

Role of Family Counseling and Voluntary Action Bureau in Domestic Violence: A Case Study in Imphal West District, Manipur

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Abstract

In patriarchal societies women have been commonly somewhat like object, but the voice of women spreads all over the world and become a global issue. The issue of gender disparity and their status thereof within the family and in the society becomes a major concern of the government. In India since the first five year plan (1951-1956) envisaging welfare measures for women, welfare measures have been spearheaded by establishing the central social welfare board (CSWB) in 1953 and voluntary action bureau (VAB) in 1982. In Manipur the VAB and family counseling centre (FCC) became functional in the year 1984, through the Manipur State Social Welfare Advisory Board (MSSWAB), Imphal. Yet the atrocities of domestic violence resulting devastating emotional and physical wounds which may also be fatal ones still linger in the state. This is the crux of the problem. The present study attempts a relational study of domestic violence through the lens of FCC & VAB as well as an assessment upon them. The objectives of the study are to find the trends of domestic violence in the state of Manipur particularly in Imphal West district to understand the consciousness of gender specific violence and to evaluate the function of VAB and FCC in solving such problems. The present study adopted interview and case study methods along with statistical analysis for five years from secondary sources. It is found that out of 157 cases of F.V as per report of FCC, Imphal West from 2011-2016, the number of cases increase yearly only 9 cases in 2011 against 66 cases in 2015 were reported. In such cases there are 27 complaints pleaded by male while 130 cases came from female complainants indicating dominant number of female victims. The present study also discussed minutely considering the case studies of the victims, and it may conclude that women are still sufferers and more awareness or schemes oriented towards gender equality are needed. Further, the role of FCC and VAB would be made more effective as many inadequacies such as untimely release of Government sanction may not hamper the sincerity of the employees.

Key Words: Domestic violence, gender equality, family counseling centre, Imphal West District and voluntary action bureau

Introduction:

Women have been treated as 'objects' by the male dominated society in India and elsewhere. However, there is no uniform pattern of social, cultural and economic, distinction between men and women. Patriarchy is very strong in India,

despite several movements for the upliftment of women launched by women's organization during pre and post independence period. Male supremacy emanates from caste, class patriarchy and sexuality of the male. Women are treated as dalits (downtrodden and inferior) in their own families by parents, in-laws and

even by their husband. In ancient India women occupied a very honorable place in society (Sharma 1989:124). But momentous changes took place during medieval period i.e. change from freedom to bondage and from honor to disgrace custom of sati, child marriage and prohibition of widow re-marriage were widely prevalent.

Women's quest for equality with man has become universal. It has given birth to women's movement and feministic activities and associations. All over the world, feminism has its origin in social structure. They want to have equality with the framework of the existing highly rigid patriarchal society. At present women is equal to man in every sphere of life. She enjoys an equal status with man in law, because there were several reforms regarding the position of women in Indian society which brought up by our famous reformer Raja Ram Mohon Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. (Sharma 1989:125)

Today, women from all over the world were becoming more and more conscious of their status within the family and in the society. In India, the problems affecting women's status are vast, complex and dynamic. Despite, the guarantees equality of opportunities for women in every sphere of activity still, women are continue to suffer from the innumerable instances of violence in mental, physical, sexual, or social and other. Rape, molestation and harassment on the streets, transport & work places, dowry, wife beating, divorce desertion etc, are arising day by day. Sadly, women, the most valuable but vial proportion of the country are still neglected by the society. Today, women are motivated and struggling for equal rights and human freedom from

earlier bondage. She does not like traditionalism. She hates exploitation. (MSSWAB1992:1-2) The voice of women spread all over the world and is becoming a global issue. In consideration the above facts recognizing the needs various steps have already been taken up by various officials and non-officials agencies to provide relief to the victims of such incidents. Number of women organizations has come up to carry the torch of equality, justice and freedom. Besides helping women publish and disseminate information related women and hold discussions seminars, workshop etc in the state, national and international levels.

