INTRODUCTION
Based on consensus model, the family sociologists have treated family as contributing to stability and order which is achieved through the process of socialisation of the younger generation (Gelles, 1979; Coode, 1971; Kulkarni, 1982; Straus, 1980a). It is through familial association that social definitions and social values are transmitted from one generation to the next. It is for this reason the family has been treated as a "transmission belt" between an individual and the society. Keeping in view, the functions the family performs for the individual and the society it is treated as a basic institution of the society. Such overemphasis of its contribution for bringing about stability gives scant attention to the conflicting interests of its members which are part and parcel of the role relationships. As social system is the outcome of both associative and dissociative processes, family being a "mini society" has also both positive and negative aspects which are in built in its network of relationships.

The presence of consensus and conflict can be seen existing simultaneously in Indian family system while looking at the nature of role relationship among the members.

Husband and Wife - Conjugal relationship is marked by both cooperation and conflict. Mutual concern and dependence mark
the relationship between husband and wife. As partners they are treated as "two wheels of a cart". Sexual intimacy fosters emotional interdependence. In the ancient literature wife is treated as a man's other half (ardhangini). They are to perform all religious ceremonies together. They are supposed to enjoy the fruits of their action together. Wife is also considered to be the "glory of the home, the symbol of prosperity to the family, (the better) half of the husband, his friend, philosopher and guide. As a mother, she is superior to ten fathers, superior to anything else on earth" (Majumdar, 1980). Manu declares that the Gods are pleased with (those households) where women are held in honour (Majumdar, 1980).

Due to asymmetrical roles, conflict is also inherent in the conjugal network of relationship. Sexual division of labour provides the husband the role of a provider and the wife is made responsible for the upkeep of the household. Such a division of labour gives rise to asymmetrical relations. As and when such asymmetrical relations are challenged, marital discord occurs because men would not give up their dominant position. Even when the wife does not question her husband's absolute authority she is still abused. Mane (1991) on the basis of her analysis of ancient Indian literature reports that wives were meant to be beaten occasionally and it was a normal behaviour pattern. It was seen by the husband, often as a manifestation of his power over his wife, a right which most husbands did not omit to exercise. In most cases of wife-beating the reasons were extremely petty but related to breach of code of feminine conduct or poor performance of domestic activities.
Further, historical evidences show that not only husbands but wives also used physical force against the partner. Kautilya, while advocating seclusion of women and vigilance in the harem describes a number of instances where the queens in collaboration with their paramours and kinsmen had killed the kings (Mahajan, 1989a).

A few studies on the quality of conjugal relationship conducted recently in India have demonstrated how wives are abused by their husbands (Ahuja, 1987; Bhatti, 1989; Ganguli, 1980; Gautam & Trivedi, 1987; Grewal, 1982; Mahajan, 1986; 1989a; Mathur, 1978; Parihar, 1988; Saheli, 1986; Singh, 1985; Sood, 1989). Further, taking into account the increasing incidences of divorce, it has been noticed that a large number of women have gone for divorce because of mental and physical atrocities perpetuated by their husbands (Batra, 1990).

Parent-Child - From the ancient times, it is believed that a man is born with three debts, to sages, to gods and to ancestors and that by bramacharya (studenthood), by performing yajnas (religious rites) and by procreating sons he frees himself from these debts respectively. Birth of the child especially son enhances the status of parents. Thus parents are not only responsible for giving birth to the child but are also responsible for their proper upbringing, protection and material support. Child is dependent upon his parents for his physical, psychological and social needs and parents undergo different types of sacrifices in order to fulfil his needs.
Parents expect respect and obedience from the children in return to the sacrifices made by them for their upbringing. There are numerous examples in Indian history where sons had shown unquestioned obedience to father. Rama cheerfully gave up his kingdom and took himself to the life of an exile merely to enable his father to keep his word and Bhishma voluntarily took the vow of lifelong celibacy to remove all obstacles in the way of his father's marriage (Majumdar, 1980).

Parents use both reward and punishment to inculcate desirable behaviour pattern in the child. Sometimes due to economic strains or cultural values parents ill-treat their children. Historical evidences show the presence of infanticide, child sacrifice, child marriage and putting the child into bondage. The parents have complete control over their children. They use and abuse them the way they feel like. The child continues to suffer because of the lack of alternative social support systems and also due to potent ideology of family dependency which makes it difficult for the child to contemplate surviving outside the family. Thus it is in the family that the child is likely to be exploited most (Mahajan, 1989b).

When the child grows up and wants to establish his independence it is resented by the parents. So long as the grown up children accept their subordinate position the status quo continues from the point of view of the parents. However, when grown up children want to act on their own and question their subordinate position the conflict comes to the fore.
On the other hand there are a number of instances where children had also abused their parents. Mughal history stands as a testimony to this fact. Jahangir revolted against his father Akbar in order to establish his independent kingdom. Aurangzeb, not only tortured but also imprisoned his father, Shahjahan, in order to ascend the throne at Delhi (Chaudhary, 1984). These historical facts are further strengthened with the help of empirical studies which highlight how elderly parents are ill-treated by their children (Bhatia, 1983; Desai & Naik, 1971; Mahajan, 1987; Nair, 1980; Randawa & Bhatnagar, 1985; Sharma, 1985; Sharma et al., 1986).

Siblings - The sibling relations are marked by comradeship and mutual give and take role relationship. Love, affection and care mark the relationship between brothers and sisters. Srivastava (1974) on the basis of a comparative study in Rajasthan and Eastern U.P., refers to different folklores and folk tales which highlight affectionate bondage between brothers and sisters. Ramayana depicts the fraternal love and sacrifices of brothers. Lakshmana accompanied Rama, who was sent on exile for 14 years, sacrificing marital life and princely comforts.

Sibling relationship is also marked by discord. The elder sib may act as a father and would try to dominate the younger siblings which would be resented because they preferred comradeship. Further, as having equal right in the property, they may fight with each other to have a control over the family property. Buddhists texts like the Divyaradna and the
Sinhalese chronicles depict Asoka as a cruel and ferocious tyrant, who seized the throne after his father's death by a fratricidal war in the course of which he slew ninety-nine of his brothers (Mookerji, 1980). Mahabharata also depicts a picture of conflict and war between cousins for the sake of kingdom.

Conflict not only exists among the primary relatives but also among the secondary and tertiary relatives. In the Indian situation power dynamics play an important role in the conflicts between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law and between the sisters-in-law.

**Mother-in-law and Daughter-in-law** - Under the patrilocal rule of residence, the mother-in-law assumes the role of mother for the proper socialization of the daughter-in-law in her new house. It is through mutual interdependence that the daughter-in-law is not only socialized for her new role responsibilities but is also granted a status. The daughter-in-law in return treats her husband's parents as her own and pays them due respect (Kane, 1940).

Sometimes, however, their interests collide. The mother-in-law who plays an important role in the selection of a daughter-in-law wants to dominate her and wants to continue having control over her son, whereas the daughter-in-law who is a new entrant in the household through marriage wants to develop close association with her husband. Due to long period of association and dependency the man is more likely to side with his mother. Such a situation gives an edge to the
mother-in-law who uses different mechanisms to subdue the
daughter-in-law. Srivastva (1974) in his comparative study of
folk cultures of Rajasthan and eastern Uttar Pradesh, reports
that in both the regions usually the mother-in-law keeps severe
control over the daughter-in-law and gives her trouble.
Empirical studies of dowry related crimes against young women
have held to a large extent mother-in-law responsible. Either
the mother-in-law is the perpetrator of the violence against
the bride or the main instigator of the violence against the
bride (Das Gupta & Banerjee, 1984; Gautam & Trivedi, 1987; Ghosh,
1984; Khan & Ray, 1984; Kishwar & Vanita, 1984; Maydeo, 1989;

There is other side of the picture also. When the
mother-in-law is dependent on her daughter-in-law she becomes
the victim of the cruel behaviour of her daughter-in-law. Such
a situation is more prevalent in the cases where the old lady
is physically weak and has lost her husband. The son also
sides with his wife because he treats old mother as a liability
and feels that he has to spend his later life with his wife who
looks after his children. Thus elderly mother-in-law feels
neglected. There are certain historical instances where
daughter-in-law even connived a cunning plot to kill her
mother-in-law. Srivastva (1974) quoted folk tales from
Rajasthan and eastern Uttar Pradesh where mother-in-law was
physically tortured by daughter-in-law. A few empirical studies
which have been conducted lately indicate that when daughter-
in-law becomes powerful and mother-in-law becomes dependent,
the mother-in-law is economically, mentally and physically abused (Gursharan, 1964; Mahajan, M., 1989; Nair, 1980; Rajender Indra, 1963; Singhal, 1988).

