

Intimacy and Alcoholism Rethinking Resilience in the Families of Alcoholic Men: Case Study from Public Health Perspective

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the problems faced by the intimate partner of the ones who are into alcoholism in the re-settlement colony at Dakshinpuri, Delhi, India. In this paper two case studies are taken up; one of them being middle aged woman and the other being in her early thirties and the problems are outlined. Basically intimate partner violence can be on a man or woman both but here in this particular context it is the women who are the victims of intimate partner violence.

Introduction

One in two men in India believes that a woman must endure domestic violence to keep her family together, revealed a study released by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)¹.

¹<https://www.dnaindia.com/business/report-50-indian-men-feel-violence-against-women-endemic-to-happy-family-2034020>, consulted 1 Sep 2018

Women in India have always been seen as endure. Good or bad but her biggest strength is thought of as her ability to suffer silently. Her tolerance towards circumstances is often used as a weapon to humiliate her and camouflage the male violent agenda. Drinking or alcoholism is a very common thing around the world. It is common to both the genders but not in India. Here in most parts of the nation drinking and manhood are seen in a peaceful frame. Hence wife battering becomes an ingredient to male pride and a part and parcel of wifehood. Socially, especially in the not so privileged sections of the society drinking and wife battering is seen as a parameter of normal married life. Irrespective of what the society thinks, it is still the society as a whole which suffers.

Description of the Community

The researcher was worked as a field work placement at Dakshinpuri which is a re-settlement colony comprising primarily of the people from “Valmiki” community and the Muslim community in Delhi, India. Residents mostly from the Valmiki community are employed in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) as sweepers or “Safai karmacharis”. The second generation of the Valmiki community consist of males who are employed in factories or workshops as blue-collared workers and the women are mostly employed as house-hold helps. The residents of the Muslim community are employed in small jobs such as drivers, tailors, mechanics, electricians etc. Most of the women in this community are housewives except for a few families. Education although has some importance for them still very few continue their studies after completing primary school education.

Sanitation and availability of toilets is the problem which affect the residents most. This also infects the water which is available for drinking. Alcoholism and drug abuse is another problem prevalent in the community. Wife battering is another common issue which is related to alcoholism and drug abuse. Eve-teasing is another important issue in the community. Females living in the area are greatly affected by these issues as they are the ones who have to manage the household and spend most of their time in the area.

Also, all these years the people have been living in harmony there have not been any instances of communal violence since the community has been into existence perhaps since the late 1980's.

The study has been focused on the problems faced by the intimate partner of the ones who are into alcoholism. Wife battering is a very common issue in the community specific to the homes or families in which a person is into alcoholism. Mostly men are into alcoholism, yet no women found, could identify as an alcoholic. Basically the men involved in alcoholism get into the habit at an early age as was told by the members of the family. It has serious consequences with the children when their father is involved in alcoholism. It has serious consequences in their process of socialisation. The entire family suffers specially the spouse. So, the paper will be based on case studies.

A woman endures in distinctive strolls of her life as girl, wife, mother or little daughter in- law. Ladies; 49% of the populace for all obligations and distinguishments, are at accepting end viz. financial, social, religious, political or even social and religious. She has numerous shades and parts in her entire life yet lamentably affirmation of each shade and part is connected with unmistakable male part as being little girl of an

incredible father is matter of high stature, being wife of an unmistakable identity is enormous part, being mother of a child is incredible accomplishment, being dairy animals like little daughter in-law is incredible accomplishment in social life.

The expense of being accomplice of supposed prestigious male part is high at some point resistance of roughness for entire life. She exited no stone unturned to satisfy her partner yet her everything wishes, accomplishments and trusts abused by one or other. Once in a while one disturbs her mental and enthusiastic provocation in methodology of satisfaction of obligations without any privilege. The deplorability of society is that she could be goddess (who dependably saccadic and do welfare for others) however can't be dealt with as an individual persona having feelings and need recognizable proof. Swinging starting with one part then onto the next when she get an accomplice to impart love and passionate sentiments her womanhood get distinguishment. Here additionally her oppression didn't provide for her chance to survive calmly and frequently defy with roughness.

Savagery against women is comprehensively pervasive. The establishments of the patriarchal society sends a capable message that roughness against women is not an unimportant issue which happens just in a few pockets of society, rather scourge and universal. Universally, 30% of women have encountered either physical and/or sexual close accomplice or no partner savagery. Notwithstanding, there are numerous different types of savagery that ladies might be presented to, however an extensive extent of ladies defy with viciousness in the hands of private partners. Thus close accomplice savagery developed as essential element in viciousness against woman.

