

## **COVID-19 and Domestic Violence : Examining the Impact of Lockdown in India**

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*With a rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases globally in the past few months since various countries started lockdown as a measure to contain the pandemic, several international organizations have raised concern about the global rise in the incidences of domestic violence. It was further validated as many countries reported a substantial increase of 15-30% distress calls, which were received from women who were confined in closed spaces with abusive partners. India is said to be no exception to it. The present paper aims to analyze the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 in India. Empirical evidence collected from 750 respondents through the unrestricted self-selected online survey using google form in May 2020 from 19 states and union territories of India shows that a little more than one-third respondents (35.1 percent) agreed that incidences of domestic violence have increased in the lockdown period. The proportion of middle-aged respondents (41.3 percent) was much more as compared to young and the aged ones among such respondents. Not only this,*

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*respondents from nuclear families were more (36.2) than joint and single-parent families.*

[**Keywords** : COVID-19, Lockdown, Domestic violence, Unrestricted self-selected online survey, Abusive behaviour]

## **1. Introduction**

The global outbreak of coronavirus since a patient in the city of the wet market of Chinese city Wuhan reported pneumonia-like symptoms on December 8, 2019, had turned into a global pandemic in 3-4 months and threatened the lives of millions of people across the globe. This virus has put the world on standstill until few weeks/months earlier. It created the World War situation across the globe as most of the countries were blaming China for this pandemic for hiding the facts and misleading WHO. At present, majority of the countries in the world are fighting the menace of coronavirus (changing its form constantly)<sup>1</sup> which has disturbed the safety, security and well-being of their citizens, besides paralyzing the economies. All the countries were forced to impose various restrictions on their own people, which probably they have not even imagined before. The world battled with COVID-19 during lockdown to save their citizens as well as economies. Hence, it becomes imperative to investigate the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 at various levels.

## **2. COVID-19 Pandemic in India at the time of Study**

India faces multiple major challenges on the COVID-19 front as its position is quite different from other countries. For example, it is densely populated : 464 people/km<sup>2</sup> compared with Italy's 206, Spain's 91, Iran's 52 and the USA's 36. It has a huge population: 1350 million (USA 330 million, Iran 83 million, Italy 60 million, Spain 46 million). Social distancing without total shutdowns is unimaginable, especially in the big cities with crowded streets, trains, buses and offices. Besides, India has a population of 1.35 billion and the largest concentration of COVID-19 cases initially had been in the metropolitan cities of New Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Chennai. According to Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, on June 30, 2020, there were 5.85 lakh cases to date in India with 17,410 deaths. The government response has included prolonged lockdown, public awareness campaign and a series of innovations including a novel smartphone application called *Aarogya Setu* for contact tracing and aiding in quarantine and related containment measures.

India reported its first case of COVID-19 in Kerala on January 30, 2020 which rose to three cases by February 3, 2020. All these affected people were students who had returned from Wuhan, China. On March 4, 2020, however 22 new cases came to light, including those of an Italian tourist group with 14 infected members. The transmission showed a steady increase during March after several cases were reported all over the country. Most of the affected people were linked to people with a travel history to affected countries like China, Italy and America etc. and since then the cases have shown a prominent increase and the graph has risen exponentially. The growing threat from the COVID-19 has prompted Indian government to try and limit contact between citizens by encouraging them to stay and work at home, closing all educational institutions, postponing exams and shutting down malls and restaurants.

Most effective measure to contain coronavirus has been the total lockdown in the world including India. A lockdown (also known as containment, locking, lock, confinement, confining, curfew and lockout) can be defined as an emergency protocol implemented by the authorities that prevents people from leaving a given area. A complete lockdown means that the people in the given area must stay where they are and must not exit or enter other areas because of an emergency due to any reason. As COVID-19 takes a firm grip over India, the central and state authorities are working in overdrive to try and curb the spread. Most of the countries including India, adopted the measure of lockdown to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Thus, a lockdown is an emergency protocol that prevents people from leaving a given area. This scenario usually allows for essential supplies. All non-essential activities remain shut for the entire period.