The folk songs, the folk tales, social history and a few empirical studies stand as a testimony that both cooperation and conflict are the normal features of familial relationships. However, the presence of cooperation and conflict in the intimate relationships create a paradox. On the one hand, there is what Steinmetz and Straus (1974) have called the "Myth of family non-violence" which depicts cultural harmony and on the other hand, there seems to be social norms which grant the right to a few members to abuse other family members. Family sociologists have unfortunately overemphasized the positive aspect of familial relations and have neglected the other set of normative pattern regulating relations between family members.

During the last few decades a number of instances regarding the quality of intra-familial relationships have come to the notice of general public which have forced the sociologists to accept the dictum "family is the centre of warmth" with cynicism. A number of researches have been conducted during the last two decades and it has now been established that family has a darker side also. Family has also been seen as the source of assaults, violence and homicide. Gelles (1979) opines that people are more likely to be hit, beaten up, physically injured or even killed in their own homes by other members of the family. Other scholars have drawn the same conclusion. They contend that in the United
States of America, violent crime occurs more frequently in the home than outside. Violence perpetrated among the members of the family is more common than violence among strangers (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Freeman, 1979; Martin, 1976; Walker, 1979).

Similarly Levinson (1989) on the basis of a cross cultural study of 90 societies came to the conclusion that family violence exists in one form or the other in 75 societies. He further argues that most people in the world have been at some time either the perpetrator, or the victim of or a witness to violence between members of their family.

Family violence range from any use of force in the family setting, including sibling fights, child and elderly abuse, and spousal conflicts. Similarly, violence conveys different meanings to different persons. From the legal perspective it refers to assaultive acts that lead to visible injuries both physical and mental. Mental health professionals include both assaultive and non-assaultive acts which are injurious to the mental health of the victim. Sociologists tend to measure violence by the degree of its acceptance by the society and from the perspective of the victim, Violence indicates transgression of the level of tolerance. The Feminists include all patterns of discrimination under the category of violence. From the power dynamic perspective, violence refers to the abuse of power. Additionally, the terms 'violence' and 'abuse' have been distinguished. The term violence refers to all forms of physical aggression. While the term abuse refers to all physical and non-physical acts
that cause physical and emotional injury to the victim. Taking into account different operational definitions adopted by the researchers, they can be ranged from physical assaults to denial of freedom.

Gelles (1972) has defined family violence as 'day today patterned and recurrent use of physical violence like pushing, slapping, punching, knifing, shooting and throwing objects by one member of the family at another'.

Gelles and Straus (1979a) added 'intention or perceived intention' but family violence for them remained physical in nature. Most of the studies on family violence have limited their scope to 'physical violence' involving members of the family. These studies (Downes, 1982; Gelles & Straus, 1979a; Levinson, 1989; Miller, 1976) have overlooked verbal and psychological violence like humiliation, insult and public embarrassment.

Garbarino & Gilliam (1980) highlight four basic features of the concept of abuse in the intrafamilial relations. They are: the intentionality of the act, the effect of the act on the victim, the value judgement made about the act and the standard on which the judgement is based. Such definitions emphasise that violence, abuse, maltreatment have to be examined in a cultural context. Further, to enlarge the area of research neglect, abandonment, emotional exploitation have also been included under the label of abuse (Leonard & Jacob, 1988).
Pagelow (1984) adopted a broad concept of family violence by taking into account physical, verbal and psychological aspects of violence. He defined family violence as, "any act of commission or omission by family members and any condition resulting from such acts and inaction which deprive other family members of equal rights and liberties and/or interfere with their optimal development and freedom of choice".

These definitions have accordingly affected the nature and quality of research. The concept of family violence not only ranges from physical assault through psychological abuse to denial of freedom but also involves different network of relationships. Further, one cannot overlook the fact that different familial networks are governed by different normative patterns resulting into differential quality of interpersonal relations between them. Hence it would be problematic to club them together for explicating the nature and quality of interactions between them as well as for analytical purposes. Different familial network of relations are not only conceptually distinct but the causative factors of violence between them are also likely to be different. It is therefore, most appropriate to limit one's field of research to one network at one time. It is for these reasons that subsequent discussion revolves around marital relationship only.

Out of different intra-familial network of relations husband-wife relationship is basic on which family revolves.
The quality of interaction between husband and wife would have repercussions on the whole family. Marital happiness will not only facilitate the adult members to perform their roles effectively and efficiently but will also facilitate for the creation of the congenial atmosphere and proper socialization of the progeny. On the other hand, marital conflict will not only lead to rupture in the family but would have adverse effect on the children.

Keeping in view the importance of husband-wife relationship in the family as well as the distinctive nature of quality of interaction between them, it would be most appropriate to investigate the nature, extent and precipitating factors which lead to conflict and violence in the conjugal relationship. There are additional reasons for restricting the present study to conjugal violence. One, a large number of studies report that wife beating occurs in more societies around the world than any other type of family violence. Second, most social and behavioural scientists working in the field of family violence have conceptualized it as a unidimensional phenomenon. Third, and the most important of all is the women's lower status. Husbands use violence against wives to reinforce their dominant position because use of coercive methods by the husbands has tacit societal approval. The studies further indicate that husbands resort to this behaviour pattern because they are physically more strong and do not visualize that their wives will hit back. Further, such victims are likely to continue living in the violent marital relationship because of their economic and social dependency.
It would be most appropriate to explicate the process by which wife abuse became a social problem in the Indian context. In the patriarchal Indian society the relationship between a man and a woman as husband and wife was of asymmetrical type. Women assumed the subordinate position and were denied equal status with men. They meekly suffered discrimination, disgrace, and dehumanizing practices, e.g., female infanticide, denial of education, denial of freedom of expression, no right in the family property, sati pratha, dowry etc. Further, their economic dependence exposed them to various kinds of oppressions and exploitations. They accepted their sufferings because of the lack of alternative support system. During the 19th and 20th centuries, a number of legislative steps were taken. First, to put an end to the exploitative practices against women and secondly, to raise their position vis-a-vis men. However, such protections failed to make any visible dent in their status. Serious attempts were made to elevate their status after the independence of India. Educational facilities were made available to them and a few urban based fortunate women could take advantages of these facilities. Techno-social changes provided opportunity for women not only to get modern education but also opened up new avenues for gainful employment outside their homes. In the recent years an increasing number of educated women have started accepting occupational roles of various types. These women are now competing for various positions along with men. They work not because they have to but because they like to. This change in their orientation has
brought about a new awareness about their position as well as their resistance to exploitative social order. Equipped with modern education and economic independence they no longer accept asymmetrical marital relationship and are now claiming egalitarian way of living which implies change in the traditional role relationships between husband and wife. Men are not likely to accept the new position of the wife and may use greater force and violence to retain their traditional position. To highlight the plight of women victims, women organizations which are urban based have also started taking up such issues to create public awareness against wife abuse. In the beginning these women organizations took up the issue of abuses related to dowry, husband's violence against wife and subsequently they took up different types of exploitation of the women which were not confined to intra-familial relations, e.g., sexual harassment at work place. As the present study is confined to the dynamics of marital relationship it will suffice here to state that women organizations played a pivotal role to highlight the problem of wife abuse in the Indian society.

Review of Literature

It was during the second half of 1970's that social scientists in the West started conducting studies to find out the nature and the extent of violence against wives in the intrafamily network. Subsequently, they also tried to identify the percipitating factors which led to violent relationship between the marital partners. Based on the results of the researches
for almost two decades, the social scientists were able to work out not only the coping mechanism adopted by the victims but also different treatment programmes for the batterer and the battered. Further, a few sociologists have attempted to develop conflict tactic scale with the help of which the researcher would be able to identify the violence prone couples. Unfortunately, in India very few studies have been conducted in this area, except dowry related problems. However, from the late 1980's a few isolated attempts have been made to find out the nature of the problem as well as the precipitating factors which led to violence against wives. In review of literature I shall discuss different researches under the broad headings of incidence of violence against wives, precipitating factors and coping mechanisms. The studies conducted in India and other countries have been grouped together.

Incidence of Violence - David Levinson (1989) an anthropologist after going through the records of human relations area Files at Yale University comes to the conclusion that wife beating is the most common form of family violence around the world. In a study of 90 societies, he finds that wife beating occurs occasionally in 74.5 per cent of the societies and it never occurs or very rarely occurs in 15.5 per cent.

