

## **Activism's Case Study on Domestic Violence and Intolerance at Maniktala Slum, Kolkata: A Brief Overview**

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Domestic violence is a pervasive social issue having deep impact on different sections of people. Considering the importance of the problem Activism Foundation for Social Research and Action has carried out a research project on Domestic Violence and Intolerance at the slum area of Maniktala, Kolkata during 2023-2025. The purpose of the study is to explore the main causes of domestic violence and its impact on different family members of in a slum area. Survey research has been done on a sample of 90 people, including 45 males and 45 females. Both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected from the respondents by structured interview schedule. Besides survey research, focus group discussions were also conducted in order to make an in-depth study. The study revealed that the slum dwellers have their own perspectives regarding domestic violence, whereby domestic violence in the form of verbal abuse, beating, slapping, forcing to do anything have been considered normal and legitimised by a large section of the respondents. The root cause of the problem found to lie not exclusively in economic problems, alcoholism or child issues, but in the patriarchal values of power relations held by people. At the final stage. The results of the study and a probable way out were discussed in a public conversation.

**Keywords:** domestic violence, intimate partner violence, patriarchal values, public conversation

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Domestic violence is a worldwide menace even for the contemporary modern society. World Health Organisation defines domestic violence as a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner....this includes any behaviours that frighten, intimidate, terrorize, manipulate, hurt, humiliate, blame, injure, or wound someone. (WHO) Of late, this problem has intensified, more so due to Corona pandemic and subsequent period of complete and partial lockdown during 2020 to 2022. Studies show that home, which is supposed to provide safety and security, became the most vulnerable place for many. Report of National Crime Records Bureau, 2023 shows that domestic violence tops crimes against women. A total of 4,48,211 cases of crime against women were registered during 2023, Majority of cases under crime against women under IPC were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or Relatives' (1,33,676 cases, 29.8%). Now, such violence definitely affects lives of a large number of women. For this reason, it is often a tendency to equate domestic violence (DV) with intimate partner violence (IPV) and most of the studies on domestic violence focus on the women victims in the domestic sphere.

To counter the problem of domestic violence Domestic Violence Act was introduced in 2005. However, the law is never sufficient to end such violence. Kimuna, S.R et al. (2013) observed that gender role conditioning and cultural norms both are the contributing factors to domestic violence. They, Therefore, realises that solutions should be found beyond institutional and legal levels and should include cultural capital to address partner and relationship issues.

In this backdrop Activism Scholars' Forum, along with Activism Social Science Club, the two units of the Activism Foundation for social Research and Action, conducted a research project on 'Domestic Violence and Intolerance' at Maniktala Slum area in Kolkata during 2023-2025. The main objectives of the study are:

- i. to understand the perception of the slum dwellers about domestic violence;
- ii. to explore the factors of domestic violence in the slum area;
- iii. to know who are the sufferers and perpetrators of domestic violence; and
- iv. to develop a structure of solutions appropriate for the people of the area.

## **Methodology**

The study has been conducted at no. 1 and 2 Basti of Maniktala Slum, Kolkata. Total Population of the area under study is 1050, sample size calculated as 90, where margin

of error- 10%, confidence level- 95% and response Distribution- 50%.<sup>1</sup>

The method of sampling is quota sampling and the total sample has been divided as 45 males and 45 females, with respondents aged between 25 and 65. The study incorporated respondents of different gender, age, marital status, caste categories etc. In fact, the objective of the study was to explore whether the impact of violence is seen on other members than only wives in the family. So, married, unmarried, divorcee or widow/ widowers were also taken into consideration. The study has been conducted through face-to-face interview method, using structured interview schedule.

The data has been collected by the research executives of Activism Foundation in 2023. Afterwards, two phases of Focus group discussion (FGD) were conducted, where two groups of males and two groups of females of 7-8 people each have participated. The FGD were conducted to discuss the main issues of domestic violence as according to the participants. Entry into the field was possible due to the help of local councillor, who gave permission for the study and also helped with volunteers from the area itself. Data were collected from the respondents with prior oral consent and with a guaranty of anonymity.

The final phase of the study was Public Conversation, which was held at Harinath Dey Road Baroari Puja Mandap in the slum area on 19th January 2025. Around 40 inhabitants of the slum area participated in the interactive discussion. The session ended with the presentation of a drama "Grihajuddha" by the students of the Department of Drama, Rabindra Bharati university, Kolkata to make people understand in a more attractive way.

