

Literature Review:

What Foster's Domestic Violence in Bangladesh?

Ilsia Bonilla

Department of Social Work, Southern Adventist University

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Professor Corneliu Rusu, PhD

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Introduction

The view on domestic violence has been a continuous conversation. There have been various interpretations of what domestic violence or intimate personal violence means and looks like. According to the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act in 2010 domestic abuse also known as intimate personal violence is an array of actions or behaviors expressed by a partner to continue to stay in authoritative control over the other partner in the relationship. It also mentions how this form of violence is a violation of human rights and can be categorized under economic, sexual, or physical abuse by any person who has a familial relationship with the victim (DVPP, 2010). Domestic violence has been an issue in Bangladesh for centuries. Domestic violence can occur for many reasons but in Bangladesh it is mostly associated with education, economic status, cultural norms, and policies. This literature review is an attempt to further answer the burning question of “what fosters domestic violence in Bangladesh?”

Limitations/Relevance

Domestic violence is an issue that I am familiar with in the United States. I wanted to research this topic through the lens of a victim of intimate personal violence in third world Bangladesh. Areas in South Asia like Bangladesh have normalized intimate personal violence and other issues surrounding the topic. My role in this literature review is not to judge the culture but merely highlight the various factors that contribute to fostering domestic violence by using various studies that have been conducted by credible scholars. Scholars such as like Kathryn M. Yount, Nadine Shaanta Murshid, and Shahnaz Huda. Although there are many studies on domestic violence, I acknowledge that the findings do not fully encapsulate the issue completely for several reasons.

Survivors and victims' lack accessibility to study the topic of domestic violence thoroughly. This leads to experience in the situation, but a lack of knowledge as to triggers that may be prevented before the problem arises. Survivors and victims' must be willing to share their experiences and take safety and privacy into account. Another disconnect of intimate personal violence is the lack of accurate data. The information surrounding domestic violence greatly increased after the Domestic Violence Act was enacted. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, a survey conducted in 2015 showed 80.2% of women in committed relationships have encountered a form of violence from their spouse. The form of violence was categorized to either be physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse (BBS, 2015).

This is an important topic because there is a thin line between cultural norms and violent domestic abuse. There is a disconnect on what human rights are and how human rights should be applied. My lack of experience with domestic violence does not mean that I am not knowledgeable on this topic. I have encountered individuals that have dealt with intimate personal violence. I have made it my life's work to specialize and help people who have experienced domestic violence and wish to rebuild their lives.

Education

Education in Bangladesh has been one of the contributing factors towards domestic violence. School is a foundational establishment that passes on and conveys knowledge and influences in interpersonal relations. In recent years, schooling for women in Bangladesh has increased at a high rate. It has become a national priority to empower women in Bangladesh. Awareness towards the empowerment of women and gender equality has met the rising opposition of modern technology (Krause et al., 2017).

In 2017, a study was conducted to express the correlation of the level of schooling, exposure to media, and the likelihood of the acceptance of domestic violence from women. This study consisted of surveying women from ages 15-49 years old across 600 communities (Krause et al., 2017). The exposure of specific types of media were found to be significant factors in fostering intimate personal violence. Women who participated in using the radio, newspaper, or magazine at least once a week were found to be more likely associated with intimate personal violence than those who watched television. The various types of media available to the community had different affects to the audience resulting in either influencing women positively or negatively in regard to intimate personal violence. This study acknowledges that the media plays a part in educating women to accept their submissive roles that result in domestic violence.

The findings from this study also showed how the minimum amount of schooling obtained from both partners in the relationship can help protect women from intimate personal violence to an extent. But due to the nature and culture of Bangladesh, education is not a tool that is easily offered to women. If women are receiving education, it is used as a form to enhance their roles as a housewife and mother rather than a way to empower them for financial gain (Krause et al., 2017). Media and schooling may be a contributing factor to empower women; but it is met with opposition of old cultural norms to intentionally mold women in Bangladesh to remain submissive and not obtain insight through education.

Economic Status

Poverty is a main factor that contributes to fostering domestic violence in Bangladesh. Many women cannot afford to leave the home they get abused in. The ongoing cycle of domestic violence starts at birth. Women are seen as property and to be married away at the cost of her

immediate family, this process is called the dowry system (Huda, 2016). As a safety net, women are able to claim their share of paternal property if divorce or separation in the future occurs. But due to the social construct of the country, divorcing or separating from a spouse will cause shame upon the women and leave them impoverished.

Scholars Ruchira Tabassum Naved and Lark Ake Persson conducted, a study to show the connection between dowry and spousal physical violence against women in Bangladesh. The study consisted of surveying reproductive-aged women who reside in rural and urban communities. The type of area and the status of dowry payment determined the level of domestic violence a woman would undergo. The results of this study showed that in the rural communities of which dowries are less demanded and marriages that had dowry paid in full showed to be less likely to participate in any form of intimate personal violence (Tabassum & Persson,2010).

The findings of this study support the question of “what fosters domestic violence?”. It was found that the patriarchal attitudes towards dowry play a role in domestic violence. The transaction made between the man and the bride’s family to either agree or demand payment is a reflection of how women are portrayed in Bangladesh. There are many problems that can arise throughout the ongoing status of the dowry of whether or not it has been fully paid. This study supports the concept of how domestic violence may derive from patriarchal attitudes in correlation with dowries (Tabassum & Persson,2010).

