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WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON RESPONSES TO INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

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I am alone responsible for any errors.

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SUMMARY

The qualitative study focuses on women's ways of responses to intimate partner violence, both physical and sexual, and the routes through which violence has been resolved. Violence against women is a social structural phenomenon embedded in patriarchal power. It is inextricably linked to sexuality and male oriented sexual practice. A number of the responses have been a challenge to patriarchal power. Twenty respondents from an organisation in Calcutta volunteered to participate in this study.

The researcher found that many women do not consider male violence in intimate relationships to be acceptable. This is often expressed in their practice even though their words may sometimes express other views, reflecting the way in which women's relationship with their abusive partners is multi-faceted and complex. The researcher investigated the ways in which women express disapproval or intolerance in more coded or indirect methods than outright verbal condemnation.

Women have the options of letting others know about physical violence and they commonly do so with the help of their family and friends. The constrained space of sexual discourse limits the possibilities women have to vocalise their violence and as a result makes it difficult for the organised effort to come into play.

The contact with social service agencies, along with women's education and employment are highlighted as factors in challenging patriarchal power. The study looks into the social, personal and economic assets which contribute to the ending of violence. Women's collective effort transform women's responses from individual to social actions and significantly impact the stopping of violence in the daily lives of the victims. The personal asset which emerges to be of prime importance is education, an asset of important consideration in countries where women face educational

disadvantage. The financial asset is employment, which is essential for women who want to separate from violent men to maintain lives free of violence.

A model of politicisation based on the feminist interpretation of power has been proposed to empower victims for direct action against intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Intimate Partner Violence

> 'I was truly alone, abandoned to an endless purgatory of beatings and housework. I was worked like a mule and only given leftovers to eat. There wasn't an ounce of kindness in them. From dawn until dusk they just worked me to the bone. After only a week of marriage my husband had kicked me from the mattress.'(38 Bahadurabad, Zeeba Sadiq)

Violence against women is not unusual as is evident from this unique blend of autobiography and fiction. Nor do only abnormal, psychologically disturbed individuals commit it. On the contrary, it is perhaps the most pervasive form of abuse – a universal phenomenon that cuts across all divisions of age, class, race, religion, ethnicity and geographical region.

There is, of course, a great host of historical evidence to show that women have always suffered violence from their husbands and partners (Martin, 1976; Tomes, 1978; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Freeman, 1979; Smith, 1989; Clarke, 1992). However, the problem of partner violence has only become publicly evident when there has been a strong feminist movement, enabling the collective organisation against its occurrence (Freeman, 1979; Brokowski et al., 1983; Pence and Paymar, 1993).

Violence against women by their partners has been recognised as an area which needs more detailed and in-depth research, particularly on the general population (Smith, 1989). The true extent of violence is generally agreed to be difficult to ascertain. It is supposed to be one of the most hidden figures of any crime (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Hanmer and Stanko, 1985; Worrall and Pease, 1986). Figures derived from

agencies like the police are necessarily selective and cover only a small proportion of victims. These represent the "tip of the iceberg" and in some cases, for instance those derived from women's refuges, point more to the limited availability of such resources rather than the overall extent of the problem.

Violence perpetrated by men on women has begun to be recognised as a major social problem. The abusers bear the responsibility for the violence and it is they who control the lives of the women they abuse. However, the women have managed to live their lives and the achievement lies in the fact that there has been a change in the terminology from "victim" to "survivor". However, the researcher prefers the term "victim" to "survivor" in her study as this keeps the fact in focus that women as the targets of the violence are the sufferers.

1.2 Basis of the Study

Women throughout the world are often faced with the difficult decisions on how to proceed in responding to and stopping the violence. The issue of male violence has been challenged in many countries including the women in the Asian countries. In the international arena women have won a number of advances such that in the United Nations a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women has been appointed (http://www.stopvaw.org/Special_Rapporteur_on_Violence_Against_Women.html).

In this study the researcher aims to understand the violence from woman victim's perspective. It is because the victim is the one who experiences violence, is supposed to know when it starts and how to respond to and resist it. The researcher will investigate the potentials in the hands of the victims and to explore the organisational links as well as the extent of physical and sexual violence they are exposed to. This is to acknowledge the critical role of women in challenging male violence and give due

recognition to the fact that without such challenging responses male violence will not end.

The researcher will explore the different responses to intimate partner violence against women. Resistance as one of the challenging strategies can be seen as an important indicator of a woman's ability to take control over her own life. It gives her autonomy. This research is based on the premise that freedom from violence is central to the autonomy of a woman. Again, this work has two basic tenets: male violence against women is unacceptable and the commitment to the actions which eradicates such violence. Moreover, power used by abusive men creates some kind of in-built counter-power in the women victims even when it is not explicit.

1.3 Rationale for the Study

This research may be carried out in any context and situation (Cavanagh, 2003.). In fact, previous studies on violence against women in general and intimate partner violence in particular have been carried out in continents of North America, Europe and Australia (Brown, 1992; Mooney, 1994; Busch et al., 1995). Research on intimate partner violence in the South Asian countries is scant. The researcher's study will certainly contribute to the knowledge in terms of understanding the violence, particularly, in South Asia.

Much research has been done on women's experiences of violence and its demoralising effects. However, most theories on male violence are rather western, and in recent times there has been much debate on the need to consider culture and ethnicity (Kanuha, 1998; Crenshaw, 1994). The South Asian women have a low representation in such literature though in a South Asian country like India the factor of culture specificity is very significant.

This study will bring into focus the experiences of the women in South Asia, specially for India, adding to the existing knowledge base.

Again, theories of male violence have too commonly centred around male perpetrators. This has resulted in victimhood being constructed as a state of passivity, the only solution to violence is thus escape from the relationship. Explanations of violence which centre on patriarchal power aptly display the gendered and controlling intent of partner violence. They have been characterized by insufficient research and theorization of women's active responses against male violence. This has meant that they have been vulnerable to charges of being ahistoric, insensitive to cultural context and static.

1.4 Focus of Study

The interest in responses to male violence raises several queries.

1. How do women respond to resist such violence?
2. Are the women's responding strategies similar in cases of physical and sexual violence?
3. When and how a woman decides to leave a violent relationship?
4. What types of social support do women seek in dealing with intimate partner violence?
5. What are the social, political and economic factors that have a bearing on resistance to such violence?

The researcher believes that victimhood is not a passive state and thus this study is concerned about identifying women's active responses while being victims.

1.5 The Context of the Study

A research of this nature could indeed be carried out in any context or situation. However, the researcher decided to carry out this project in Calcutta, India primarily for two reasons. By doing so the researcher could add on to the existing knowledge on the extent of violence against women in a city in South Asia. Secondly, the women who face violence in their daily lives are looked down upon by the Indian society as having lost their dignity. This reality and the silence around the issue of intimate partner violence have led to the recent setting up of several non-profit organizations (NGOs) in Calcutta with the aim of providing a platform for speech, expression and protest. NGOs like Sakshi in Delhi, Swayam in Calcutta resort to awareness campaign, lobbying to the government, protest rallies, counselling victims and if possible, their husbands, setting up shelters for victims leaving violent relationship and the like. Besides, government-established women councils like National Commission of Women, Delhi and social welfare departments of governments of the States also actively participate to curb violence. The police and the legal aid societies also play their part. There are certain legal provisions to penalize the violent husbands including the incorporation of Section 498A into the Criminal law Act 1983, under which if a husband or his relatives subject a woman to cruelty, they face imprisonment up to three years and have to pay an amount as fine. An amendment in The Evidence Act was also affected, shifting the burden of proof of innocence to the accused, much against regular criminal jurisprudence. More significantly, the offence under Section 498A is non-baillable and non-compoundable. These provisions are culture-specific to India where a huge number of married women are subject to cruelty. So a service delivery system seems to have developed to help women in crises, though much headway has not been made in controlling violence. The

researcher wanted to document and enable women to exchange experiences on this most pervasive form of abuse. She hopes that ways can be found to build a world free from violence.

Calcutta, one time capital of British India, is the capital of West Bengal, one of the 28 states, in India. It has a glorious past and a rich cultural heritage originating from Bengal Renaissance. It is a big metropolitan city, partly cosmopolitan, partly pan Indian and partly Bengali. Majority of the population of Calcutta is Hindu though a good number of minorities are also there. High levels of unemployment and overcrowding mark the city at present. Poverty is so widespread in Calcutta that many beg and sleep on the streets. Others have a home to return which is a part of the slum dwellings that spread through the city. Since 1977 the Left Front Government led by the Communist Party of India has been in power in Bengal.

1.6 Approach to Study

This research is guided by a feminist perspective. Feminists view intimate partner violence to be a social issue rather than as an individual or family issue (Cazenave and Straus, 1990). They are of the opinion that battering is a manifestation of the patriarchal power or the 'rule of the fathers'. Hence, intimate partner violence is seen in the light of one of the male behaviours to oppress and control women.

The feminist research methodology has several tenets (Sprenkle and Moon, 1996). The feminists hold the view that all social science research has socio-political significance. The research involving feminist approach is carried out to bring about social change. Secondly, the researcher need not look for research objectivity as the experiences of the researcher is an important component of the knowledge so constructed. The focus is based on the individual researcher's concern and interest.

Thirdly, the feminist approach to research is transdisciplinary and hence might incorporate a variety of research methods. Fourthly, the researchers belie ve that woman's experiences constitute a valuable source of knowledge. Fifthly, the feminists also believe that there is no single 'truth' about a human experience. Knowledge constructed keeps on changing with the changing experiences of women and collation of data. The feminists of today believe that research should be directed towards liberating the oppressed rather than seeking the 'truth' (Andrews, 2002).

1.7 Thesis Structure

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. The first chapter introduces the project. The second chapter deals with literature related to responses to violence against women. The third discusses methodological issues, fieldwork and the epistemological stance of the researcher. The fourth concentrates on the findings. The fifth deals with the discussions of the study. The sixth throws light on the limitations of the study; and implications for research, practice and policy. The seventh chapter proposes a practice model for empowering women victims. The last chapter of the thesis contains the concluding remark.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This research concerns the way in which women respond to intimate partner violence and what helps them move from violent to violence-free lives. The existing literature on response to intimate partner violence meted out to the wife seem to have undergone an evolution. The researcher tries to review the works in the light of feminist standpoint of combating violence on a social basis.

The early literature considered leaving and staying as the only two responses of battered women (Gelles, 1976) based on psychological and economistic explanations and as a result women's passivity was often reflected in the earlier literature. However, now much literature focuses on not only the active responses of women (Dutton, 1993; Hoff, 1990; Campbell, 1998) like problem-solving, verbal and physical retaliation and killing perpetrators but also analyses leaving vis-à-vis staying from a number of perspectives other than only psychological and economistic reasons (Nicarthy, 1987; Rhodes and McKenzie, 1998). Hence the various responses to intimate partner violence may be categorised into two broad headings: escape as a solution and active responses of the battered women.

2.2 Escape as the Solution

The early literature on women's responses considered escape as the primary way in which women can or should respond to violent relationships (Hendricks-Matthews, 1982; Labell, 1979; Walker, 1979). Literature on response to intimate partner violence has a dominant theme of women's escape. Many women who are abused by their

partners are not quick to leave them. This has been a matter of some interest and thus is in the need of an explanation. An abusive relationship is a situation from which women are expected to escape since this seems to offer an immediate and speedy reprieve to intimate partner violence. The interest in escape can be motivated by a number of factors, including an assessment that the relationship cannot change (Walker, 1979) or that escape is itself a common means to resolution (Russell, 1990). The problem becomes centred on a dichotomous choice: leaving/escape against staying/continued violence: escape becomes the alternative to abuse. The consequent questions are why women stay? Why don't women leave abusive relationships?

2.2.1 Psychological Explanations

The psychological explanations include self-blame, psychological entrapment and the theory of learned helplessness as explanations of escape or staying (Walker, 1979). It has been argued that some women blame themselves for relationship difficulties (Glass, 1995).Theories of physical entrapment argue that some women are unwilling to terminate a relationship having made a heavy emotional and psychological investment and being influenced by social pressures to be in a relationship, opting instead to continue in the belief that at some point there will be a positive payoff (Gelles, 1976; Brokner, Shaw and Rubin, 1979; Jacobson and Gottman, 1998). This approach also concludes that commitment increases with investment so that the longer a woman stays in an abusive relationship the less likely she is to leave it.

Another theory which offers psychological explanation is the battered woman syndrome, especially on the theory of learned helplessness (Walker, 1979). This approach highlights the effects of women's unsuccessful attempts to get the violence stopped. A battered woman develops three types of psychological deficits –

motivational (so she does not want to try anything else to resolve the abuse), cognitive (because actions and outcomes are de-linked) and affective (resulting in feelings of self-blame and depression). A battered woman learns that she is helpless. In turn this leads to the inability or unwillingness to seek help to resist the violence. This eventually impairs her problem-solving skills (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997). Women most likely to fit this model are those who internalise the blame for unsuccessful outcomes and consider the non-contingency between outcomes and actions to be both long-lasting and to extend to other aspects of their lives (Abramson, Garber and Seligman, 1980).

Recent studies (Lerner and Kennedy, 2000; Martin et al., 2000; Griffing et al., 2002) on the battered women's decisions of staying/leaving and returning to abusive partners focused on multiple psychological variables. Lerner and Kennedy's (2000) study of two hundred women who were in a violent relationship or who had left one revealed that the psychological variables such as self-efficacy, trauma and coping varied depended on whether women were in or out of the relationship and how long it had been since they had left the relationship. This article contributed to the fact that the decision to stay or leave depends upon a number of factors and is a complex process.

Again, women who leave, return to the abusive relationship due to internal factors (Martin et al., 2000). The process of leaving involves a lot of 'stressors'. If a woman inaccurately perceives these difficulties, she would be completely unaware of the feelings that arise during the process of leaving and would make a hasty decision of returning to her abusive partner (Martin et al., 2000). A study conducted by Griffing et al. (2002) considered the impact of both external (economic need, legal intervention) and internal factors (feeling the need to preserve the relationship,

heavily influenced by perpetrator's sense of remorse) on the process of returning to the abusive partner. The study revealed that women returned to their partners as 'emotional attachment played an influential role in their decision to do so' (Griffing et al., 2002: 313). The majority of the victims who had returned previously to their partners claimed that emotional attachment played a vital role in making such a decision. A small fraction of the participants who walked out of the relationship for the first time felt that attachment might force them to return in the future. 'The fact that continued emotional attachment appears to play a critical role in past and future decisions to return to abusive relationships stands in contrast to the central focus in the literature on external factors, such as economic dependence, lack of safe haven, and fear of further abuse' (Griffing et al., 2002: 315).

All these psychological explanations may offer some insights into the situation where women who have sought help find their attempts to be unsuccessful to stop violence and the psychological factors affecting their stay-leave decision. It does not explain how women continue to manage or minimise violence against them (or their children). Neither does the theory explain how women resolve violence.

2.2.2 Economistic Explanations

Inability to escape violence has been explained by the lack of economic resources of many married women (Horton and Johnson, 1993; Pahl, 1985; Massiah, 1990; Strube and Barbour, 1983; Schuler et al., 1998). Economistic explanations tend to focus on the employment or economic status of the abused woman, often equating the two, and commonly posit economic activity as the route to economic independence, which in turn facilitates escape. This stress on the potential of paid work to impact positively upon domestic relations draws, in particular, on the analysis of Engels (1972) that 'the

first condition in the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into public industry' (Engels, 1972:137-38). Liberals have offered similar arguments. Wollstonecraft argued for women to have economic independence in order that they can relate as equals to their husbands and so they can leave a tyrannical marriage (cited in Green, 1995).

Pahl's early work with abused women (Pahl, 1985) highlighted the absence of financial means, as a significant barrier to escape; financial means could be realised through economic activity. Pahl's analysis was based on interviews with some women in refuges who themselves provided this analysis and assessment of their options. Massiah's work with women in Caribbean (1990) found that they similarly stressed the need for independent financial status and valued this as 'a means of avoiding, or at least reducing their vulnerability to their men folk and of lessening the need to indulge in submissiveness as a strategy to achieve their own goals' (Massiah, 1990: 236). Employment in the garment industry in Bangladesh has been found in some cases to have a direct mitigating impact on domestic violence (Kabeer, 1995). Kabeer termed this as a "strategic potential of women's wages in the context of domestic violence" (p.30) and found that a number of women who had taken up new employment opportunities had felt enabled thereby to leave their abusive husbands.

Homer et al. (1984) concluded that economic dependency on abusive men was a significant influence on whether or not women left. They found that women who were abused by unemployed men were more likely to leave than those who were living with employed men and that the "pressure of economic dependency can push women into economic independence". (Homer et al., 1984: 20). However, in Homer's study only 24% of the women had been employed in the three-month period prior to coming to the refuge and some had given up their employment due to the deterioration in the

domestic situation. Many women said that had they tried to take up paid work it would have resulted in worse violence from partners. This raises questions concerning women's employment as to whether it is a precedent to escape. Or perhaps a consequence thereof? Or perhaps financial independence is a motivating factor for separation?

Few studies have tested empirically the relationship between economic or employment status and the likely outcome of an abusive relationship and the key findings are presented here (Okun, 1988; Russell, 1990; Hashemi et al., 1996; Schuler et al., 1998). They tend to highlight relative rather than absolute status, in terms of the woman's experience compared to man's. These nuanced approaches suggest that the relative financial position of the man and woman may impact upon women's capacity and willingness to challenge violence or to leave a violent relationship (Russell 1990; Okun, 1988).

Okun (1988) compared the relationship outcomes of 187 women leaving shelters in Michigan over a period of two years. He found a statistically significant relationship between outcome and relative economic position of the battered women and her partner, such that there was immediate termination in 54% of cases where the woman provided more income than her partner compared with 28% in couples where the women earned the same as or less than their partners. The pattern was the same for eventual termination, which occurred in 58% of cases where women provided the larger part of the couple's income compared to 39% in other relationships. Okun (1988) is in favour of a 'feminist resource theory' analysis, which says that a woman is more likely to end an abusive relationship if her abuser provides few resources. Women with greater independent economic resources, on the other hand, will be more likely to terminate violent relationships.

Russell (1990) addressed the question of how some women stopped the violence (rape in marriage), finding that leaving the marriage permanently was the strategy to end rape applied in 42% of cases (1990). Her quantitative analysis of the factors associated with the wives being more likely to end the violence found economic considerations to be important, in that women who were the primary breadwinner at the time of the first rape were more likely to be those who stopped the violence, as were those women who were married to men in low-status occupations. Russell (1990) found that women's occupational profiles were not clearly concentrated, being spread across upper and lower class locations.

The later studies have tried to analyse the relationship between intimate partner violence and women's economic dependence on men through the introduction of microcredit programmes (Hashemi et al., 1996; Schuler et al., 1998; Mallick, 2002). With the introduction of many micro-credit programmes in the developing countries there are doubts whether it perpetuates intimate partner violence or helps in the economic empowerment of women (Mallick, 2002). 'Credit programmes may reduce domestic violence by channelling resources to families through women, and by organising women into solidarity groups that meet regularly and make their lives more visible, strategies that could be employed in other types of programmes. In some cases, however, providing resources to women and encouraging them to maintain control over these resources may provoke violent behaviour in men, because they see their authority over their wives being undermined' (Schuler et al., 1998 :155).