A number of studies have been conducted in the United States to find out the incidence of assaults against wives, the estimates of these studies vary from one study to another. The most conservative estimate suggests that 12 per cent of all
wives in The United States are physically abused by their mates each year (Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, 1980). Other studies in The United States have suggested that incidence is as high as 50 per cent (Straus, 1978) to 60 per cent (Gelles, 1974; Walker, 1979). In a representative United States Survey which was specifically conducted to measure the violent acts among the intimates with the sample of 3300 families, Straus et al. (1980) estimated that there were 3.9 million instances of spouse abuse annually. Two other surveys conducted in the United States also report alarming results. An estimated 20 per cent of the adult residents of Suffolk County, Long Island, have hit or been hit by their spouse (Nisonoff & Bitman, 1979). Szinovacz (1983) found that 26 per cent of the women had been abused in the sample of 103 couples from Pennsylvania towns.

Three state surveys conducted in the United States have focused exclusively on violence against wives. A Harris Poll of Kentucky housewives (Schulman, 1979) found that 10 per cent had been abused during the year and 21 per cent had ever been abused. A North Carolina sample revealed that 21 per cent had ever been beaten as adults by their husbands (Genteman, 1980). Finally, a probability sample of 1,210 female residents of Texas, aged 18 or older found that 8.5 per cent had been abused during the year and 29.7 per cent had been abused 'ever' (Teske & Parker, 1983).

Data from the Second National Family Violence Survey conducted in the United States (Straus & Gelles, 1986), it was
noted that in 16 per cent of the homes, some kind of the violence between the spouses had occurred in the year prior to the survey in 1986.

Some scholars are of the opinion that wife battering is quite widespread in all the cultures, though the problem is hidden away in some cultures as a "Private matter" (Seager & Olson, 1986).

Different studies have been conducted around the world as reported by Levinson (1989) which show the presence of wife beating in different societies, Bororo of Brazil (Baldus, 1937); Kpelle of Liberia (Erchak, 1984); Serbs of Yugoslavia (Erlich, 1966); Azande of Central Africa (Evans-Pritchard, 1937); Moosi of Mali (Hammond, 1964); Ojibwa of Wisconsin (Landes, 1937); Somali of Somalia, (Lewis, 1962); Ganda of Uganda, (Mair, 1940); Quechua of Evader, (Muratoria, 1981); Greece (rural), (Sanders, 1962); Hare of Canada (Savishinsky, 1976).

A number of studies have been conducted in the United Kingdom (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) which firmly establish that the wife abuse is a social problem (Hanmer, 1989; Johnson, 1985; Maidment, 1985). Small scale neighbourhood research projects aimed specifically at women, have had greater success in providing information on crimes against wives (Hanmer & Saunders, 1984; Radford, 1987), than the government sponsored national incidence surveys (Chambers & Tombs, 1984; Hough & Mathew, 1983; 1985). These Government surveys have been remarkably poor at gaining information from
woman, while non-random surveys give a tantalizing taste of the magnitude of sexual and other violent crimes against wives (Bains, 1987; Hall, 1986). Hanmer (1989) on the basis of a student of West Yorkshire in England reported 67 per cent of violence incidence against wives by their husbands within a period of one year as reported by Police Officers.

Hatty (1989) reported that in Australia, violence against wives has been most prolific in New South Wales. In another study it was found that out of 500 randomly selected sample, 106 cases reported wife abuse in New South Wales (Hatty & Sutton, 1986).

A study on 1000 families in Newzealand indicated that over a span of six years of family life the wife assault rates ranged between 8.5 per cent to 33 per cent. However, at the yearly basis the wife assault was limited to 3 per cent of cases under study (Fergusson et al., 1986).

Another study conducted in Netherland, indicates that violence against wives has become a common feature. The study does not however, indicate the extent and frequency with which such violence takes place (Zoomer, 1983). In a longitudinal study conducted on 100 catholic mestizo households in Caipi, an Ecuadorian farming community in 1976 and 1983, it was noted that wife abuse was a common feature of the community (Stolen, 1990).

Unfortunately no nationally representative sample survey has been conducted in India to find out the extent of the problem. However, a few isolated studies have been conducted
to find out the frequency of wife abuse. Grewal (1982) in a sample of 117 cases of the lower class at Chandigarh found that approximately 66 per cent of the husbands use verbal violence and approximately 33 per cent use physical violence against their wives. Singh (1985) in a study conducted in a village of Panjab found that violence in different forms existed in 50 per cent of the cases and physical violence was present in 9 per cent of the cases out of the sample of 114 cases belonging to different caste groups.

A number of studies highlighting the dowry related problems in Indian marriages have identified a number of atrocities committed against women by their husbands and in-laws (Gautam & Trivedi, 1987; Prasad, 1989; Shah, 1989; Singh & Renuka, 1989; Sugumar, 1989; Verghese, 1980).

Wife abuse is considered a private affair in the Indian society and it is difficult for the researchers to find out the extent of the problem in the general population. Hence depending upon snowballing technique a few studies have been conducted on the known cases of the battered women to find out the severity of the violence (Ahuja, 1987; Kaushik, 1989).

Taking into account the reasons for seeking divorce, Chaadhary (1989) in his study found that 17.5 per cent of the cases had filed application for divorce because of physical assaults on them by their husbands.

Bhatti (1989) while taking into account different forms of violence concluded that 88 per cent of women in lower class
were the victims of physical and verbal violence in contrast to 43 per cent from the middle class and 35 per cent from the high income class were the victims of physical violence. With regard to emotional and intellectual violence he found that the representation of the upper and middle classes was more as compared to the lower class.

To the best of my knowledge with the exception of the United States, in no other country a national sample survey on wife abuse has been conducted. Keeping in view the paucity of reliable information on wife abuse in different countries in the general population, it is difficult to give any estimate regarding the extent of the problem. Nevertheless, different studies establish that wife abuse or wife battering is quite widespread around the world. So far as the studies conducted in India are concerned, most of them are limited to self identified abused women and the concept of abuse has also been reduced to physical violence only.

II. Precipitating factors - A number of studies have been conducted to identify the precipitating factors which lead to wife abuse. Some of the scholars have attributed abuse to the personality factors either of the batterer or the battered or to both. Most of the sociologists have tried to identify the social variables which are responsible for differential behaviour pattern attributing it to socialization, normative pattern, value system, traditional sex role orientation, social class background etc. For the purpose of convenience, instead of
taking into account individual studies, different studies have been grouped together on the basis of commonality of their themes.

**Personality disorders** - Many researchers assume that identifiable psychopathology exists among the battering husbands (Ptacek, 1988) and they may often suffer from various personality disorders. They have been described as passive aggressive, obsessive compulsive, paranoid, sadistic and addiction prone (Faulk, 1977; Shainess, 1977; Snell et al., 1964) or suffering from neurological or biochemical disorders (Elliot, 1977; Schauss, 1982). These researchers are of the opinion that these personality disorders directly involve abusive behaviour. Andersen et al. (1991) reported that these personality disorders are severe and carry a negative prognosis. They imply a lack of emotional empathy for the feelings of others.

Similarly, abused women are described as aggressive, masculine, frigid and masochistic (Ball, 1977; Snell et al., 1964). Others find battered women as unassertive, shy and reserved (Weitzman & Dreen, 1982).

Straus (1980a), on the other hand, claims that it is a myth that violence is used only by mentally disturbed people. He argues that fewer than 10 per cent of all instances of family violence are caused by mental illness or psychiatric disorders. Similar views have been expressed by other researchers (Browning, 1983; Dvoskin, 1981; Stark & Flitcraft, 1988).
Gelles & Cornell (1990) argue that it is difficult to interpret behaviour of the battered women in terms of personality disorders because one never really knows whether the personality factors found in the battered wives were present before they were battered or are the result of their victimization. They further argue that personality studies of the battered women frequently use small samples or clinical samples and often fail to have comparison groups. Thus generalization from these studies is difficult and demonstrating that battered women are actually different from non-battered women is nearly impossible using these data (Gelles & Harrop, 1989).

Low self esteem and wife abuse. Many researchers suggest that batterers have low self esteem and they use violence to compensate the feelings of inadequacy and to prove masculinity (Boyd, 1978; Coleman, 1980; Gayford, 1975; Gelles, 1980; Kalmuss and Straus, 1982; Kaplan, 1972; Labell, 1979; Martin, 1976; Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981a; Straus et al., 1980; Walker, 1979, 1981). Man uses violence to compensate for his feelings inadequacy because violence can be a vehicle for achieving a more positive attitude toward the self if the individual has experienced its being subtly condoned (Johnston, 1988; Kaplan, 1972).