Policy

The average person may not know the laws Bangladesh has in place that help foster domestic violence. The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act in 2010 that was implemented by the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, explains how victims

will be protected against domestic violence. There have been improvements made to help prevent and protect domestic violence victims in Bangladesh, but there was no law put in place until 2010. Although Bangladesh is a patriarchal society, it does not exempt men from being abused. The domestic violence act specifically states that it was meant to protect the victims. In this act a victim is defined as a woman or a child.

Therefore, without society accepting the new laws being implemented the issues that foster domestic violence will continue. The learned behavior from the media, educational settings, and laws overrides the attempt at reducing intimate personal violence in Bangladesh. Due to the gaps in policies and laws there has still been common practices of dowry which is a main trigger towards domestic violence depending on the payment status (Tabassum & Persson, 2010). This leaves room and resistance towards engaging in intimate personal violence due to the frustrations and laws challenging the societies norms. The severity of domestic violence in Bangladesh is so grand that technical and minor adjustments to laws and /or policies will not suffice the magnitude of the issue, there must be radical change. Society must acknowledge and focus on the gender inequality.

Society Norms/Culture/Exposure?

In Nadine Shaanta Murshid's study back in 2015, she was able to show the way marital violence can be transmitted generationally. In this study, the intergenerational transmission of domestic violence is explained by showing the relationship between the exposure of childhood parental violence and intimate personal violence perpetrated as an adult. This study was conducted by interviewing 3,771 married men between the ages of 15 and 54 years old. They

were to answer questions that explained when it was appropriate to show marital violence towards their spouse.

Children who have been exposed to parental violence by observation or listening can affect the individual's psychological and behavioral development (Karakurt, Smith, & Whiting, 2014). The study highlighted how boys and girls express what they have learned differently in regard to parental violence. Girls tend to hold onto feelings and then project symptoms of anxiety and depression. Because of the way girls tend to internalize feelings, exposing them at a young age to parental violence may increase their chances of experiencing intimate personal violence in the future due to the internalization of suppressing their feelings towards patriarchal attitudes (Shalev et al., 2013). On the other hand, boys tend to externalize their feelings and may exude violence due to the influential actions portrayed by their parents. In result of this study, Murshid was able to conclude that men who were exposed to parental violence at a young age were the ones who were able to justify intimate personal violence on more accounts than others who participated in the study (Murshid,2015).

Theoretical Framework

The social learning theory has been used to explain domestic violence in Bangladesh. In Albert Bandura theory, he projected that humans can learn behavior through subconscious and conscious observation. In turn, the learned behavior is repeated by a form of imitation (David,2015). With that in mind violent behavior is not something that is within an individual; it is learned through observing others in their environment. For example, children may see their fathers abuse their mothers and think that it is acceptable. Later on, the child might mirror that behavior with their future spouse with the mindset that expressing violence is acceptable.

Boys who have been exposed to violence at a young age may think that regulating a woman using coercive control is normal (Yount, James-Hawkins, et al., 2016).

The psychodynamic theory is a theory that was coined by Sigmund Freud.

In this theory, Sigmund Freud explains how the human personality is split into of three parts; id, ego, and superego. These levels come together to create human behavior. The id is the pleasure-seeking or creates the demands, the ego gives a sense of reality and the superego adds morale. With id being the first level, at a young age the individual further develops their sense of reality and morale as they continue to socialize and engage with their environment (Deal, 2017). A research article on human subsistence, Gavin et al (2018) speaks on how humans are all born with innocence and dependency that eventually grow up to aspire superiority. The psychodynamic theory emphasizes the extensive process on how humans develop their persona. An individual cannot change completely in a short span of time due to the development of their persona from birth.

These theories support the cultural context that resides in Bangladesh. The development process starting at birth is crucial to ensuring that an individual can become independent enough to make their own choices in the future. Learned behaviors from the environment can impede their ability to flourish or have a negative impact on their persona. Children who are in the process of finding their identity and persona pick up on social cues and parental violence. In regard to domestic violence in Bangladesh, a child being surrounded by superior male attitudes and intimate personal violence may mold the perception of the child into thinking that this negative behavior is acceptable. Being that it is a patriarchal society, males are more inclined to be the initial aggressor, but victims comes in all shapes, sizes, and genders.

Conclusion

Domestic violence against women in Bangladesh has been a known phenomenon. There are many factors that contribute to the fostering of domestic violence. But education, policies, economic status, and childhood exposure (eh could be better) were all found to be the most significant throughout my findings. The purpose of this literature review was to provide a different perspective on the foundational elements that may influence intimate personal violence.

Due to the nature of Bangladesh, social construct and the status a woman holds are factors that subject them to domestic violence. These roadblocks lead to oppression, that is woven into the fabric of Bangladesh culture. The social learning theory and the psychodynamic theory help to understand the context of the role men play in this Bangladesh. Through these frameworks, it can also be recognized that women are furthermore influenced to be molded into a submissive figure.

Unfortunately, a mile in the victims' shoes is a lifetime of anguish that perpetuates the human condition in South Asia. In order to see significant change, people must view this issue with the intent to empower women versus discouraging the traditional hierarchy of the family unit. A solution that can break the chain of causation of domestic violence can be done by implementing stronger prevention mechanisms. Spreading awareness of domestic violence in Bangladesh is important to show the fine line between cultural practices and a violation of basic human rights. It is important that the family structure in South Asia begin to view their women in a different light in order to shift the quietly accepted cultural issues.

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