On March 24, 2020, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi announced in his address to the nation that the entire country would be in a complete lockdown for 21 days, limiting movement of the entire 1.3 billion population of India as a preventive measure to check the spread of coronavirus. He said it was not a curfew, but, given the seriousness of the matter, it should be treated as no less. On April 14, 2020 the Prime Minister announced that the 21-day nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19 in the country would be extended to May 3 owing to the rising number of cases.

Lockdown restrictions in India were extended for the third time under new guidelines designed to contain the COVID-19 situation in

the country with some relaxations. The central government announced that the measures would run for a further two weeks which means the lockdown was extended till May17. Authorities also introduced changes to the designated red, orange and green zoning system with restrictions eased for the parts of the country where the situation was less severe. This third phase, however, was less severe than the first two as the government had announced several relaxations. This was the time when the survey was conducted for the present study. Hence, the responses are confined only to first three phases of lockdown in India.

### **3. Clarifying the Concept of Domestic Violence**

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes. It cuts across cultural and religious barriers, impeding the right of women to participate fully in society. The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) defines violence against women as “Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (DEVAW, Article 1)<sup>2</sup>.

Violence against women takes a dismaying variety of forms, from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision. All are violations of the most fundamental human rights. This is the reason that violence against women is considered a major violation of human rights. It is also a major public health problem. A wide range of physical, mental, sexual and reproductive and maternal health problems can result from violence against women. Violence against women is associated with sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, unintended pregnancies, gynecological problems, induced abortions, and adverse pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage, low birth weight and fetal death (Mahajan and Mahajan, 2012 : 1).

Domestic Violence may be described as the situation where one adult in a relationship misuses power to control another. It is the establishment of control and fear in a relationship through violence and other forms of abuse. This is the reason that ‘domestic violence’ is synonymous with domestic abuse. It is an abuse which manifests

itself when a spouse or a family member violates another physically or psychologically. The term domestic violence is normally used for violence between husband and wife but also encompasses live-in relationships and other members of families who live together.

The term 'domestic violence' is used to describe the exploding problem of violence within homes. This type of violence is towards someone whom we are in a relationship with, be it a wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent, daughter-in-law or any other family member. It can be a male's or a female's atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. Although both men and women can be abused, but the victims are women in most of the cases. This is the reason that generally domestic violence connotes the violence against female members of the family. Children in homes where there is domestic violence are also abused or neglected. Although the woman is usually the primary target, violence is sometimes directed toward children, and sometimes toward family members and friends (Mahajan, 2020).

Domestic violence has a tendency to explode in various forms such as physical abuse and assault, sexual assault and threats or emotional abuse. Sometimes it is more subtle, like making someone feel worthless, not letting one to have any money, or not allowing one to leave the home, while in other situations it may lead to physical assault. It may be in the form of hitting or fighting or an occasional argument. Even social isolation and emotional abuse can have long-lasting effects like the physical violence which is a blatant abuse of power because the abuser (generally male member of the family) tortures and controls the victim (generally the female member of the family) by calculated threats, intimidation and physical violence.

Though domestic violence as such was not recognized by any law till the year 2005 in India<sup>3</sup>, still it has been an intrinsic part of our society since times immemorial. The contributing factors could be the desire to gain control over another family member, the desire to exploit someone for personal benefits, the flare to be in a commanding position all the time showcasing one's supremacy so on and so forth. On various occasions, psychological problems and social influence also add to the vehemence. However, domestic violence has increased in magnitude during recent decades. It is now present almost everywhere and nowhere is this eruption more intense than right behind the doors of our homes. Behind closed doors of homes all

across our country, people are being tortured, beaten and killed. It is happening in rural areas, towns, cities and in metropolitans as well. It is crossing all social classes, genders, racial lines and age groups. It is becoming a legacy being passed on from one generation to another.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 defines domestic violence as actual abuse or the threat of abuse that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional and economic. Harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to the woman or her relatives is also be covered under this definition. This act has been brought into force by the Indian government from October 26, 2006. The preamble of the Act aims at providing effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution of India who are victims of any kind of violence occurring within the family. Though it is a civil law, yet this Act also recognizes certain acts as offence, punishable with imprisonment or penalty. Breach of Protection order, has been made as cognizable and non-bailable offence.