The development literature stressed the importance of personal independence through economic independence (through employment activity). Both Marxist and Neo-liberal approaches stress the importance of female integration into the economy. In development discourse interest has not yet been focused on violence in the home but

on women's status, which extends to intimate relations. The linkage is stated explicitly in a World Bank document on India: 'women's ability to make (or withdraw) an identifiable economic contribution to the family… will engender changes in the self-perception of the individual woman and increase her 'bargaining power' i.e. her ability to realise her individual preferences within the family' (Bennett, 1991: 5). ECLAC (1992) identified an appropriate response to domestic violence as being women's 'integration into the labour market, to promote their economic self-sufficiency and autonomy and thus assist them to escape from violent surroundings' (p.44). Sen (1992) has shown similar indication in his model of co-operative conflicts, where women's income–generating activities outside the home can have a significant influence on their bargaining position within the home. Again, Mies (1982) found that the lace-making women of Narsapur did not receive direct benefits from their employment (for the world market) because their employment – as housewives – was defined primarily as marginal, both in terms of time and place of work. Analyses of women's experience of paid work have shown that occupational segregation combined with feminised casualisation of the formal sector mitigate against women being personally enriched by the employment experience. Their concentration in the informal sector with all its attendant insecurities similarly is unlikely to offer satisfaction (Banerjee, 1985; Jayawardena, 1986; Zaman, 1999).

The mostly Western literature on ending violence stresses the impact of (relative) economic status while gender-and-development (GAD) literature (Mies, 1982; Banerjee, 1985; Jayawardena, 1986) has increasingly questioned the linkage between economic activity and intra-household power of women. The latter has not focused on violence while the former literature has concentrated in areas where single adult women are more easily accepted than in other countries and this may have led to an

undervaluing of social factors which mitigate against escape. Thus escape is an outcome which cannot be assumed to be preferred by all or a majority of women as they do not want to be seen 'westernised' (Yoshioka et al., 2003).

Psychological and economistic approaches are the most significant and commonly argued explanations in the Western literature dealing with the issue of escape from violent relationships. The relative economic position analysis has been supported by empirical data. However, there is no consensus on the impact of women's wages on the prevalence of domestic violence or the propensity of women to leave violent men. More sophisticated accounts point to the potential in income differentials to incline women to leave and to the quest for economic control to motivate women to leave.

The dichotomy of leaving/escape against staying/continued violence inevitably equates staying with failure and leaving with success. 'If women stay with violent men and somehow struggle to maintain the relationship they may be seen as enjoying or asking for the abuse' (Stanko, 1990:106-7). Escape becomes the sole alternative to victimisation (Mahoney, 1994). 'The focus on leaving conceals the nature of intimate partner violence as a struggle for control, pretends away the dangers of separation and hides the interaction of social structures that oppress women' (Mahoney, 1994: 61). In fact, women who have somehow managed their relationships in ways which result in the violence stopping and the relationship continuing are in danger of being understood as having failed to leave and therefore having failed to resolve the abusive relationship.

The researcher explores the employment linkage and hence will contribute to the existing literature; however, it will centre around the issue of cessation of violence.

2.2.3 Other Explanations

Leaving is a complex and difficult decision and process, complicated by the obstacles of establishing separate lives. This is not simply a function of employment status (Okun, 1988; Malik, 1988; Pizzey, 1974; Rhodes and McKenzie, 1998) but is also influenced by myriad factors which include moral conflict (Belknap, 1999), state social security systems where they exist (Kelly, 1993; Okun, 1988; Hague et al., 2000) and safe alternative accommodation (Malik, 1988; Pizzey, 1974; Hague et al., 2000). Okun found the influencing effect of state social security when comparing income of partners (Okun, 1988). In the UK, restrictions in welfare payments and decline in government expenditures meant that leaving is difficult and many women 'realistically assess the negative impact on themselves and their children…in these circumstances it is amazing that many women do leave' (Kelly, 1993:18). The practical considerations about leaving are wider than purely financial – safe alternative accommodation cannot be assumed to be available. The alternative accommodation along with the support that comes with it is a key element in women's response options (Malik, 1988; Pizzey, 1974; Hague et al., 2000). Kelly (1988) found that the most common reasons women gave for returning to abusive men were that they had nowhere safe to go, the men found them and forced them to return or the fact that they had left their children behind.

The strategy of leaving an abusive relationship has attracted more attention than others.

Having talked to women who 'got away', Nicarthy (1987), later Branett and La Violett (1993), and Rhodes and McKenzie (1998) found a complex set of reasons in each case where women left, although the final action may have been spurred by one specific event. Women offered on average more than five explicit reasons for their

final decision to leave. Nicarthy (1987) highlighted a number of themes running through women's decisions to leave: fear of staying, loss of hope for change, reaching a position of rock bottom, where the humiliation or shame was unbearable, hoping for a better life without the abuser, being open to positive external influences such as the support of other women and events which are beyond the control of the women such as the husband leaving her for another women. She summarizes these as a balancing process between fear and hope, in which women's fear of her own safety, hope that the abuse will change and fear of living alone all play a part in the decision-making process. Nicarthy (1987) implied that leaving is itself not a permanent solution. Attention must be given to the conditions which support women's ability to stay away. Among these are the practical supports such as places of safe housing, public welfare schemes, support from women's groups, impact on self-confidence of adult education as well as volunteer or paid work.

Rhodes and McKenzie (1998) concluded that the overall coping patterns adopted by battered women and their decisions whether or not to stay in the abusive relationship are largely affected by factors such as: the women's demographic characteristics (e.g., age, education level, income, occupation, and financial independence), the frequency and severity of violence, personality factors (e.g., self-esteem and self image, proneness to depression, locus of control), cognitive and behavioral factors (e.g., attitudes toward women, learned helplessness, self-accusation), and environmental factors and resources (e.g., availability of formal services and the services' responses to the woman's needs, social networks, etc.).

These studies fail to recognise the fact that the solution from violence may not lie in separation. Women continue to face violence even after separation (Johnson, 1996; McLellan, 1996; Pagelow, 1984; Walker & Meloy, 1998). Men may track down, stalk

and harass women over whom they continue to seek to exercise control, whose latest transgression (leaving) they still feel they have the right to punish. The term 'separation killing' has been coined to describe the killings of women by men seeking retaliation for rejection (Rapoport, 1994). Hence escape should not be equated with the cessation of violence – violence is not contained neatly within the formal lifetime of a relationship. Recognising this important distinction, Johnson and Horton noted that 'strategies and treatment approaches that have proven successful deserve further study' (Horton and Johnson, 1993: 482).

The researcher views resolution as the end of violence and not the end of a relationship. This allows the possibility for violence to end while a relationship continues and conversely does not assume that the end of a violent relationship brings safety for women. It also allows the researcher to consider the various ways in which a relationship is ended – a woman or a man can leave; in fact, women may prefer to remain in their homes while men leave.

2.3 Responses to Violence

Though writers like Foucault emphases the coexistence of power and resistance (Foucault, 1990) there are few studies which detail the ways in which women challenge, actively respond, resist violence, or how violence is ended. As these constitute the main questions in the study, these are discussed in some detail. The key findings to the questions relating to ending violence drew on family violence, sociological and feminist research. Most of the studies were conducted in the USA and UK. There have been studies done in closely associated areas, such as battered women's repeated attempts to end the violence by reasoning with the husband and making him understand that he must cease the abuse, by retreating or by seeking the

protection and advice of relatives and friends (Bowker, 1993; Kelly, 1988; Pahl, 1985; Haj-Yahia, 2002). With only a few exceptions (Kelly, 1988; Wade, 1997; Hyden, 1999), the resistance theme has been almost completely missing from research on the abuse of women.

Bowker (1988) and later Abraham (2000)[1] have identified three response strategies used by women against violent men. These include personal strategies such as avoidance, running away, non-violent threatening and passive defence; informal help-seeking from family, friends, in-laws and neighbours; formal help sources like the police, physicians, nurses, clergy, lawyers, district attorneys and social shelters. The researcher uses this framework to review the literature starting with personal strategies.

2.3.1 Personal Strategies

Several studies focused on women's active personal responses to intimate partner violence (Russell, 1990; McDowell, 1992; Campbell et al., 1998; Cavanagh, 2003). The personal strategies used by some marital rape-victims (Russell, 1990) included leaving the marriage permanently or temporarily, fighting violence with violence, insistence on husband giving up alcohol, or a range of effective threats such as threatening to leave or to use violence. Within the category of leaving the marriage Russell included the strategy of women excluding men from the home and found this strategy to be used in 42% of cases where wife-rape stopped. Women used a range of strategies of retaliatory violence from struggling, pushing away a violent husband to using tools like lamp against them. Threats of violence were effective only where

[1] Abraham (2000) has also identified a fourth strategy called controlling her destiny by leaving her husband. Since the researcher has already discussed 'escape' as one of the strategies, she has used the first three for the building the framework.

there was a 'rare sense of mutuality, as well as physical strength and willingness to use it' (Russell, 1990:318). Women's use of violence (McDowell, 1992) has been observed to be similarly constrained by physical characteristics in other studies such as Finkelhor and Yllo (1982). Some women see no way out and resort to attempting or committing suicide (Mitchell, 1992). Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, and Sandin (1997) argued that because the personal skills may be adversely affected by the husband's violence the responses are an outcome of that behavior and not the cause of it. For example, a battered woman will develop a sense of learned helplessness when she finds that nothing she does will stop the husband's violence. This, in turn, substantially impairs her problem-solving abilities (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997).

The distinctness of violence in on-going relationships is relevant to the strategies which women use against their assailants. While women may be inclined to use any type of retaliatory violence they can against a stranger-rapist, they are mindful of the consequences of doing so when their assailant is their boyfriend, husband or partner unlike men who use the violence without apparent thought for the consequences on their relationship. This leads some women to opt for appeasement rather than retaliatory violence when raped by men within an on-going relationship. Women are less prone to run out of the house or use violence in response to domestic violence (Finkelhor and Yllo, 1982). Russell assesses this type of restraint to be an outcome of the ideology of male sexual right of access to wives; women who were prepared to end their marriages over physical abuse were less likely to act similarly in response to wife-rape (Russell, 1990). Russell found that in many cases assertiveness in women's personal response is limited to non-sexual violence. On the other hand, Hyden's (1999) work, based on 20 women in a sheltered home in Stockholm on six occasions

over a span of two years, showed that 'fear of the husband' is a form of resistance because fear comprises unarticulated knowledge of what is wanted and not wanted.

Bowker's (1988) study with 1000 battered women on the effectiveness of response strategies found that women rated running away and hiding as the most effective – judged to be so by 36% of respondents who had used this strategy. This was closely followed by avoiding the husband when he is in a violent mood (34%). Other effective strategies included threatening to file for divorce or calling the police (29%), talking to the husband out of using further violence (23%) and retaliating with violence (18%).The last response was considered to entail significant risk of further violence and indeed this was so for 58% of the women (Bowker, 1988). However, this was not the only response which involved greater exposure to abuse – 29% of women who threatened to call the police or file for divorce and 23% of those who hid or run away also suffered further abuse as a consequence of their actions (Bowker, 1988).

Horton and Johnson (1993) studied women who have ended violence and they suggest that speaking to someone about the abuse is a significant contribution towards resolving violence. Women who have left abusive men are most likely to have done this – a 96%, have spoken to someone compared to 87% of women who remain in their relationship and are satisfied. Only 56% of women who remain are dissatisfied.

Gelles (1976) explored the role of various factors in the decision to leave and found that there was no link between educational background, employment status or number of children with the decision to leave. However, he noted that he was unable to ascertain whether employed women were in paid work or not at the time of separation. Some studies have been drawn on sheltered women to investigate the relationship status of women after leaving a shelter (Snyder and Scheer, 1981). They

found that women who returned to abusive men were more likely to be in longer-term relationships and to use the shelter for repeated short-term separations.

Okun (1988) found weak relationships between outcome and many other variables, including class and race, use of violent self-defence by the woman, frequency and severity of assaults, women's employment status, women's experience of abuse as a child and whether the woman was the daughter of an abused woman. He concluded that greater relative financial contribution by women, together with low education in batterers is associated with women's ability to terminate violent relationships.

Strube and Barbour (1983) surveyed women undergoing counselling to investigate two variables with respect to the leaving decision: psychological commitment to the relationship and economic dependence. They found that women who were unemployed and women who were in the long-term relationships were more likely to return to their abusers. Their subsequent study (1984) explored a wider range of variables and their influence on the decision to stay or leave. The variables which independently predicted the relationship status were employment status, length of relationship, economic hardship, love, ethnicity and having no alternative accommodation. In reviewing data for ninety societies Levinson argued that women's economic power is a "powerful predictor of the absence of wife-beating" (Levinson, 1989).

Campbell et al. (1998) took resort to feminist action research to identify the effective responses of women which helped in achieving the state of 'nonviolence'. The responses were (a) 'active problem solving, including conscious decisions to "make do" in a relationship and/or subordinate the self (b) responding to identifiable pivotal events, and (c) a negotiating process first with the self and then, directly and/or indirectly, with the male partner'. Cavanagh (2003) added to the literature on

responses by examining how women's responses are contingent upon men's responses. 'The majority in this study read their partners like books; they came to know the patterns of men's behaviour; they recognised the cues and the danger signals' (Cavanagh, 2003: 246). Women struggled to make meaning of the violence and their responses were in relation to men's responses.

A number of these studies on women's decisions to leave abusive men or on the statistical correlates thereof commonly found that 'women who lack the economic means to leave a relationship, are willing to tolerate the abuse so long as it does not become too severe or involve the children, and who appear to be very committed to making their relationship last' (Strube, 1988: 98). However, other factors commonly cited include relationship length and number of previous separations. Speaking out about abuse also emerges as a significant contribution towards the decision-making process. Many of the studies (Lempert, 1996; Mills, 1985; Tifft, 1993) 'have been instrumental in demonstrating' (Campbell et al., 1998: 744) the role of the active responses in coping with violence. The studies contributed to the fact that women with good problem-solving

skills continue actively coping and resisting violence rather than passively coping or attempting to appease the husband by leaving or staying away from him.

2.3.2 Informal Help

Women's use of everyday relationships with their family, friends, in-laws, neighbours and possibly work colleagues appear as strategies of battered women. Several studies found informal help as significant for family members were the most likely point through which women seek informal help (Frieze et. al, 1980, McGibbon et al., 1989, Mooney, 1994) and that their involvement could be of immense help (Bowker, 1993,

Gielen et al., 1994; West and Wandrei, 2002). An Australian study found that the main action taken by the woman after experiencing assault by a man was to talk to other people, particularly to friends and family (McLellan, 1996). Family, friends and neighbours were also important in the struggle against violence. Hanmer and Saunders (1993) found that female friends, female relatives and female neighbours were the ones most likely to be told about incidents of violence. Endogamous marriages increased the chances of a woman's kin knowing of and intervening against domestic violence (McDowell, 1992). Violence can be mitigated or prevented by the women's coalitions (Levinson, 1989) or other forms of community intervention (Burbank, 1992). The possibilities for such interventions are influenced by the degree of privacy a couple enjoyed (Burbank, 1992) so that in societies where outdoor domestic activities or thin-walled dwellings characterise marital life there was greater chance of community involvement.

Kerns (1992) argued that since there are real possibilities of alternative ways of living for Garifuna (Black Carib community in Belize) women other than within marriage it means that women are rarely battered. From five cases of wife-beating Kerns noted that other women intervened in each of the cases: even standing and watching as a witness has an impact as this shame the man and enables woman to ask him to stop. In other cases sisters provided temporary accommodation to wives and in another a woman helped the victim to escape. In four cases the couple reconciled and Kerns notes that there was no history of violence in any of these – the violence occurred only once. The social practices of this community permit them to 'protect themselves from chronic abuse, primarily making it rather easy for them to leave marital relationships and to enter new ones or remain single' (Kerns, 1992: 132). The point here is worth some consideration – in all four cases violence occurred only once,

perhaps due to the prompt challenge and expressions of intolerance by the victim as well as the women friends and kin. In these social contexts women are not prompted into feelings of shame and guilt, rather their feelings are closer to intolerance and unacceptance. The physical condition in which they lived facilitated public knowledge of marital relationships, shared knowledge of abuse through observation or through the victim speaking out. This mobilised a more collective resistance to violence and had an inhibiting effect on an individual male.

Horton and Johnson (1993) divided their sample of women who had been free from violence for at least one year into three sections – those who remained with their partner and were satisfied, those who remained and were dissatisfied and those who had separated from their partners. Family knowledge and consequent involvement distinguished between these groups in that 81% of those who remained and were satisfied told their family, as did 64% of those who separated.

Research has also highlighted the importance of children in the responses to violence. In Russell's (1990) the respondents related the involvement of children, specially the grown-up sons, in calling the police or being an inhibiting effect on the father's violence.

Involvement of social networks has been shown to play a positive role in stopping violence against women. This has found to be true for women who face violence during dates (Mahlstedt and Keeny, 1993) and domestic violence (Mahoney, 1994). Vulnerability to violence during pregnancy was lowered when women found a confidante and social support from friends (Gielen et al., 1994).

These studies contributed to the knowledge on the usage of informal sources of help, such as family and friends. These informal networks of help were considered by abused women to be more effective in curbing violence than the personal strategies

discussed before. Amongst the informal help-seeking strategies the wife's own family was considered to be an effective source of help, followed by friends and neighbours and lastly in-laws. 'Yet, despite evidence that friends and family members are some of the most sought-out resources available to battered women, little research attention has been paid to predicting the helping behaviors of these informal social networks' (West and Wandrei, 2002: 972).

2.3.3 Formal Strategies

Among the formal agencies many studies have examined the services of police in the study on battered women (Horton and Johnson, 1993; Dave et al., 2001; Wolf et al., 2003). Frieze et al. (1980) and Pagelow (1981) found that 67% and 55% respectively used police service. In Frieze's study the police were contacted by the abused. Women in both the studies rated poorly the effectiveness or helpfulness of the police. It was even reported that women found police involvement to hinder the situation (Frieze, 1988) like 'women's fear of losing her children as a barrier to contacting police' (Wolf et al., 2003: 127). Horton and Johnson (1993) found that women who lived with their partners and were dissatisfied were less likely to get in touch with the police compared to those who stayed and were satisfied. Bowker (1988) concluded that the police were rather unsuccessful in helping battered women. It has been argued that women who suffer domestic violence are less likely to report their experiences to the police than are women who are assaulted by strangers. These findings have been supported by the Canadian National Survey. The survey compared five categories of victim-offender relationship, namely, spouse, boyfriend, relative, others and strangers (Gartner and Macmillan, 1995). When the two researchers compared the three groups – more intimate, less intimate and stranger violence – they found a reduction over

time in the gap between the level of police knowledge of stranger and less intimate offenders like friends, relatives, co-workers, although spousal violence had the lowest reporting rate.

Mooney (1994) found that only 22% of women in North London study had involved the police. A study on Asian women found that the police had been involved only in 14% cases (Belgrave Baheno). The unwillingness of black women and ethnic minority to go to the police is attributed to racist attitudes they face there (Mama, 1989).

Despite the poor performance of the police in regard to help offered to battered women, they still have a positive role to play. In Russell's (1990) study respondents noted that even though they reported that the actions of police were not helpful, going to the police may have an intimidatory effect on abusers. Only 19% of the wife-rape victims in her study had contacted police. A study in Singapore found popular support for police intervention (Choi and Edleson, 1995).

A study in India (Dave et al., 2001) examined cases recorded at a police station in Maharashtra, India during the period 1990-97 to find out whether at all ' women's voices were duly recognized and recorded and to find out how the police logically build up the case of violence against women'. There were helpful and unhelpful aspects regarding the recording of the cases. 'In some cases, the statements show a mechanical recording of women's experiences, which falls short of mirroring women's realities…'(p.440). Again, there were cases 'wherein the women's language and the police language have merged to name, mirror and reconstruct women's reality'(p.440).