Literature Review

Before aiming to bring out the effect of alcoholism on various intimate human relationships it will be helpful to establish the relationship that one has with one's alcohol addiction. According to the book, *Drinking: A Love Story*², by Caroline Knapp (a writer who fought 20 years of battle with her own drinking problem) explains the intangible string of intimacy that an alcoholic shares with alcohol. This bonding can be of three types:

- **Casual Friendship:** Such people are generally social drinkers. A glass of wine or two with friends at parties is their limit. Such people use drinking less as a habit and more as a social lubricant. In corporate social groups or even in small friendly get-togethers they act as a mood refresher or a minor relaxing agent.
- **Relationship:** This sort of drinking habit is all about dependence. The alcoholic goes into a social "relationship" with alcohol than with his partner. Habitual drinking symptoms are seen especially drinking consistently alone and in an effort to either create feelings (relaxation) or mute them (anxiety, depression), or to influence behaviour (to socialize, to get to sleep). Alcohol becomes a reliable friend. Finally, at this stage loved ones become aware of their partner's drinking and may experience a degree of jealousy over their "relationship" with alcohol.

²Knapp, Caroline, *Drinking: A Love Story*, Random Publishing House, 1999

• **Commitment:** This is the spectrum where alcoholism induces alcohol abuse. The alcoholic goes into a committed relationship with his drinking habit.

The committed drinker makes sure that he or she is never far from alcohol. Over time, his or her life style begins to revolve around more and more around drinking³.

This phase of drinking proves fatal to intimate relationships. Not only does it affect the individual life of the drunkard but also his personal life. His diurnal activities get altered according to the availability of alcohol. Often the weakest member of the family feels the burn of this stage of the alcoholic family member. The male members of Dakshinpuri fall under the last two categories of drinkers. A young male child sees his father comfortably getting along with alcohol in public and private life. As he grows up he too develops a mode of escapism through alcohol intake. By the time he is in his youth, he gets into a serious relationship with alcohol. The women too despite knowing the evils of drinking under societal pressure, accepts to marry such a drunkard.

The study will be taking into consideration to the Modules issued by National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism on ‘*Social Work Education for the prevention and treatment of Alcohol use disorders*’.

To begin with ‘*Social Work Education for the prevention and treatment of Alcohol use disorders*’ 8th module which is related to my field of study-

‘Alcohol and Intimate Partner Violence’

Intimate Partner Violence

Family violence is a relatively young field of research, with systematic study coalescing during the 1970s (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Yllö, 1988). The umbrella term “family violence” includes abuse and violence against children, adolescents, adults, and elders that occur within the context of family and other intimate relationships (Carden, 1994). Over the past three decades, much has been learned about the epidemiology of family violence, the associated risk factors, and the outcomes or effects on victims, witnesses, and family systems. Family violence interfaces with the understanding, study, and treatment of the more general class of aggression and interpersonal violence. This module discusses the very clear yet complex associations between alcohol and intimate partner violence⁴.

- Violence or threat of violence
- In context of relationship between intimate partners (or “ex” partners)
- Physical, sexual, psychological, emotional aggression or abuse
- Includes married, cohabiting, dating, same and opposite gender relationships

³Nowinski, Joseph, Doyle, Robert, *Almost Alcoholic: Is My (or my loved one’s) Drinking a Problem*, Hazelden Publishing, 2012

⁴<https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/social/module8intimatepartnerviolence/module8.html>, consulted 30 March 2018.

- Relationship Violence Types :

1. Physical violence
2. Sexual violence
3. Threat of violence
4. Psychological, emotional abuse; coercion.

Case Examples

- 22% of women, 7.5% of men experience intimate partner violence in a lifetime
- IPV is leading cause of injury to women aged 16-44 years.
- Among female murder victims, 30% are killed by intimate partner⁵.

Liquor is an essential danger element of sick wellbeing and inability.

The WHO gauges that one-fourth to 33% of the male populace in South East Asian nations drink liquor

In India, the evaluated number of liquor clients in 2005 was 62.5 million and 17.4% (10.6 million) were reliant on liquor [1].

Of the doctor's facility affirmations, 20-30% was because of liquor related issues [2]

Nonstop liquor ill-use influences the single person as well as relatives, particularly the mate who faces numerous enthusiastic issues and upsetting life occasions. Numerous studies and episodic reports recommend that people who are hitched to persons reliant on liquor have poor general physical and mental wellbeing [3]

One study found that substance utilization issue among spouses is emphatically connected with psychiatric ailment, for example, depressive issue and uneasiness issue among their wives [4-6]

A writing pursuit uncovered that there is little information from India on liquor utilization and its effect on the wives. In India the social conditions, social qualities, measure of social help and sorts of stressors are unique in relation to that in the Western world. Therefore, the study reflects on with the essential goal of recognizing the relationship between liquor utilization in the spouse and the depressive gimmicks in the companion⁶ [7].

Case Study-1

The client is a middle aged women married in the year 1983. She has five children. Her husband works as a supervisor in a private hospital and is decently paid. But since marriage he has never ever taken care of the

⁵<https://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/social/Module8IntimatePartnerViolence/Module8.pdf>, consulted 30 March 2018.