### **Findings and Discussion**

No 1 and 2 basti of Maniktala slum has total population of 1050. People of different education, occupations, income group, caste live here. Though mainly Bengali Hindu live here, a few from Bihar, who work in Kolkata also live in this slum. Majority of males are engaged in informal or private sector jobs, a few work as government employee. Some also have small business, having small shops in the locality. A few are also unemployed. Some females are house-wife but a good number of females work as cook or maid servant in nearby locality. Few females, who are educated like, higher secondary or graduate level also work in formal sector like bank etc. Following table describes the demographic pattenen of the respondents.

**Table 1: Socio - Demographic Profile of the Population**

Status		Male	Female	Total
Age	Below 30	10(11.11%)	12(13.33%)	22
	31-40	10(11.11%)	13(14.44%)	23
	41-50	11(12.22%)	9(10%)	20
	51-60	9(10%)	9(10%)	18
	Above 60	5(5.56%)	2(2.22%)	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>
Marital Status	Married	32(35.56%)	32(35.56%)	64
	Unmarried	11(12.22%)	5(5.56%)	16
	Widower/Widow	1(1.11%)	7(7.78%)	8
	Divorcee	1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>
Caste	Gen	28 (31.11%)	33(73.3%)	61
	SC	13(14.44%)	8(8.89%)	21
	ST	0	1 (1.11%)	1
	OBC-A	3(3.33%)	1(1.11%)	4
	OBC-B	1(1.11%)	2(2.22%)	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>
Education	Illiterate	5(5.56%)	8(8.89%)	13
	Primary	10(11.11%)	19(21.11%)	29
	Upper Primary	11(12.22%)	6(6.67%)	17
	Secondary	7(7.78%)	7(7.78%)	14
	Higher Secondary	8(8.89%)	4(4.44%)	12
	Graduate	4(4.44%)	1(1.11%)	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>
Income	Below 5000	4(4.44%)	6(6.66%)	10
	5000 -10000	13(14.44%)	17(18.88%)	30
	10000-15000	7(7.78%)	10(11.11%)	17
	15000-20000	6(6.67%)	6(6.67%)	12
	20000-30000	10(11.11%)	2(2.22%)	12
	Above 30000	5(5.56%)	4(4.44%)	9
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>
Number of Families living in the same household	1	34(37.78%)	32(35.56%)	66
	2	3(3.33%)	3(3.33%)	6
	More than 2	8(8.89%)	10(11.11%)	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>
Economic Status	Earner	39(43.33%)	24(26.67%)	63
	Dependent	6(6.67%)	21(23.33%)	27
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>90</b>

Source: Field Study by Activism

### I. Domestic Violence – As perceived by the slum dwellers

The study revealed that the slum dwellers have their own perspective regarding domestic violence. Though the viewpoints vary on the basis of gender, education, marital status etc, a substantial number of the respondents do not consider verbal abuse, laying hands,

beating, forcing to do something like sex, destroying goods etc. as domestic violence. Many of them describe such behaviour as normal events in every family.

**Table 2: Perceiving Particular Actions as Domestic violence**

Actions	Gender	Do you consider this Action Domestic Violence?			
		Yes	Not Decided	No	Grand Total
Verbal Abuse	Male	23(25.56)	6(6.67)	16(17.78)	45 (50%)
	Female	25(27.78)	7(7.78)	13(14.44)	45 (50%)
Total		48(53.33)	13(14.44)	29(32.22%)	90 (100%)
Laying Hand	Male	35(38.88)	6(6.67)	4(4.44)	45 (50%)
	Female	30(33.33)	9(10)	6(6.67)	45 (50%)
Total		65(72.22)	15(16.67)	10(11.11)	90 (100%)
Beating	Male	34(37.77)	6(6.67)	5(5.56)	45 (50%)
	Female	28(31.11)	11(12.22)	5(5.56)	45 (50%)
Total		62(68.89)	17(18.89)	10(11.11)	90 (100%)
Forcing to do something like sex	Male	28(31.11)	8(8.89)	9(10)	45 (50%)
	Female	27(30)	13(14.44)	5(5.56)	45 (50%)
Total		55(61.11)	21(23.33)	14(15.56)	90 (100%)
Destroying things	Male	24(26.67)	7(7.78)	14(15.55)	45 (50%)
	Female	27(30)	10(11.11)	8(8.89)	45 (50%)
Total		51(56.67)	17(18.89)	22(22.44)	90 (100%)
Outside interference in familial matters	Male	26(28.89)	9(10)	10(11.11)	45 (50%)
	Female	26(28.88)	12(13.33)	7(7.78)	45 (50%)
Total		52(57.78)	21(23.33)	17(18.89)	90 (100%)

Source: Field Study by Activism

The table indicates that when many respondents accept the actions which is abusive of others, exert power to harm others as violence, some of them refuse to do so. Now, let us analyse this tendency in more detail.