The findings on the use of a number of other formal agencies are summarised as follows. Use of lawyers is commonly found to be widespread, although again the UK

studies have found lower rates than in USA, such as 21% of women reporting to solicitors (Mooney 1994). Ethnicity and race may not be the only factors structuring discrepant access to agencies – Mooney (1994) found that professional women were less likely than others to report their experiences of violence to agencies. Russell (1990) found that the use of police as an intimidatory strategy was more likely to be in response to physical domestic violence, not sexual violence. Gelles (1976) found a complex link between the frequency and severity of abuse and women's response. The more severe the abuse the more likely the women were to intervene, mostly through separation but also through seeking police intervention. Greater frequency of abuse was found to be associated with regular call for police intervention while less frequent (but perhaps more severe) abuse was associated with separation or divorce.

High use of general practitioner and hospital services (Mooney 1994; Horton and Johnson, 1993) suggests that women seek the help of formal agencies when it is unavoidable and when they consider the impact on themselves to have reached an unmanageable stage.

Women's groups and refuges have repeatedly been named as useful, supportive or helpful agencies (Bowker, 1988; Mooney, 1994; Mazumdar, 2001; Mitra, 2001). A recent study in Maharashtra, India (Muzumdar, 2001) focused on the involvement of 'police, medical and legal systems and the judiciary' (p. 412) in the preventive and remedial measures against dowry-related cases. The women's organisations were found to play a pivotal role in 'counselling the woman and her children, legal advice, shelter (if necessary), institutionalisation of the children (according to the wishes of the woman), educational assistance to the children and referral to other organisations and to the police' (p.406).

Mitra (2001) studied responses to violence of community-based organisations in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The groups largely prepared themselves to meet the immediate needs of the women. The organisations aimed at raising awareness about the issue of intimate partner violence, demystifying 'the private nature of domestic violence' (Mitra, 2001: 420), providing counselling, legal aid and temporary shelter. Often these organisations came up with ingenious ideas for catering to a particular group of women or community like having mobile counselling centres for the rural poor.

2.3.4 Comparative Effectiveness of Responses

Though most of the studies above provided insight into the usage of formal and informal strategies by battered women where effectiveness of responses has been considered it is usually by a single measure in any one study.

Bowker (1988) and Haj-Yahia (2002) compared effectiveness across four different measures, as had been described earlier. Bowker found that women considered personal strategies to be less effective than informal help sources which in turn were less effective than formal sources of help. When asked what advice women would give other battered wives they named two formal help sources, lawyers and social service or counseling agencies, and three personal strategies – separating and obtaining divorce, seeking help immediately and raising self esteem while increasing independence (Bowker, 1988). The single most effective factor named by the women was separation and divorce (we should note that half of his sample had separated from their violent partners). Bowker's (1988) respondents reported that batterers were most likely to react positively to intervention from lawyers, district attorneys, social service agents and family members. Kelly's (1988) study found that women's evaluation

showed that only solicitors, close women friends and refuges provided effective support.

Bowker (1988) is one of the few researchers who explore, statistically, the correlates of the ending of violence. He finds that the strongest associations are with the wife's occupational status, annual family income and the degree of husband-dominance in solving family problems and settling arguments during the couple's most recent year together. Women with high status occupation, low incomes and less domineering husbands are most likely to be associated with the cessation of violence. The income profile may be 'misleading' since the ending of violence is commonly through separation which results in reduced family income. Bowker compared the measurements of effectiveness and found that two – women's own assessment and empirically based tests of correlation – showed a convergence: factors named by women were women's groups, battered women's shelters, lawyers and social service/counselling agencies while the statistical tests showed that women's groups, battered women's shelters and lawyers were the strongest correlates.

In a study conducted among the Arab battered women in Israel, to find out how a minority group cope with intimate partner violence, Haj-Yahia (2002) noted that Arab women had a preference for the personal strategies 'in which the wife changes her behavior toward her husband and which the wife assumes responsibility for changing her husband' (p.738). The personal strategy in which the wife assumes responsibility for changing her husband was the most desirable and preference was given to seeking help from informal agents than to requesting aid from formal agents or breaking up the family unit regardless of the severity of abuse.

In a study by Das Dasgupta and Warrier (1996) with 12 South Asian battered women in the USA, adherence to traditional gender roles was revealed as a barrier to help

seeking. The researchers found that women's belief in the importance of being a good wife and mother and their willingness to sacrifice personal autonomy, and freedom to adhere to these beliefs deeply, shaped their willingness to seek assistance from outside sources and/or leaving the relationship. Economic independence did not provide these professional women with a sense of empowerment. Women reported that by speaking about the abuse they feared they would be seen as too "westernised." As a result, many of them did not leave their marriages because they did not want to compromise their families' honor with a divorce and damage the image of their community within the United States. They place the well-being of their community and/or family over the attainment of individual goals and wellbeing.

To some extent the typology of responses used here reflects the process through which abused women seek to construct their lives as victims of violence. Personal strategies are often the first form of response as they involve immediate response to assaults and almost all abused women will be included in his category (there may be some who literally do 'nothing' but they are likely to be very few (see Kelly, 1988: 170). If and when women find that their personal strategies do not achieve the desired results then they look beyond their own personal resources to deal with the abuse. Studies increasingly show that women turn first to their friends and family to share their experience and to seek support, whatever might be their ethnic background (Yoshioka et al., 2003). Literature shows that South Asian women victims rely heavily on informal networks for help and advice and often are not ready to discuss the problem with an outsider (Rao et al., 1990). Further well-defined roles in the South Asian families require brothers to take up the responsibility for sisters (Das and Kemp, 1997). However, formal agencies tend to be the final set of responses and perhaps also the most influential in stopping the abuse.

2.3.5 Battered Women Who Kill

Just as it is relatively unusual for abused women to retaliate with violence, it is even rarer for women to retaliate against male violence by killing their abusers. Like domestic violence, such actions by women are significantly more unusual than spousal killings by men. Recent cases in the West (Southall Black Sisters, 1994; Ahluwalia and Gupta, 1997) show that most women who do respond in this way have suffered many years of abuse, have tried to seek help and have been ill-served by those around them who were able to intervene. It has been suggested that battered women who kill suffer more frequent and severe violence, involving more sexual violence than battered women who do not kill (Browne, 1987). Unlike men who appear to be more easily able to have spousal killings deemed as manslaughter and thus avoiding mandatory life sentences, women who kill their husbands have tended to be convicted of murder (Hague and Malos, 1993). Having suffered abuse over many years, having tried to get help (in many cases), having failed to envisage escape or a life beyond violence the women who kill do so out of desperation and are then punished through incarceration for the remainder of their lives. Criminal justice systems have historically been unable to differentiate between women who kill as a result of years of abuse and men who kill as an expression of power. The defence of provocation has been defined to meet male norms (Bartal 1995), in that there is little, if any, time lag between the provocative act and the killing. The immediacy means that there is no premeditation, customarily taken to be an indicator of intent to kill and rare use of weapons as they are unlikely to have been obtained in the immediacy of provocative incident and instant response. Killing as a result of provocation, thus allowing a defence of manslaughter has rested on the killing resulting from a sudden and temporary loss of self control; it has not accommodated an element of delay.

Women who kill, however, typically react to series of actions – a history of abuse – and also typically use an implement to level the unequal physical strength between themselves and their abuser.

Cases such as those of Sara Thornton and Kiranjit Ahluwalia in the UK have begun to challenge legal interpretations (Kennedy, 1993; Southall Black Sisters, 1994; Ahluwalia and Gupta, 1997) so that it has now been established that 'provocation would not as a matter of law be negative simply because of the delayed reaction in such cases' (Taylor, 1992). In Australia, the concept of cumulative provocation has shown itself to be more amenable to the delay between the provocative situation and the act of killing (Kennedy, 1993; Bartal, 1995).

2.4 Chapter Summary

The researcher has sought to cover a wide body of literature on the different aspects of the research questions. Researches by Western scholars do not conclusively prove any positive contribution of economic activity to the resolution of violence. Relative income disparity may have an impact but equally it seems that many women may end relationships without certainty of adequate income to support themselves. A search for financial independence may encourage women to leave even though they may be dependent within the relationship. This study throws some light to the relationship, if any, between economic activity and response to violence in the Indian context.

Collective actions appear to have importance in the success of effective response to challenge male violence, involving family, friends and women's groups. The researcher asked women whether members of their everyday are aware of the violence they encounter, what are their responses and how do they help in the cessation of violence. The researcher wanted to find out whether family, friends and social

contacts emerge in the Indian context as having similar importance as found elsewhere and the process behind the translation of individual effort into collectivised effort in the responses of victims.

'There is a lack of research detailing the experience of domestic violence' (Yoshioka et al., 2003: 171) within various ethnic and linguistically homogeneous communities. Much of the theory and research is western. The researcher hopes to throw some light on the experiences of a group (Bengali Hindus of a metropolitan city) of South Asian women. The studies relating to Indian women in states other than West Bengal focus on the role of the police, doctors, legal advisors, courts and community-based organizations in preventing and remedying cases of violence (e.g., Mazumdar, 2001; Mitra, 2001). This qualitative study conducted in Calcutta for the first time seeks to use the experiences and voices of women and their responses and improve upon the theorizing of intimate partner violence.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The central question for this study relate to the best way to research women's responses to intimate partner violence in order that respondents could be encouraged to speak to the researcher, a stranger, about their experiences of intimate abuse. The interest is in responses to violence which means that the researcher needed to find out about women who had experienced physical or sexual violence or both. The researcher also wanted to find out how they had responded to such abuse and what had been the result of such responses. The study aimed to find out whether victims turned to friends, family members and neighbours for help and if they had resorted to the formal organisations, when they did so and which were utilised. Finally, the researcher wanted to find out what individual, social or economic factors were associated with spousal violence.

In order to investigate these questions it is necessary to consider a number of methodological issues including qualitative and quantitative approaches, epistemology, research location of the project in Calcutta and the appropriate interview method. Each of these issues is discussed drawing on previous researches and exploring the constraints and needs in order to construct a workable and productive methodology for the project.

3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Quantitative research on violence, although not used exclusively, has been strongly associated with family violence research studies. Quantitative studies are

characterised by the use of scales, indexes and questionnaire-based procedures (Straus and Gelles 1988: 15-16). The researcher's focus is not on family violence as such. Sexual violence is included in this study. Hence much is not drawn from the research methods of the family violence school though there is a growing body of quantitative studies on male violence against women including those of Russell (1990), Mama (1989), Bowker (1988) and Johnson (1996).

Qualitative studies have tended to focus on women's accounts, collected through exploratory interviews with them. Open-ended, probing questions were included in qualitative analysis (e.g. Stanko 1985; Kelly 1988; Glass 1995). Oakley (1981) argues that less-structured and in-depth research minimizes the hierarchy between researcher and researched.

These approaches have been polarized in a dichotomous model (Reinharz, 1983) in which quantitative becomes patriarchal and qualitative becomes feminist. Along with various distinctions between the two Reinharz (1983) argues that feminists, who do qualitative research by definition, are not detached from their work but are closely involved through a personal commitment that contrasts with the detachment of quantitative research. Is this polarisation accurate? The researcher will briefly explore the dichotomy, using two illustrative texts – Kelly (1988) and Russell (1990).

Kelly (1988) used qualitative research in her early work on sexual violence. She defined her feminist research practice as being based in her style on interviewing dialogue, in-depth interviews, discussion of findings during interview and on the progress of interviews itself and the content of follow-up interviews – participation in the project, discussion of the transcript of first interview and joint interpretation of meaning. Kelly said she had a commitment to support those women who had not previously spoken publicly about their experiences of abuse, and provided contacts

and information for them. Kelly's respect for women's own definitions of violence led her to re-define the categories of analysis, involving time-consuming and laborious re-coding as well as the development of her concept of continuum: 'The concepts used and the themes we have chosen to focus on emerged from and are grounded in the experience of the women interviewed' (1988:14).

Russell's (1990) study on marital abuse used quantitative research methods. It was a large-scale random sample survey of 930 women, collecting qualitative and quantitative data on experiences of rape and sexual assault. She employed a marketing and public opinion research organisation to draw up a random sample, used letters for initial contacts, and followed by visits by interviewers and then by verifiers. She used a predetermined definition of rape, based on the legal definition then prevalent in the US, and applied this to reported incidents which met her criteria regardless of whether or not the respondent used the term rape. One of her hypotheses was that the actual rate of rape is higher than is commonly believed, and hence it was necessary to use this approach; otherwise her data would have been limited by that very same common belief. Her study discovered high rates of sexual violence.

These studies are both significant in their contribution to the understanding and recognising male violence against women. Kelly's work produced important developments in theorising violence producing the concept continuum. She explored in detail the process of negotiation in which abused women engage as part of their struggles to survive violence. These are two valuable insights resulting from data gathered and analysed through qualitative methods. The study also showed the rigour which can be brought to such methods. Russell, on the other hand, used quantitative methods in interview procedures and data analysis to provide sound estimates of the

prevalence of wife-rape. She compiled a statistical view of the extent of such abuse and her methodological choices gave her findings a particular authority.

3.3 Complexity of Research on Violence

Kelly's early work (1988) is a qualitative project with a commitment to privileging the accounts of women who experience abuse but she declares herself in favour of exploring different approaches to methods, analysis and documentation of research (1988:7). Reinherz' later work (1992) reaches the same conclusion: 'Clearly there is no single 'feminist way' to do research … (it) reaches into all the disciplines and uses all the methods, sometimes singly and sometimes in combinations' (p.243).

Women's accounts are commonly the basis of research into male violence (these areas include many examples including Bowker 1988; Mama 1989; Ofei-Aboagye 1994; Kabeer 1995; Johnson 1996, McLellan 1996, Horton and Johnson 1993). In some studies, women's voices provide the primary basis of knowledge. For example, Bowker (1988) prefers women's own accounts and assessments of responses to violence, unless there is considerable contradictory evidence. Mama (1989) places women respondents at the peak of a hierarchy of 'knowers' of the situation of black women who experience violence. However, there is a difference in the use of analytical tools and the search for scientific validity as indicated by statistical techniques of data analysis. Some researchers, like Russell (1990), have combined the perceptions and experiences of victims with quantitative analysis. Bowker (1988) used women's accounts to make a statistical analysis of the correlates of cessation of violence. Mama (1989) has conducted one of the few pieces of research on domestic violence and black women in the UK. Her methodological aim demonstrates how Reinherz' models are not mutually exclusive: 'to develop a paradigm that would

enhance our understanding of the lives of black and ethnic minority women and the forces oppressing them, and remain empirically valid' (Mama 1989:27). In her study of family violence in India, Jain (1992) described her work as using a sociological framework for the analysis of violence, drawing on both the perceptions and experiences of individuals and objective facts, empirically gathered. Hendessi (1992) used anonymous questionnaires to survey homeless women in order to research the contribution of sexual abuse to homelessness among young women. Kelly, Regan and Burton (1991) adopted a methodology more closely associated with traditional social scientific method than Kelly's previous (1988) study. Their research on the prevalence of sexual abuse in childhood in the UK drew on a non-random sample of 1244 students in further education.

Thus, there is no automatic relationship between a given research method and good research on male violence. There is a common focus on women's accounts, gathered through open interviews or pre-determined questionnaires, although data analysis methods can vary. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses are commonly used. They resulted in and reflected the ability of those interested in male violence as a specific set of practices to engage in discussions, for example, of prevalence and correlates of cessation. While qualitative research and analysis has enabled development of theoretical and conceptual tools and given access to the ways in which women make sense of their experiences, quantitative tools have given authority to feminist studies of prevalence and cessation. Which path an actual research will follow depends on such factors as the approach of the researcher, contextual perspective of the situation, nature and availability of the respondents, time-frame allowed, availability of relevant resources and the like.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

It is helpful to distinguish between methods of data collection and those of data analysis: a choice of method has to be made for each.

The researcher's data collection drew on women's accounts (as did both Russell (1990) and Kelly (1988)) through semi-structured open-ended interviews and questions. Open questions were used to gather a breadth of information, wording the questions in ways that did not limit understanding to specific acts – such as through reciting pre-determined lists of responses to violent acts. This meant that data of this study is grounded in women's lived realities, understandings and coping strategies to violence.

Analysis can use either qualitative or quantitative methods. The researcher wished to involve women's words and voices and not to lose the humanitarian context of women's lives at the end of the interviews. Qualitative analysis is useful here for searching for themes and issues raised by respondents. Moreover, such facts as non-availability of data on women's experiences of violence in India, want of public awareness campaigns, deficiency of organisations in financial resources and professional skills point to the fact that qualitative in-depth studies should precede more comprehensive procedural and substantive surveys and their analyses. A qualitative method is also helpful when 'there is relatively little that is known about the subject of study from the existing literature, or this knowledge base has important missing links' (York, 1998).

The question to be addressed is: what produces good knowledge about women's experiences of violence? The researcher is of the view that this can result from research with the following characteristics: firstly, a place for women's accounts and experiences; secondly, research which combines, analyses and interprets those

accounts without completely decontextualising women's words; finally, research which should not shy away from contradictions between or within various accounts, nor of analytical outcomes which may be at odds with women's accounts. Such contradictions should be faced and explanations sought. The researcher does not think that collecting and presenting women's accounts alone constitutes research, rather it is reporting. Again, the researcher does not want to commit to unadulterated accounts without a statement from her side, as this may risk downplaying incidents of violence or refusal to consider non-consensual sex as rape, behaviours which we already know to be common coping or managing strategies of women who live with abuse.

The researcher wishes to clarify that this research has a commitment to a set of principles which has improvement in the women's lives as a primary concern. These include: that women should be able to live their lives free from violence, that this is a social as well as an individual goal, that public policy and public programmes should assist such objectives. The purpose of this project is to understand better the ways in which women respond to and resist domestic violence in order to contribute to efforts that improve the chances of achieving these goals.

3.5 Epistemological Stance

What constitutes 'good' knowledge has been understood to be contingent upon the means through which it is created (Okaley, 1974; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Harding, 1991). Constructions of men as being appropriate and rightful producers of knowledge and as 'knowers', gives them a claim to rationality which in western political thought has eclipsed the possibility of women being both rational and knowing (Okin, 1979). Epistemology which privileges the knowledge of experts has also denied women, particularly (poor or rural women) of developing countries,

access to domains of knowledge, which often have fundamental impacts upon their lives (Parpart,1995).

Using feminist epistemology as a guide, the present study strives to understand women who experience violent acts. Feminist epistemology relies on the introduction of women's experiences, voices and perspectives into the academy, so that gendered social reality is better incorporated into scientific knowledge. An influential strand is standpoint epistemology (Harding 1986, 1991), which constructs the knowledge of the oppressed group (women) as being inherently superior to accounts interpreted by researchers (Smith, 1988; Stanley and Wise, 1993).

Harding argued that even if researchers follow the stringent rules and methods of traditional research, strong objectivity is never reached. The researchers using the traditional methods neglect the context of discovery thinking it to be non-rational. The social desires, values and interests that have shaped the sciences are neglected. Harding went on to say that science has a subject, which is a group of dominant males. This subject has a standpoint that is a perspective involving values based on the kinds of activities this group engages in. The traditional methods of research leave this point unexamined and tarnish the objectivity that science could have achieved.

Harding, hence, advocated a methodology where the starting point is from the lives of the marginalised people (women). This, according to her, reveals the unexamined and overlooked assumptions and generates critical questions producing less distorted and less biased knowledge.

