COPING

BEHAVIOUR
Violence against wife in one form or the other was found to be quite widespread in the cases under study. To find out the correlates of violence, the analysis is restricted to physical violence in the preceding chapter because it is felt that physical violence as a form of behaviour is different from other types of violence. Moreover, physical violence against wife was not found to be present in some families, a situation providing an opportunity to identify the factors present in the families of battered women and likely to be absent in the families of non-battered women. Physical violence against wives was found to be more common in lower class as compared with that of upper classes. However, violence of different forms was found to be quite generic, cutting across class boundaries and was also found to be present in all age groups having different attributes. Additionally, domestic violence in one form or the other is not considered seriously unless it involves homicide or physical injury against an intimate. It is commonly recognized that much of what would be called aggravated assaults, become domestic disturbances or comparably minor offences if they occur in domestic situations.

From the standpoint of the victim, violence is violence whether it is verbal, psychological or physical. Therefore
in this chapter on coping behaviour, all the victims will be considered in order to find out their reactions to violence as well as steps they take to deal with the abusive situation.

Researchers in the area of family violence in United States have spent about 20 years in understanding the nature and the extent of the problem. After identifying major social factors associated with the problem of wife abuse they have advocated different coping mechanisms for the solution of the problem.

Different researchers have given attention to develop programmes for the wife batterers, such as individual therapy (Adams, 1988; Adams & McCormick, 1982; Rosenbaum, 1986); marital and family therapy (Adams, 1988; Heppner, 1981; Weitzman & Dreen, 1982); psychoeducational or psychotherapeutic group approach (Roberts, 1984); Anger control techniques (Bilesen, 1984; Ganley & Harris, 1978; Purdy & Nickle, 1981; Saunders, 1984; Sonkin et al., 1985; Star, 1983); cognitive behaviour strategies (Emery, 1980) and coordinated programmes involving group treatment and community intervention (Gondolf, 1987; Gondolf & Hennekin, 1987).

In addition to research on batterers' treatment programmes, researches have also suggested treatment techniques for the victims (Andersen et al., 1991; Bowker, 1988; Gondolf & Fisher, 1991; Gelles & Cornell, 1990; Sedlak, 1988; Turner & Shapiro, 1986). Andersen et al. (1991) argue that separation
of the abused wife from her husband is an important factor for the treatment of abuse and ultimately for her survival and yet when she leaves her husband, she exposes herself to an ever increasing risk of violence. Thus a wife must not leave her husband until she has the resources to stay away either permanently or long enough to facilitate significant change in the husbands' behaviour. Gondolf & Fisher (1991) argue that it is the woman's separation that is the prime motivator for a man's attending counselling in the first place, once batterer "gets her back" he is much more likely to drop out of counselling and batter again.

Although different researchers in United States have started working on the solution of wife abuse, yet they are unable to reach at a consensus because most of them are naive. Gondolf & Fisher (1991) argue that there is high drop out rates in such programmes. After such programmes their battering ceases but psychological abuse hightens. Stordeur & Stille (1989) argue that patriarchal Society will not change overnight and that men in society who are reaping the rewards of violence will resist relinquishing their domination, men who attempt to give up their violence will be faced with covert and overt pressures from other men to come back in line with the attitude of masculine superiority.

The procedures advocated by these researchers may not be applicable to the Indian cultural situation. First, because the available knowledge regarding violence against wife is only
anecdotal but there is also no consensus on the definitions of wife abuse. Additionally, no national sample survey has been conducted in India to find out the extent and the severity of the problem. Under these circumstances efforts should be made to assess the nature and the extent of the problem as well as to identify the factors associated with wife abuse. Further, coping involves three sets of behaviour pattern. First, reactions to violent relationship; secondly, procedures adopted to deal with abusive relationship and thirdly, to develop mechanisms for countering violent behaviour pattern or getting freedom from abusive relationship. Because of above noted reasons I have restricted this chapter to only the reactions of the victims to different forms of violence as well as the steps they take to deal with the situation.