The battered women have also been described as having low esteem and feelings of inadequacy and helplessness (Ball, 1977; Hilberman & Munson, 1977-81; Shainess, 1977; Star et al., 1979; Walker, 1979).
Lack of assertiveness and wife abuse - Wife batterers have been described as having difficulty in expressing verbally what they think, feel and want (Ganley & Harris, 1978) and as being non-assertive both in their families and in the outside world (Browning, 1983; Ganley & Harris, 1978; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981a; Saunders, 1982; Sonkin et al., 1985). Ganley & Harris (1978) note that assaultive men appear to be poor listeners, are unable to communicate directly and confuse assertiveness with aggression. Although many batterers may have good verbal skills in some areas, such as manipulation they tend not to use these skills in expressing their feelings assertively.

Stress and wife abuse - The presence of stress, both internal and external has been found to be strongly related to the risk of wife abuse (Ganley & Harris, 1978; Gelles and Cornell, 1990; Neidig & Friedman, 1984; O'Leary et al., 1988; Straus, 1980c). These men have learned to respond to stress with attempts to control others with violence. Straus (1980c) concludes that it is not stress per se that is the cause of marital violence. Violence is but one of many responses to stress. He further argues that stress is a mediating variable that may occur in combination with other variables to make violence more likely.

Self blame and wife abuse - A number of studies have established that aggressors do not own the responsibility of their violent behaviour towards their wives. Abusive men rarely define their violence as deviant behaviour and attempt to rationalize their
behaviour through minimization, confusion, denial of attention, intoxication, loss of control and projection of blame on to women (Adams & McCormick, 1982; Bhatti, 1985, 1989; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Lata, 1989; Mahajan, 1989a; Ptacek, 1988; Shah, 1989; Saunders, 1982; Straus et al., 1980).

The battering males may induce guilt in their victims by blaming them for the abuse until they come to blame themselves. Blaming the victim is frequently used to justify the use of coercive power (Kipnis, 1976).

The victims also endorse the contention of their aggressors. They assume the responsibility and suffer from the guilt that they provoked their husbands to be violent. (Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Flemons, 1989; Hilberman, 1980; Hilberman & Minson, 1977-1981; Miller & Carol, 1983; Pagelow, 1981a). Andersen et al. (1991) argue that self blame is common in the battered women who invest more and more efforts in the relationship to make it work and blame themselves for the failure.

Pregnancy and wife abuse - Several researchers have suggested that women experience violence at unusually high rates during pregnancy. Two types of explanations are given for it (1) children are considered intruders by fathers (2) pregnant wives are perceived as unwilling or unable to retaliate to violence (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Gelles, 1972; 1988; Helton, 1985; Kaplan, 1972; Pagelow, 1981a; Stark et al., 1981; Teske & Parker, 1983; Walker, 1979).
Jealousy and wife abuse - Different studies have enumerated a number of additional factors responsible for wife beating. Sexual jealousy, a form of insecurity is a common theme in the literature on violent marriages (Bhatti, 1989; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Hilberman and Munson, 1978-81; Mahajan, 1989a; Mohan, 1989; Pagelow, 1981a; Parihar, 1989; Stacey and Shupe, 1983; Walker, 1979). The battered women have also endorsed that jealousy in one form or another was the main source of their husband's violent behaviour (Daly et al., 1982; Rounsaville, 1978; Roy, 1977; Whitehurst, 1971).

Marital satisfaction and wife abuse - Some studies indicate that violence is negatively correlated with marital satisfaction (Kratcoski, 1984; Lystad, 1982; Martin et al., 1987). On the other hand, there are some studies which indicate existence of violence in satisfied couples. There is a belief that love and violence go together (Brinkerhoff & Lupri, 1988; Byles, 1982; Dutton, 1988).

Alcohol and wife abuse - Many researches have held use of alcohol on the part of husband to be an important factor for wife abuse (Ahuja, 1987; Bhatti, 1989; Bordin, 1981; Brekke & Saunders, 1982; Coleman et al., 1980; Grewal, 1982; Hastings & Hamberger, 1988; Mahajan, 1989a; Mohan, 1989; Parihar, 1989; Shah, 1989; Singh, 1985; Snell et al., 1964).

Some research studies, however, find that although there is a strong relationship between alcohol and violence, physical
violence in families actually declined when drunkenness occurred "almost always" (Coleman & Straus, 1983). Alcohol as such is not an immediate antecedent of violence in a majority of families in which violence occurs (Kantor & Straus, 1987).

Cross-cultural studies of alcohol use and studies of marital violence suggest that alcohol itself does not lead to violence rather, men drink to have a socially acceptable excuse for violent behaviour (Gelles, 1974).

**Sex differences and wife abuse** There are many studies which suggest that females are less aggressive than males. Hence females are always victims of male aggression. Physiologists have attributed violence to genetics and hormones (Eme, 1979; Kaplan, 1972; McFarlane et al., 1954; Sears, 1961; Shaffer et al., 1980).

**Race and Wife abuse** Some studies have tried to find out association between race and wife abuse. It is argued that blacks use more violence against their wives as compared to whites (McAdoo, 1981; Straus et al., 1980; Willie, 1981). These researchers are of the opinion that there is more marital violence in blacks because they are also subject to different types of stress, discrimination and frustration. There are, however, a few studies in which it was reported that whites were more violent both inside and outside their homes (Fagen et al., 1983).
Another group of researchers argue that there is no significant difference between the proportion of black and white women who were the victims of marital violence (Casanave & Straus, 1979; Lockhart, 1987). It is further argued that race has no effect on marital violence, however, when social class positions are controlled black women experience more violence. Thus the issue of race remains enigmatic and warrants further investigation.

Social class and wife abuse - A number of studies highlight that wife beating is more common in the lower classes (Ahuja, 1987; Bhatti, 1985; Gaguin, 1978; Gelles & Cornell, 1983; 1990; Grewal, 1982; Prescott & Letko, 1977; Saunders, 1982; Young, 1963).

The use and approval of physical violence in the lower class can be explained in terms of "Culture of Poverty" (Lewis, 1959). It has been argued that for the lower class people physical violence is normal and socially transmitted behaviour pattern (Davis, 1963; Whitehurst, 1974). Lower class husbands use physical force against their wives in order to give vent to their frustrations. According to frustration aggression explanation developed by Dollard and his associates (1939) aggression should be directed against the source of frustration. However, members of the lower class cannot show their aggression against those who are highly placed hence, their aggression is displaced.
On the other hand, several studies show that wife battering cuts across the class boundaries (Berk et al., 1983; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Giles-Sims, 1983; Hilberman, 1980; Mahajan, 1989a; Martin, 1976; Star et al., 1979; Steinmetz, 1977; Straus et al., 1980; Walker, 1979; 1984).

Further, dowry related violence against women in the Indian society is a phenomenon of the middle class families. The low incidence of violence in the upper and middle classes can be attributed to their resources with the help of which they are able to keep their violence as 'private' but it does not mean that women in the middle and upper classes are free from such abuse (Gelles & Cornell, 1990; Margolin et al., 1988).

Employment status and wife abuse - Wife abuse has been found to be associated with employment status of the husband. Wife battering is more in families where the husband is unemployed (Fitch & Papantonio, 1983; Gaguin, 1978; Gayford, 1975; Lewis, 1987; Prescott & Letko, 1977; Rounsaville, 1978; Straus et al., 1980). This may be due to number of factors, loss of income may increase the batterer's stress, lack of employment may be seen as a failure to live up to his status expectation that man should be the family provider (Hornung et al., 1981; Gelles & Cornell, 1990; O'Brien, 1971) or lack of a job may increase the time spent at home, increasing the opportunity for violence. It is further argued that men who are employed part-time have even higher rates probably because they do not have full time jobs and ineligible for unemployment or other benefits (Straus et al., 1980).
Steinmetz (1977) on the other hand argues that occupational environment (rather than employment status per se) was an important stimulus to violence and survey data points that clerical, service workers or managers and professionals are at a highest risk (Gaguin, 1977; Schulman, 1979; Stark & Flitcroft, 1988). Iwarimie-Jaja (1989) however, indicates that husbands working in unskilled occupations are more likely to be abusive than those working in skilled occupations and men in professional occupations were the least abusive.