There are compelling arguments for research and theory on social problems, including forms of oppression, to be fundamentally informed by the voices of those who experience them. This project gives an important place to the accounts of women who live with intimate partner violence. In this case they are women of a developing

country whose voices have had little hearing in debates on violence. However, to deny a role for interpretation by researchers is problematic as it can render the researcher merely a reporter with no analytical contribution to make. It delivers unmediated knowledge but without the involvement of those who are in a position to make sense of a compilation of various accounts, which may indeed be contradictory.

3.6 The Research Methodology

The subject matter of partner violence is so hidden and sensitive in a city like Calcutta that initially it was impossible to find women who would be prepared to talk about it without any ground preparation like getting in touch with different women's organisations, consulting the counsellors there about the subject area of research and meeting the respondents time and again to build trust and confidence so that they would be comfortable in intimating the researcher about their experiences of violent acts. Hence researching violence was a difficult and time-consuming issue.

This research is to focus on responses to physical and sexual violent acts. The emphasis is on contact violence from intimate partners, i.e. physical and sexual violence. The definition of violence is a limited one and people who have previously worked in this area have called for a broader definition including emotional violence. But the researcher's choice of researching on contact violence was a deliberate choice as there are difficulties in measuring emotional abuse. Moreover, in a developing country, the true subjective elements of abuse are not very clearly understood by the women themselves, particularly by those who belong to the marginalised section. This is so as these women are often criticised by her partner for her actions and abilities and harassed if she does not comply with her husband. Moreover, the husband undermines her authority as a parent and often makes the major decisions of the

household without her knowledge. However, physical or sexual violence (or both) have often enabled women respondents from all backgrounds to produce clear and identifiable responses.

As far as the definition of violence is concerned the researcher defined it as an act which is injurious to the health of the partner. This has followed from the definition of Dobash and Dobash (1979) who have defined it as "the use of physical force against wives" (p.242) which "is seen as an attempt on the part of the husband to bring about a desired state of affairs" (Dobash, 1979: 242).

There are about 6 organisations working with women's issues in Calcutta. The researcher contacted all of them and found them all to work in a similar fashion. With the help of one of these organisations 20 women were interviewed who agreed to participate in the project. This organization is seen as a representative of all these agencies working in the field of mitigation of gender violence. In selecting the 20 respondents from the organisation, purposive sampling was used. The researcher had to 'go where the respondents are' (Padgett 1998: 51) that is to the site where respondents congregate. As Padgett notes, 'qualitative studies sample to capture depth and richness rather than representativeness……qualitative researchers feel no need to apologize for sampling strategies that make quantitative researchers cringe… the atypical cases remind us of the richness of human diversity'(p.50).

In this study the data collection was stopped at the twentieth person as no new observations and insights were seen at this point. 'The emphasis is on quality and not on quantity, qualitative researchers sample not to maximize numbers but to become "saturated" with information about a specific topic' (Padgett 1998:52). These women, in the age group of 18 to 35 years, were or had been facing serious and repeated violence in their marital lives for at least one year. They were either currently

involved in a violent relationship and have walked out of the abusive relationship not more than 6 months ago with the help of the organisation or the violence has stopped with the intervention of the women's group or have been temporarily left by men who return to them for monetary demands and the violence continues. Ten out of twenty women have walked out of the relationship, four women now lead a violent free life and violence has not stopped for the remaining six. The respondents belonged to different socio-economic strata of the society so that the variations in the responses to violence could be gauged appropriately. Initially, the researcher had to build rapport with the participants so that they would feel comfortable to discuss this sensitive and delicate issue. Two rounds of interviews were conducted with each of them. The interviews, which lasted for 45 minutes to 120 minutes, were taped and later transcribed. Conversations were mainly in Bengali, the state language of West Bengal – mother tongue of the respondents.

The interviews were wide-ranging in order to explore the cross-sectoral links. The researcher took resort to an interview style which allowed women to discuss issues which were not only important to the area of research but to them too. The main focus was on contact abuse, which is physical and sexual violence against wives. Most of them had experienced both and in one or two cases the violence had stopped. Most of the women volunteered to speak about their experiences. A number of them had faced severe physical abuse; some abuses repeated over a span of several years. All of them spoke of the pain that they had endured. Women were given the chance to talk at length about their experiences. The interviews with women provided detailed discussions about women's responses. Moreover, the interviews threw light on the reality of collective responses and the spread of knowledge from the couple to the others.

As far as the responses were concerned an important distinction emerged regarding questions on physical and sexual violence. Women respondents were more free to discuss their experiences of physical abuse than sexual abuse. For the latter, the women were ashamed, embarrassed, felt awkward and took longer time to respond. Women were asked as to how they have responded to the different kinds of abuse and the efficacy of each of these responses. They were asked about the people they took help from. In the interviews data on women's educational qualification, employment, social and familial connections were also collected. The matter as to whether financial consideration kept the women with abusive men was then explored. The women were also asked about the extent of help that they received from their kin and friends.

To build up a workable and productive methodology the researcher had to be aware of the inherent constraints of the purported project from the very beginning. Time and resources were very limited. The researcher could not resort to the method of advertising for volunteering battered women to be interviewed and paid for the interview if and when required. Even surveys using self-administered questionnaires by mail could not be utilised because of wide illiteracy among the women folk. Even in-person survey method could not be easily used, as women would not usually talk to a woman from the same city due to the fear of non-confidentiality, and the method itself is time-consuming. In fact, it would be difficult to search and approach appropriate respondents singly and at random. Opportunely, some agencies had been found to come forward to help distressed women by counselling, giving legal advice and so on. The help of such an organisation of repute (the name is not mentioned for the issue of confidentiality) in Calcutta was sought to select respondents.

To the organisation concerned, such characteristics were specified as women facing violence in marital life for at least one year; women who are Hindu by religion (as

they are the majority in Calcutta), women who have shown identifiable responses to violence preferably in the age group of 18 to 35, the number of respondents varying between 15-20. The period of data collection was from July 2003 to October 2003.

The semi-structured questionnaire (Appendix A) was administered with the help of two counsellors with the concerned organisation before the beginning of the pilot[2] study. The concerned agency works with women's issues like violence against women, trafficking, promotion of justice for women, spreading awareness among women folk and the like.

Before embarking on the present study a pilot project was conducted with three respondents contacted through personal contacts. The researcher conducted a pilot project on women's experiences of contact violence in Calcutta, India. Three women were interviewed. The three came from a range of backgrounds: from different classes, with varied experiences of education and employment, women with children and those without. Discussions were carried out with them at length about their lives, the ways in which they exercise control over them, and their experience of violence in marriage. The women were contacted through agencies and personal contacts. They were interviewed in the counselling center of the concerned agency on three occasions over a period of one month. In the first meeting with all the three the researcher tried to develop a rapport with them. The interviews were conducted in the second and third meetings. Based on the questionnaire (see Appendix A) the interviews investigated the experience of violence and the ways in which women responded. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was taped, then subsequently transcribed. Conversations were in Bengali as most of the respondents that the researcher would be interviewing in the future might not know English.

[2] Findings of the pilot project are discussed in the next chapter

The fieldwork was of course not problem-free. Long wait for respondents, excessive time consumption and mental and physical strains were associated with it. In fact, Calcutta, and for that India, is yet to develop a facilitating infrastructure for such a research.

3.7 Questionnaire Re-design

Based on the experiences of the pilot interviews, the researcher made a few changes in the question set. First, questions were grouped under five headings in order to bring about clarity and specificity. This also proved useful in grouping the emergent themes discussed later on. Secondly, some questions were dropped as they were found to be not so relevant. For example, "Was the locality peaceful?" in the original questionnaire was deleted because it led the respondents in the pilot project to areas not so central to the study. Similarly, question like "How does the husband's physical violence against the wife affect the children?" was excluded because the researcher felt that the issue of children would require separate and detailed enquiry. It would probably rouse enquiries related to moral conflict (Belknap, 1999). Thirdly, questions examining the perception of battered women relating to male behaviour pattern were re-modelled and made more to the point, direct and searching in order to highlight male domination leading to violence. Actually the questions were not so unstructured and open-ended as desired in view of the initially apathetic mental attitudes of the respondents faced at the time of the pilot interviews. But at the time of interview a participatory and equal level-cum-friendly approach could elicit many talks from the respondents (both of the pilot and final) revealing what they think about male violence, response to it and about themselves. The amended and final questionnaire (Questionnaire 2) is annexed in Appendix B.

3.8 Design and Analysis

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984), the analysis of qualitative data is for developing an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Analysis began by reading the entire transcript, making tentative interpretations in the margins, coding the central ideas in the data. The Theme Matrix is helpful for analysis of the data. The themes emerged as a result of the combined process of becoming intimate with the data, making logical associations with the interview questions, and considering what has been learned during the review of literature (Tutty et al., 1994).

3.9 Credibility

The interview transcript was recoded with concentration on refining the code categories and reexamining the rationale for the fit between the data and the originally assigned codes. This type of code-recode procedure is an excellent means of increasing dependability (Krefting, 1990). The researcher used line-by-line coding. The codes that emerged from the interview transcripts were categorised into headings like 'nature of physical violence', 'nature of sexual violence', 'responses to physical abuse', 'social contacts', 'education' and 'economic factors'.

3.10 Ethical Issues

The ethical issues addressed in the study include ensuring that the interviewees understand the voluntary nature of the study and their right to discontinue involvement in it; that the clients' names are not used in the study; that the audiotapes are kept in a secured place and will be destroyed after the research is completed.

The ethics review form duly filled in and submitted to the Ethics Committee in the Department of Social Work & Psychology, National University of Singapore got the clearance from the Head of the Committee (Refer to Ethics Review Form appended at the end as Annexure A).

3.11 Chapter Summary

To sum up, having reviewed the methodologies pertinent to researching violence, semi-structured interviews were conducted with women in Calcutta contacted through an organisation. By asking open questions about marital relationships, physical and sexual violence, the researcher tried to catch a wide range of experiences. This allowed the researcher to pick up and explore experiences of violence and to investigate women's responses to violence.

As far as the fieldwork conditions are concerned, the researcher tried to strike a balance between the two, namely, seeking out data, and supporting and comforting distressed interviewees, which also impacted on the ease with which the research was conducted.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the violence and responses thereto, which have been experienced by the women interviewed. The information was gathered during the interviews with the 20 respondents using a semi-structured questionnaire. Firstly, in the light of the intimate partner violence noted among the women respondents, the researcher draws on their own accounts to find out the nature as well as the impact of violence in order to explore the background of their responses to violence. Since the scope of the study did not allow the researcher to interview the abusing husbands and since none of the respondents referred to wrongdoing on her part, it could not be known whether any woman contributed to violence by her deeds. Secondly, the researcher explores how the respondents reacted to violence and analyses their accounts of responses. Particularly, their changing consciousness, their process of decision-making in relation to resistance, their attitude towards staying with or leaving the abusing husbands, their process of seeking redress, the dawning of their sense of a kind of strength to oppose violence were tried to be found out by the researcher from a feminist viewpoint. Thirdly, the researcher tries to find out the link between social and economic factors and the cessation of violence from the respondents' accounts and raises some pertinent questions in this field.

In other words, this chapter tries to answer the questions raised in the introductory chapter in the perspective of two vital elements of the research's methodological framework - feminism and cultural feasibility. As to the first, the researcher proceeds with the political commitment to produce useful knowledge that will make a

difference to women's lives through social and individual change and follows feminist methodology by being respectful of respondents and acknowledging her own subjective involvement- of course, without being carried away.

As to the second factor, it is recognized that cultural specific characteristics of India, nay Calcutta, have influenced the study. Though socio-culturally speaking male domination profiles of abused women seem to influence gender violence more or less everywhere and though male violence is related to poverty, level of social sanction etc. in many South Asian countries, contextual determinants of individual and social behaviour relating to intimate partner violence are to be especially remembered in the area of the present study: timid and passive nature of Bengali women, developing, rather poor economy, cultural legacy of tradition contributing to the attitude of accepting fate without question by women, religio-social notion of husband's overwhelming superiority, more or less blindness of the society to the private affair of husband treating his wife as he likes and so on. These factors not only increase the vulnerability of women to male violence but also limit their protest against such violence.

The focal point of the research being responses to physical and sexual violence from intimate partners, the author tried to explore in details the experiences of the respondents relating to this and results emerging from such experiences. Their accounts have been sought to be discussed in details substantiating the discussions on findings by giving suitable examples of the respondents' observations made during the interviews.

4.2 Findings of the Pilot Project

All the 3 women interviewed for the pilot study had been subjected to repeated and serious physical and sexual violence in their marriages. Serious violence is defined as violent actions (for example, kicks, punches, threats with a weapon, attempt to strangle, rape and so on) (Hyden, 1999). Repeated violence means violence that is so frequent that it has become an integral part of marital life. This was more or less a socially homogeneous group of women though economically they were from marginalised class and middle class. For linguistic and cultural reasons the researcher preferred the respondents to be in the group of Bengali and Hindu women. This enabled the researcher with the best chance of communicating with, and getting the most from, this reasonably homogeneous group of respondents. Of the three respondents (P1, P2 and P3), the first was a sales girl, second was employed in the private sector and the other was a student. The ages of the women were between 24 and 35 years.

Three of them spoke of violence in marital relationship. Women spoke of physical as well as sexual violence from their husbands. They were slapped, pushed and punched. Two of them reported sexual violence, elucidating the pain and stress they have gone through.

They had often taken help from family, friends and neighbours to stop the violence. P2 let others know mostly by shouting and attracting their attention as a way of responding to violence. P1 showed her pain mostly by crying and as a result involved the neighbours in the apartments. In both cases they received help and advice from the informal and formal networks. This included remonstrating with the husband, involving agencies such as women's groups or political parties, taking the woman for medical attention, or providing shelter, money (in P2's case), or child-care (in P1's

case) for the one who left her home. In the case where P1 had sought help from agencies working with intimate partner violence, she reported that the violence had stopped and she came back to her husband. However, P2 had to walk out of the intimate partner relationship. If the first was the case of putting resistance with outside help, the second exemplified resistance in the form of leaving an abusive relationship.

The third respondent, P3, reported that she did 'nothing' when she was beaten. She adopted only avoidance strategies of resistance, such as running out of the home or hiding in another room. However, this form of resistance did not mitigate intimate partner violence.

It is not the general pattern among the women to whom the researcher spoke that male violence is considered an acceptable aspect of marriage and that is why P2 'walked out' of the relationship.

With sexual violence, the picture is different. In almost all cases where women had communicated their unwillingness to have sex, the husbands disregarded them and continued; in cases of P1 and P2 they also beat their wives when they voiced their lack of consent. The respondents voiced their opinions, but their voices were unheard.

The organisations and agencies which provide information and contacts to abused women contribute to a sense of self-value which helps women to consider their own well-being as worthy of protection as in P1's case. However, they may not always seek access to agencies as P3. They may be unaware of what is available and how to access such resources. Often, as in the case of P1 and P2, the informal networks, which women tap, act as a linkage to the formal agencies.

Again, the researcher found that literacy skills pave the way to access to resources like women's organizations and employment. On the other hand, the lack of such skills limits the routes through which information can be gained.

Of the three respondents, two are employed and one, who is a student, occasionally gets financial support from parental family. Employment seemed to be a significant factor in effective response to violence, and it might be expected to characterise more of those relationships in which the violence had been positively resisted. More on this could be explored in the final study.

From the pilot project several themes emerge. Women's own contacts are central to their resistances to domestic violence - families, organisations, and State institutions all contribute to the flow of information, further contacts, intervention with the perpetrator, and possibly resources (such as accommodation). Further, by questioning the presence of violence and in encouraging women to value themselves and speak out against violence, even not paying heed to the possible social stigma, they can strengthen women's resistance. It is not always the case that women's preferred option is to leave violent men; the ways in which they can maintain a relationship and end the violence need to be investigated further.

Based on the revised questionnaire (see Appendix B) the findings of the main study are reported below.

4.3 Nature of Physical Violence

The question "Do these forms of dispute lead to physical violence?" (Appendix B) evoked answers of varied nature. The nature of physical violence ranged from beatings to twisting to killing. Their husband or partner had physically abused the women the researcher spoke to. Women have been slapped, kicked, punched, burned and men have even attempted to kill their wives.

'*Pulled my hair…*' {W6}

'*Kicked me on the floor…*' {W3}

'Smacked my face…' {W4}

'Twisted my arm and tried to hang me…' {W9}

'Hit me with a stick…' {W17}

The bruises and marks on them indicate the degree and severity of the violence. The consequences ranged from burns to fractured bones. In some cases objects like sticks, dusters, pokers and shoes were used to implement violence.

'He burned me with a hot poker….' {W12}

The physical consequences ranged from external burns to internally fractured bones. Though emotional and psychological consequences were harder to establish and the researcher's point of interest is contact violence, women were upset, fearful and many had at some time been suicidal.

4.3.1 Women's Vulnerability to Physical Abuse

Male superiority and culture of violence lead to husband violence revealing unequal position of women and normative use of violence. Again, male superiority, a key element in the explanation of violence according to the feminists, emanates from distinct gender role, male sexual entitlement, low social value and power of women, and ideas of womanhood link to control over women. All these factors pave the way for the exercise violence against women. However, these more or less general or universal factors vary in nature and intensity from culture to culture, vulnerability to abuse being more in non-modern contexts. Moreover, there are specific cultural factors and here the importance of these factors is highly effective in the Indian context. Thus early age at marriage, dowry, limited education (particularly literacy), transgression from male defined behaviours and cultural belief of "pativrata" (husband is the lord) are the India-specific cultural factors, which seem to heighten

women's vulnerability to physical abuse. However, women from all classes and backgrounds reported physical violence.

Some of the respondents married at a tender age and expressed their fear of their husbands.

'*I was scared of him when I first came to my in-laws' house*' {W15}

The failure of bringing in sufficient amount of dowry also resulted in physical violence on the part of the husbands. The in-laws supported such a cause.

'*I told them that my father was poor and cannot afford a radio. He never listened*.' {W5}

In most cases the husbands were more educated than their partners.

'*He says, I know better than you. Listen to what I say*' {W2}

'*He says, don't argue. I'm more educated than you'* {W1}

The cultural belief of 'pativrata' (wifely fidelity) often raised inhibitions and fears in the victims and initially prevented them from taking a 'bold' step like sharing the knowledge of abuse with the family members.

'*I cannot leave my 'pati'…I should listen to what he says*' {W20}

The researcher found that precipitating events commonly centred on women's transgressions of male defined limits or definitions of acceptable behaviour. Men used violence against women who disobeyed explicit instructions confining social intercourse or implicit codes of gendered household behaviour, such as being sole childcares or cooks. Most commonly it was women's transgressions of male defined limits and behaviours which precipitated individual assaults from men. The cause of physical violence was disobedience to the husband's order, or failing to meet the partner's expectations. Disobedience ranged from failure to serve a hot meal to quarrelling with the in-laws to leaving the house when the husband was not there.

'In spite of the burns I was expected to do the cooking and the washing' {W16}

It is clear from their experiences that violence left women scarred both physically and emotionally, leading some to try to end their own lives by attempting suicide.

'*At one point of time I wanted to end my life*' {W4}

4.4 Nature of Sexual Violence

Sexual violence was rather common amongst the respondents interviewed. This study found that 8 out 20 respondents experienced sexual violence in their intimate relationships. As with physical violence, women from all backgrounds reported sexual violence and both forms of violence was seen to commonly co-exist. Sexual violence was seen to be as an aftermath of challenging responses to physical violence. Women described painful sex and marital rape. Their accounts demonstrated the degree and severity of sexual violence.