Section A

Husband's violence against wife is not a continuous process but revolves around relative peace and violence. There would be certain periods when the partners exhibit complete sympathy, understanding and love for each other. On other occasions the relationship would be marred with violence. Most of the women who are victims of their husbands' violence are of the view that conflicting situation in their intimate relationship is transitory. It is perhaps with this false hope that they continue living in the abusive relationship.
The perceptions of abuse by victims are likely to be different depending upon their training, life situation and availability or non-availability of alternatives. They, in turn, are likely to have ramifications on their reactions to their abusive situation. Further, their reactions are likely to be coloured by the presence or absence of other members in the household. In case, the conjugal violence takes place in the absence of other members of the family or outsiders, the victims are likely to react differently as compared with those victims who are abused in the presence of others. Victims who are abused in the presence of others are more likely to feel humiliated as they may develop a feeling of having been let down in the eyes of others. The victims are likely to react sharply even to the mildest form of abuse in case such abuse takes place in the presence of children and in-laws. In case of children, the victims may feel that their limited area of authority over children has been eroded. On the other hand, if the abuse takes place before the in-laws and outsiders, the battered women are likely to feel that they have been let down in the estimation of their in-laws and outsiders. Such victims are more likely to develop a feeling of helplessness. Before taking into account the victims' reactions to their abuse it is therefore essential to know, in whose presence their abuse had taken place.
Out of 187 cases of victims of violence, only 24 victims informed that their abuse took place in the absence of other members of the family or outsiders. It is only in these cases where violence can be labelled as a "private matter" between husband and wife. In a majority of cases (159 out of 187) their abuse took place in the presence of their children. Such a situation is likely to create a sense of powerlessness among the victims. Further it would have negative effect on the children. A number of researchers are of opinion that children who are brought up in violent families are more likely to become violent parents (Gelles, 1974; Pagelow, 1981b; Straus et al., 1980). It was only in 25 cases where women were abused by their husbands in the presence of outsiders. Such a situation is likely to create greater humiliation and shame for the victims. Approximately one-fourth of the victims were abused in the presence of their in-laws. Their abuse may be attributed not only to interference in the conjugal relationship by the in-laws.
but also depicts stronger ties with family of orientation of the husband than his family of procreation. As the respondents were allowed multiple choices it was noticed that a number of victims told that they were abused in the presence of other members of the family as well as outsiders. These are the victims who are more likely to be depressed as the charm of their married life starts fading away.

Studies conducted on wife abuse and victims reactions report a high incidence of depression among the victims. Wife abuse has been claimed to produce reactions among the victims such as "paralyzing terror" (Hilberman & Munson, 1977-81), "terrifying intimidation" (Schechter, 1983), "shame and degradation" (Marsden & Owens, 1975) and "humiliation and isolation" (Walker, 1978). A number of clinical studies report a high incidence of depression and anxiety (Hilberman, 1980; Star et al., 1979; Rounsaville & Weissman, 1978; Walker, 1978). The literature on psychological problems of battered women consistently report depression, anxiety and somatic problems. The samples of the battered women in these studies are exclusively the samples of women who come forward and seek help, hence are not the representative samples of the abused wives. It is quite probable that there may be psychologically troubled and more anxious abused wives who have not sought such help. Keeping in view the methodological shortcomings and the small size of the sample and lack of comparison group, it becomes difficult to draw any generalization with regard to
reactions of the abused women. Further, it is not known whether they have been abused on single occasion or repeatedly. Additionally, psychological distress experienced by battered women was initially thought to be responsible for their battering (Shainess, 1979; Straus et al., 1980). Recently researchers have proposed that depression, anxiety and somatic disorders reported by battered women are the consequences of their being abused rather than a cause (Gelles & Straus, 1988).

Based on Second National Family Violence Survey in United States, Gelles & Harrop (1989) examined the effects of violence against women as per the information provided by 3002 female respondents. Women who reported experiencing violence also reported higher level of depression, anxiety and somatic disorders. Such a situation has prompted these battered women to contemplate suicide and a higher percentage of them had reportedly made suicidal attempts in comparison to non-battered women.