The first five year plan (1951 – 1956) envisaged welfare measures for women. To spearhead welfare measures the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was established in 1953 by the planning commission, which symbolizes the welfare approach to women's problems. The CSWB Delhi set up a VAB (voluntary action bureau) in 1982, to meet the challenge of atrocities on women and children. (MHRD 1988: XII). The VAB has a committee including eminent social workers representatives of voluntary organization. Members of parliament, police, doctors journalist and lawyers, social scientists etc, which meet periodically to guide the activities of the Bureau and ensure proper implementation of the programme in achieving its goals. After the Bureau worked successfully, the central social welfare board (SCWB) set up similar, Bureau in every state and union territories to implement the similar programme directed by VAB, CSWB etc (MHRD 1988:189). In Manipur, the VAB was set up in the year 1984, through the Manipur State Social Welfare Advisory Board (MSSWAB) Imphal. This VAB has its sub-committee consists of various

concern government and non-government agencies such as state social welfare department, police, Legal Aid Cells and representation from the health and eminent social workers. The main theme of VAB is that to protect those women and children in distress by providing para-legal support and rehabilitation even by taking the help of police / court and legal aid. While, family counseling centres (FCC) which is introduced by the planning commission, Government of India in 1983, provide direct counseling to the victims. (MSSWAB1992:1& What is Counseling 1993:2)

Objectives of the present study:

The main objectives of the present study are:

- i) To find the trends of domestic violence in the state of Manipur particularly in Imphal West district.
- ii) To understand the consciousness of gender specific violence; and
- ii) To evaluate the function of VAB and FCC in solving such problems.

Methodology of the present study:

The present study is mainly analytical one based on a specific case study of domestic violence in Imphal West District. Both primary and secondary sources are used. For the collection of primary data, statistical tools like interview, observation method, etc are used whenever necessary arises. Personal information consent (PIC) is taken before any interview to be taken from the concerned interviewee. Secondary sources are mainly taken from the related books and booklets published. The period of data collection is from 2011-15 of Imphal West District and then, the data are analysed statistically.

Results and Discussion:

A. Area of Specialisation:

The area of specialization of the present work is Domestic Violence Cases which handled by this above FCC, Imphal Police Station for the year 2011-2015, particularly in Imphal West District. As we know that Domestic violence occurs when an intimate partner or a former intimate partner a husband or a wife, or boyfriend or girlfriend (or an ex) uses physical force or other abusive tactics to coerce or control his or her partner. Actually, violence is the result of economical, psychological social, culture, environmental and educational problems in the society. Domestic violence raises devastative emotional and physical wounds and sometimes it kills. Although men are also victims of domestic violence, women are twenties more likely than men to be victimized.

In Manipur, the VAB and family counseling centres (FCC) became functional in the year 1984 through the MSSWAB, Imphal. Yet the atrocities of Domestic Violence resulting devastations emotional and physical wounds which may also be fatal ones still linger in the state. This is the crux of the problem. The present study attempts a relational study of domestic violence through the lens of FCC & VAB as well as assessment upon them in Imphal West District.

B. Objectives of the FCCs:

The main objectives of the FCCs are:

1. To provide various program an atrocities against women and other relevant for the welfare of family.
2. To prove for legal aid, police assistance and counseling for the needy persons.
3. To provide service to women battered exploited women with

physical and emotional problems and women from lower socio-economic families.

4. To established such excellent man-women parent child and in-laws relationship that the social and emotional needs of each members of the family will be met.
5. To established sound work and study habits so that the economic, education and cultural needs of the family may be satisfied. This is often necessary before the couple's desire for children can be fulfilled.(What is Family Counseling 1993:3)

C. Discussion about Voluntary Action Bureau and Family Counseling:

Broadly, the State VAB performs the following functions:

- (i) Implementation of FCC schemes.
- (ii) Monitor the performance of FCCS in their respective states through periodic visit & meetings with the counselors and FCC organizers.
- (iii) Act as a referred agency.
- (iv) To educate and mobilize public opinion against social crimes particularly those against women.
- (v) Conduct independent inquiry of all cases of death of young women under suspicious cases and take up follow up action on collaboration of FCC.
- (vi) Organise legal literacy camps through FCC in the rural areas in order to carry the message of the programme in to the interior.
- (vii) Organise orientation and refresher training for FCC counselors and organisers with the objectives of the programmes and ensure professional services to the victims.
- (viii) Collected and impart information regarding welfare activities

conducted by welfare agencies to ensure better co-ordination between voluntary organization and official machinery.