Wife abuse has also been associated with employment status of wives. It is argued that women who stay at home and do not work outside the home as paid worker are at greater risk of being abused. When women have few personal resources severity of violence against them also increases (Iwarimie-Jaja, 1989; Levinson, 1989; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983, Schwartz, 1990). Hornung et al. (1981) on the other hand reported that housewives had a lower risk of violence than employed women.

Power imbalance and wife abuse - Power imbalanced relationships are associated with spousal abuse, especially when the imbalance threatens the males power (Harris and Associates, 1979). Wife beating occurs far more often in families where all the decisions are made either by the wife or the husband (Adler, 1981; Bowker, 1983; Coleman & Straus, 1986). It is believed that wife beating tends to decrease in frequency when decision making becomes more egalitarian (Bowker, 1983; Coleman & Straus, 1986; Straus et al., 1980). Hauser (1982) however, argues that equal power is
seen as a lower position for the husband and as a higher position for the wife, as a consequence, husbands refuse to accept egalitarian way of living and violence continues.

Values and wife abuse - It is argued that violent wives as well as violent husbands express values in favour of violence than do non-violent husbands and wives (Briere, 1987; Levinson, 1989; Margolin et al., 1988; Straus, 1980b). Saunders (1982) suggests that if a man believes that use of violence is acceptable he may be less likely to internalize controls that would inhibit violence.

Traditional sex-role orientation and wife abuse - The male batterer is characterized as holding traditional sex stereotyped values (Coleman, 1980; Gelles, 1980; Rosenbaum and O'Leary, 1981; Smith, 1990; Walker, 1981; 1988). Researchers argue that violence tends to erupt when there is a clash of ideologies between traditional, conservative, patriarchal husbands and non-traditional liberated wives (Walker, 1984; Whitehurst, 1974). Traditional male sex-role socialization places strong emphasis on men being in control in all aspects of their lives and batterers tend to overidentify with these dysfunctional and stereotypic masculine values and expectations (Gondolf, 1985; Straus, 1976). They hold high expectations of their own abilities to regulate their feelings and behaviours and are often described as rigid. Their patriarchal belief system grants them privilege and power to enforce their expectations on their partners, using violence if necessary.
Social learning and wife abuse - A large number of studies show that violence is a learned behaviour. Batterers have been abused as children or they have witnessed their fathers beating their mothers and as adults they also use violence against their wives as a means to an end (Ceser, 1988; Erlanger, 1979; Freeman, 1979; Gelles, 1972; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Kalmuss, 1984; Malone et al., 1989; O'Leary, 1988; Pagelow, 1981b; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981b; Shupe et al., 1987; Straus et al., 1980; Ulbrich & Huber, 1981).

There are other researchers who do not find significant relationship between social learning and wife abuse (Emery, 1989; Gelles & Cornell, 1990; Rosenbaum & O'Leary, 1981b; Telch & Lindquist, 1984). They argue that violent background does not always predetermine a violent adulthood. Although the chances of being an offender and victim are increased if one grows up in a violent home, there are many violent people who had limited exposure to violence as children and some people who experienced extremely violent childhoods grow up to be non-violent persons (Gelles & Cornell, 1990).

The social learning model assumes that the battering male is violent with his wife in order to control her behaviour (to get rid of what he sees as aversive in her behaviour and to get her to behave as he wishes). Despite the power of the theory in accounting for wife battering, the applications of the
model have also been limited by failing to deal directly with "internal" maintaining conditions for violent marital behaviours (Emery, 1989). Instead the literature has focused rather exclusively on "external" contingencies (Emery, 1989) which is problematic because the goal of aggressive behaviour is often to inflict pain rather than to attain some external instrumental end (Berkowitz, 1983; Emery, 1989).

**Status inconsistency and wife abuse** - Status inconsistency between the spouses is also considered to be a risk factor in wife abuse. Wives having higher occupational status than husbands have high risks of being abused, particularly life threatening violence because such a situation disturbs the traditional position of the husbands (Demaris, 1987; Hauser, 1982; Hornung et al., 1981; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Mohan, 1989; Yllo, 1983). Male dominance and female subordination is viewed as normal conditions but when some inconsistency develops in the status of either husband or wife, wife abuse results (Bhatti, 1989; Briences & Gordon, 1983; Carmen, 1981; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Martin, 1979; Mohan, 1989; Moore, 1979; Norman, 1985; Parihar, 1989).

**Dependency and wife abuse** - Dependency is considered to be positively related with wife abuse. Those wives who do not have independent source of income and are psychologically more committed to their marital partners are at greater risk of being abused. Lack of any alternative support forces them to

Wife assailters have also been characterized as being extremely dependent on their partners (Bernard & Bernard, 1984; Browning, 1983; Coleman, 1980; Elbow, 1977; Faulk, 1977; Ganley & Harris, 1978; Hilberman & Munson, 1977-81; Saunders, 1982; Sonkin et al., 1985; Walker, 1979). Stordeur and Stille (1989) argue that dependency creates emotional conflicts for the batterers as they are likely to be afraid of loosing real intimacy. They fear that they will be abandoned, as a consequence when such a situation comes they become violent, homicidal or even suicidal in an attempt to prevent their abandonment.

The above noted studies on the precipitating factors leading to wife battering highlight one or the other factor. There is hardly any study which takes into account holistic approach and accounts for different precipitating factors. Further, taking into account the social definitions, one set of precipitating factors is likely to play pivotal role in one culture and another set of precipitating factors may be important in another culture. In short, the precipitating factors have to be seen in a cultural context.
Equipped with rich data on the incidence and nature of wife battering, the sociologists in America have started working out the coping mechanisms to deal with the problem of wife abuse. They not only look at the reactions of the victims but also the strategies adopted by the victims. Recently, they have also started working out the programmes for the perpetrators of violence as well as for the victims for reducing conjugal violence.

Victims' reactions - Different researchers report that victims experience a variety of reactions as a consequence of abusive behaviour of their husbands such as terror, shame, degradation, guilt, humiliation, constant anxiety, apprehension, and depression (Gelles & Harrop, 1989; Hilberman & Manson, 1977-81; Hilberman, 1980; Marsden & Owens, 1975; Schechter, 1982; Star et al., 1979; Walker, 1978; 1988).

Violence against wives has negative consequences not only for the victims but also for the whole family. In battering relationships, the women are always isolated from outside sources of social support (Boulette & Andersen, 1985; Ponzetti et al., 1982; Straus et al., 1980). Further, it leads to low self-esteem of mothers in the eyes of their children. Moreover, such families become the training grounds for young to be violent (Browne, 1988; Giles-Sims, 1983; Martin, 1976; Nicarty, 1982; Straus et al., 1980; Walker, 1979; 1981; 1984).
There is also a growing body of research that suggests that wife beating may lead directly to suicide or suicidal attempts (Back et al., 1982; Counts, 1988; Pagelow, 1984; Stark & Flitcraft, 1985). It may not be beatings per se that lead wives to kill themselves but beatings that are abusive and that bring shame to women. Mitchell (1990) explains the case of Wape women, a pacific cultural ethos where wife beating is rare experience, when it occurs, it is a humiliating experience. So suicide is a culturally accepted response and is seen as a self empowering act.

Coping with abusive behaviour - Researchers have tried to study different coping mechanisms used by the abused women to deal with abusive behaviour. Many researchers report that battered women specifically resist the notion that they should leave their battering husbands. First, because the battered women feel that they have invested too much (time, effort, money and emotions) (Brockner & Rubin, 1985; Brockner et al., 1981; Ross, 1980; Strube, 1988). Secondly, due to 'psychological entrapment' where women give exclusive value to their marriages over and above other aspects of their lives may be at risk of being battered (Dutton, 1983; Dutton & Browning, 1988; Dutton & Painter, 1981; Strube, 1988) and thirdly, battered women may suffer from "learned helplessness" in that they come to expect that no relationship exists between their actions and the outcomes. After trying and failing to prevent the abuse they may give up and become unable to learn that there is a way out of the situation (Boulette & Andersen, 1985; Walker, 1979, 1983).
Abramson et al. (1978) argue that learned helplessness is more likely when the victim of abuse attributes the abuse to internal, stable and global causes.

In addition to above mentioned reasons, other researchers have also mentioned different factors such as lack of alternative support system, self image, social stigma, dependency, presence of small children and fear of living alone and embarrassment to admit that she has stayed in such a bad situation for so long etc. which force women to remain in the violent relationship (Bhatti, 1989; Bergman et al., 1988; Chapman & Gates, 1978; Edgell, 1980; Mahajan, 1989a; Martin, 1979; Parihar, 1989; Roy, 1977; Russell and Ven, 1976; Shah, 1989; Strube and Barbour, 1983; Walker, 1979).