It is quite clear that various connotations of domestic violence have certain common features : domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour (as contrasted to a single event); the abusive behaviour involves control, coercion, and/or power; the abusive behaviour may be physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and/or financial; and the victim of the abusive behaviour is a co-habiting or non-cohabiting intimate partner or spouse.

#### **4. Objective of Paper**

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of lockdown due to COVID-19 on the incidences of domestic violence in India.

#### **5. Methodology**

The universe of this study was cross sections of Indian population residing in various states and union territories of India. As the universe was very large and vague in nature, it was not possible to draw a definite sample. Unrestricted self-selected online survey was used for this study. This is a type of unrestricted self-selected survey which is used in online researches. Unrestricted, self-selected surveys are those that are open to the public for anyone to participate in (Couper, 2000, 2008). They may simply be posted on a website so that anyone browsing through may choose to take the

survey, or they may be promoted via website banners or sent through social media platforms. Regardless of how they are promoted (or not), the key characteristics of these types of survey are that there are no restrictions on who can participate, and it is up to the individual to choose to participate (opt in). Unrestricted, self-selected surveys are a form of convenience sampling.

The responses of 750 respondents from 19 states and union territories of India (Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) who sent the google form back form the sample and basis of interpretation. The data were collected in May 2020 and were subjected to analysis using SPSS package. Statistical technique of Chi-square was been used to find out the association between two variables..

## **6. An Overview of Studies**

As the history of this pandemic is hardly of one and half year, there are not many full length studies available so far in India on impact of lockdown on incidences of domestic violence. Some studies depicting psychological impact have been conducted at the initial stages. To cite a few, studies conducted by Varshney *et. el.* (2020), Khanna *et. al.* (2020), Chakraborty and Chatterjee (2020) and Dubey *et. al.* (2020) have shown that a significantly high proportion of respondents had felt a significant psychological impact during the initial stages of COVID-19 in India as the pandemic had threatened their existence and they found it difficult to adjust to the new routine. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis and lockdown related rules and restrictions have forced most of the older persons to live in isolation, with life affected adversely during.

There are few studies on impact of coronavirus on education in India. Arora and Rathi (2020), Gupta (2020), Saksham Mahajan (2020) and some others have shown that online classes are not capable of substituting classroom lectures. Network issues, lack of training, and lack of awareness remain to be the major challenges faced by the students. They have underlined the need to arrange refresher and orientation courses for the teachers for preparing E-contents and teaching students on digital mode. Even the teachers



have to take this challenge as an opportunity to go for virtual classrooms, virtual learning and teaching. Infra-structure for digital teaching in colleges and universities should be given priority for adapting to technology and virtual engagement of students. We also have to keep in mind the difficulties being faced by students of marginalized and vulnerable sections of society, who are without tools to access online classes and reliable internet and/or technology and are still struggling to participate in digital learning.

Studies, over the years, have shown a direct link between times of crisis like these and interpersonal violence. Pandemics provide for an enabling environment of fear and uncertainty that may exacerbate diverse forms of violence against women. COVID-19 pandemic is no exception to this rule as this upheaval has led the women to face the brunt of lockdown - the vital measure to contain the spread of coronavirus throughout the globe including India. The worst part of this increase of complaints of domestic violence is that the affected women were unable to access the institutional support at time crisis. Undoubtedly, the rules of mandatory stay-at-home, economic uncertainty as well as anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an increase in domestic violence.