The battered women may also develop a feeling of helplessness as they may find themselves unable to check the violent behaviour of their husbands as well as they find that social definitions are unsupportive in helping them to come out of the abusive relationship. The abused women often suffer from, what Walker calls "Learned helplessness" (Walker, 1979; 1983), in that the victims come to the conclusion that no relationship exists between their actions and the outcomes (violence). After trying and failing to prevent the abuse of their husbands they give up. In addition, learned helplessness is more likely when the victims of abuse attribute the abuse to internal, stable and
global causes (Abramson et al., 1978). There is, however, another side to this learned helplessness. The helplessness on the part of the victims is created by their perpetrators of violence. It is in this context that Kipnis (1976) opines that battering males may induce guilt in their victims by blaming them for the abuse, until they come to blame themselves. Blaming the victims is frequently used to justify use of coercive power (Adams & McCormick, 1982; Bhatti, 1985; 1989; Star, 1980; Walker, 1979). Further, the battering men arouse fear in the victims by frightening them with threat of abandonment and of physical violence and by actual physical violence of varying severity (Andersen et al., 1991). Additionally, the victims are forced to develop a feeling of powerlessness and helplessness because they find that social support system would not come to their rescue, hence they continue to suffer humiliations in silence with the hope that things may improve.

There would be a few cases who may not accept a victim's role and as a consequence of being abused by their spouses, they may develop a feeling of hatred and may also become vengeful. Keeping in view the cultural ethos and status of women in India, where a wife is expected to treat her husband as God (Pati Parmeshwar) few victims of such abuse may develop a feeling of hatred against their husbands.

In the present study an attempt was made to find out the reactions of the victims to their abuse. It was expected that
most of the victims would give their reactions which would be self directed rather than directed against the perpetrators of violence i.e. their husbands.

TABLE 4.2 The reactions of the victims to violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reactions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depressed</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humiliated</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shameful</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonely</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trapped</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred against husband</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wengeful</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note - Multiple choices were used by the victims, hence total exceeds 187 cases.

Keeping in view the reactions of the victims of different types of violence in the conjugal relationship it was noted that a majority of the cases (146 out of 187) had developed a feeling of depression. The results of the present study support the findings of Gelles & Straus (1988) and Gelles & Harrop (1989)
that high level of depression was a consequence of their being abused by their husbands.

Further, a number of respondents assumed the responsibility of provoking their husbands to be violent and hence, started blaming themselves for their abuse. These cases developed a feeling of guilt (23 cases) in them and indirectly endorsed the contention of their abusers that they had "asked for it". A number of researchers have also come to this conclusion in their studies in which the victims assumed the responsibility of provoking their husbands to be violent and suffered from the feeling of guilt (Ferraro and Johnson, 1983; Hilberman, 1980; Miller, 1983; Pagelow, 1981b). Additionally, a few respondents became afraid after having been abused by their husbands.

These were the cases who have been threatened of dire consequences by their husbands if they did not act according to their dictates. As a consequence of their abuse they became very fearful and hence, their conjugal relationship was marked with fear rather than mutual love and understanding.

As expected, a few victims blamed their husbands for their violent acts. There were only 11 cases who developed hatred against their husbands because of their violent behaviour pattern against them and three cases as an outcome of their being abused developed animosity and hostility to such an extent that they became vengeful and would like to take up some action against their perpetrators of violence. It can, thus be assumed that these cases who have developed hatred and enmity against their abusive spouses are likely to seek intervention from the
formal agencies so that they could teach a lesson to their abusers.

The above description regarding the reactions of the victims helps in concluding that in spite of being abused by the husbands, the women in India suffer in silence and do not develop a feeling of hatred against their spouses. It does not, however, mean that they have not reacted to their abuse but their reactions were self directed rather than directed against the abusers.