Some researchers argue that many abused women cope with violence by leaving the abusive relationship. It is argued that women who are employed, who get support from their family of orientation, friends and who do not have children are more likely to leave the abusive relationship (Gelles, 1976; Moore, 1979; Okun, 1988; Strube, 1988).

**Treatment for the batterers** - As the problem of domestic violence has gained recognition, some researchers have suggested different treatment programmes for the batterers such as individual therapy, marital and family therapy, psychoeducational or psychotherapeutic group approach, community intervention and anger control techniques (Adams, 1988; Adams & McCormick, 1982; Gondolf, 1985; Roberts, 1984; Rosenbaum, 1986; Sonkin et al., 1985).
One study of abusive men who had been reformed in treatment indicated that they attributed their successful treatment to learning to accept responsibility for their problems, learning to become more empathetic and learning to redefine their conceptions of manhood (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987). It is believed that such programmes are not very successful in checking the abusive behaviour of the batterers (Gondolf & Fisher, 1991; Gondolf & Russell, 1986). Bowker (1983) argues that those who do stop physical violence heighten their psychological abuse. Those who do stop their abuse and violence are likely to do so as a result of constellation of interventions.

Treatment for the victims - A variety of counselling approaches have been proposed for battered women (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988; 1991; Rieker & Carmen, 1986; Turner and Shapiro, 1986). It is suggested that women should also think about resource allocation because it not only enables them to leave abusive relationship but also helps to 'equalize' the relationship (Gondolf & Fisher, 1991).

Andersen et al. (1991) consider separation of the wife from the abusive husband as an important factor for the treatment of abuse. They also argue that the wife must not be encouraged to leave her husband until she has the resources to stay away either permanently or long enough to facilitate significant change in the husband's behaviour.
Other researchers have mentioned different counselling sessions for the battered women where the main aim is to reduce psychological dependence of victim, to reestablish her self-esteem, to combat traditional sex-role concepts, to dissuade her of beliefs that she can control the abuse and to decrease her acceptance or tolerance of the use of physical force in interpersonal disputes (Carlson, 1977; Gregory, 1976; Pagelow, 1978; Ridington, 1977-78; Straus et al., 1980; Vaugan, 1979; Walker, 1978, 1984).

Solution of the Problem - Ultimate aim of any scientific research is to suggest measures to control the problem after finding out the causative factors responsible for the existence of a social problem.

Keeping with this view, Straus (1979) with the help of 18 items of life stresses developed conflict tactics scale so that violence prone families could be identified. Efforts are being made to test the scale in different situations by various researchers.

Most of the researchers agree with the viewpoint that the root cause of wife abuse can be traced to societal values favouring use of violence and wives' objective and subjective dependency. Therefore, its solution lies in removing wives' dependency as well as bring about a change in the value system (Baum, 1987; Gil, 1979; Hotaling et al., 1988; Levinson, 1989; Linnel et al., 1984; Moore, 1979; Strube, 1988; Walker, 1979).
Absence of wife abuse - Levinson (1989) on the basis of cross cultural study in 90 societies found that in approximately 16 societies there was absence of any kind of family violence. The absence is attributed to i) equal share of husbands and wives in family decision making process ii) wives being more powerful economically iii) wives having informal support system, iv) remarriage permissible to both husband and wife v) monogamous relationship and lack of premarital sex double standards. Kumagai (1979) and Mitchell (1990) also report the similar findings in other cultural groups.

The above mentioned researches on different coping mechanisms used for the purpose of reducing family violence have been evolved by psychologists which are individual based. As these techniques do not account for social definitions, normative pattern and socialization they fail to achieve the desired results. Even when psychological health of the batterer and the battered is restored, the "cure" would have no effect if the violent couples are sent back to the same social environment which had made them violent in the first place. In other words, unless social definitions are changed and women are allowed to have egalitarian way of life, wife-abuse in one form or the other would persist.

Gaps in the available literature - The review of the literature, no doubt helps in providing a guideline for future research on wife abuse, nevertheless, these researches cannot be used as a model for the present study for a number of
reasons. First, there is no consensus among the researchers on the definition of wife abuse. Secondly most of the researchers have taken a very narrow aspect of violence, that is, physical violence and have overlooked verbal and psychological violence in the marital relationship which is sometimes more damaging than physical violence. Thirdly no study has taken holistic approach to explicate the precipitating factors of wife abuse. Fourthly, the precipitating factors have to be seen in the cultural context, hence, the results of different studies conducted in the United States may not be applicable in Indian context. Fifthly most of the studies have not used qualitative research methodology to explain violent marital relationship. It is through qualitative research only that subterranean aspect of conjugal relationship can be understood. Additionally, in the Indian context no systematic scientific study has been conducted for understanding the nature of the phenomenon. No doubt, a few empirical studies have been conducted recently but even in these studies no theoretical framework has been used to explicate the problem of wife abuse in India.

Theoretical frameworks - From the review of the literature it can be stated that scholars have used different theoretical frameworks to understand the nature and the extent of wife abuse, to identify the major social factors associated with the
problem and to suggest ways to control violence against the wives. Instead of taking all the perspectives, I will restrict my analysis to sociological perspectives only, which have caught the attention of family violence scholars. Sociological perspective embraces the microscopic as well as macroscopic levels of analysis. It is for this reason that different theoretical frameworks used by family violence scholars will be discussed under the heading of micro level perspectives, which will include resource, exchange/control and symbolic interaction, and macrolevel perspectives which will include subculture of violence, conflict, patriarchal and general systems.

Resource theory rests on the notion that decision making power in family relationships depends to a large extent on the value of resources each person brings to the relationship (Blood and Wolfe, 1960). Violence is used as a last resort to regain status quo ante (Goode, 1971). Resource theory has been revised and it has come to be called as status inconsistency theory. This perspective suggests that violence is more likely to occur when a man perceives his status inconsistent with his traditional power in the family which has been eroded because women's power has increased. He resorts to violence to compensate the loss of his power over his wife.

When this theoretical perspective was used in empirical research it produced inconsistent findings. For example, Allen and Straus (1980) provides some evidence that the more resources people have the less likely they are to commit family violence. However, Stark and McEvoy (1970) showed the opposite.
Exchange/social control theory - Drawing from general exchange theory and social control theory, Gelles (1983) proposed an exchange/social control model of family violence. Gelles (1983) argues that unlike regular social interactions, intrafamilial relations cannot be broken off easily because members take into account the profit and loss they receive from such relationship. As a consequence when family members perceive injustice in a daily interaction, they become angry and resentful as a result violence erupts. He summarizes "People hit and abuse other family members because they can". The wife tolerates violence because of her greater investment in marriage and lack of alternative resources.

This theory does not account for the possibility of any change in the husband-wife relationship and also for the changing position of women who want to enter into marital relationship to have egalitarian way of life. Further it fails to take into account the chances of the victim hitting back and use of violence leading to a loss of status.

Symbolic interaction perspective - Symbolic interactionism rests on three basic assumptions. First, social reality as it is sensed, known and understood. Interacting individuals produce and define their own definitions of the situation. Second, humans are capable of shaping and guiding their own behaviour and that of others. Third, in the course of taking their own standpoint and filling that standpoint with the behaviour of others, humans interact with one another.
Interaction is seen as an emergent, negotiated and often unpredictable concern. Interaction is symbolic because it involves manipulation of symbols, words, meanings and language (Denzin, 1989). Stryker (1967) highlighted several indications of researchable questions that can be helpful in the study of family violence through the use of symbolic interactionism. The first question deals with differential commitments to family identities. The second question for a research deals with the consequences of differential commitments. The third question for research concerns an examination of the effects of identity. The fourth research question concerns about the relationship of crisis of identity. The fifth area of research deals with role taking and the final research question is concerned with the meaning held by individuals about things and words. Gelles and Straus (1979b) suggested that symbolic interaction view of family violence would explore the different meanings of violence people hold and the consequences of such meanings in situational setting.

Unfortunately symbolic interaction approach has not been used by the researcher to understand the phenomenon of wife abuse, hence, it is problematic to speculate about its applicability in the empirical situation. Further, symbolic interactionists are inattentive to the importance of structural constraints and underestimate the extent to which choices are effectively foreclosed by given social circumstances.