- (ix) Conduct studies and research on specific problems pertaining to women.
- (x) Preparation of literature, booklets, pamphlets, related to women issues and distribute to the public through voluntary organizations who are engaged in the welfare of women to extend their support and co-operation for running the programme of voluntary action bureau smoothly.(MSSAB 1992:3)

D. The Schemes of financial assistance to voluntary organization to set up family counseling centres:

The schemes of family counseling centre (FCC) was introduced as an experiment by the CSWB, New Delhi and got approved from the planning commission, Govt. of India in 1983. These centres are given granted for providing preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to women who are victims of atrocities.

Distress women are provide services like crisis intervention investigation in dowry death cases, counseling incase of marital family mal adjustment; efforts for reconciliation in cases of separation and out of court settlement in marital cases or referral services like short stay, free legal aid, police assistance etc by trained social workers.

As we know that counseling means giving advice to the people who need assistance. It is essentially a relationship, an interaction between two people, the counselor who is trained to give help and who seeks to assist the other by means of

appropriate to the latter's need and life situation and the counselor who is in need of help and seek it. (MSSWAB1993:4)

Augustine Warner Jr. (politician) defines counseling as "a therapeutic growth process through which individuals are helped to define goals, make decisions and solved problems related to personal social educational and carrier concern". The counselor should first help the client selective conducive environment. In case that is not feasible, the second strategy of change should be attempted failing which the third strategy creation should be attempted and for implemented. (Bhakry1995:3)

Characteristics of counseling relationship are as follows:

- (i) Counseling relationship is formal and structural and is characterized by specified duration, privacy and confidentiality.
- (ii) It continues till the client feels the need for a special help which he / she cannot solve independently.
- (iii) The counseling relationship is limited to the therapeutic use and purpose.
- (iv) Although, it is limited, the relation is deeper and closer than the other social relationship.
- (v) The counseling relationship is powerful and thus effective because the principles of good human relationship are applied consciously and purposefully. (What is Family Counseling 1993:4)

E. Techniques for dealing with resistance:

The main techniques for dealing with resistances in counseling are:

- (i) Counselor should be alert to client's assistance, but should not respond to

it. Instead she should recognise that resistance is normal and should concentrate on understanding the clients unique defensive style.

- (ii) The good relationship supportive and accepting may help clarify the situation and reduce the resistance.
- (iii) If the resistance is stronger, the counselor may redirect the interview to less threatening areas.
- (iv) The strongest technique is the direct confrontation or questionnaire. (What is Family Counseling 1993:5)

F. Basic principles for counseling:

The basic principles for consoling are given below:

- (i) Respect: This means praising another person for what he is with warmth and acceptance. The ability of the counselor lies in communicating to the counselee belief that every person possesses the inherent strength and capacity to make it in life and each person make his own decision.
- (ii) Authenticity and congruence: This implies genuineness, openness, realness and honesty.
- (iii) Empathy: Empathy is the ability to accurately perceive what another person is experiencing and communicate that perception, what does the counselee think? How does (s) he really feel inside? What are then counselee's values, belief, inner conflict and hurts? A good counselor is continually sensitive to these issues, able to understand them and effective in communicative this understanding to the counselee by words or gestures.
- (iv) Confidentiality: Confidentiality and trust are most important in a counseling relationship.