We have witnessed an increase in domestic violence globally during COVID-19 pandemic. China, United States, United Kingdom, Brazil, Tunisia, France, Australia, and others have reported cases of increased domestic violence and intimate partner violence. According to WHO report, 1 in every 3 women in the world faces domestic violence and most of this violence is intimate partner violence and globally, as many as 38% of all murders of women are committed by intimate partners. Recently, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Director General, WHO) announced on May 5, 2020 that “sadly there are reports from some countries of increase in domestic violence since the COVID-19 outbreak began. ...Stress, alcohol consumption, and financial difficulties are all considered triggers for violence in the home, and the quarantine measures being imposed around the world will increase all three”.

Moreover, besides economic insecurity, financial instability and isolation are also some of the factors that contribute to making domestic violence even more prevalent. A UN report on *Violence against women and girls: the shadow pandemic* (2020), has stated that with 90 countries in lockdown, four billion people are now



sheltering at home from the global contagion of COVID-19. It's a protective measure, but it brings another deadly danger. We see a shadow pandemic growing, of violence against women. It analyzed the impact of COVID-19 on women, urging nation-states to include prevention of violence against women and girls as a part of their COVID-19 action plan. With a sharp increase in domestic violence cases across the world, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, has termed this increase in violence as a "shadow pandemic". Violence against women is a human rights violation that takes place every single day around the world.

Lockdown has caged the women in homes where they are placed in the situation where it is difficult to seek help or support from the outside world. However, it may be noted that women worldwide (including India) consider informal channels as their first point-of-reporting in the case of domestic violence. The first respondent is often the family and the police the last (Jacob and Chattopadhyay, 2019). The series of COVID-19 lockdowns in India diminished the opportunities of reporting of domestic violence cases. Factors like restricted movement, handicapped mediums of communication, reduced contact with the natal family, unavailability of the formal support system etc. are said to be responsible for under-reporting in this situation.

India, infamous for gender-based violence, who ranked at the fourth worst country for gender equality according to public perception, also showed similar trends. This has been validated by many studies (Kumar, Mehta and Mehta, 2020; Das, Das and Mandal, 2020; Krishnakumar and Verma, 2020; Arora and Kumar, 2020 etc. among many others). All these studies have concluded that not only domestic violence has increased due to lockdown in India as well as all over the world, but has also emerged as a big public health threats that concerns all of us.<sup>5</sup>

The NCW monthly data spoke some alternate truth for initial months of lockdown in India. It showed an overall decrease in the complaints received during the months of lockdown in comparison to even the initial months of 2020 (Complaints received were 538 in January 2020, 523 in February 2020, 501 in March 2020 and 377 in April 2020).<sup>1</sup> Not only this, in order to step-up its outreach for women facing domestic violence in their homes during the lockdown, the NCW also launched a dedicated WhatsApp SOS alert number for

those who are unable to reach out through emails and social media. However, the gradual relaxation of the lockdown saw a subsequent surge in the complaints. While 552 complaints were recorded in the month of May, June saw over 730 complaints. This data showed that while the concern of a rapid increase in the domestic violence cases during the lockdown was valid, the instances were not actively reported. In an interview with NDTV, Rekha Sharma (Director, National Commission for Women) informed that there is an increase in the number of domestic violence complaints received by NCW.

Thirumurthy and Parasa (2020) hold that victims of domestic violence have even more hurdles in seeking help during the lockdown as their abusers are always present at home. They have substantiated their point by quoting Swetha Shankar (Director, Client Services at International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC)) in Tamil Nadu, who pointed out that the lockdown may be able to prevent or slow down the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

It is evident that still there are few empirical studies on the impact of coronavirus on families. Hence, this study is an important one and is likely to provide impetus to all those concerned with the impact of coronavirus on violence against women in Indian society to undertake such investigations after the pandemic is over.

## **7. Lockdown due to COVID-19 and Violence against Women : The Empirical Evidence**

With a rapid increase in the number of COVID-19 cases across the world in the past, several international organizations took cognizance of a global rise in domestic violence incidences as a result of physical distancing (also initially called social distancing) regulations and subsequent lockdowns. It is said that many countries have reported a 15-30% hike in the number of distress calls received from women who were confined in closed spaces with abusive partners. This percentage may be quite less as unfortunately, domestic violence cases are underreported across the world, especially in times of global emergencies like COVID-19. India is no exception to it. It is held that the grasp of domestic violence perpetrators has tightened in times of the pandemic in India too. Not only this, abuse victims were distanced from their regular support systems making it difficult for them to call out for help.

