy’ of domestic violence against women.
Therefore, the various theories of violence/domestic violence against women given by a number of scholars, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists and miscellaneous investigators play a major role to reveal social, economic, psychological, religious or environmental causes/factors of violence against women etc.

Various theories of violence against women give the different notions regarding this act. Some theories believe violence against women occurs due to the social arrangement and patriarchal structure of the society which value the masculine and devalue the feminine. A society in which men hold the positions of respect and power, and plays a dominant role over women, is more fertile for domestic violence.

Some theories consider the cultural factor as the cause for crime against women which includes gender specific socialization of women in which they take their victimization very natural, as a part of their lives. Similarly cultural definition of appropriate sex roles, expectation of roles within relationships, belief in inherent superiority of males, values that give men priorities, notion of family as a private sphere under the total control of men are also considered major factors for women’s victimization.

Other theories focus more on poor economic condition of offenders, which compels them to commit crime against women. It includes persons living in absolute poverty, lack of job opportunities, unfavorable frustrating working condition and bad housing. Similarly members of slum areas living a disorganised family life in absolute poverty can also be the potential victimizer. Thus women become the soft target of alienated and frustrated individual.
Some theories consider the psychological problem of the victim as the major cause for the act of violence. According to these theories violence against women occurs due to the psychological problems of the offender like depression, impulsiveness, uncontrolled emotions, stresses, deprivation, frustration, career crises, failure in achievement of goal/rewards. Similarly other characteristics of the offender like physically weak, pathological jealous and low self-esteem are also considered as the cause for committing violence. Some theories argue that genetic characteristics of men like brain structure, chemical imbalances, dietary deficiencies and hormonal factors sometimes also encourage them to commit crime against women.

Though, undoubtedly these theories are helpful in understanding the causes of violence against women but at the same time many other related factors like legal and political have not been covered by any theory. Legal status of women either by written law and/or by practice, law regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance, legal definition of rape and domestic abuse insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary and the low level of legal literacy should also be taken as the major cause of violence against women.

There are also some political reasons, ignored by the investigators of the causes of crime against women like under representation of women in legislatures and decision making.

Similarly, the theories which consider the psychological problems of the victim as a cause of violence seem to sympathize with the offender/perpetrator who in majority of cases happen to be men not the victim.
If poor economic condition is a cause for violence against women then economically poor women are the most backward section. Rather contrary economic status/weakness is more a cause of their victimization. So, if poor economic condition is taken as a cause of violence then theoretically women should be more aggressive and violent to men than, the vive-versa

It seems as if different theories regarding violence against women wanted to make it conform that it is not the offender himself rather his social, economic, physical, cultural and environmental condition which compel him to commit crime against women.

Thus, largely it is the unlimited/unrestricted power and authority of man that encourages him to keep ‘his’ woman in such a manner as he pleases to. Therefore, committing violence against women is nothing but a matter of honour to preserve the cultural and traditional stereotypes against women.

The study of violence/domestic violence against women is a very complex issue. Therefore, any acceptable theory on violence/domestic violence should be comprehensive enough, to include both the psychological as well as the social aspects of the problem. To understand domestic violence one requires multidimensional approach in the light of psychological, cultural, social, economic and ethical aspects of the offender as well as the victims’ life. No theory can be exhaustive or universal to the extent of being applicable to all cases, in all countries and in all cultural setups.
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