⁶<http://medind.nic.in/iaj/t10/i2/iajt10i2p238.htm>, consulted 30 March 2018.

family. Right from the very beginning of their married life, he used to consume alcohol every day. Soon he became an addict and till this date the situation stands to be the same. The marriage took place because his father-in-law had lied that he is a government employee in MCD. But soon after the marriage she was able to decipher that he had no such job and she even got to know that he had no property whatsoever in his name but blatantly had lied at the time of marriage. She was battered since the very first day of her marriage but since now her children are grown up, they object whenever he tries to initiate in this direction. The client has been working as a household help for eight years now. Prior to this she was working as a midwife to aid the elderly people who reside nearby in posh localities. She takes care of her children on her own. She has three sons and two daughters. The eldest is the daughter followed by three sons and another daughter. The first three children have been married off. Both of the sons work in private firms. The husband has had several extra marital affairs and even at times he used to bring many of the women with him back home. Since the commencement of their married life, the husband has been using abusive language in front of the children. Not only this, he also publically maligns her image and tries to disparage her character. Once happened that he stood on top of the roof of his house and tried to publically assassinate her character using abusive language and alleging her of being a prostitute. But there is something which I found, which is important here, that although he financially has never assisted any of his children neither his family, but he does take care of both his daughters. At times he would bring food for them and the eldest daughter who's married, stays close to his house and he every day after coming from office, before getting drunk, would visit her house and bring either sweets or chocolates for his grandchild. One more important point is to note that the youngest daughter even fights with her mother, taking her father's side despite the adamant, rude and inhuman nature of her father. This can be seen as Electra complex.

The client had registered a court case against him and he was also arrested and spent certain days in the jail. And later he had apologized and she withdrew the case. But as soon as he was backing home, he reinstated the old behaviour. There was one case registered in CAWC, in the Moti Bagh police station in Delhi. There were several rounds of counselling but there he would certainly assure that he wouldn't repeat his behaviour but everything would just go in vain as he carries forward his same old attitude.

At times, he has also tried to sexually abuse the client but now the client always tries to remain with her children so that he doesn't dare to do so. He can misbehave with the client and go to any extent to malign her but will never go against his children.

She is in heavy debt because of her daughter's and both of her son's marriage. She earns a meagre amount, 8000/- a month and has to take care of the entire family. She is 46 years old now but she looks a 60 year old woman. The client's parents have financially helped her a lot. The house in which they reside has been built completely by the client. But her husband always threatens her to leave the house. He would come back home, drink and cook just for himself, eat and go to sleep. He is well built and spends his entire salary on alcohol as well as his food.

The client says that she is not at all bothered about him but for her to register a case and fight it in the court of law is not possible because of her meagre income as well as shortage of time. So she has left it to the fate of time that is what she says.

Case Study-2

This client is comparatively a young woman in her early 30's. Working as a domestic help, she supports a family of three that is her two children and herself. Her husband is a chronic alcoholic and according to her, he has been so even before she got married to him. The husband works in a nearby factory but does not contribute any monetary assistance in the family. The client too had an alcoholic father hence it was not very difficult to accept a husband who earns well and has a drinking problem. But what she expected as a mere adjustment turned out to be a nightmare for her. Leaving aside her husband's drinking problem, he also has an inclination towards becoming violent once he is completely drunk. The client had never seen her father behave in such a manner with her mother hence it was unfamiliar to her. The husband becomes violent towards her irrespective of his children's presence. The innocent 8year old son and 6 year old daughter see their mother being battered every day. The client stays ill for most of the days due to such physical torture but even then she has to work to look after her children. Few years back she even tried to lodge a police case against her husband but her parents and in-laws forced her not to file a complaint against him explaining her that it is a common thing and a woman must learn to cope with such "petty" issues. Earlier the husband used to sexually abuse her too but it has stopped for a last 3- 4years owing to the presence of their children. But the battering still continues.

The client says that ever since she tried to lodge a legal complaint against her husband, he has grown more violent. Often when he is not completely drunk and still wants to hit her, he uses alcohol as an effective tool and later on being urged by the locals to refrain from such an act he blatantly puts the blame on alcohol. The client still today suffers from serious physical torture but says that as long as her children are not settled, life has to go on like this or may be even worse.

Conclusion

The phase of drinking proves fatal to intimate relationships. Not only does it affect the individual life of the drunkard but also his personal life. His diurnal activities get altered according to the availability of alcohol. Often the weakest member of the family feels the burn of this stage of the alcoholic family member. As is evident from the case studies that we have undertaken, women of the house suffer both mentally and physically because of her partner's alcoholism. Alcoholism of one person affects the family and the society in large. Often because of witnessing violent behaviours at home between the parents, the children suffer psychologically. They might become distant or themselves indulge in alcohol or various other forms of drugs. Therefore, one can say that alcoholism affects everyone around the alcoholic person, primarily the wife, the children, then the relatives, the neighbours, the society at large.

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