In this light, the data collected have been presented into following two sub-heads :

### **7-1 Characteristics of the Sample**

The findings of the study show the following characteristics of the sample :

1. The percentage of female respondents (55.9 percent) was comparatively more than those of male respondents (44.1 percent).
2. A little less than two-third respondents (63.9 percent) were young (less than 35 years) and one-third (30.5 percent) middle-aged (36 to 58 years). Remaining (5.6 percent) were the aged ones (more than 58 years). Thus, the sample had more youth than the middle and aged persons.
3. As regards the profession of respondents, a little less than half (45.5 percent) of them were students, followed by private and government employees (34.4 percent). Remaining one-fifth were housewives, retirees, doctors, health care workers, police personnel and unemployed people (21.1 percent).
4. Respondents have been classified in three broad categories on the basis of their monthly family income : low income families (less than ₹1,00,000), middle income families (₹1,00,001 to 2,00,000) and high income families (above ₹2,00,000). Their proportions were 58.9%, 22.1% and 18.9% respectively.

Thus, the sample represents both male and female of various age groups and professions and different income bracket of families.

### **7-2 Domestic Violence during the Lockdown**

COVID-19 led to prolonged lockdowns throughout the world. Fuelled by mandatory stay-at-home rules, physical distancing, economic uncertainties, and anxieties caused by the lockdowns as well as pandemic, domestic violence have increased globally. India, famous for gender-based violence since long, is showing almost similar trends as has been reported by newspaper reports and articles.

Table-1 on the next page depicts the responses of the selected sample on whether the incidences of domestic violence have increased in the lockdown period or not on next page according to the age group and type of family.

**Table-1 : More incidences of domestic violence  
in the lockdown period**

Variables	Responses			Total
	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	
<b>Age Group</b>				
Less than 35 years	24.0 (55)	45.4 (104)	30.6 (70)	<b>100.0 (229)</b>
36 to 58 years	41.3 (198)	31.1 (149)	27.6 (132)	<b>100.0 (479)</b>
More than 58 years	23.8 (10)	45.2 (19)	31.0 (13)	<b>100.0 (42)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.1 (263)</b>	<b>36.3 (272)</b>	<b>28.7 (215)</b>	<b>100.0 (750)</b>
Chi-Square = 25.164*; DF = 4; Significance Level >.05 Contingency Coefficient = .180				
<b>Type of Family</b>				
Joint	32.5 (76)	43.6 (102)	23.9 (56)	<b>100.0 (234)</b>
Nuclear	36.2 (160)	33.1 (142)	31.7 (140)	<b>100.0 (442)</b>
Single-parent	36.5 (27)	37.8 (28)	25.7 (19)	<b>100.0 (74)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.1 (263)</b>	<b>36.3 (272)</b>	<b>28.7 (215)</b>	<b>100.0 (750)</b>
(Actual figures are shown in parentheses) Chi-Square = 9.706*; DF = 4; Significance Level >.05 Contingency Coefficient = .113				

It is quite clear from the reading of data presented in above table that a little more than one-third respondents agreed that incidences of domestic violence have increased in the lockdown period. The proportion of middle-aged respondents was much more as compared to young and the aged ones in this category. Almost same proportions of respondents have shown disagreement with this impact on family. The proportion of such respondents was more for the middle-aged vis-a-vis the young and the aged ones. Remaining more than one-fourth remained neutral to this query. Here, the proportion of young and the aged respondents was almost same and was more than those in the middle-age. As the calculated value of Chi-square is more than the table value (9.488) at 4 degrees of

freedom, the association between age group and view about the incidences of domestic violence having increased in the lockdown period seems to be significant.