## Verbal abuse

We find that, out of 50% male respondents 25.56% considers verbal abuse as violence, but 17.78% does not consider verbal abuse as violence. On the other, out of 50% female respondents 27.78% considers verbal abuse as violence, but 14.44% does not consider verbal abuse as violence. Thus, significantly enough, total 32.22% of the respondents think that verbal abuse cannot be considered as domestic violence.

## Laying Hands

Out of 50% male respondents 38.88% considers laying hands as violence, but 4.44% does not consider laying hands as violence. Out of 50% female respondents 33.33% considers laying hands as violence, but 6.67% does not consider laying hands as violence.

## Beating

Out of 50% male respondents 37.77% considers beating as violence, but 5.56% does not consider beating as violence. Out of 50% female respondents 31.11% considers beating as violence, but 5.56% does not consider beating as violence. Interestingly, 3.33% married females and 5.56% married males refuse to consider beating as domestic violence.

**Table 3: Relationship of Gender and Marital Status with Perception of Violence**

Gender	Marital Status	Respondents	Do you think 'Beating' is Domestic Violence?			
			No	Not Decided	Yes	Grand Total
Male 45	Unmarried	11(12.22%)		2(2.22%)	9(10%)	11(12.22%)
	Married	32(35.56%)	5(5.56%)	4(4.44%)	23(25.56%)	32(35.56%)
	Widower	1(1.11%)			1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)
	Divorcee	1(1.11%)			1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>45(50%)</b>	<b>45(50%)</b>	<b>6(6.67%)</b>	<b>34(37.77%)</b>	<b>45(50%)</b>
Female 45	Unmarried	5(5.56)	1(1.11%)		4(4.44%)	5(5.56)
	Married	32(35.56%)	3(3.33%)	9(10%)	20(22.22%)	32(35.56%)
	Widow	7(7.78%)	1(1.11%)	2(2.22%)	4(4.44%)	7(7.78%)
	Divorcee	1(1.11%)		1(1.11%)		1(1.11%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>45(50%)</b>	<b>45(50%)</b>	<b>12(13.33%)</b>	<b>28(31.11%)</b>	<b>45(50%)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>90 (100%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>	<b>18(20%)</b>	<b>62(68.89%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>

Source: Field Study by Activism

From the table no 2 it is significantly seen that, while out of 35.56% married male respondents, 25.56% considers beating as violence, out of 35.56% married female respondents, only 22.22% considers beating as violence, 13.33% does not consider it violence or undecided about it. It means more women particularly married women than men try to view even beating as normal activity, not violence.

### Forcing to do something

31.11% out of 50% male respondents considers forcing to do something like sex as violence, but 10% does not consider forcing to do something like sex as violence. Out of 50% female respondents 30% considers forcing to do something like sex as violence, but 5.56% does not consider forcing to do something like sex as violence. Again, here too, whereas 3.33% married females do not consider such act as domestic violence, more married males, i.e. 8.89% does so.

**Table 4: Relationship of Gender and Education with the Perception of Violence**

GENDER	EDUCATION	RESPONDENT	Do you think Forcing to Do Something Like Sex is Domestic Violence?			
			No	Not Decided	Yes	Grand Total
MALE 45	Illiterate	5(5.56%)	1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)	3(3.33%)	5(5.56%)
	Primary	10(11.11%)	3(3.33%)	1(1.11%)	6(6.67%)	10(11.11%)
	Upper Primary	11(12.22%)	2(2.22%)	3(3.33%)	6(6.67%)	11(12.22%)
	Secondary	7(7.78%)	1(1.11%)		6(6.67%)	7(7.78%)
	Higher Secondary	8(8.89%)	1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)	6(6.67%)	8(8.89%)
	Graduate	4(4.44%)	1(1.11%)	2(2.22%)	1(1.11%)	4(4.44%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>9 (10%)</b>	<b>8 (8.89%)</b>	<b>28 (31.11%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>
FEMALE 45	Illiterate	8(8.89%)	2(2.22%)	4(4.44%)	2(2.22%)	8(8.89%)
	Primary	19(21.11%)	1(1.11%)	7(7.78%)	11(12.22%)	19(21.11%)
	Upper Primary	6(6.67%)		1(1.11%)	5(5.56%)	6(6.67%)
	Secondary	7(7.78%)	1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)	5(5.56%)	7(7.78%)
	Higher Secondary	4(4.44%)	1(1.11%)		3(3.33%)	4(4.44%)
	Graduate	1(1.11%)			1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	<b>5 (5.56%)</b>	<b>13 (14.44%)</b>	<b>27 (30%)</b>	<b>45 (50%)</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>90(100%)</b>	<b>14(15.55%)</b>	<b>21(23.33%)</b>	<b>55(61.11%)</b>	<b>90(100%)</b>

Source: Field Study by Activism

It is seen from the table that more male respondents (10%) than females (5.56%), irrespective of their education believe that forcing to do something like sex is not domestic violence. A significant percentage of females (14.44%), of which 12.22% is either illiterate or have primary education, is undecided about whether such action can be considered as domestic violence, whereas, 8.89% males are undecided about it. The table also reveals the tendency that less percentage of females with upper primary education to higher levels, consider such action not as domestic violence.