Subculture of violence theory - The theory suggests that some subcultural groups develop norms and values that emphasize
the use of physical violence to a greater extent than is seemed appropriate by the dominant culture (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1982). Oscar Lewis (1959) has also explained family violence in terms of "Culture of Poverty". In certain groups, wife beating is more common because it is considered as a normal and appropriate way of behaviour. In these groups men have not been inculcated with sophisticated alternatives for resolving conflicts. For such men the most accessible targets in the intimate relationship are their children and wives. They use physical coercive methods to reduce their tension and stress.

Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1982) do not apply their thesis to violence within upper status groups. Further there are some studies which indicate that a large number of members of the lower segments of society are law abiding and on the other hand "white collar crimes" is the characteristic of the middle and the upper class.

Conflict Perspective - From the conflict perspective of conjugal violence, conflict could be viewed as one of the elements involved in social interactional processes within dyads and groups characterized by the positions of domination and submission (Steinmetz, 1978). However, the conflict perspective involves at least two distinct interpretations, drawn from two 19th century sources, Simmel and Marx. The Marxist version, modified by Dahrendorf, views intense conflict as the pervasive feature of the society itself and of social beings (Davis, 1980). Bipolar opposition of interest is the
essence of the capitalist society therefore conflict is an inevitable feature of social process. The literature on conjugal violence generally ignores this version. Family violence theorizing reflects Simmel's version of conflict. This version views conflict as one of the universal forms of social interaction. Coser and other value conflict proponents reflect Simmel's notion of conflict as simply one of the processes of social interaction (Bersani & Chen, 1988). Conflict perspective helps in understanding the conflict in the intimate relationship. When wife who is supposed to assume submissive position questions the dominant position of the male partner, the husband uses violence as a powerful option for achieving his self interests that is reinforcing his dominant position in the marital relationships (Sprey, 1974).

This perspective fails to account for those cases where husbands resort to violence even when the wives and husbands have common interest, that is harmony in the family relationships. Theoretically, what is needed is not only an enhanced understanding of intrafamily processes but also the placement of that family within the context of totality of values and beliefs with which they identify and that may set the conditions for violence. In societies in which violence is not an approved means of conflict resolution and husband is not empowered to use coercive methods violence against the spouses is absent (Levinson, 1989).

Patriarchal Perspective - Patriarchy, power dynamics and social inequality (Coleman & Straus, 1986; Dobash & Dobash, 1979;
Finkelhor, 1981; Gelles, 1974; Meiselman, 1978; Star, 1980; Straus et al., 1980) can be explained together under one heading. Wife beating tends to occur more often in either wife dominant or husband dominant families but occurs most frequently when husband controls the family decision making. It is hypothesized that the greater the degree of inequality, the greater the violence to keep wife in a subordinate position. The same explanation has been utilized by the feminists who advocate that violence against wife is the outcome of male dominance in the patriarchal social structure. It is hypothesized that the greater the demand for equality by the wife the greater will be the violence against her in the patriarchal familial system to keep the wife in the subordinate position. Hence, violence against wife is seen as a means to an end.

This explanation, however, fails to explain why most powerful uses violence against the least powerful even if his power is not challenged by the subordinate. It has another drawback of being a theory that is essentially a single factor (patriarchy) explanation of violence toward women.

General systems theory - Strauss (1973; 1980a) tried to apply a general systems theory approach to explain family violence. According to him, family violence is a product of the system rather than of individual pathology. He argues that society expects a wife to be more committed to the marital relationship, this commitment represents a positive feedback loop that encourages violence in the future.
Further, relative power of husband and wife also becomes the source of conflict. If a husband feels that he should or must have power in the relationship, he may use violence to enforce that power. A husband may also use violence as a response to a wife's attempt to break off the relationship. He further believes that if once a wife accepts violent behaviour of the husband, it provides positive feedback and there are chances that incident will be repeated again. When wife gives in, to the violent behaviour of the husband her response represents positive feedback to violence and it soon becomes an established pattern. When battered woman gets any support from her informal or formal group, it will lead to a change in the basic rules of the system. However, when she fails to get any support, pattern of violence is strengthened.

The general systems perspective fails to explain those situations in which wives fight back or they do not accept violent behaviour of their husbands in the first place. Given the size and complexity of the model it is not surprising that it has yet to be tested in its full form. Such a test would require research with individuals with families and across societies, a task beyond the resources of researchers today (Levinson, 1989).

Different theoretical perspectives discussed above indicate that sociologists are now seriously addressing themselves to the problem of family violence in general and conjugal violence in particular. They are developing micro and macro level perspectives which are expected to be
comprehensive and useful for empirical verification both quantitatively and qualitatively. Unfortunately, no theoretical framework discussed above adopts a holistic perspective with the help of which the problem of wife abuse at the individual level and at the socio-cultural level could be explicated. The discrepancy may be attributed to theorists who are eager to argue for a specific theoretical perspective or theories instead of carefully developing them so that they can be subjected to research verification. To overcome this discrepancy, recently a new conceptual framework under the broad heading of dependency framework has been evolved and is being used to understand the phenomenon of wife abuse. As sociological perspective is expected to provide both microscopic as well as macroscopic levels of analysis, dependency framework fulfills this requirement. At the microlevel it can be easily operationalized to understand the dynamics of conjugal relations and at the macrolevel it can help in understanding victimization of women at the socio-cultural level. It is for these reasons that for the present study, I propose to use dependency framework for understanding wife abuse in the Indian context.

**Dependency framework** - Dependency has been defined differently, A few scholars take into account economic, social or physical dependency. For Blenkner (1969) dependency is "a state of being not a state of mind, a state of being in which to be old - as to be young - is to be dependent". This is similar to Clark's (1969) cultural perspective on dependency. Pillemer (1985)
defined dependency as requiring assistance from another person or persons to continue living in the community. These explanations, however, give scant importance to psychological dependency.

Knopf (1975) has identified three degrees of dependency which are quite similar to those suggested by Otten and Shelley (1977) interdependency, survival dependency and excessive dependency. Foulke (1980) has drawn a scale where at one polar opposite of the continuum, there is independence and at the other polar opposite there is complete dependency. The first stage is of independency, second stage is of reciprocal dependency, third stage is of asymmetrical dependency and the final stage is of survival dependency.

Dependency designates certain conditions over which the victim has no control. These conditions may be her economic dependency or social definitions which force her to trace out her identity through her husband which make her more committed to marriage. Dependency framework has been used in three ways to explain wife abuse. In the first approach dependency is treated as a cause of wife abuse, whereas in the second it is treated as a condition forcing a woman to assume the role of the victim and thirdly the way in which partial non-dependency also results into wife abuse.

Women's social status as well as their access to various systems of resources are determined largely by their relationships to men through marriage. Women enter into marital
relations as subordinate to men as their attributes height, age, education, occupation etc. are lower than men. Further, they are trained to be submissive and trace identity through their husband. This dependency of the wife is fully exploited by the husband and he uses violence to reinforce his dominant position in the marital relationship. Hence, dependency is considered to be positively related with wife abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Marsden, 1978; Straus, 1976; Truminger, 1971; Walker, 1978). Further, dependency of husband over his wife is also treated as a cause of wife abuse (Bernard and Bernard, 1984; Coleman, 1980; Faulk, 1977; Ganley, 1981; Saunders, 1982; Sonkin et al., 1985). When husband is dependent upon his wife he resorts to physical violence because he is afraid of losing her. Thus dependency either of wife's or husband's is related to wife abuse.

There is another way in which dependency framework has been used to explain wife abuse. Marital dependency is not treated as a cause of wife abuse but as a condition which forces a battered women to continue staying in the abusive relationship. Lack of alternative support system and wife's tolerance of violence force her to continue living with violent spouse (Gelles, 1976; Martin, 1979; Roy, 1977; 1982; Strube and Barbour, 1983; Strube, 1988).

Family sociologists inspired by Marxian ideology have also used dependency framework to explain wife abuse. With partial release from dependency wife starts questioning
asymmetrical power relations which results into her abuse because she continues to remain subjectively dependent upon her husband. This framework suggests that unless women are totally free from both 'objective' and 'subjective' dependency, they would continue to be abused. However, men would resist such changes and are likely to abuse their wives but it would be only a temporary phase. In the long run, freedom from dependency would result into freedom from abuse. A new type of role relationships will develop between husband and wife based on the ideology of egalitarianism (Kalmuss & Straus, 1982).

Dependency framework suggests that wife abuse is rooted in many factors. Hence, it provides a leeway to account for cultural context. Taking into account the research studies conducted in India on wife abuse, it is quite clear that they have very limited empirical base and much of the knowledge gained so far is anecdotal. It would be appropriate to start with broad based conceptual framework and dependency framework serves this purpose.