Section B

The second part of this chapter deals with coping behaviour pattern which the victims adopt to deal with the violence. The strategy an individual adopts depends upon one's perception of the abusive situation. The analysis of the reactions of the victims to their violence indicated two types of reactions. One, self directed and the second as 'other directed'. However, keeping in view one's training, socialization, life situations and the possibility of getting help from kin and others, one would act accordingly. It is further, envisaged that marital relationship is marked both by mutual sympathy and conflict. When two persons interact there may be a number of issues on which they think alike as well as have difference of opinion. Keeping in view the quality as well as the permanency of relationship, some incidents of dispute between the partners or sporadic incidents of conflict or violence may be accepted by the partners as part and parcel of their intimate relationship. As stated
earlier conjugal relationship is not marked with continuous conflicts and fights but there are occasions when such conflicts stop and partners have cordial relationships. Hence, the conjugal relationship revolves around love and conflict and there is a tendency on their part to overlook certain sporadic incidents of disputes. The basic assumption of exchange theory that human interaction is guided by the pursuit of reward and avoidance of punishment is not applicable to the husband-wife relationship particularly in the Indian society. Following Homans (1961) and Blau (1964), Gelles (1983) believes that an individual who provides a reward to another thereby places him or her in debt, so that the second individual must furnish benefits to the first in return. The interaction will continue if rewards come equally to both the parties, if not, it will be broken off. However, intrafamilial relations, particularly, husband-wife relationship, cannot be broken off easily. As a consequence, when a partner perceives injustice or is abused, the individual may become angry but keeping in view the social definitions and societal reactions a person may think twice before initiating any step which would permanently break off the relationship.

Each victim of abuse is likely to work out her own strategies to deal with abusive situation in the conjugal relationship. It is only when violence becomes recurrent and individual strategies fail to bring about change in the violent behaviour pattern of the spouse, the victim may feel quite helpless. It is this helplessness on the part of the victim
which would force her to seek some assistance from other persons. Frieze et al. (1980) found that members of the wife’s family are more likely to be sought out help to end battering than any other informal help source. Among the formal agencies police were likely to be approached than other formal sources. Almost similar conclusions were drawn by Pagelow (1981a, 1981b) with regard to use of formal sources. Based on in-depth interviews of the victims Bowker (1983) came to know about different techniques used by the women to get their husbands to stop battering. These techniques were clustered into three types: (a) personal strategies, including talking, promising, threatening, hiding, passive defense, aggressive defense and avoidance; b) use of informal help sources, including family members, in-laws, neighbours, friends and shelters; and (c) formal help sources, including the police, social service agencies, and lawyers and district attorneys.

It is expected that the victims would first use informal help sources before seeking formal help in case she is not able to check the violent behaviour of their husbands. Further, the help from the informal sources would not imply asking them to intervene but by sharing one’s experiences with them and seeking their advice for dealing with the abusive relationship. It was in this context that the victims were asked, whether they shared their abusive experiences with their relatives and close friends?
TABLE 4.3  Sharing of their experience of abusive marital relationship with informal sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that a majority of the victims (137 out of 187) did not share their bad experiences even with their relatives and close friends but preferred to rely upon their own strategies to deal with the abusive situation. It needs an independent study to find out the reasons as to why these cases have not shared their experiences with their informal sources for seeking their advice to tackle the abusive situation as well as the reasons why they are continuing to stay in the abusive relationship. As the scope of the present study was limited to finding out the coping behaviour pattern of the victims, the description would be limited to only those cases who have sought informal and formal help to deal with the situation.

Out of 187 victims of violence, only 50 cases shared their experiences with their informal help sources i.e. kin and close friends. Out of these 50 cases, 36 cases were the victims of physical violence of their husbands and 6 victims were adopting
"passive" and "aggressive-defence" mechanisms. In the remaining 14 cases, they were free from physical violence but were the victims of verbal and psychological violence of their husbands.

As stated earlier, when the victims' own strategies to deal with violent situation fail, they are likely to approach their informal group to seek advice to face the situation. As the victims themselves have failed, they seek their advice with the hope that by acting on their advice, they will be better equipped to change the behaviour pattern of their husbands so that they could have cordial relations with their spouses. Whenever there is a conflict between husband and wife and this conflict is brought to the notice of informal group of the conjugal unit, there would be certain persons who would show sympathy to the victims and others may take the side of the husbands. Depending upon the nature of the abuse, the reactions of the informal group are likely to vary. Further, some members of the informal group may advise the victims to patch up for the purpose of saving their marriage whereas others may simply lend lip-service but would not give any concrete advice. Still others, are likely to advise the victims either to seek help from formal agencies or to break off the abusive relationship.