### **Destroying Things**

Out of 50% male respondents 26.67% considers destroying things as violence, but 15.55% does not consider destroying things as violence. Out of 50% female respondents 30% considers destroying things as violence, but 8.89% does not consider destroying things as violence. When 5.56% married females do not consider destroying things as domestic violence, 14.44% married males do so. It seems when actions become more severe females do take it as violence, but males still take such actions as normal.

### **Outside Interference**

Out of 50% male respondents 28.89% considers outside interference in familial matters as violence, but 11.11% does not consider outside interference in familial matters as violence and 10% is undecided about the issue. Out of 50% female respondents 28.89% considers outside interference in familial matters as violence, but 7.78% does not consider outside interference in familial matters as violence and 13.33% is undecided about the issue. Moreover, it has been found that out of 50% male respondents 18.89% does not consider Verbal Abuse, 16.66% does not consider slapping 13.33% does not consider beating as violence if received in return of respondent's committing any extreme wrong/unjust so. On the other, out of 50% female respondents 20% does not consider verbal abuse, 17.78% does not consider slapping, 14.44% does not consider beating as violence if received in return of respondent's committing any extreme wrong/unjust.

## II. Normalizing violence?

So, it is a big question – whether or to what extent the respondents normalize the violent behaviour in their everyday life. If we analyse their viewpoints on the basis of their education we find some important tendencies.

**Table 5: Relationship of education and Perceiving Violence as Normal**

GENDER	EDUCATION	RESPONDENT	Q. Do you think that the incidence of intolerance and violence in the family is not at all a big deal and albeit a normal thing?		
			Yes	No	Grand Total
MALE 45	Illiterate	5(5.56%)	2(2.22%)	3(3.33%)	5(5.56%)
	Primary	10(11.11%)	5(5.56%)	5(5.56%)	10(11.11%)
	Upper Primary	11(12.22%)	6(6.67%)	5(5.56%)	11(12.22%)
	Secondary	7(7.78%)	6(6.67%)	1(1.11%)	7(7.78%)
	Higher Secondary	8(8.89%)	7(7.78%)	1(1.11%)	8(8.89%)
	Graduate	4(4.44%)	1(1.11%)	3(3.33%)	4(4.44%)
Total		45 (50%)	27 (30%)	18 (20%)	45 (50%)
FEMALE 45	Illiterate	8(8.89%)	1(1.11%)	7(7.78%)	8(8.89%)
	Primary	19(21.11%)	13(14.44%)	6(6.67%)	19(21.11%)
	Upper Primary	6(6.67%)	5(5.56%)	1(1.11%)	6(6.67%)
	Secondary	7(7.78%)	3(3.33%)	4(4.44%)	7(7.78%)
	Higher Secondary	4(4.44%)	2(2.22%)	2(2.22%)	4(4.44%)
	Graduate	1(1.11%)	1(1.11%)		1(1.11%)
Total		45 (50%)	25 (27.78%)	20 (22.22%)	45 (50%)
Grand Total		90(100%)	52(57.78%)	38(42.22%)	90(100%)

Source: Field Study by Activism

30% out of 50% male respondents express that whatever violent behaviour take place at home is normal, not at all a big deal, whereas among 50% female respondents 27.78% thinks so. Therefore having 57.78% believing everyday occurrences of violence as normal, it definitely implies that such tendency leads to a more exploitation of the near and dear ones at home. However, a smaller number of the respondents, 42.22% in total does not consider such violence at home as normal – indicating the existence of some good senses among people in this slum. It is found that at least 3.33% out of 4.44% graduate males does not perceive violent behaviour at home as normal.

## III. Causes of conflict

A lot of reasons for conflicts at home are cited by the respondents. Of course, most of the respondents mention more than one reasons for conflict at their home.