'Sexual torture followed the beatings when I accused him.' {W8}

'*Sexual torture was an every day's affair.'* {W7}

'*If I refuse my husband will coolly walk out and take another woman.*' {W9}

4.4.1 Women's Vulnerability to Sexual Abuse

Almost as in the case of physical abuse, early age at marriage, dowry and restricted access to sexual discourse of unmarried women are factors which are associated with heightened vulnerability to sexual abuse in marriage in India.

'*I was married young and did not know what to tell him.'* {W3}

'*My parents could not provide the dowry amount…sexual torture was inevitable.*' {W5}

Victims reported access to a highly restricted sexual discourse, if any at all, and begin marital sexual relations in ignorance of what sex might involve.

'*Sexual behaviour before marriage is difficult to explore*' {W7}

4.4.2 Sexual Violence – A Privatised Pain

Most women who reported sexual violence let their husbands know of their unwillingness or pain during sex. They did not suffer without their objections known to their assailants. Unlike physical violence, however, women did not speak to others about sexual violence and so it remained a privatised pain in most cases. In fact, all women felt uneasy to talk to the researcher about sexual violence. They were embarrassed, shy and felt quite awkward to answer the queries. They did not deny the fact that they had never spoken about such violence even to their kin and friends.

'*I am speaking for the first time about my experience. I don't have the courage or the face to speak of these issues to my in-laws or to my parents.* {W2}

'*In the first place I have never discussed these issues with anyone. How can do so being a wife?'* {W5}

All the women reported that men were aware of their unwillingness to have sex, but in most cases this had no impact on the severity of violence. Women were a little coy and expressed their unwillingness to have sex by pleading and crying.

'*It is worst when he drinks. He never listens even when I cry*.' {W14}

'*I cry and move away. But he never listens.'* {W9}

4.5 Ways of Responses to Physical Abuse

The researcher has thrown some light on the factors that intensify the vulnerability to both types of abuse. In this research the emphasis is on the responses to both types of violence, namely, physical and sexual. It calls for a detailed discussion.

The answers of the victims revealed the different forms of responses. The responses which women gave to assaults from their husbands are categorised as 'nothing' 'avoidance', 'responding to violence alone' and 'responding to violence with help'. Again, from the responses of the victims it is clear that some responses were more challenging than the others and they, in fact, took the form of 'resistance' whereby male dominance is challenged. It appears that women vacillated and what they did was quite different from what they actually thought. Again, the response in the first incident of abuse was quite different from the subsequent ones like from 'nothing' to 'reporting to the women's group' and finally individual responses turned into collective ones.

In fact, the interviewees' responses to violence were highly nuanced – their accounts revealed complex responses often changing over time and in character. But the researcher states this not to criticize their attitude and their action but to present findings with a view to inform and improve practice from the feminist point of view.

4.5.1 Nothing

This is in a way an aspect where cultural specificity shapes the experience of abuse and the framework in which this is both understood and challenged. The traditionally cultural myth of women being regarded as 'properties' of husbands who are their undisputed lord or master make the former accept male violence as nothing unnatural and ordinarily not to think about resisting it. Here it is noted that specific cultural

context inhibits resistance to violence. Moreover, the researcher has not come across any account of any respondent to find that emergent feminist orientation to this culture facilitated response.

'Since childhood I have been nurtured with the norm that women in our country are always subordinate to men – to the father in childhood, to the husband during the days of womanhood and to the son in old age. I thought I deserve because I am a woman' {W8}

'I first thought parents, relatives and friends wouldn't listen to me. They would urge me to tolerate husband oppression 'cause all would blame me and won't question the husband's behaviour.' {W11}

In fact, in our cultural context, there is a good amount of permissiveness so far as intimate partner abuse is concerned.

However, in a few cases women, though not ignorant of our cultural tradition, had somehow felt from friends and relatives that violence by intimate partner was no more perpetrated these days. But they too initially did not react to the physical abuse. They were too shocked and confused to make sense of what was happening.

'I looked forward happily to my marriage. The violence was a great shock…could not believe that he could do so' {W1}

'The first two years we lived happily. But thereafter abuse started.' {W7}

However, when the violence aggravated in degree and severity the victims felt it unbearable. They started thinking of some means to resist violence irrespective of the myth which they believed before.

'The violence became frequent and severe…. I shook off my inhibition and thought why not oppose it?' {W11}

Here the researcher finds seeds of feminist consciousness in the attitudes of the concerned respondents.

4.5.2 Avoidance

The avoidance strategy was undertaken by some mainly to prevent men from using violence as far as possible. Over a period of time the victims developed strategies which they gained through observation and experience.

'*Each time he came home from work I made coffee to keep him in a good mood*.' {W13}

'*I agreed to whatever he said to keep him in a good mood. I have to accept the way he is... after all he is my pati*' {W18}

'*Sometimes I embraced him and told I loved him even if I disliked him at that moment. That would at times calm him down* . {W3}

Though these strategies were quite effective for stopping one-time incident of violence. In most cases the success was ephemeral. They seemed to be somewhat 'managing' violence rather than resolving it and were much short of feminist way of tackling violence. Still, this kind of attitude also betrays hatred of violence and the need to find out ways and means to tackle it and is therefore a stepping stone towards further feminist consciousness.

4.5.3 Resisting Violence Alone

Some women victims of course challenged the male dominance and violence on their own. In fact, more challenging responses developed with the passage of time. These were mainly used as self-defensive strategies.

'*I tore his clothes the day he punched me'* {W10}

'The day he hit me on my ear and it started to bleed I cried and shouted at him to stop for the first time.' {W18}

Though mutual violence was absent in the sample of the researcher, the actions taken in response to an assault which challenged the violence, included grabbing a man's hands, pushing him away or shouting at him to stop. Here the victim was the key player and there were no other people to challenge the assaults.

'….. thought no good bear the violence by lying low…have to retaliate' {W9}

This too, does not, strictly speaking, enrich a conspicuous feminist understanding, though here violence results in resistance almost instinctively, maybe dormant at the beginning and more covert later on – an action stemming from some sort of empowerment resulting from the feeling of urge to do something against intimate partner violence.

4.5.4 Resisting Violence with Help

In this study women were not isolated to the degree that knowledge of violence was limited to themselves and the abuser after a point of time. There were ways to 'break the silence' around intimate partner violence. The knowledge of violence was gained through observation of pain or injury, or of disturbed behaviour, through expressions of fear and through reporting about the incidents of violence to the ones that the victims came in contact with daily. The responses suggest that in most cases knowledge was shared and often among three categories: in-laws, natal family and neighbours as they were the ones who generally have greater levels of proximity to abused women. The data in this section brings out the close association between women reporting the cessation of violence and their organisational contacts. The knowledge of violence went beyond the couple to the others who came in close

proximity to them. It initially reached the ones in close proximity to the victim and this further facilitated the spread of knowledge to the more formalised networks and organisations like police, women's groups, lawyers, and even political parties in some cases.

'As it is the frequency of beating increased…. So I thought why not tell my in-laws' {W11}

'*I decided to call up my father first to tell him about his misbehaviour*' {W7}

'*In the slums the neighbours came to my rescue hearing my cry*' {W12}

Natal family, in-laws and neighbours came to the victim's rescue as is evident from the responses in my selection. Both kin and neighbours supported women, by asking or telling men to stop, threatening them, by getting medical attention for injuries, by providing women with temporary or long-term shelter and by encouraging women not to tolerate violence. Even political parties sometimes come forward to help the women in distress.

'*I reported to CPI(M) office in my locality. The party people threatened my husband on his way back home*' {W6}

'*My natal family was supportive and helped me to get out of this situation. My mother brought me here to this centre.'* {W16}

'*The neighbours came running to help me. He could not stand against five men. They forced him to stop hitting me and encouraged me not to tolerate such nonsense*' {W20}

'*I could not stand straight. My backbone seems to have broken. I received medical treatment with the help of my in-laws.* {W14}

Knowledge about intimate partner violence did not remain confined within the informal networks. It spread further to the formalised networks. However, whether or

not it spread was very much dependent upon the victim herself. The Indian women did not spontaneously go to the agencies and often themselves were not able to recall when they made initial contacts with this support agency.

'*I did not want to come here…but my friend asked me to come. She said there is nothing wrong in going to this organization*' {W13}

Again, they avoided agencies in cases of one-time, not so severe incidents of violence. All respondents had to endure pain and suffering before they finally made up their minds to contact the staff at the agency. The time-frame, however, varied. Initially they had an inherent proneness to regard their families as a haven from other forms of social life. Also, the respondents did not want to make a private matter public and attract the eyes of many as is evident from this woman's response.

'*I did not want to discuss this matter with everyone. But here when I came, one of the staff said that I can talk to the counsellors here in private. They will not let the matter go out of this room.*' {W14}

Out of the twenty respondents, six of them did not get in touch with the formalised networks. It was rare for these networks to become aware of abuse without the active participation of the victim, unlike the situation of neighbours or in-laws or others who were in routine contact with the victims of violence. The institutions and networks which came to hear about the abuse are in a political, statutory or solidarity position to assist the woman. In this study a woman's group was mobilised in an attempt to bring violence to an end.

'*My mother brought me to this group. The staff, here, helped me to walk out of the relationship and helped me to get a job.*' {W10}

These formalised networks were most often the channels through which significant resources of support were mobilized, such as legal advice, First Information Report

(FIR) and personal support. When the awareness of intimate partner violence moved beyond the informal networks, it reached a domain in which some formalisation was possible – that is, cases could be recorded, files maintained, sanctions and formal redress facilitated.

'Through this organisation I filed a FIR. I was afraid to go the police station on my own even though my mother insisted on it. {W9}

With the help of the women's organisation, 10 walked out of the abusive relationship while in 4 cases violence stopped and they still continue being in the relationship. The other 6 could not put an end to violence nor could they walk out of the relationship on their own.

Most of the women were not clear about when they made contact with the group nor did they know much about the detail of organisational involvement. But they were clear in their praise of the work done by these groups. The importance of these groups emerged particularly in the support they gave women – emotionally, materially and in terms of advice and solidarity.

'I don't know when I got in touch with the head of the organisation… my neighbour brought me here. The only thing I know is that she and her people were kind enough to give me shelter the night he drank too much and hit me with a poker' {W8}

'I needed their help to leave my husband. {W2}

The stopping of violence is closely linked with having organisational support. The advice, shelter, support and encouragement which women got from the social service agency, in particular, and also legal advice and employment were important in the transition from violent to non-violent lives.

*'The staff here helped to get this job. They gave me the strength to come out of the in –law's house' {*W6}

'Now he does not beat me. He is scared of the staff here. I said I will report to them if he ever does it again.' {W3}

In responding to violence with the help of organisation the other interesting fact is that class is a signifier of social status and the resources and influence that flow from it; this means that working class women faced particular difficulties in accessing the sort of resources they needed to resolve violence.

'I did not know how to contact the women's group. I was locked up in the room. Where to contact, whom to contact, I never knew.' {W9}

In effect, remaining isolated in terms of class disenfranchised women from those very resources. Even something as basic as access to a telephone was difficult for a slum dweller but as soon as she made contact with a women's group, forms of communications which do not rely on face-to-face contact became available to her. From such contacts she could also access other benefits of middle class location – legal literacy and access to lawyers, temporary accommodation, food, clothing and money, training and even employment.

'I don't have phone. How do I contact? The staff here gave me space to sleep. They arranged for food and shelter that night. I am learning tailoring here.' {W3}

Even though the staff provided accommodation to the women victims to the best of their ability inadequate accommodation was an issue which cropped up repeatedly, raised by many of the victims who decided to leave the husband. The extremely inadequate short-stay homes for homeless women tended to be filled by those who are destitute, leaving little room for those fleeing from violent men. Often women contacted the personal networks for housing options.

'One of them working here took me to her apartment the day I fled. There were women like me. I had no room to stay.'{W13}

In these cases too feminism was not fully or clearly revealed because the respondents did not know of the appropriate agencies to seek help from by themselves but were referred to them by informal helpers. However, the feeling that violence cannot be combated singly without help of others definitely reveals a clear step towards feminism. The researcher came to realise the value of networking and propaganda of women's organizations to ensure collective struggle against intimate partner violence.

'*Without the organisation's help I would have committed suicide.*'{W12}

'*Father could not give dowry and I faced violence. I ended the relationship with the organisation's help*.'{W8}

It is clear from these that many respondents realised that they needed formal support from women's agencies to respond effectively to violence.

4.6 Other Factors

The researcher wanted to consider the various ways in which a relationship is ended – a woman or a man can leave; in fact, women may prefer to remain in their homes while men leave. Why did the 10 women leave while the 4 did not? This led to further discussion involving the 'other' factors. This section investigates personal and economic factors like education and employment to find out whether they are linked with the ending of violence. Whether employment and education have a bearing on the responses of the victims and the ending of violence are considered here.

4.6.1 Overview of the Indian Education System

The Indian Education system has 5-tiers. It starts with the primary level which consists of kindergarten to standard five. The secondary level begins at sixth standard and ends with the pupil appearing for a public examination at the completion of the

tenth standard. The standards eleven and twelve comprise the post-secondary level or the 'plus 2' stage. On passing the twelfth standard, where again the pupil appears for a public examination, the student is now ready to enroll in a college. After completing three to four years in college (which depends on the nature of the course undertaken) the student enters the university level.

4.6.2 Educational Achievements of the Respondents

Fifteen women in the sample enrolled in school, of whom five progressed to college graduation, five began or completed the tenth standard and five attended primary schools. Among the rest of them some women found the researcher's question on literacy difficult to answer saying that they did learn to read and write a little but had since forgotten, some saying that they taught themselves some literacy but not very much and others, that they could read some billboard posters but could not write.

Among the respondents no working class women attended secondary school and no middle class women studied any less than class ten.

4.6.3 Education and Responses to Violence

The data show that women's life chances are influenced by education. Their capacities to cope with violence and create lives free from male abuse in the home are enhanced by studying beyond the tenth level. No woman who had studied beyond class ten remained in a relationship where men have used violence against them. It is not a necessary condition for stopping of violence as for women with less than this level of education also reported the cessation of violence with the help of the women's group but it is a clear predictor of resolution in ten cases. The relationship

between higher levels of education and the resolution of violence is clear: education beyond the tenth level predicts the cessation of physical violence in this selection.

The link between education and response to violence lies in the acquisition of basic skills (literacy and numeracy) and suggest enhanced self-esteem and confidence which results from success at school. The consequences of formal education are difficult to quantify but perhaps are no less important in their impact on women's lives. Confidence and self-esteem are enhanced in girls who successfully complete each year of formally assessed schooling and finally appear for the public examination. These may engender in girls a critical sense of self-worth which helped to deal with male violence and which countered other influences toward intolerance of such violence.

'*I am a learned woman and can manage my life on my own. Why should I tolerate such nonsense? I suffered a lot and now decided to leave him*' {W4}

Completion of ten years of formal education developed skills of literacy and numeracy, enabling women to manage their own financial affairs and giving them access to written materials. They also had some skills in English which widened the materials and relationships to which they had access. These constitute the formal outputs of schooling. It seems that schooling has a positive impact upon women's resistance to violence in the home.

'*I may not be college graduate but I know how to read English. I can manage the finances. No one can cheat me in the outside world.*' {W8}

These examples of self-confidence, self-worth and esteem result in social empowerment that definitely reveals a good level feminist consciousness.

4.6.4 Nature of Employment of the Respondents

Among the respondents twelve are employed. Three work in the private sector, two work in grocery shops and the rest help in collecting ration and domestic work. Although many of the respondents work they tend not to be able to support themselves and their children on their earnings.

4.6.5. Employment and Responses to Violence

The researcher's data on employment suggests that there is limited significance of employment in a woman's life. It is not a sufficient condition to end violence or to walk out of the relationship. Employment emerges clearly as a means to sustain, though not as a precondition for independent lives. Among the 10 women who have separated from abusive husbands, majority of them were in paid work. This contrasts markedly with the profile of women who continue to live with men, irrespective of the fact whether or not the violence continued. However, to live apart from men in a society where women's social identity depends on being married, women need to support themselves financially and have access to social and/or political networks. Financial obligations were met through work while advice, support and social contacts were enabled through the women's groups.

'I have a job. The staff gave me the courage and will power to leave my husband. The lawyer here is giving me legal advice. I get emotional strength from the staff working here. I don't know what I would have done without their support and help.' {W1}

The constrained nature of employment lies in the unfavourable conditions of women's work in the labour market. Forms of labour market closure limited these women to certain types of work - predominately insecure, poorly paid.

'My job type is irregular. If they call me I go to help them in domestic work. They call once in three to four days' {W19}

Women had little option to move into new occupations as on-job training was difficult to access. Even those who had been trained / retrained were not assured that the employment for which they had trained will be open to them.

'I came to know of this training programme from the staff here. I am still not sure whether the computer training will provide me with a new job with better pay' {W7}

Aspirations to economic independence were constrained not only by poor incomes but also by ideological factors which located the meaning of women's lives as both wives and mothers – neither one gave full status.

'I was unable to leave my two-year child here alone. I could not take up the job. It was far from my place. {W4}

Despite the bleak picture of employment, women reported that they kept and allocated their own incomes and even those who did not have employment were often responsible for household money management. The notion of 'prescribed gender role' of women enabled them to oversee household budgeting that was not directly linked to employment activity.

'I managed money at home. Whatever he earned he came and gave it to me. {W16}

The relevant remarks of the concerned respondents show that there is uncertainty as to finding out economic security by themselves – a sense heightened by developing economic culture of India. Here resistance also may become ineffective. However, their realisation that with the help of others they may attain economic empowerment necessary to fight violence is definitely a path to feminism.

4.7 Chapter Summary

In summary, the nature and intensity of violence from intimate partners led the respondents from passive to active responses ultimately seeking the help of an agency working in the field of abuse against women. However, as regards Indian women, community pressure -- religious, social cultural, familial – inhibits response to violence. Social stigma of admitting information relating to violence, religio-cultural norm of some kind of permissiveness to men to exercise violence and persuasion from family members like parents to endure violence as far as possible exemplify such pressure.

'First my mother asked me to compromise, though gave shelter later on.' {W2}

'At the beginning I was afraid that if I let others know of my abuse they will think bad of me.' {W13}

However, none of the respondents had any idea of the agencies through television or newspaper and all of them were taken to the formally helping organisation by other informal helpers. From the feminist approach of holding wife abuse as not just about violence but about control, some respondents seem to have realise this gender control though not very distinctly.

'He wants everything under his control' {W10}

Employment together with organisational contact distinguishes between women who live alone and those who remain with husbands who have used violence. Women's post-violence independent lives or into less violent conjugal life commonly involve the co-existence of employment and organisational contacts. Literacy and numeracy skills also play a positive role in the cessation of violence. Women's routes into and survival in independent lives are facilitated not only by financial resources but also more by the social or political resources obtained through contact with local

organisations and personal resource. In this sense, formal help from women's organisations is a source of empowerment for them over body and mind. It is mainly with this help that 4 of 20 respondents of the study have started to live with their hitherto abusive husbands more peacefully and the rest are generally being rehabilitated in independent lives.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The study has focused on women's responses to intimate partner violence and the routes through which violence has stopped. The research found that vulnerability to violence cuts across many differences like age, class and employment status. The organisational links that the victims can forge along with employment and education contributed to the cessation of violence. The ending of violence is linked to women's mobilisation of social and collectivised forms of opposition to male violence. Again, education beyond the secondary level contributed to the ending of violence. Employment itself has limited importance in stopping violence but along with organisational contacts contributed to the cessation of violence.

This chapter discusses how violence is embedded in the social structure of the society, the implications of responses to such violence from the women's perspective and the role of women's organisations, education and employment in helping the process of cessation of violence.