Objectives - Keeping in view the gaps identified in the available literature on wife abuse and lack of systematic, scientific studies in India, the proposed study was undertaken with the following main objectives.

1. To find out the nature, extent and frequency of wife abuse. While exploring the nature of violence, an attempt will also be made to find out the frequency with which different types of violence namely withdrawal, verbal,
psychological and physical are used. It will also be seen which partner uses which form of violence more against the other partner. Further, it will also be seen whether different types of violence are used in combination and to what an extent.

2. To identify the correlates of physical violence used against the wives by their husbands. Under correlates different demographic variables (age at marriage of the wife, present age, number of children, sex of the children and family composition); ascribed attributes (caste & religion); and achieved attributes (education, occupation and social class) will be associated with physical violence. An attempt will also be made to find out relationship between traditional sex based roles and wife battering. Further, it will also be seen whether the presence of values in favour of use of violence instigates wife battering. Conversely, disapproval of such behaviour pattern protects her from being the victim of husband's physical violence. Additionally, an attempt will be made to find out whether dependency objective or subjective or both, is the cause or condition or instigating factor for wife abuse.

3. To explicate the coping mechanisms adopted by the victims to deal with the abusive relationship. While looking at the coping mechanisms, the reactions of the victims to different kinds of violence will be considered. Further, an attempt will be made to find out different strategies used by the victims to deal with abusive
behaviour. Additionally efforts will be made to find out as to what an extent help is sought from informal or formal agencies to put an end to the abusive relationship and to what extent these agencies, are successful in solving the problems of the abused women. Lastly, an attempt will also be made to find out the reasons for which abused women continue to stay in the abusive relationships.

Methods of conducting study - Sociologists in India for a number of reasons have remained indifferent to the phenomenon of intrafamily violence. Such indifference has resulted into very few empirical studies conducted on domestic violence in general and wife abuse in particular. A few isolated studies which have been conducted in India have very limited scope. Further in these studies no theoretical framework has been used for empirical verification. Under these circumstances, the present study is based on exploratory and descriptive designs of research to explore the nature of wife abuse.

For the present study violence refers to "an act carried out by a spouse with an intention to inflict harm or injury to the other spouse". The terms 'violence' and 'abuse' have been used synonymously. Violence has been further divided into four types; withdrawal, psychological, verbal and physical: 'Withdrawal' as a form of violence stands for "stoppage of normal communication, not eating, crying or going out of the house and drinking". 'Psychological' violence includes
"humiliation, indifference, demeaning and degrading the spouse with an intention of doing psychological damage" to the victim. 'Verbal' violence stands for "use of abusive language, or calling names or even verbal threat of resorting to physical violence". 'Physical' violence implies the use of physical force with an intent to harm or inflict injury on the other spouse. Physical violence stands for "assaulting, beating, battering, slapping, hitting, pushing and throwing objects with an intention to injure the victim".

**Universe** - The study was conducted at Chandigarh which has a population of more than six lakhs. The city is one of the few planned cities of India and is divided into different sectors. The city at present serves as a capital for the states of Panjab and Haryana and is a Union Territory as well.

**Sample** - Chandigarh, being a planned city has a housing pattern which is clearly demarcated. The living arrangement ranges from one room set to large bungalow type. For the purpose of giving equal representation to all the classes of people residing at Chandigarh, it was decided to have a purposive sample of 50 cases from each class as a preliminary step, the classes were identified according to their living arrangement. People living in one room sets or in huts were treated as belonging to the lower class. Those residing in houses consisting of two rooms were designated as belonging to working class. The middle class consisted of those persons
who were living in houses consisting of 3 to 4 rooms and the upper class stood for those who were living in the houses having 5 or more rooms. For the purpose of comparison, a purposive sample of 200 households situated in different sectors were selected giving equal representation to all the four classes identified based on their living arrangements. However, for the purpose of analysis these cases were rearranged, taking into account the education, occupation and income of the head of the household. After dividing the three variables into four categories, gamma test was used to find the association between these three variables. After having established high association between these three variables, in order to avoid further discrepancy a comprehensive index was worked out for the purpose of identifying the social class. Weightages were assigned on these three variables i.e. education, occupation and income. Individuals score could range from 3 to 12. Then the scores were arranged in ascending order to calculate quartiles in order to compute social class. The redistributed sample according to the social class background came to be 54 cases from the lower class, 46 from the working class, 74 from the middle class and 26 from the upper class (Please see Appendix I).
Techniques (Interview Schedule) - An interview schedule was constructed to collect the core data for the present study. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, different close ended questions were formulated. Interview schedule, thus prepared was pretested on two respondents of each class. The language of a few questions was redrafted in the light of the comments of the cases as well as to remove the possibility of ambiguities. The interview schedule had different sections to elicit information from the respondents. In addition to socio-economic and demographic background of the respondents and their husbands, information was also sought with regard to the constitution of their households, that is, in addition to their own children who were the other members residing with them. Further questions related to nature, extent and frequency of violence, precipitating factors of violence and coping mechanisms were also asked. There were three sections in the interview schedule which dealt with their level of traditionality, value orientation in favour or against violence and dependency.

Traditional sex based orientation - The level of traditionality of the respondents was found out with the help of eight statements to find out association between wife abuse and level of traditionality. Each statement had three response categories. The reactions 'agree' designated endorsement of traditional sex based roles. Conversely, disagreement indicated non-endorsement of traditional sex based roles. To
find out their level of traditionality scores were allocated to the reactions. Score '3' was given for agreement, score '2' for somewhat agree and for disagreement score of '1' was given. Depending upon the scores of the respondents, they were distributed into three categories, viz., high level of traditionality, medium level of traditionality and low level of traditionality (See Appendix II).

Value orientation - To explicate the role of value orientation favouring the use of violence for resolving conjugal conflict, the respondents were given a set of 12 statements. The response designating favourable attitude to the use of violence was given the score of '3' and disapproval was assigned the score of '1'. In this way, a respondent's score could range from 12 to 36. Depending upon the scores of the respondents they were accordingly divided into three categories low, medium and high (Please see appendix III).

Dependency - To understand the role of dependency in wife abuse it was divided into 'objective' and 'subjective' dependency. The level of objective dependency was found with the help of six statements, having two points scale. As objective dependency mainly dealt with factual information, dichotomous response categories in shape of 'yes' and 'No' were used. Any response which depicted the objective dependency of the respondent was assigned the score of '2' and any response indicating absence of dependency was allotted
the score of '1'. In this way, each respondent's score could range from 6 to 12. Depending upon the scores, the respondents were divided into three categories of low, medium and high (See appendix IV).

For the level of subjective dependency six statements were used having three point, scale. The responses ranged from 'agreement' to 'somewhat agree' to 'disagreement'. Depending upon the statement, scoring was done. Any response depicting the subjective dependency was assigned the score of '3' whereas non-dependency was allocated with the score of '1' and partial subjective dependency was given the score of '2'. In this way scores ranged from 6 to 18 and accordingly the respondents were divided into three categories of low, medium and high level of subjective dependency (See appendix V).

To see the effect of total dependency on wife abuse, subjective and objective dependency were grouped together under the label of 'Total dependency'. Total dependency was calculated by taking the scores of both objective and subjective dependency. The respondents were divided again into three levels of high, medium and low dependency (See appendix VI).

Case study method - For greater understanding of the problem of wife abuse, eight case histories of victims were taken who had sought help from women organizations or with the police or in the judiciary. Two cases from each social class were taken. Their detailed case studies were recorded with the
help of an interview guide. Each case study was recorded at several meetings with the victim. This technique was used to understand the developmental cycle of their married life. The temporal aspect of the cases revealed the onset of the violence, the period for which the abusive relationship continued as well as the strategies adopted by the victims to deal with the abusive situation. The case study method was used to find out the subterranean aspects of their married life. Further, the qualitative information gathered from the selected cases was also used to check the analysis based on the sample data.

Tabulation - After collecting all the information it was transferred into a code design and were entered into computer. With the help of computer, simple frequency and cross tables were made. Percentages and measures of central tendency were calculated for analysing the data and making comparisons between the groups. Gamma statistic was used to find the relationship between education, occupation and income so that 'social class' could be operationally defined. Further, different quartiles were also calculated for dividing traditionality, value orientation and dependency into different levels.

The present study is of non-probability sampling and research design is of exploratory nature, therefore statistical tests are not used for the sample data.