**Table 6: Causes of Conflict in families at the Maniktala Slum**

Sl. No.	Causes of Conflict	Male	Female	Total
1.	Alcoholism	9 (10%)	10 (11.11%)	19 (21.11%)
2.	Economic problems	20 (22.22%)	27 (30%)	47 (52.22%)
3.	Unable to Repay Loan	0	3 (3.33%)	3 (3.33%)
4.	Difference of Opinion	23 (25.56%)	28 (31.11%)	51 (56.57%)
5.	Interference of Outsiders	14 (15.56%)	14 (15.56%)	28 (31.11%)
6.	Issues related to Children	6 (6.67%)	15 (16.67%)	21 (23.33%)

Source: Field Study by Activism

Table 6 shows different causes of conflicts in families at the slum. Among these 56.57% stress on the difference of opinion and 52.22% on emphasizes economic problems, interference of outsiders is mentioned by 31.11%, and issues related to children by 23.33% and alcoholism by 21.11%. Females, who actually run the family, talks more about economic problems. It is also observed from the table that the females are more concerned about children's issues and are often engaged in conflict because of children's matters, particularly, their education. They mention about children's tendency of not attending school, not studying properly etc. and also one respondent mentions that conflict take place when son disobeys and is engaged in violence with mother over pocket money. While the male members talk about excessive demands by the young boys and girls of goods and money as they feel jealous of their friends, conflict among young siblings, children returning home late and chatting outside for hours etc. children disobeying parents, daughter not doing household work etc. They also mention about problem of alcoholism by matured sons.

#### **Other issues or reasons for conflict**

When asked about the other causes of conflict male members mention i) exposing family secrets to outsiders by others in the family, ii) conflict among brothers on the issue of property selling, iii) childlessness and illness of wife, iv) issues of household work, if meal is made late or wife is busy with mobile phone, as wife gets irritated by

excessive household work, v) mental or physical health problems, e.g., obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) etc. On the other females refer i) cooking issues, like if food is not liked by the other members, particularly husband, ii) family politics, jealousy etc, iii) habits of bidi smoking, iv) extra marital affairs of husband or suspecting of having such relationships as factors of everyday conflict. Outsiders sometimes also create problem, for example, one respondent said that her sister-in-law (nanad) tries to exercise power over the family leading to violence within the family. Ego problems also become issues of conflict, like the issues of disagreement between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, jealousy of mother-in-law. Some of them also mentioned the problems of common washroom and tap water in the slum as influencing factor for conflict at home.

Thus, it is found from the study that though both male and female respondents agrees that alcoholism, economic problems, issues related to children and mostly difference of opinion are factors of domestic violence, when asked more detailed causes of conflict they come up with all everyday issues of egoism, power relations, jealousy, family politics, household work etc. All these issues leading to violent behaviour are definitely not results of alcoholism or economic problems. So, the factors of alcoholism or economic problems may be regarded as initial triggers, but they may not be the exclusive cause of violence within home.

NFHS (4) report of 2015-16 shows that among males who committed physical violence 44.1% consumed alcohol but 55.9% did not consumed alcohol. NFHS (5) report of 2019-21 shows that, in Goa, 59% consume alcohol, but level of domestic violence is as less as 8.3%. Therefore, alcoholism can never be directly correlated with domestic violence. Similarly, we can see domestic violence in well off families beyond slum area on the everyday issues mentioned by the respondents here. Likewise, different studies also indicate that children's issues are not original cause of domestic violence, they may some excuses only to initiate violence. (Walker, 1979) Therefore, it cannot be the problem of alcoholism, economic condition, children's issue that are the actual

cause of domestic violence, but it is the problem of values, particularly the patriarchal values of power relations that are exercised by the people.

#### IV. Who are involved in conflict?

7.78% male respondents out of 50% and 6.67% out of 50% female respondents say that they themselves are engaged in violence. Spouse are responsible for conflict – said by 8.89% male and 6.67% female respondents. Others are involved in the violence according to 17.78% male and 17.78% females. So, it is really great that respondents accepted that they themselves are perpetrators. The ‘others’ include relatives like uncles, aunts, brothers as mentioned by male respondents and sister-in-law (nanad) and her husband, mother-in-law as mentioned by the female respondents. Many respondents say that, many relatives who are outsiders still interfere with the family matters and become a source of conflict within home.

#### V. Impact of Domestic Violence on family

The respondents report that when acts of violence like verbal abuse, beating, forcing to do something, comparing with others, rude behaviour etc. take place on them they feel insulted. This means, though such behaviour is regular and mostly normalized are definitely not desired by the inhabitants of the slum area. The respondents do admit that domestic violence in any form from verbal abuse to physical assault hamper the daily routine of the family, destroy properties, lead to mental instability.