5.2 Intimate Partner Violence and Gender Relations

From the findings on the nature of physical and sexual violence reported, it may be concluded that the context in which the violence is used is in the pursuit of male control over women's behaviour and violence is an expression of the gendered, unbalanced power relationship in the institution of marriage as is evident in the referred sayings of W8 and W11 (Section 4.5.1) and from the background of others' viewpoints. Again, women thought that men were not averse to use violence because

of the limited formal social disapproval and punishment of such behaviour. The nature of violence involves ongoing and repeated abuse and includes all forms of physical attacks including attempted murder.

Marriage is at once the only socially legitimate arena to be an adult woman and the place where male violence against women is generally free from public judgment. This makes it not only a dangerous place for women but also one for which women have few real alternatives in a Bengali cultural context. It has the potentiality to be a place of terror and a place of social acceptance and it is from this combination that many of women's conflicting views of and responses to violence stem.

Hence we see that marriage, to a large extent, is based on acute gender inequality that is manifested in no small part by unpunished male violence against Bengali wives. In this research sample of the researcher, physical violence was endemic although the figures cannot be extrapolated with any certainty beyond the respondents due to the sampling method. We must note that it supports the view that male violence in intimate relationships is not just aberrant behaviour but a social fact which emerges from intra-family conflicts of power (Rajan, 1993; Agarwal, 1990; Flavia, 1988; Mishra, 1989; Sexwale, 1994; Singh and Singh, 1989; Dorkenoo and Elworthy, 1992).

The study supports theories of patriarchal power which specify the relationship between violence and power. It is in tune with the studies on patriarchal power which view male violence against women through which compliance of a female is achieved (Hanmer, 1981), a form of oppression (Midgely and Hughes, 1983), as a broader system of gender subordination (MacKinnon, 1989), a distinct structure within patriarchy (Walby, 1990), a form of control (Radford and Russell, 1992) and a cause of women's subordination (Blakeslee, 1994). Explanations of male violence that are

based on theories of patriarchal power have been characterised as being based upon static analyses of patriarchy in which men hold power over women regardless of historical, cultural, spatial and other differences. However, cultural difference contributes to the degree of potentiality to violence, and here the cultural context of the present study smacks of a very high degree of such potentiality. In fact, violence against women is well within possibility in the concept and practices of Indian style of patriarchy. It is linked to sexuality and male oriented sexual practice. Heterosexuality and marriage are so commonplace in the experience of women that male control in those spheres is particularly important for analysis. Marriage is common and if it expresses patriarchal power, then such violence, arising out of power differences, may reach many women. No doubt, personal characteristics play their part in the sense that an aberrant husband is more likely to be violent, but what women realise is that the societal set up in Bengal, India is rather congenial to husband violence.

This intimate partner violence has debilitating effects for many women; however, it does not guarantee female compliance as this study suggests. There is a high level of contestation of patriarchal power.

5.3 Responses to Patriarchal Power

It is true that some women expressed their understanding of violence as an integral part of Indian or Bengali marriage as an institution, may be overtly in a few cases but often covertly in other cases. However, if the researcher took these statements as given and did not look into the actions of women, she might have reached a culturally specific analysis which would conclude that abused women in Calcutta have a cultural acceptance of such abuse. There are aspects, no doubt, in which cultural specificity shapes the experience of violence. According to Hindu ideology, it is not only the

married state which is significant for the normative ideal of womanhood but also the nature of a wife's behaviour towards her husband, including the need to be devoted to her husband, to be loyal, faithful, submissive, attentive to the needs of her husband (Mukherjee, 1978). Again, from such a belief Indian women are conventionally not supposed to address their husbands by name. When addressing him she should use all expressions to have his attention like, "Are you listening?" and other such phrases which avoid the usage of his name. When speaking to others they refer to their husbands as "swami" meaning husband (also meaning lord), "pati" meaning husband and "bor" which means husband or blessing. The Hindu concept of "pativrata"[3] prevented the victims from mutual violence, as a woman should "worship her husband as God, no matter how cruel, unfaithful or immoral he might be" (Liddle and Joshi, 1986). Of course the husband has the normal duty to protect and look after wife and family; but if he deviates from this responsibility the wife is not normally supposed to question his action. Though the study of non-violent marriages was beyond the scope of the research, it was found that some respondents definitely took a positive view of marriage as an institution and actually enjoyed a non-violent relationship right after marriage. This shows that Indian culture of patriarchy has a good potentiality to lead to violence by intimate partners; but that does not mean that marriages in India necessarily lead to violence.

Again, in spite of the cultural and religious myths prevalent in India the researcher found that the victims challenged the male dominance. This is often expressed in their practice even though their words may sometimes express other views. Women expressed disapproval or intolerance in more coded or indirect methods (like crying to

[3] It means a wife who is "completely loyal to the husband" or "unquestionably serves or worships the husband". The meaning is clear is from such a dictum as "pati param guru", that is, "the husband is the supreme lord". In relation to this "pati" or husband, the "patni" or the wife is a "dasi" or "sebika" meaning servant.

attract the neighbour's attention, getting in touch with women's organisation, leaving the relationship) than outright verbal condemnation. Hence, the researcher did not limit her discussion in this way; she discussed issues of violence with women from a number of perspectives – how women felt about being abused as well as their responses to it. The analysis of these interviews shows that in spite of the existence of a discourse in which male violence is normalised, women had different ways of contesting such a normalisation. The research on women's responses to domestic violence has increasingly highlighted the importance of women's organisations, shelters, family and friends (as discussed in chapter two). The importance of collective resistance has been argued both at policy level (Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Hague and Malos, 1993) and in relation to individual strategies to challenge violence (Kelly, 1988, 1993 Burbank, 1992; McGibbon et al., 1989). This research also supports such a finding. The change from individualised to collective response is explored in this section through analysis of data on women's contacts with, and use of local, familial, organisational and other networks.

Organised effort to intimate partner violence is central to the struggle against male violence. Women's groups have played the greatest part, enabling women to gain legal and emotional support as well as access to shelter and employment. Support, sympathy, encouragement, advice, accommodation, money, childcare and employment have all been available to women through organisational and familial linkages. Women tend to rely on the commitment and goodwill of individual staff in these groups, given the limited alternative safe shelter in Calcutta. Single women in Indian culture seem to be considered as being of ill-repute. To complicate the economic hardships faced by single women and single mothers, they have the fear of becoming vulnerable to men who are themselves seeking sex or those recruiting

women into the sex industry. Experience of intimate partner violence is likely to compound the vulnerable position in which women find themselves when seeking paid work. No doubt there is evident a big shortcoming in proper propaganda or preaching on the part of the organizations resulting in limited access of the abused women to them; but once made a few of them come to such agencies through other's help their lot has a good chance to be changed. Of course, only the tip of the iceberg of the problem is touched and much more is to be done by feminist bodies and workers. But from the experiences of the respondents of the study it is realized this way.

Women's groups not only provide support and advice to victims but also help in the cessation of violence. The resolution rate for women with organisational contacts is 70%, a product of successful alliances of responses to partner violence. Hence resolution of violence is strongly associated with having organisational links. The 14 respondents who took help from the women's organisation either walked out of the relationship or ended the violence. The other 6, who remained isolated, could achieve neither of these on their own. The advice, support, shelter and encouragement which women obtained from women's groups in particular, and also from legal aid centres and community development organisations was important in the transition from violent to non-violent lives. The Director of the women's group offered a formulation of empowerment to the researcher as 'the level of control over oneself and one's environment, beginning with control over the body, moving through control over education and social aspects right up to control of the political environment – that is being able to control aspirations of oneself and of others. Individuals empower themselves through collectives'.

An important connecting channel involves cross-class alliances of women, as in women's organisations and advice sessions where women can progress a common goal despite their different class locations. The findings show the alliances between groups are both possible and productive. Women who run groups and legal advice centres are often of a higher socio-economic class than women who use their services. The distinction between the former and latter groups of women may be numerous and include wealth and financial resources, the areas in which they live, educational background, levels of literacy, access to political and legal resources as well as accommodation and the capacity to network with other organisations. Class location has great social significance in India and although the ruling party, Communist Party of India- Marxist (CPI (M)), has sought to forge alliances against elite power structures the influence of class is also strong in West Bengal (Mallick, 1993).

Again, West Bengal has a highly politicised environment with political parties having a very influential role. Historically, women's organisations have been allied to communist parties and have developed with less autonomy than in other parts of India. Here political parties are not only engaged in formal politics like election and running or opposing the government, but also in attempts to solve the social and other problems either through mass organizations affiliated to them or by themselves.

The Indian women's movement is both articulate and well organised and enjoys a relationship with the state which has won some advances for women. The state has an explicit commitment to gender equality provided in the Constitution, and this provides a useful point of leverage. The democratic political framework in India facilitates a dialogue between women's movements and the state, although it does not guarantee a sympathetic or constructive reception. Reserved places for women in political structures in the future will increase the profile of women in the state and may

influence the nature of future state involvement on male violence. Increasing proportions of women in the state apparatus has also increased the optimism about violence against women being taken more seriously in public, political and state arenas.

The legacy of the independence struggle as well as women's struggle in India during the colonial period may be particularly conducive to the establishment and effective workings of contemporary women's organisations. It may also mean that there is a popular and positive assessment of the possibility of organised activity and willingness of women to use such organisations.

Western accounts of organised opposition to male violence have demonstrated their strength and effectiveness in applying pressure on the state by achieving, for example, legal change and resources for the provision of shelters. Studies of violence have increasingly shown the importance of women's connections with other women (Bowker 1988; Mooney 1994; Belgrave Baheno n.d.; Mazumdar, 2001; Mitra, 2001) in their responses to violence but there has been no mapping of the extent or diversity of dispersed knowledge. Complementing the existing evidence on women's likelihood to speak to other women about abuse, this study suggests that not only is this important in helping women find emotional support but it also contributes positively to interventions that challenge the violence.

The strength of alliances in this study has emerged in their common aspiration – the end of male violence. For the women victims who seek help, the violence they wish to end is that which marks their own individual lives while for the organisations the struggle is against the more generalised social practice of male violence as well as the individual cases with which they deal. Although women lead it, the collective struggle in this study builds upon a social and political commonality, not a gendered one. It

may be that many of the women who came together to progress the collective struggles also have a shared experience of violence but this is not necessary for participation in these alliances. Identifying the collectivities as alliances allows them not to be limited by the gendered composition of their members and can thus both be built upon political aims and acknowledge the contribution of men – such as the lawyers who have given their time and efforts to women for legal advice.

There are some ways in which the social aspects of femaleness and gender provide the basis for solidarity of the support networks. For example, abused women will be more at ease to speak of their experiences (particularly of sexual violence) to other women, rather than to men. Emotional support is more readily provided by women to other women. This does not necessitate a shared experience of violence. Many women in the collective struggles have either not experienced domestic violence (like the staff of the women's group), or the same form of violence or may not have known their own histories of abuse. But the special place of women in such supporting roles lies in the propensity to understand the situation and experiences of women, though occupying the same social space as those who are seeking help – that is they are socially female.

The nature of women's support to other women rests on their shared experience of gender and the way in which this can provide the basis for a common understanding of women's experiences of vulnerability, fear and male power. This is invaluable as the basis for support, sympathy and for building up the confidence of women whose lives have been devastated by violence. It is not the same as the political struggle against violence, in which many other factors come into play – particularly the shared goal of elimination of male violence which is not restricted to women.

The transition from isolated to collective action against male violence involved the spread of knowledge beyond the abusive couple.

5.3.1 Spread of Knowledge

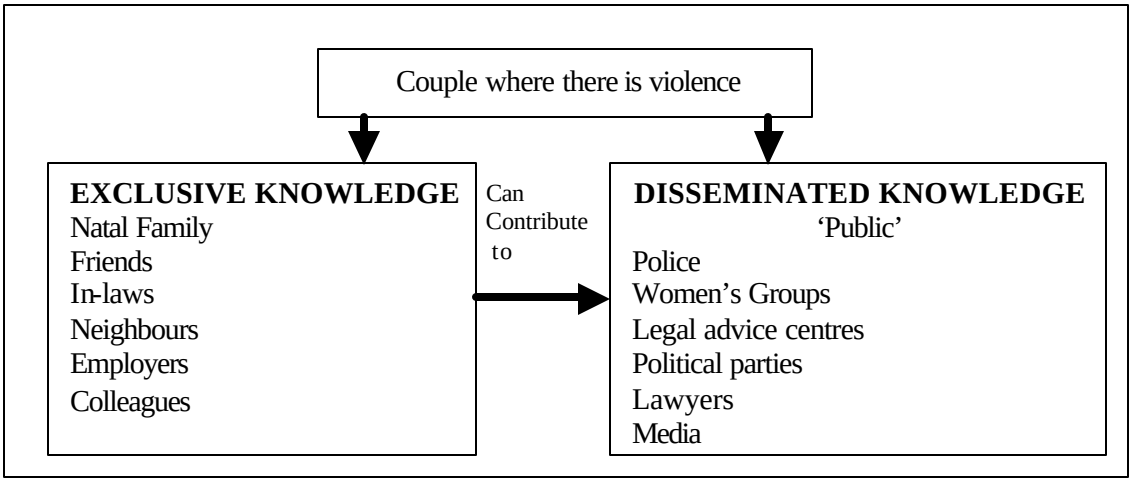
The findings show that knowledge is spread by these women, often to those closest to them – particularly natal families, in-laws and neighbours. This affords the possibility of immediate or on-going support. Further, it facilitates access to social and political resources which the abused women may not otherwise be able to readily access. The researcher calls this level of awareness 'exclusive knowledge'; it is knowledge among people beyond the violent couple who have regular contact with that couple. This includes natal families, in-laws (where patrilocality is practiced) and neighbours; they may be told about the violence or they may find out through their everyday relations with the couple.

The researcher uses the term 'disseminated knowledge' when the knowledge spreads to the formalised networks like women's organisations, police and lawyers. They have an important role to play as they can all be mobilised to resist incidents of violence. This is not the same as saying that on every occasion these networks can and will be mobilised to defend the woman and to challenge the man.

A map of the ways in which knowledge can spread beyond the couple is given in Figure 1. It shows that knowledge can move from the couple to localised domains, including natal families, in-laws, friends and neighbours. The knowledge that spreads through the daily contacts which women have is exclusive knowledge. The composition can vary, depending on whether the couple lives with the woman's or the man's family. Another domain is disseminated knowledge wherein formal

organisations, including those of the state, are aware of violence. This corresponds to the way in which the public domain is commonly discussed.

Figure 1: Exclusive and Disseminated Knowledge



This disseminated knowledge is also what commonly passes for public recognition and on which the case for policy changes can be argued. Formalised institutions and networks need to 'know' of the individual cases and the widespread practice of intimate partner violence. The absence of disseminated knowledge is not equivalent to a silence, as there may be localised knowledge but the two domains, or discourses, may be disconnected. It is possible and necessary to connect these two and bring the everyday lives and difficulties of women to the knowledge and attention of the formalised and/or state sectors in order that changes in the lives of women are made more easily possible.

5.4 Sexual Violence

The analysis of women's actions which contributed to the cessation of violence shows the importance of collective responses to abuse, which is preceded by the spread of knowledge of violence. Sexual violence, which is conceptualised as distinct from

other forms of physical abuse, does not follow the same pattern, by virtue of the difficulties women face in talking to others about this sexual abuse. This may mean that in the absence of other routes of dealing with the sexual abuse women may feel that separation from their husbands is the only way to end the ordeal. Discourses, which deny women to talk about sexual acts, limit their opportunities to transform responses from private to public actions through the spread of knowledge about the sexual abuse. Together with notions of appropriate adult womanhood which is defined by marriage, women are inhibited from talking about sexual violence.

The male oriented discourse on heterosexuality constructs women as passive and servicing sexual objects, whose social recognition is found within marriage (McKenzie-Mohr and Zanna, 1990). Girls have access to a highly restricted sexual discourse, if any at all, and often begin marital sexual relations in ignorance of what sex might involve. Physical control on the behaviour of girls (especially in urban areas) also leaves them little room to mix with boys or to gain any sexual experience before marriage. This contrasts with the greater scope which men have to establish a range of relationships, including sexual, and the sexual talk in which many young men can engage. This context makes it extremely difficult for women to exercise any resistance to sexual acts and limits the possibilities of sexual pleasure in their lives.

Sexual behaviour outside the limited confines of heterosexuality in marriage is particularly difficult for women to explore. Again, if the law were to be amended to understand all sex without a woman's consent as rape, then the number of legally recognised rape in this selection would be higher[4]. De facto rape is high while de jure rape is lower.

[4] If a woman is aged over 15 years rape by her husband is not legally recognised (Indian Penal Code section 375)

5.5 Differences in the Responses to the Two Forms of Abuse

Some western literature highlights the links between sexual and physical violence (Russell 1990; Finkelhor and Yllo 1982, 1985, Bergen 1995), both in women's experience and in the conceptualisation of male violence against women. The findings of this study showed that there is indeed an overlap between these forms of abuse in their co-existence and therefore in their significance in the lives of violated women. However, in terms of responses to physical violence, as against responses to sexual violence, available to women are markedly different. This in turn is clearly shaped by the nature and extent of public discourse on the two forms of behaviour: the public recognition of physical violence is considerably further advanced than that on sexual violence. In fact, women's access to any sexual discourse, not only one on sexual violence, is limited and defined by ideological norms of sexual innocence before marriage and sexual availability to a husband thereafter. Women's exclusion from sexual vocabulary appears to deny them the spaces through which to challenge sexualised male power.

Women have the option to let others know about physical abuse and this study shows that they commonly do so – calling to their support family, friends and neighbours as well as organised resistance to male violence. The knowledge of abuse spreads beyond the couples concerned into wider networks and with respect to physical violence the wider spread is linked to the cessation of violence.

The constrained space of sexual discourse limits the possibilities women have to vocalise their abuse and as a consequence makes it difficult for collectivised resistance to come into play. The differences between sexual and physical violence is thus brought into sharp focus in the coping strategies available to women.

From the experiences of the respondents it is clear that sexual abuse is much harder for women to discuss than is physical violence. This denies the preliminary step towards effective coping style, which is so pronounced in case of physical violence, the spread of knowledge of abuse through kin, friends, in-laws and tenants. Moreover, the legal machinery in India does not take into account rape by an intimate partner. This is an extremely significant distinction between the two forms of violence, particularly in terms of the possibilities for the challenging and effective responses. While it is helpful to understand forms of violence as connected conceptually and in practice, it seems that the strategies available to women in response to sexual violence are more limited than those which they can use against physical violence. This is related to the discourses on each, as there is a greater degree of public activity and discussion about physical violence than there is on sexual violence (or any sexual topic) in India. This context limits the possibilities for collective resistance to sexual violence, a strategy which is strongly implicated in the resolution of physical violence.

Women's actions like walks and rallies, demonstrating violence against women in India held by women's groups and agencies (like the one organised by Concerned Civil Societies of Delhi in November 2002), had contributed to the resolution of physical violence. These activities show the importance of collective resistance to abuse, which is preceded by knowledge of violence spreading beyond the couple concerned. By virtue of the difficulties women face in talking to others about the abuse, sexual violence does not follow the same pattern. This may mean that in the absence of other routes of dealing with the sexual abuse women may feel that separation is the only way to end their ordeal.

Thus the study of violence in marriage finds a disjuncture between women's responses to physical and their responses to sexual violence. The pattern of women's responses to physical violence typically involves the spread of knowledge beyond the concerned couple, many supportive intervention and strategies of organised resistance. This collective resistance helps in the resolution of physical abuse in marriage.