TABLE 4.4 Types of advise extended by informal sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice given</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advised to patch up</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advised to seek formal help</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advised to break off</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showed no interest</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note - Restricted to only 50 cases, and the respondents were allowed multiple choices.
Data reveal that in a majority of the cases, the members of the informal group advised the victims to patch up with their spouses. Indirectly these members valued their continuation in the conjugal relations and advised them to reconcile to the situation for the purpose saving their marriage. As in the case of the victims, their informal group also endorsed the traditional values, wherein it is the wife who is expected to yield irrespective of the fact whether she is at fault or not. Just in opposition to this, ten victims were advised to seek help from formal agencies and in 8 cases the members of informal groups even advised for breaking off marital relationships. In addition to these, there were 15 cases where the victims found the attitudes of the members of their informal group not of much help because they showed indifference to their problem.

After seeking the advice of the members of the informal group the victims are not likely to translate the advice into practice irrationally and immediately. They would reevaluate their situation and would work out their own strategies to deal with the situation. To the marital partners the richest payoff of well managed conflict comes with yielding after a fight (Bach & Wyden, 1974). Any intimate relationship implies some readiness to yield one's own self interest when it clashes with that of a partner. Give and take relationship between husband and wife also implies bending one's own will to the wishes of the other. Yielding, no doubt, involves loss of self respect but those who value the relationship yielding is a small price so long as it leads to cessation of the conflict and an
improvement in the quality of the relationship. Given the lower status of women in our society, as well as the stigmatized position of the single woman, the victims are likely to take the initiative of patching up the differences because they do not like to break off the relationship permanently (Dutton & Painter, 1981; Saheli, 1981; Strube, 1988; Truninger, 1971).

It does not, however, mean that it is only the women who move first in the direction of reconciliation. In the conjugal relationship both the partners are likely to patch up if they value the relationship. The husband, the perpetrator may also realize his mistake and may become very apologetic over his behaviour pattern (Straus, 1980a). It is, therefore, expected that both the partners would take the initiative for reconciliation, however, more wives than the husbands are likely to take the first step.

### TABLE 4.5 Which partner reconciles first after the quarrel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either husband or wife</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>58.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not applicable 13 cases have been excluded.*
The data indicate that in a majority of the cases (58.82 per cent) both the partners take the initiative to patch up i.e. sometimes the husband reconciles first and at other times, it is the wife who takes the initiative for reconciliation. Either husband or wife here means that whosoever realizes his/her mistakes first takes the initiative for reconciliation. Secondly, more wives than the husbands take the first step for reconciliation. Further, out of 33 husbands who tried to reconcile first after the quarrel, 78.79 per cent were also the initiators of the quarrel whereas in cases of 44 wives who tried to reconcile first, only 59 per cent had started the quarrel, but less percentage of husbands had tried to reconcile. On the other hand, less number of wives had started the quarrel but a higher percentages of them had taken the steps for reconciliation. The results reinforce the dominant position of husbands in the conjugal relationship.