**Table – 7: Types of Damage Resulting from Domestic Violence**

Damage Caused	Male	Female	Total
Waste of working hours	28 (31.11%)	21 (23.33%)	49 (54.44%)
Physical illness	21 (23.33%)	18 (20%)	39 (43.33%)
Mental stress	18 (20%)	25 (27.78%)	43 (47.78%)
Children's education harmed	6 (6.67%)	11 (12.22%)	17 (18.89%)
Goods damaged	3 (3.33%)	7 (7.78%)	10 (11.11%)

Economic loss and disturbance	2 (2.22%)	0	2 (2.22%)
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Source: Field Study by Activism

Most of the respondents report more than one impact of domestic violence. From the above table it is found that more males report about waste of working hours and physical illness as major consequences of violence. On the other females experience the mental stress and they are more concerned about children's education and goods damaged during the physical violence.

### VI. Who becomes the Sufferers and how they response

Among the 50% male respondents 21.11% reports that they themselves suffer as consequence of violence and 13.33% says others in the family suffer. On the other, 27.78% out of 50% female respondents suffer themselves and 11.11% says others in the family suffer. For others, the respondents refer to either whole family or aged people like parents or children or sometimes spouse. Therefore, from the study it is revealed that not only women but anybody can be the victim of domestic violence. As domestic violence is often equated with intimate partner violence and victims mostly being women, the present study is a kind of eye opener, which exposes the true nature of domestic violence.

Table 8: Sufferers and their response to the situation of conflict

Gender	Who in the family suffers most of the violence?		6. What is your response to the situations of conflicts created by others?											
			Remain Silent			Quarrel with others		Try to make others understand			Went outside home			
			M/O/S	N/NA	Total	M/O/S	N/NA	Total	M/O/S	N/NA	Total	M/O/S	N/NA	Total
Male 45 (50%)	Self-sufferer	19 (21.11%)	14 (15.56%)	5 (5.56%)	19 (21.11%)	6 (6.67%)	13 (14.44%)	19 (21.11%)	13 (14.44%)	6 (6.67%)	19 (21.11%)	15 (16.67%)	4 (4.44%)	19 (21.11%)
	not Self-sufferer	12 (13.33%)	4 (4.44%)	8 (8.89%)	12 (13.33%)	1 (1.11%)	11 (12.22%)	12 (13.33%)	10 (11.11%)	2 (2.22%)	12 (13.33%)	7 (7.78%)	5 (5.56%)	12 (13.33%)
	NA	14 (15.56%)	6 (6.67%)	8 (8.89%)	14 (15.56%)	2 (2.22%)	12 (13.33%)	14 (15.56%)	5 (5.56%)	9 (10%)	14 (15.56%)	4 (4.44%)	10 (11.11%)	14 (15.56%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>45 (50%)</b>	24 (26.67%)	21	<b>45 (50%)</b>	9 (10%)	36 (40%)	<b>45 (50%)</b>	28 (31.11%)	17 (18.89%)	<b>45 (50%)</b>	26 (28.89%)	19 (21.11%)	<b>45 (50%)</b>

Female 45 (50%)	Self-sufferer	25 (27.78%)	15 (16.67%)	10 (11.11%)	25 (27.78%)	12 (13.33%)	13 (14.44%)	25 (27.78%)	17 (18.89%)	8 (8.89%)	25 (27.78%)	8 (8.89%)	17 (18.89%)	25 (27.78%)
	not Self-sufferer	10 (11.11%)	8 (8.89%)	2 (2.22%)	10 (11.11%)	4 (4.44%)	6 (6.67%)	10 (11.11%)	8 (8.89%)	2 (2.22%)	10 (11.11%)	3 (3.33%)	7 (7.78%)	10 (11.11%)
	NA	10 (11.11%)	4 (4.44%)	6 (6.67%)	10 (11.11%)	2 (2.22%)	8 (8.89%)	10 (11.11%)	5 (5.56%)	5 (5.56%)	10 (11.11%)	1 (1.11%)	9 (10%)	10 (11.11%)
<b>Total</b>		45 (50%)	27 (30%)	18 (20%)	45 (50%)	18 (20%)	27 (30%)	45 (50%)	30 (33.33%)	15 (16.67%)	45 (50%)	12 (13.33%)	33 (36.67%)	45 (50%)
<b>Grand Total</b>		90 (100%)	51 (56.67%)	39 (43.33%)	90 (100%)	27 (30%)	63 (70%)	90 (100%)	58 (64.44%)	32 (35.56%)	90 (100%)	38 (42.22%)	52 (57.78%)	90 (100%)

Source – Field study by Activism M- Mostly, O- Often, S- Seldom, N- Never, NA- Not Applicable

Now, if we analyse the responses of the sufferers to the situation of violence, we see that 26.67% out of 50 % male respondents remain silent when he himself or any other suffer, whereas 30% out of 50% female respondents remain silent when she herself or any other suffer in violence. When only 10% male respondent quarrel in such situation, 20% of female respondents quarrel in defence of the violence. 28.89% of male respondents went outside home in such situation, but quite expectedly only 13.33% of female respondents leave home to avoid violence. However, at least 30% of both males and females try to make others understand and stop violence. From another point of view, we see that among the earners, 14.44% of male respondents out of 43.33% and 13.33% of female respondents out of 26.67%, in total 28.89% report to be the sufferers. On the other, 2.22% out of 6.67% male dependents and 10% out of 23.33% female dependents, in total 12.22% report to be the sufferers. This implies that though male earners suffer bit less, females suffer more even if they earn money.