A significant proportion of women who said that their objections to sex (or their pain during sex) were ignored by their husbands have since separated. Their experiences of sexual violence, the negligible opportunities to speak about abuse and find support, together with physical abuse, may pre-dispose women to leave violent men. Rape in marriage is an intimate, intrusive and lonely experience no matter what the social context is.

An important difference between physical and sexual violence is the very limited knowledge of sexual abuse beyond the couple where it takes place. Unlike physical abuse there is a silence surrounding sexual abuse in marriage. The silence is interwoven with emotions of shame and embarrassment, contributed in no small part by the dominant discourses of heterosexuality which limit or deny women access to a sexual domain, except in marital relations. Marriage is constructed as the only legitimate arena in which women are sexual beings. These conditions make it extremely difficult for women to broach a discussion of sexual relations, in the absence of prior discussion and when the marriage on which their adult status depends is poorly implicated in their comments or questions. The experience of sexual violence institutionalised in marriage remains one of the isolated and lonely pain through which male power over women commonly remains unchallenged.

The questions the researcher asked about women's responses to sexual abuse are slightly different to those about physical violence. The researcher asked all women who reported about sexual abuse whether their husband knew that they were unwilling to have sex or that it caused them pain. The researcher then asked the women who said that their husband knew, whether or not he had discontinued the sex.

It is helpful conceptually to understand the various forms of physical and sexual violence and the ways in which they express patriarchal power; the recognition of rape in marriage is an important part of this. It is important, however, to distinguish concept from strategy and to understand that individual women's struggles against physical and sexual abuse may in fact be quite different. Sexual relations are highly pervaded by emotional baggage (romantic or prudish, or both) which complicate the ways in which they can be both discussed and challenged. In summary there is limited public recognition given to sexual violence in marriage in India and this restricts the ability of women to seek help. Sexual violence in marriage causes privatised pain and the connections and shared knowledge which have been demonstrated to facilitate the resolution of physical violence are therefore not available to women experiencing sexual violence.

5.6 Education

Education has a significant role to play in the lives of the victims. Secondary education for girls is valued for increasing labour productivity and having a highly attractive rate of return.

Liberatory approaches to education (education of the oppressed) stress the importance of education, particularly literacy, in enhancing the awareness of oppression and in

advancing action against it, through an appropriately structured pedagogy (Friere, 1973).

Formal products of secondary schooling, such as intermediate skills in literacy and numeracy, contribute to the bundle of life skills which women can use in their quest for support, should they experience domestic violence. It enables them to access written publicity materials from women's and legal aid organisations, for example, and to read media coverage of relevant issues.

The importance of secondary education lies also in the enhancement of self-perception which educational achievement brings. Successful completion of secondary schooling, which involves passing exams for progression through the classes, can contribute to a girl's confidence in her abilities and self-worth. In turn, these may have a positive influence on women's propensity to resist violence both by predisposing a questioning of ideologies which normalise male violence against women and by valorising women's humanity and integrity to the degree that violence is not tolerated in the long term. Secondary schooling seems to be a definitive point at which the skills base and the conscientising effects of education together have a strong impact on the ending of intimate partner violence.

From the feminist point of view, the changes are in women's capacity to resist patriarchal power that expresses itself, among other channels, through domestic violence. Unlike the instrumentalist views of education (which find relevance in the works of Neo-classical economists like Matthew McQueen (1973) and David Bright Singh (1966)) which locate the beneficiaries of female education in persons other than the woman herself or in economic processes, this finding relates directly to personal autonomy and is thus more closely allied to empowerment approaches to education.

In spite of this great importance of education in relation to gender violence in a country like India with a very high degree of illiteracy among females (more than 75% according to Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2001), the findings do not show that more educated women are necessarily spared of violence.

5.7 Employment

Women's access to paid employment is structured by several factors: family obligations require them to be available near their homes at certain times, making local domestic work attractive and lack of access to training limits them to unskilled or low skilled occupations.

The meaning of employment in the lives of women is not free standing in that the meaning is not inherent in the act of economic engagement or in the level of income accruing from it. Employment has varying meanings depending on the combination of other co-existing conditions. The significance of the family for women's paid work is in the role this institution has in constructing the meaning of womanhood. It is through familial economic necessity that women may be pushed into paid work. In the family the social dynamics tend towards seclusion or 'housewifisation' (Mies, 1986) of women, thus rendering women's paid employment a problematic option. A similarly power relations within the family and household influence the degree of control which women are able to exercise over any income they receive – it is not inherent in the nature of paid work. Cultural norms also influence such practices and the combination of these various factors makes it difficult for women to act independently in establishing their own employment and financial arrangements.

Leaving a violent husband or partner is not the only option to consider – perhaps having an income allows women to leave home more quickly than being unemployed

but if this is an option which she does not wish to take (as in the cases of four women who resolved with the help of the women's group) then employment becomes less critical. It is not only women who have escaped who are in paid work but also those women who have been left. This makes employment a means of financial support but not a pre-condition for resolution. What may be significant in terms of economic activity and resistance to violence is that regular and adequately paid employment can lay the foundation for single adulthood or motherhood, if certain other conditions also exist. Also important is that the significance of paid work is not purely financial but that the opportunities offered for social networking may be crucial in the process of speaking out.

Marxist analyses of female labour force participation have stressed the importance in challenging male dominance (Engels, 1884), although feminists have questioned this single variable analysis of oppression. Neo-liberal development discourse stresses the importance of effective and efficient resource mobilisation within an economy, for which women's economic engagement is necessary. Analyses of women's experience of paid work has shown that occupational segregation combined with feminised casualisation of the formal sector mitigate against women being personally enriched by the employment experience and their concentration in the informal sector with all its attendant insecurities similarly is unlikely to offer satisfaction (Banerjee, 1985; Jayawardena, 1986; Zaman, 1999).

Gendered occupational segregation in India locates women in poorly paid employment which does not lay the foundation for economic independence. In my selection of women, the specific occupations to which women had gained access were dominated by domestic work and other insecure work, such as collecting brushwood and selling ration items. Low paid and insecure forms of work influence the

significance of employment, rendering it the means to support financial obligations but not necessarily the route to increased sense of empowerment.

Employment is of great importance in meeting daily living needs. The majority of women who have separated from abusive husbands are in paid work. The lack of state welfare provisions with which to sustain independent lives makes paid work a necessity for single women, especially for those whose families are either unwilling or unable financially to support them and/or their children. Poor training opportunities and limited scope to apply such training in intended occupations limits the diversification of women's employment profile. Employment emerges, therefore, as the means with which to sustain independent lives but is not a sufficient condition for leaving or ending of violence.

Women's aspirations to economic independence cannot be assumed, as ideological constructs of appropriate womanhood locate the meaning of women's lives in their relational dimensions as wives and mothers. The over-riding importance of wifehood in this construction means that the imperative to remain in a marriage severely impinges upon any initiatives to separate, even where employment is well paid and can underwrite economic independence.

The study does not support an interpretation of employment, therefore, as empowering precondition for change in gender relations. It is possible that the specificities of local occupational structuring of female labour force participation impinge on this experience, as the women were predominantly located in casual or insecure work which was also poorly paid.

Control of household finances cannot be assumed to follow economic activity as many women who were in paid work were responsible for household budgeting.

5.8 Chapter Summary

The research is in favour of a theory of resources to combat male violence which includes a concept of social, personal and financial assets.

First is the access to support networks. Individual transitions from violent to non-violent lives are linked with organised struggles against male violence; individual empowerment is enhanced through collective action. Women need to have a safe person with whom they can speak with. They need to have confidence in their integrity and worth as people who can and should pursue and promote their own lives, well-being and development. Women should look for intolerance of and commitment to the elimination of male dominance.

The second asset is education which will equip women to with basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy, as well as enhancing self-confidence which will strengthen their intolerance of abuse.

The third asset is financial means to meet women's obligations. This enables them to be independently liable for their own lives (and those of their children).

These three assets can hasten women's intolerance to intimate partner violence and combat social disinclination to act against such abuse. These assets will not only empower women but also give them the confidence and courage to stand up against male dominance.

CHAPTER 6: LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Limitations of the Study

This study had several limitations. First, there is a lack of appropriate database in Calcutta and India regarding domestic abuses and the responses of women to them. Studies on domestic violence are few and far between. Secondly, the generalisability of the findings is also limited. However, this is a limitation of most qualitative researches since they are designed to give a greater depth of individual's unique experiences. Thirdly, the researcher faced difficulties in procuring respondents. The only feasible path, which is, taking the help of an agency working on abuses against married women, was taken. This population of women was difficult to reach. The study was not expected to be generalisable to all women. However, for the first time the study attempted to develop an understanding of the experiences of the victims who participated in the study. But here too the researcher had to adjust with the fact that not only the number of such agencies is very limited, they lack resources, infrastructure and, above all, professional skill – in fact, the persons involved may have humanitarian zeal but not required expertise. Fourthly, in the perspective of socio-religious context of India, abused women are rather reluctant to open up to the researcher. Moreover, many of them have an inherent proneness to regard their families as a haven from other forms of social life and their husbands as something like their 'lords'. As a result, there is a tendency to underreport violence. Fifthly, the respondents frequently failed to keep appointments with the researcher. Sixthly, the time and resource constraint were great drawbacks. Not only the time of study was very limited, communication problems (like hesitations of the respondents to open

up), paucity of fund and the like also acted as limiting factors. Again, the implications for practice must be interpreted modestly as the researcher has used a small sample size, non-probabilistic sampling method and retrospective data collection in few cases.

6.2 Implications for Research

- A quantitative large-scale survey with systematic samples may be conducted for the purpose of generalisability.
- A comparative study could be carried out to find out whether women's groups play a similar role in other parts of India where the environment is not so politicised and women's groups are more autonomous and not allied to the political parties.
- The theme of response to violence against women could be studied further in the human development framework. Human development is concerned with the enlargement of people's choice and a process which weaves development around people not people around development (UNDP, 1990-94). This formulation has the potential to include violence against women as a central issue as violence contradicts the process of widening choices (Carrillo, 1992). Effective responses to violence could be seen as enlarging such choices. The further research on human development approach to violence has the potential for prioritising policies and interventions to seek to reduce and eliminate violence against women.
- Further research could also determine the connection, if any, between violence, women's response and autonomy. A focus on autonomy can throw into focus the nature of relationships between women and their contexts. Male

violence against women could be analysed in terms of infringement of women's autonomy.

6.3 Implications for Practice

This study emphasised the importance of collective effort in challenging the male violence against women and found that talking about violence is important in an individual journey towards effective response and in a broader struggle against violence against women. In her interviews with the respondents the researcher found them often coming out of their mental shell and talking about violence from women's point of view as a problem born of male dominance. With this understanding of the value of collective effort and adoption of women's point of view by the respondents, the researcher advocates feminist approach for practice of intervention. The main tenets of such a practice involve consciousness raising, challenging attitudes, changing the mindset, building critical consciousness, skills training and facilitating adult literacy.

- Raising awareness and ending social stigma – Violence is a tangible manifestation of male domination of women. Men's power over women is often believed to be an 'uncritical and partly unconscious way in which people perceive the world' (Simon, 1991:26). There is a common belief that the cause of violence against women is that a woman is responsible for the violence rather than the man. Women's organisations need to challenge the 'common sense' beliefs and attitudes. They could do so by providing rich sources of stories of violence at home. They can help in the dissemination of the anecdotes of women's experience of male violence. Having done so they are

to see that it is named as 'violence' in the society. This can be achieved through influencing the media, or through public education campaigns.

- Challenging attitudes by recording violence against women – There is an inadequate or insufficient recording of data by police, health workers and other officials in most states of India, the reason being the lack of awareness of violence against women as an issue of relevance to the national government. 'It is only through the development of creative means of information collection and analysis that a more comprehensive range of violations will be identified. Locating broader sources of information, expertise and materials is an important first step' (United Nations Centre for Human Rights, 1995:10). Research undertaken by women's organisations at local and national levels will play a key role in raising awareness of the extent and impact of violence on individual women and the society at large.
- Challenging attitudes through media – Since media communications can reach and influence a large number of people it must be tapped to play a positive role in the struggle for a violence free world. It is often seen that the media portrays gender stereotypes that are detrimental to the struggle against violence. The incidents of violence are depicted as rare and isolated events taking place in public places, when in reality most violence occurs within the home (Rowlands, 1997). The media needs to be encouraged to develop a balanced and unbiased portrayal of women. A news and communications service for journalists may be set up for training on gender sensitive reporting and awareness raising like 'How to Report Gender Violence' is being tested in South Africa (Made, 2000). National level women's organisations working with women can implement a policy of writing to individual journalists for

reporting on preventing violence against women. This involves meeting journalists on a regular basis and inviting them to be a part of the solution to the problem of violence against women.

- Changing the mindset through public education and campaigns – Popular education can be used to challenge assumptions about violence. Such campaigns might use comics, brochures, leaflets, videos, theatre productions, radio and television programmes. Women's organisations at the local and national levels have to play an important role in placing violence against women in the public arena through public education campaigns. The messages can be tailored to local realities and facts. Well-drawn images, role plays and theatrical productions can be effective means of communication. They not only promote reflections on issues such as the causes of a specific form of violence and ways of overcoming them but can also raise awareness in a vivid, thought-provoking and participatory way.
- Building critical consciousness of violence against women - Building on the work of the Brazilian scholar and educator Paulo Freire (1974), women can be helped to achieve critical consciousness about gender, power and how violence operates in women's lives. Women's organisations can take up the elements of Freire's approach to 'education for liberation'. In Freire's approach groups of people identify problems and their causes in order to come up with strategies that will eventually bring about changes in their lives. The process of developing 'critical consciousness' starts from recognising the fact that women's experience of violence comes about because of their inequality with men. Groups move from a 'common sense' idea of violence against women as a feature of society that is tolerated to a 'critical consciousness' of

violence against women as a human rights abuse. Friendship with other women and talking about own experiences of violence will help them to develop assertiveness and empowerment.

- Skills training and provision of resources - This will help women to bring about changes in their lives conducive to their interests and goals. It will make them able 'to participate more effectively in the wider process of socio-political development, to wrest from society the rights, the dignity and the resources to which they are entitled for their own development, through collective action to increase their voice in development decisions that affected their lives' (Mazumdar, 1989:11). This may be achieved through vocational training, attending leadership programmes, gaining access to economic resources and being fully aware of the nation's legal framework so as to challenge men if need so arises. Though the role of credit in relation to violence is a complex one, nevertheless, it empowers the women economically.
- Facilitating adult literacy – Social workers, counsellors, activists are to encourage adult education especially in a country where girls suffer a disadvantage as far as education is concerned. The valuation of education should be emphasised both for themselves and for their children in the context of improved life chances, particularly in terms of employment and earning opportunities

6.4 Policy Implications

The State should help the development and growth of women's groups. The women's groups in India are primarily concerned with developmental activities. These

women's groups are the first to respond to any social and political change. Hence the State should

- Allow the women's groups to multiply and grow faster
- Provide support for women's shelters and homes
- Allow foreign fund to flow in as most of the women's groups in India are dependent on foreign fund[5]
- Allocate state fund for the development of these organisations

Empowerment of women is a critical precondition for participation in the education process that is essential in mitigating domestic violence against women. From the secondary data we find that while the rate of increase in women's literacy has been increasing each decade, it remains far below the level of literacy for men. The disparity between male and female literacy in India has constantly been at 25% for four census periods between 1961 and 1991 with marginal decrement in 2001 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2001). As per Census of India 2001, Calcutta's female literacy rate is 77.95% in general compared to 84.07% for the males (Human Development Report, 2004). Non Formal Education with a focus on women gaining momentum after the International Women's Year, 1975, the National Literacy Mission launched in 1988 with a focus on functional literacy, and the National Policy on Education, 1986 focusing on 'education for women's equality' are the main Government programmes relating to women's education. Still the rate of female literacy remains low (a little over 40%) as it was only 0.9% in 1901 (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2001). The policy implications as far as education is concerned should involve the following.

[5] This was evident from the interactions with women's organisations of Calcutta who needed license and permission from the government and face delay and complications in receiving grants from foreign aiding bodies.

- Education system should be used as an agent of basic changes in the status of women---it should play an interventionist role in the empowerment of women.
- It should promote the development of new values through re-designed curricula, textbooks, training of teachers, decision-makers and administrators.
- New textbooks should be introduced to remove the present sexist bias both in terms of selection of content and use of language.
- Need-based vocational education and training should be imparted to women. Infrastructural and physical facilities for education and other support services to women should be provided.
- Increasing access of women to inputs, services and technology should be ensured to mitigate drudgery and improve their productivity.

Women empowerment should have a component on income – generating activity. In the state of West Bengal, 11.2% women came out of home to work according to 1991 census, rising to 18.1% according to 2001 census. Not only is the increase is insufficient, the number of workers has mainly increased in marginal and unorganised sectors. Women in the organised sector are covered by protective legal provisions in the various enactments; but there are few legal provisions for women working in the unorganised sector. Work participation rates for the male and the female in urban India are a little less than 50 and a little more than 10 respectively. Again women workers often earn 40% less than men for the same work or work hours. A few micro level studies on the impact of the recent economic reforms based on liberalisation and globalisation observe that the demand for labour and especially women's labour will register a shrink in the formal sector and increase in the informal sector. The wage differentials by education, age and gender are likely to increase, and the work

condition will increasingly be informal, exploitative and insecure (Voluntary Health Association of India, 2000).

Hence the policy implications are the following. There should be highlighting of

- growing feminisation of poverty;
- the importance of promoting equality in women's access to and participation in economic activities;
- more gender sensitive planning, policy making and implementation;
- more recognition of women's current economic activities and an increase in women's access to information, skill and knowledge about economic opportunities;
- women component of mainstream poverty-alleviation programmes should be linked to sectoral programmes.
- reservation of jobs for women in particular sectors may also have to be resorted to

CHAPTER 7: A PROPOSED MODEL

7.1 Introduction

The study provides insight into the fact that the cooperation or intervention of others transformed the act of actively responding to male violence from purely individual to collective level. It is more or less implied in the remarks of many respondents that they suffer from violence because they are women and there should be collective and organized effort to change this situation. It is seen that a victim on her own is incapable of taking action to change her situation. 'Realising their power within a group setting engaging in collective action can be a response that empowers an individual and enables him or her to work with others to redefine their state of being and develop a greater range of options within which to live' (Dominelli, 2002: 109). Based on this ideology of collective action, this model aims to improve the awareness and responsibility to violence and enhance the initiative of the victims to participate in direct action against intimate partner violence (Figure 2). It is based on the feminist concept of power using a Foucaldian framework (Rowlands, 1997). However, this feminist viewpoint should take into consideration the specific socio-cultural traits of society (like those of Indian society which include traditionally developed indigenous culture of patriarchy, conventional image of women as subservient to men, fear of stigma of abused females and dowry-related violence) to develop an appropriate model.

Feminists have pointed out that the root cause of violence against women lies in the unequal power relations between men and women and this ensures male dominance over women. They have termed this inequality 'patriarchy'. Violence against women

is identified as one of the 'structures of patriarchy'. Victims are chosen because of their gender. The message is domination is for women: stay in your place and be afraid. Violence is not only personal or cultural, 'it is profoundly political' (Bunch and Carrillo, 1991:8).

Hence, the elimination of violence is necessarily a political change challenging the unequal social, political and economical power held by both men and women. The ways in which the inequality is perpetuated at all strata of society needs to be confronted. A number of responses of the victims, as the study suggests, are expressions of challenges to such power. 'Heterosexual relationships and encounters are the site where many women experience patriarchal oppression most directly and intensely; they are also a site of resistance and struggle' (Kelly, 1988:42).