- (v) Immediacy: Immediacy its dealing with the feelings between the counselee and the counselor. (Bhakry 1995:2)

The family of today is face with problems of a serious nature. It is an unstable family. The number of broken marriages is on the increase. Suicide by within the husband or wife is on the increase. The main causes of the instability of the family are less social protective in family crisis and replacement of domination by co-operation. There is sexual disharmony between husband and wife. So, the divorce rate has been increased day by day with the impact of western culture, and it affected the stability of India family system.

Today, in India, Ministry of Welfare, Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) have launched a programme for the solution of family problems. So, family counseling is an interactive process conjoining the counselee who needs assistance and the counselor who is trained and extracted to give assistance. (Bhakry 1993:3)

G. Family Counseling Centres in Manipur:

The FCC scheme is being implemented since 1984 in Manipur under the CSWB through VAB of Manipur state social welfare Advisory Board (MSSWAB). At present, there are eleven FCC in the state including one innovative scheme at Imphal Police H/Q, Imphal which is the centre of the present work. These FCC, in the state has referral services for giving shelter and for convenient condition to those who are in distressed. (MSSWAB 1992:6)

H. Findings of the present study:

It is found that there are 157 cases of Domestic violence which handled by FCC, Imphal police H/Q, Imphal from 2011-2015, particularly in Imphal (W), the number of cases increases yearly. That is only 9 cases in 2011 and 12 cases in 2012, 20 cases in 2013, 50 cases in 2014 and 66 cases in 2015 were reported. In such cases there are 27 complaints pleaded by male while 130 cases came from female complainants, indicatives dominant number of female victims. The present study also discussed minutely considering the case studies of the victims, for example about, Divorce, extra marital relations, marriage crisis etc.

The tables are as follows:

TABLE – 1

NATURE OF CASE FOR THE YEAR 2011 – 2015

Nature of Case	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Divorce		3		3		6	1	8	1	13
Physically Assault						1		2	1	3
Extras Marital	1	1		2				2	1	
Family Crisis					1		1		1	1
Marriage Crisis		2		4	1	1	5	7	5	7
Family Maladjustment		1		1		1		1		1
Illicit						2				

Relationship										
Harassment				1	1		1	2	1	4
Domestic Violence						1		6		2
Marital Maladjustment		1			1			2		7
Kidnapped						1				
Bigamy						1				
Cube bending						1				2
Exploitation of Women						1		3		2
Molestation					1			2		
Treatment								1		2
Maintenance								3		3
Character Assasination								1		2
Sexually Exploitation								1		
Desertion									2	2
reconciliation									2	
Immoral Behaviour							1			3

Source: Office of the FCC, Imphal Police H/Q, Imphal West, Manipur

TABLE – 2

STATUS OF THE CASES FOR THE YEAR 2011-2015

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Closed	4	2	16	26	45
Pending	5	10	3	24	20
Cases in Referral Service					
			1	0	1

Source: Office of the FCC, Imphal Police H/Q, Imphal West, Manipur

TABLE – 3

EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE CLIENTS FOR THE YEAR 2011-2015

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Illiterate		2					1	7		6
Literate	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1	6	Nil	12	4	16	9	33	14	46

Source: Office of the FCC, Imphal Police H/Q, Imphal West, Manipur

TABLE – 4

MARITAL STATUS OF THE CLIENTS FOR THE YEAR 2011-2015

	2011		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Married		6		9	3	16	4	31	10	46
Unmarried	1	2		3	1		6	9	4	6

Source: Office of the FCC, Imphal Police H/Q, Imphal West, Manipur

Conclusions:

From the above findings, the conclusions seems to be that the awareness of right does not raises the status of women, non awareness lowers their feeling of satisfaction (with their status). The main barriers in the awareness of rights are illiteracy, excessive involvement in domestic chores, household constraints

(that is attitudes of husband and in law) and economic dependence on males. It may be concluded that women are still sufferers and more awareness or schemes oriented towards gender equality are needed. Further, the role of FCC and VAB would be made more effective as many inadequacies such as untimely release of govt. sanction may not hamper the sincerity of the employees.

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