### VII. Strategies and techniques to skip or to resist conflict & violence in everyday life

The study explored that the respondents adopt different strategies to avoid or resist violence. As we have already discussed, many of them remain silent, many try to fight back by arguing, many leave the place of occurrence, or try to make others understand and stop violence. Of course, the strategies of these people change over time, as one of the female respondents point out that during initial days of her

marriage, she used to chew raw rice to keep herself silent against violent behaviour of her husband (*age mukh bondho rakhar jonyo chal chebatam*), but later she gathered courage and complained to the local political leader and also to the police. When males try to avoid violence by getting busy in their work, talk to friends over phone/ listening to music on phone / watch television and sometimes leave home temporarily, females Keep herself busy- in own work / talk to friends over phone/ reads Gita etc. While some males and females even engage in violence, destroying goods, some females report to suffer within their own selves. However, very small number of respondents report the incidents of violence on them to the police or other administrative officials - 4.44% of males and 5.56% of female respondents have gone to the police. They think it is family matter, should not to be made public (*paribarik byapar*), matter of shame. One female respondent says that it would defame her husband (*Swamir nam kharap hobe*). Some even feel that the police itself are very complex entity. Whereas 17.78% of male and 21.11% of female respondents believe that their strategy to avoid violence is totally successful, 5.56% of male respondents accept that their strategy is totally unsuccessful. It has been also found that the respondents having regular interaction with neighbours have higher tendencies of having their strategies totally successful.

### **VIII. Issues of Intolerance and Intolerance leading to Violence**

Male respondents mention several issues that cannot be tolerated, these are- 1) alcoholism 2) problems related to children including inattentiveness of children regarding studies, excessive demands by young son. 3) Economic matters including economic problems, Private property issue, 4) Ego problem/ self-respect, issue of disagreement, among the family members, parents not obeying the respondent, problems due to household work and issues of daily cooking, illness of members of family, 5) Interference of outsiders in family and suggesting negative things, 6) Community problems- issues of washrooms and tap-water, jealousy of community people if others get richer.

On the other, four females mention the issue of 1) alcoholism 2) Problems related to children's issues, particularly, sons' /children's education, daughter teased by neighbours, daughter in law's dress, unemployment and bachelorhood of son, conflict over money between son and daughter in law. 3) Economic matters including financial crisis, private property issues, household issues, space problem, selling household items and consuming alcohol. 4) Ego problem/ self-respect including conflict over disagreement, father-in-law and husband's scoldings over food 5) Problem with spouse including husband's late coming home, extramarital relation, habit of playing cards, habit of beating as intolerable issues. 6) Community problems- issues of washrooms and tap-water.

**Table 9: Intolerance Leading to violent behaviour**

Actions	Gender	Do you think intolerance lead to this violent action?			
		Yes	No	Not Applicable	Grand Total
Verbal Abuse	Male	18 (20%)	19 (21.22%)	8 (8.89%)	45 (50%)
	Female	17 (18.89%)	14 (15.56%)	14 (15.56%)	45 (50%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>35 (38.89%)</b>	<b>33 (36.67%)</b>	<b>22 (24.44%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>
Laying Hand	Male	8 (8.89%)	27 (30%)	10 (11.11%)	45 (50%)
	Female	12 (13.33%)	20 (22.22%)	13 (14.44%)	45 (50%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>20 (22.22%)</b>	<b>47 (52.22%)</b>	<b>23 (25.56%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>
Fighting	Male	5 (5.56%)	30 (33.33%)	10 (11.11%)	45 (50%)
	Female	7 (7.78%)	24 (26.67%)	14 (15.56%)	45 (50%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>12 (13.33%)</b>	<b>54 (60%)</b>	<b>24 (26.67%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>
Destroying things	Male	7 (7.78%)	29 (32.22%)	9 (10%)	45 (50%)
	Female	6 (6.67%)	24 (26.67%)	15 (16.67%)	45 (50%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>13 (14.44%)</b>	<b>53 (58.89%)</b>	<b>24 (26.67%)</b>	<b>90 (100%)</b>

**Source: Field Study by Activism**

The table indicates a clear tendency that intolerance may lead to lower level of violence like verbal abuse, but, according to the respondents it is less likely to lead to physical violence.