It may also be seen from the data presented in table-5.8 that there was not much difference in the proportion of three types of families in the agree category. The same was visible in disagree category, though the proportion for nuclear families was slightly less than the other two types. This is other way round in neutral category where the proportion of nuclear families was slightly more. As the calculated value of Chi-square is marginally more than the table value (9.488) at 4 degrees of freedom, the association between type of family and view that incidences of domestic violence has increased in the lockdown period seems to be significant. However, a larger sample could have given different results. The role of financial position of the family (Chi-square = 39.717\*, d.f. = 8, Significance Level > .05) seems to be significant in shaping this view as there was more proportion of families having monthly income of less than ₹50,000 and between ₹50,001 to 1,00,000 (lower income families) in disagree categories as compared to families having high income brackets. It indicates that incidences of domestic violence have increased more among higher income families in the lockdown period.

## 8. Conclusion

India has a fragile socio-economic fabric compared to advanced countries of the world. This is the reason that many critics in India and abroad have been blaming strict measures like complete national lockdown by shutting down all schools/colleges/universities, workplaces and all offices, cinema halls, parks, public places, religious places, markets, malls, public conveyance like rail and state/private buses, business establishments, all types of industries etc. and confining all the citizens within four walls of their household. But, the Indian government took a bold decision and declared national lockdown on March 25, 2020 to flatten the curve and contain spread of the disease, thus giving priority to save human life in the country rather than bothering about slowdown in economic growth.

Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has also made far reaching impact at family level so far as domestic violence is concerned. The finding show that the respondents in the three types of families are equally divided on the view that incidences of domestic violence have increased in the lockdown period as 35.1% show

agreement and 36.3% disagreement. The role of financial position of the family seems to be significant in shaping this view as there is more proportion of lower income families in disagree category as compared to families having high income brackets. Middle-aged respondents seem to agree more for increase in domestic violence than those comparatively young and the aged. Hence, this study has shown that the incidences of domestic violence increased during lockdown due to COVID-19. It implies that women tend to face greater risks during emergencies, including health disasters such as pandemics. It has been widely blamed that the government in India had overlooked the need to formally integrate domestic violence and mental health repercussions into the public health preparedness and emergency response plans against the pandemic.

### Footnotes

1. According to WHO, all viruses – including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 – evolve over time. When a virus replicates or makes copies of itself, it sometimes changes a little bit, which is normal for a virus. These changes are called “mutations”. A virus with one or more new mutations is referred to as a “variant” of the original virus. Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta and Delta Plus (named after the first letters of the Greek alphabet) are various variants/mutations of original virus.
2. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993 recognized the urgent need for the universal application to women of the rights and principles with regard to equality, security, liberty, integrity and dignity of all human beings. For the purposes of this Declaration, Article I used the term “violence against women” for any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
3. Traditionally, issues related to domestic violence were considered as private matter even by the police. However, increased awareness about the far-reaching effects of the problem has forced the government to view it as a serious problem with significant repercussions on the physical and the mental well-being of victims and their forthcoming generations. In the absence of specific law, cruelty by husband was recognized as offence under Section 498A of IPC, demanding dowry was prohibited under Dowry Prohibition Act 1961.
4. Swetha Shankar (Director, Client Services at International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC)) in Tamil



Nadu, also underlined the fact that an unprecedented consequence of the same is women who face domestic violence becoming more vulnerable as they are compelled to be with the perpetrators behind four walls all day. She also underlined that usually, the perpetrator leaves the house for work or something else. It is short term relief for these women, which is now gone due to the lockdown. “There are cases where these women are told, ‘If you cough, we will throw you out of the house’. There is nothing worse than feeling unsafe in your own home”, she adds (Thirumurthy and Parasa, 2020).

5. The Hindu (June 22, 2020) also reported that domestic violence complaints were at a 10-year high during COVID-19 lockdown in India. In 2020, between March 25 and May 31, 1,477 complaints of domestic violence were made by women. This 68-day period recorded more complaints than those received between March and May in the previous 10 years. It is worth mentioning that about 86% women who experienced violence never sought help, and 77% of the victims did not even mention the incident(s) to anyone.

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