The model has been suggested with the belief that women's own perceptions of violence should be the starting point of work to end violence.

7.2 Goal of the Model

This intervention model addresses violence against women through an empowerment approach (Figure 2). Empowerment centres on the control a woman has over herself and her actions (Vatuk, 1987:24). Control over self presupposes control over one's own body and is circumscribed by contact violence. Many women experience intimate partner violence and its invasion of personal control. Ending such violence is critical for women to establish greater control over self: freedom from violence is thus central to a woman's empowerment. Such empowerment is thus necessary in order to contest and reduce patriarchal power.

7.3 Theoretical Base

Power and resistance can be juxtaposed as alternatives to each other: it is the exercise of power in some forms which resistance contests. This has been understood as a necessary and constant relationship by Foucault who has said that '[w]here there is power there is resistance' (Foucault, 1990:95); thus resistance is everywhere, dispersed and exercised through many 'points'.

In fact, power and resistance are not discrete but exist one inside the other and are, in effect, inseparable. They are both shaped by discourses through which knowledge and truth are constructed. Power is successful, however, where it is able to 'mask a substantial part of itself' and 'a pure limit set on freedom is … the general form of its acceptability' (Foucault, 1990:86), particularly through the operation of law.

Foucault's analysis suggests that whatever might be an individual experience of power – as the target or support of power – each person has a relationship to resistance also. This may be seen as facilitating a conceptualisation of all people as potentially resisting violence (Ramanozoglu, 1993) and is thus an optimistic assessment; this gels which attempts to understand women's responses to violence as contesting such power.

However, Foucaldian analysis of power suffers from being too individualistic in nature and cannot explain collective effort. A feminist concept of power drawing on Foucaldian framework is, therefore, necessary to understand the way in which male violence against women conditions women's experience. 'Feminists conceptualize power as a capacity for exercising agency' (Dominelli, 2002). The researcher also incorporates the element of socio-cultural concept to broaden the understanding of nature and exercise of power in society on a collective basis. The culture of

patriarchy that is to be combated from the feminist viewpoint includes indigenous socio-cultural elements.

7.4 Assumptions

This model of politicisation is based on the following four assumptions. Firstly, the individual experiences are the result of oppressive social relations, though the nature and degree of such oppression vary from culture to culture. Secondly, it is based on the belief that social change is necessary and possible. Thirdly, collective organisation is necessary to work toward the aim to be achieved. Fourthly, women are not passive victims of the forces of patriarchy.

7.5 The Process

Feminists perceive that women's empowerment is an important factor that challenges the norm of gender-based violence by a male as a means to attend power through social control. If empowerment means a social process involving change in an individual, organization, community and society as a whole, findings reveal that such a transformation process of abused women cannot happen in isolation but happens through participation and collective expertise.

Women need three assets to enable them to take effective and considered control over their lives and to be able to perceive of themselves as capable and deserving of taking such control.

The findings in the study suggest that a conceptualisation of empowerment involves women's control over self with linkages to other women. Women need to have a safe person or group of people with whom they can speak in the knowledge that they will not be condemned or rejected. Women need to have confidence in their integrity and

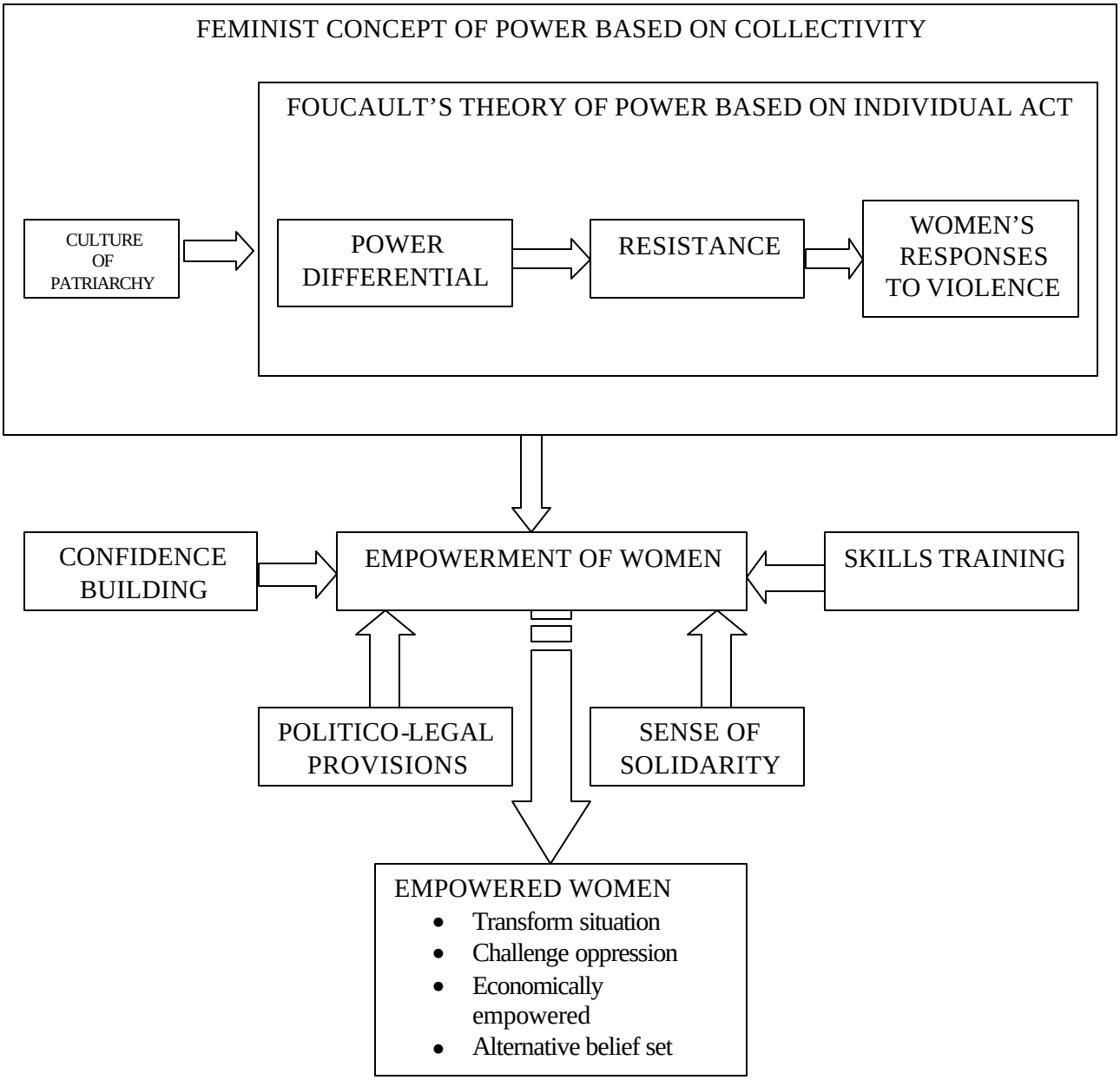
worth as people who can and should pursue and promote their lives, well-being and development. These needs can be progressed through solidarity networks which help to cease violence in the long term.

The second asset contributing to the empowerment of women is education. This equips women with basic skills, such as numeracy and literacy, as well as enhancing their self-confidence which will strengthen their intolerance to abuse.

The third asset is the financial means through which to meet obligations. Paid work is the route through which women can meet their living costs. This may be achieved through vocational training, attending leadership programmes, gaining access to economic resources and being fully aware of the nation's legal framework so as to challenge men if need so arises. Though the role of credit in relation to violence is a complex one, nevertheless, it empowers the women economically.

Thus the three assets enhance women's capacity to exercise increasing control of their lives through the termination of violence in the homes.

Figure 2: The Proposed Model



7.6 Outcome

- Empowered to transform a situation that an individual can gain through becoming aware of how power possessed by some is detrimental to others and how oppression is internalised.
- Economically empowered, at liberty to make decisions and express oneself
- Working together in a supportive group will enable them to be aware of alternative beliefs and ways of life.

7.7 Chapter Summary

This model is based on the feminist concept of power using a Foucaldian theoretical basis. It gives recognition to the fact that power differences within a heterosexual relationship give rise to women's challenging responses to violence in order to combat the male dominance, though in the socio-cultural context of the researcher's study they are not always or initially overt and sometimes are a bit complex or confused. The responses give way to the process of empowerment of women, which is not free standing, but takes the help of association with other women, literacy skills and paid work. The empowered woman is in a position to challenge oppression, transform situation to her favour, becomes economically independent and holds an alternative belief set. This model of practice could be tested at a micro-level first through any of the following ways, namely, self-evaluation, participatory or external evaluation. No matter which evaluation process is selected, it is vital to continue to provide evidence of progress and success of the intervention method in evaluation.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

Many activists, authors, researchers and individuals have highlighted the horrors of violence in the home. A qualitative study like this takes us to the depths of misery, pain and terror of such violence.

The exploration of women's experiences of violence in a non-western context has led to the development of a better theoretical understanding of women's challenging responses to violence. It clearly shows the non-economic aspects of the web of relationships, impacts, constraints and possibilities. The difficulties inherent in single adult womanhood are manifest and the ideological imperative to marriage and family is strong in this context, although not unfamiliar in the West. An understanding of the violence and routes out of violence which centre around economic aspects displays a misleading picture of the ideological and social aspects of the problem of domestic violence and response to it. Just as men always do not use violence against women on purely economic grounds, so too women's responses to that violence are not based on such conditions either.

It is true that many women who remain in violent relationships do not have independent financial means or are financially dependent on their husbands. These women may also explain that their continued residence with violent men is due to the lack of economic independence. However, analysis of the data suggests that those observations do not necessarily mean that employment or economic independence will actually result in women leaving abusive men. This is clear from the responses of the respondents and not assumed. Employment factor neither conscientised women to

resist or leave violent men, nor was it linked with the women who had resolved violence.

Women's contacts with organised opposition to male violence and education beyond the secondary level are the significant features associated with the ending of physical violence. The women who have separated from violent men had organisational contacts and employment in their lives. These two contribute positively to the victims' ways of responses and are the means to enhanced agency in contesting the violence of patriarchal power. The violent free life not only reduces the areas in which restrictions are placed on women's actions and the fear it invokes but also contributes to women's personal empowerment.

8.2 Empowerment of women

The woman's increased empowerment is contingent primarily upon the social and political connections she can forge. Alliances and solidarity between agents who share opposition to violence can impact upon the public sphere, in terms of policy change and public awareness, but also on individual struggles for change.

An interest in empowerment gives credence to the experience of individual women but does not rest on individualist notions of empowerment. Women's control over self is strongly associated with connections with other women: it is not equivalent to independence.

Empowerment centres on the control a woman has over herself and her actions. Control over self must pre-suppose control over one's own body and is circumscribed by contact violence. Many women experience intimate partner violence and its invasion of personal control. Resolving such violence is critical for women to establish greater control over self – freedom from violence is thus central to women's

empowerment. Violence constraints the actions which women can take and the choices which they are able to make. In order to have a wider range of choices women have to be free from violence. Women need empowerment to make choices and enlarging choices is fundamental to the concept of human development.

Freedom from violence is central to women's empowerment and women's empowerment is necessary in order to successfully contest and reduce patriarchal power, both in the home and elsewhere. Thus conceptualisation of empowerment, control over self, intricately connects women's control over self with linkages to other women. This contrasts with isolating conceptualisations of empowerment, centred on independence.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

1. Where did you live before marriage? / Where do your parents live?

2. How was that place? Were you happy with your parents and brothers/sisters?

3. Was life in the family and locality peaceful?

4. When did your marriage take place?

5. Are you living here since marriage? Is this locality peaceful?

6. Are the men folk here/you meet often in the habit of drinking alcohol/ gambling/bullying/dominating their wives? Is there any alcohol selling/gambling centre near about, or do the husbands of your circle often sit in drinking/gambling sessions?

7. If so, is this often an issue of quarrel between the husband and the wife?

8. Are there any other points of regular dispute between the husband and the wife such as dowry or help from the wife's parental family, doubt about fidelity/ extra-marital relation, share in the work of home-making, male dominance, sex oppression etc.?

9. Do husbands usually bully their wives during these disputes or even take resort to physical/sexual violence?

10. Have you come across such experiences? If so, how frequently?

11. Do you think that bullying or physical violence on the part of the husband detestable?

12. If so, do you think that something must be done against it? Should husband's physical violence be resisted at any cost?

13. If resistance is required, what form should it take---a) persuasion, b) physical resistance, c) help from other members of the family/friends/ neighbours, d) intervention by any organizations like the police, local club or women's council?

14. In this connection the question arises: Do other members of the family oppose or support violent actions of the husband?

15. Are economic factors connected with the husband's physical violence? If so, which factors: a) dowry-related or allied questions, b) questions regarding the wife earning or not earning any income, c) poverty, sense of want or affluence? (In this connection the interviewer should know income level of the family concerned).

16. Are social factors like illiteracy, disparity in educational or cultural standard, belief in traditional concept of husband as the lord of the wife connected with the husband's physical violence? (In this connection the interviewer should know the educational attainments of the husband and the wife).

17. Do you believe in equality between husband and wife relationship? If so, do you think that the issue of resistance to husband's physical violence is a part of a greater issue of women's autonomy?

18. Does your husband take resort to sexual violence?

19. Do you think that socio-political and cultural changes have of late brought down the incidence of physical violence by the husband?

20. Is there any relation between husband's physical or sexual violence and the age of the wife?

21. How does the husband's physical violence against the wife affect the children?

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Profile

1. Where did you live before marriage? / Where do your parents live?

2. How was that place? Were you happy with your parents and brothers/sisters?

3. When did your marriage take place?

4. Are you living here since marriage?

Personal experience

5. (a)What was the dispute in your case when you first encountered violence? (b) Did the same dispute cause subsequent instances of violence, or newer disputes arose? (c) Or is it a case of violence irrespective of dispute?

6. Does your husband take resort to sexual violence?

7. Do your experiences tell you that bullying or violence on the part of the husband detestable and should be done away with?

Responses to violence

8. If so, do you think that something must be done against it? Should husband's physical violence be resisted at any cost?

9. What kind of response do you resort to usually?

10. What is your response in case of sexual violence?

If resistance is required, what form should it take---a) persuasion, b) physical resistance, c) help from other members of the family/friends/ neighbours, d) intervention by any organizations like the police, local club or women's council, e) winning a contested divorce?

Socio-economic factors

11. Are economic factors connected with the husband's physical violence? If so, which factors: a) dowry-related or allied questions, b) questions regarding the wife earning or not earning any income, c) poverty, sense of want or affluence? (In this connection the interviewer should know the standard of living/ income of the respondent concerned).

12. Are social factors like illiteracy, disparity in educational or cultural standard between husband and wife, belief in traditional concept of husband as the lord of the wife connected with the husband's physical violence? (In this connection the interviewer should know the educational attainments of the husband and the wife).

13. Do you believe in equality between husband and wife relationship? If so, do you think that the issue of resistance to husband's physical violence is a part of a greater issue of women's autonomy?

14. Do you think that socio-political and cultural changes have of late brought down the incidence of physical violence by the husband?

APPENDIX C

Profiles of Respondents

W1, a young woman of 35 years, was married 11 years ago from now to a man who works in a factory in a managerial post. After 2 years of marriage the event precipitating physical and sexual abuse was drunkenness on the part of the husband. She has completed her college education and works in a private firm. She left her husband two months ago from the time of the interview.

W2, aged 22 years, was married to a professional folk singer. The episode of physical and sexual violence started immediately after her marriage, as she could not bring in a sufficient amount of dowry. Within 6 months of marriage she discovered that her husband had an affair with a lady singer. She ran away with her six months old son from her in-laws' house. She has passed class ten. She stays with her parents. Currently, she is looking for a job.

W3, 19 years of age, married 3 years ago. Within 1 year of marriage her husband physically abused her. The violence has been resolved with the help of the organisation. She is unemployed and illiterate.

W4, aged 32 years, was married to a man working in one of the MNCs in Calcutta. The husband took to drinking after the birth of their first child i.e. after 5 years of their marriage. Violence in their marital life took the form of verbal, physical and sexual abuse. She has completed her college and is employed. She left her husband three months ago from the time of the interview.

W5, aged 30, got married to a man 5 years ago. They have 2 children. Physical and sexual violence broke out when she came to know about her husband's affair with his colleague. She has walked out of the abusive relationship. However, she fears that she

would be unsuccessful in getting a job, as she has studied till class ten. Currently, she is residing in her parent's house with her 2 children.

W6, 27 years of age, married an unemployed man 9 years ago. Within a year of marriage her husband started physically abusing her as she was unable to bring in sufficient amount of dowry. The violence ended with the organisational help.

W7, a young woman of 28 years, was married 5 years ago from now to a man who owns a business. They have 2 children. After 2 years of marriage the event precipitating physical and sexual abuse was drunkenness on the part of the husband. She is a graduate and financially independent. She has left her husband.

W8, aged 22 years, is married to a factory-owner. It was an arranged marriage. After 2 years of marriage the episode of physical and sexual violence started as she could not bring in a sufficient amount of dowry. They have a 2-year-old daughter. She has completed her secondary education. She decided to leave her husband three months ago from the date of the interview.

W9, a woman of 35 years, has currently tackled the physical violence that broke out immediately after her husband turned into a dipsomaniac. She has 3 children. She is an illiterate and is not currently employed.

W10, a woman of 29 years, was married 2 years back. She refused to endure the physical and sexual violence any more and has walked out of the relationship a week ago from the date of the interview. She is a college graduate and is now looking for a job.

W11, aged 29 years, had led a married life for 2 years. Her husband is software professional and works in one of the leading software companies in Calcutta. Theirs was an arranged marriage. She found out about her husband's infidelities. However, her husband denied and abused her physically as well as sexually. She walked out of

the relationship within 1 year of her marital life. She has completed the secondary schooling.

W12, an illiterate and unemployed woman married at the tender age of 22. She was a victim of physical abuse. However, with the help of the organisation she has been able to resolve her case.

W13, aged 25 years, described her husband to be abnormal and mentally unbalanced. She is a victim of his physical abuse. She believes that parental rejection during his childhood has set in place the psychological problems. She has left her husband two weeks ago from the time of the interview. She has currently finished her college education and is on the lookout for a job.

W14 is a young woman of 27 years. She married a bank officer at the age of 22 years. Within 1 year of their marriage her husband lost his job. He suffered occasional bouts of depression. This was followed by acts of physical and sexual violence which were systematic and long term and created terror in the home. W14 left her husband. She has passed class ten.

W15, aged 25, is the mother of 2 children. She got married to a factory labourer. It was an arranged marriage. After 6 months of marriage the episode of physical and sexual violence started. This was, as she could not bring in a sufficient amount of dowry. Serious and repeated violence continues. She is illiterate. She is currently working as a cleaning lady in one of the households near to her home.

W16 has been left by her husband. She has neither a paid job nor organisational contact. Her husband left her few days from the date of the interview. She wishes to get in touch with the organisation for assistance. She comes from an affluent family.

W17, aged 31 years, was left by her husband 2 years ago. Her husband returns intermittently and makes monetary demands. She works in one of the ration shops. The nature of job is rather insecured.

The same is the case with W18, aged 32 years. She has a job of rather insecure manner. She stays with her four-year old son.

W19 is a victim of physical violence. She is illiterate and works in one of the households. She is physically abused by her husband when he comes back to demand money.

W20, aged 27, has a three – year old child. She stays with her. She is abused physically by her husband when he comes back to demand money.