In spite of reconciliatory approach of the wives to put an end to the conjugal quarrel, it might erupt again and again and might force them to seek help from some formal agencies. Their decision to involve formal agencies in the intimate relationships is not an abrupt or a spontaneous response to one isolated violent act on the part of their spouses. Their decision is an outcome of recurrent violent behaviour of the spouses as well as based on negative experiences over a period of time. It has been argued that the battered women are in a kind of "social trap" in which an immediate pay off obscures the violent events that precede it. In this process the
relationship alternates unpredictably from periods of violence to periods of relative peace, thereby creating hope that things could be made to be alright if the women can just keep things running smoothly (Dutton & Browning, 1988; Dutton & Painter, 1981). However, when the situation escalates and goes beyond their control only then, they would venture to seek the help from the outside sources. It, however, does not mean that all the victims of their husbands' violence would seek intervention from formal sources after having failed to control the abusive behaviour pattern of their husbands. A number of victims may be ignorant about the type of the formal help available or they have developed "learned helplessness" and reconciled to their fate or they may be afraid that such intervention instead of helping them may enhance the severity of abuse against them. This is an area which needs an independent study, particularly in Indian setting where research on conjugal violence is very much limited. After having failed in their personal strategies to deal with violent situation they seek help from the informal groups. In case such help also does not yield any result and violent situation persists as a natural consequence thereof, they may seek help from the formal agencies. It is, however, expected that few victims of husbands' violence will seek intervention from formal agencies. It is in this context the victims were asked, "Had they sought help from the formal agencies for resolving the violent situation?"

It is surprising to note that out of 187 cases of husbands' violence only 16 victims had sought help from outside
formal agencies. Nine victims sought the intervention of influential persons who could have some control over their husbands and seven victims sought the help of women organizations like Panjab Istri Sabha. However, when such intervention failed to yield the desired results two victims had sought help from the legal counsellors and one case sought help from Crime Against Women Cell of the Police Department.

It would be in the fitness of the thing to explain the background of such victims who have sought help from the formal agencies. Out of 16 such cases, 14 were the victims of their husbands physical violence and among these 14 cases there were 5 victims who had also used 'defensive violence' against their violent husbands. The remaining two cases were the victims of other form of violence. It is surprising to note that out of 67 victims of battering, only 14 battered women have sought help from the formal agencies. The results of this study do not support the contention of Gelles (1976) that the greater the severity of battering, the more likely the victim would seek intervention from formal agencies. As to why the remaining cases have not sought such help can be the subject matter for another independent study. As the present study has been restricted to only those cases who sought help from the formal agencies, the subsequent analysis will be restricted to only those 16 cases.

With regard to the educational background of the victims, who sought help from formal agencies, it was found that either those respondents who were less educated or had high educational
qualifications sought such help. Out of 16 cases, 9 had education of B.A. and above. On the other hand, 6 cases who were either illiterate or had education up to Middle level sought such assistance. Although it is difficult to draw any generalization based on 16 cases yet it is safe to conclude that women who are highly educated or had lower level of education seek assistance from the formal agencies and women, who belonged to middle category had refrained from seeking such interventions. In other words, the members of the lower and upper classes (as per their educational attainment) are more likely to seek intervention in their intrafamily relationship from the formal agencies as compared to the middle category.

With regard to the working status of the victims who had sought intervention from the formal agencies, no clear cut trend was noticeable. Out of 16 cases, 5 were those who were not engaged in any paid work outside the household. In addition there were 3 cases who had lower occupational status. In contrast to these, 8 victims were engaged in occupations of medium prestige. In other words, the victims having higher educational attainment but engaged in medium prestige occupations are more likely to seek help from formal agencies.

The class background of their spouses was also checked and no distinction was found with regard to their class affiliation. These 16 cases were equally distributed in all the four social classes, however, with the exception of the victims of upper class, the cases belonging to other three classes were the victims of physical violence of their husband
and in the upper class out of 4 cases, only two were the victims of physical violence and remaining two cases were the victims of other forms of violence. In short, no clear cut association was found between the class background and seeking help from formal agencies.

With regard to the type of help advanced by these formal agencies, it was noted that in 6 cases the women organizations provided them social or moral support implying thereby, listening to their problems sympathetically and assuring them that their injustices would be vacated. In five other cases, help in the shape of counselling was extended. The women organization as well as the influential persons had a meeting with their husbands, and family of orientation of both the spouses. In these cases attempts were made to seek the assistance of the kin of both the partners for settling the dispute between the conjugal unit. One victim was helped in filing a divorce case against her husband. There were 4 victims who informed that these formal sources neither came to their rescue nor gave them any constructive advice.