### **IX. Public Conversation – a way out to the problem of domestic violence**

Activism foundation in its last phase of research performed the most important part- the public conversation. Unlike any other research project Activism Foundation do not stop suggesting or recommending policies only, but returns to the field with

all analyses and suggestions. In the present research project also, the public conversation was held, where the main research findings were shared with the respondents, the problems were discussed and finally the suggestions to overcome the problem were shared. The whole process was conducted in an interactive way. In fact, it has been found in the study that like any other problem, the problem of domestic violence is also countered by the victims naturally, as they try to manage the situation according to their own understanding. However, though few of them say that they could manage to adjust the situation and are successful in their strategy to avoid violence, they could not able to stop it for ever or many could not handle the situation successfully. The research work by Activism Foundation tried to give some probable solutions for those conditions. Domestic violence affects a large section of population of this slum area. The study discovered that almost 76% of the respondents directly suffered or experienced others to suffer such violence. Thus, understanding the gravity of the problem, we needed some concrete and appropriate remedies for the people. It is also understood that besides in extreme cases people do hesitate to take help of the police and administration, rather people do not even move out of their home to seek help from the outsiders in the fear of defamation and being labelled. In this context, psychological models and feminist theories show some avenues. The concept of Responsibility has been referred to in such situations. Saunders (1996) shows developing a sense of responsibility for one's own action make him/her more accountable and definitely reduce violence. Besides personal responsibility, relational responsibility emphasizes mutual care, respect and non-violence (Held, 2006). In similar way Rosenbaum et. al. (2001) has shown the importance of empathy training on men to reduce intimate partner violence (IPV) and explored that after empathy training, they realize the impact of his violent activities on their partners and as a result become responsible, which restraint them from further violent tendencies. At the societal level, De Beauvoir (1948) proclaimed that social movements and educational programmes promoting relational care and shared responsibility challenge the patriarchal norms at the basis of domestic violence, thus producing cultural change. Now, professional psychological

programmes such as empathy training, accountability programme etc. need people to reach out of home to some external agencies, which again is difficult for many in the slum area. Therefore, the Activism foundation suggested a model which can be followed by the victims and his/her family to overcome the problem of domestic violence. Following the feminist political theorist Iris Marion Young (2011), the Forward-Looking Model of Responsibility was recommended for them. According to this model, individuals should not look backward and blame others for any violent situation. Rather the victim should look forward and understand his/her responsibility as also try to make the perpetrator responsible through a systematic process. This would definitely help the victims to reduce domestic violence on them.

### **Conclusion**

The study reveals that the very concept of domestic violence is interpreted according to the understanding of the people, whereby significant amount of people does not consider acts of verbal abuse, laying hands, beating, forcing to do something like sex, destroying goods etc. by the family members like husband or wife, parents etc. Again, if such acts carried out in response to the respondent's wrong doings, then it is not considered violence by a large percentage of the respondents. The issues which were initially understood by the respondents as key factors of violence, like alcoholism, economic problem, children's issues etc., were found to be only influencing factors of domestic violence. The main factors being the patriarchal value of power relation within home and sometimes even from outside home cause domestic violence in everyday life of domesticity. Moreover, by such violence, not only women or wives become victims, others like husbands, aged parents, young children, unmarried girls and boys too suffer in many households. So, an all-encompassing process of solution is to be required to reduce the sufferings of a diverse population, who suffers every day. The study does have challenges and limitations. In fact, the issue of domestic violence is very sensitive, people do hesitate to share such personal information with outsiders. However, the interview schedule did have questions in such a manner that information given in one part could be crosschecked in another. Moreover, the field

investigators tried to build a good rapport with most of the respondents, so that reliable data could be collected as much as possible. Further information collected through survey were also validated through the focus group discussion. However, with limited monetary resources and man power the large-scale study could not be conducted, which would definitely provide more extensive data.

Above all, it cannot be denied that the study on domestic violence by Activism Foundation has been a unique experience not only for the researchers of the organization but also for the people for whom the research was carried out, because for the first time perhaps the researcher and the people researched on met together to discuss the solutions of the problem. The forward- looking model of responsibility addressed the needs of all the respondents who suffer and Activism foundation do hope that the model and strategies would help them in dealing with the problem with more confidence and power.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> The sample size has been calculated by using Raosoft, Inc. sample size calculator. For a population of 1050, margin of error 10%, confidence level 95%, response distribution 50%, the recommended sample size is 89. Retrieved from <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>

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