To what an extent the intervention of the formal sources was helpful to the victims? In other words, were the victims able to have congenial relationship subsequent to intervention from the formal sources? Out of 16 cases, 5 victims gave the reply in affirmative. These victims contended that after the intervention from the formal agencies, their abuse at the hands of the husbands had stopped. However, out of these 5 cases
one had already sought divorce and 4 have been provided legal separation. As all these five cases were not staying with their abusive partners, they got freedom from daily quarrels and abuse. In the remaining 11 cases even after the intervention of the formal agencies their abuse has not stopped. Despite their efforts at the personal level, informal level and intervention from the formal sources their abuse continues and in the absence of other alternatives they are continuing to stay in the abusive relationship. In short, it can be concluded that intervention even by the formal agencies has not helped the victims to get freedom from violence of their spouses. They can be relieved of the abusive situation only when they leave their perpetrators. In case they become aware that leaving the abusive spouse is the best mechanism to get rid of violence but when they continue to stay with the abusive partner and suffer, one may raise the question, why do they stay with them? A number of studies have been conducted to find out answer to this question. Legal writer Elizabeth Truninger (1971) lists seven factors that help to explain why women do not break off relationships with abusive husbands. a) the women have negative self-concepts, b) they believe their husbands will reform, c) there is economic hardship, d) they have children who need a father's economic support, e) they doubt they can get along alone, f) they believe divorcees are stigmatized, and g) it is difficult for women with children to get work. Strube & Barbour (1983) argued that the more committed a woman is to the relationship the harder it is to justify psychologically that leaving is the best
decision. Similar ideas have been reported by other researchers who argue that economic, and psychological dependency, social stigma, presence of small children, lack of alternative support system and embarrassment to admit that she has stayed in such a bad situation for so long, force her to remain in violent relationship (Bergman et al., 1988; Bhatti, 1989; Kalmuss and Straus, 1982; Kertzman, 1980; Mahajan, 1989a; Parihar, 1989; Pleck, 1987; Walker, 1979). However, another group of researchers explains their stay in terms of cost and benefit. They feel that women have invested too much in the shape of time, effort and emotional involvement that they can't think of leaving the relationship (Brockner et al., 1981; 1982; Foss, 1980; Teger, 1980).

Marriage in India is not a social contract. It is not contracted to seek personal happiness from the marital relationships. Marriage is considered as a social and religious obligation. This is more true in case of Indian women whose destiny in life has been marriage and motherhood. The Indian women right from their childhood are trained to be submissive, expected to develop patience and courage to face different odds in life but not to seek separation from their spouses. Although legally she is allowed to seek divorce because of the atrocities of her husband, yet social definitions, values and norms have not undergone appropriate changes to create congenial situation for her to go for divorce if circumstances so demand. Consequently, divorce for women is still stigmatized. Under these circumstances, it is not easy for her to terminate the
marital relationship even though it is abusive. Additionally, she may be economically, psychologically and socially dependent upon her husband or she had made so much emotional investment in her marital relationship and children that she would continue to suffer rather than go for the last resort i.e. separation or divorce.

To get a clearer picture the remaining 11 cases were asked the obvious question, Why do they continue to stay in the abusive relationship? These respondents indicated different compulsions and gave a number of reasons which force them to continue staying in the abusive relationship e.g. for the sake of children, for the sake of family reputation, with the hope that things will improve one day and that they could not think of alternative way of living. The data of the present study support the contention of some researchers (Gelles, 1976; Martin, 1979; Roy, 1977, 1982; Strube and Barbour, 1983; Strube, 1988). They have also concluded that a number of conditions influence their decision to tolerate violence of their spouses and they are forced to continue living with their abusive partners.

The foregoing analysis on the reactions to husbands' violence and coping behaviour of the victims highlights subjective dependency of the Indian women to their marital relationship. This subjective dependency is the outcome of their socialization, life situations, social definitions, values and norms and lack of alternative support systems. Hence,
the objective conditions not only influence the victims' reaction to husbands' violence but also their coping behaviour pattern. Additionally, their perception that other alternative ways of living e.g. single, divorcee or separated are no substitute for married life forces them to develop tolerance to violence and they continue living with their abusive spouses with a hope that things may improve.