DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (PREVENTION AND PROTECTION) ACT 2010: REFLECTIONS FROM RURAL BANGLADESH

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	Domestic Violence against Women and the Implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010: Reflections from Rural Bangladesh
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Over the last few decades, domestic violence against women has received increasing attention as an insidious problem for women both on the global and national scale. Despite this attention, studies on domestic violence are still limited in Bangladesh, as such, many issues remain under-researched, unexplored, or underexplored. Moreover, studying domestic violence through the qualitative approach is also hardly visible. With this backdrop, the present study aimed at filling in some of the methodological and theoretical gaps in the existing literature of Bangladesh. Under the interpretive framework, the study was based on phenomenology and the case study approach of qualitative research. This study investigated the victims' varied experiences of domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands, and the local community's perceptions and activities with regard to domestic violence. In addition, the implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 was assessed based on perceptions and experiences of the frontline implementers. The study was carried out in different rural areas of two Bangladeshi districts, namely, Mymensingh and Netrokona, and participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

Women that were the victims of domestic violence shared their subjective, lived experiences concerning the various forms, causes, consequences of domestic violence. They also shared their experiences with regard to coping strategies and help-seeking practices. The women experienced various forms of violence, such as

physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic, and a number of factors were associated with the perpetuation of such forms of violence. Notably, it was found that domestic violence was not only perpetrated by the husbands, but in-laws of women sometimes also perpetrated or provoked violence. On the other hand, domestic violence brought about many negative consequences, not only for the women but also for the children and family members of the women. It was evident that the women that were the victims usually tried to cope with or adjust to the violence, and only sought informal or formal support in extreme situations.

The participants from the community also shared their perceptions about various aspects of domestic violence, including its forms, causes, the consequences of domestic violence, and the coping strategies and help-seeking practices that the women adopted. In most cases, the community perceptions of these aspects were similar to those of the women. The community acted as a source of informal support, and there were few community intervention mechanisms to redress domestic violence. *Salish* or local arbitration was the most widely-used intervention mechanism in the community, and there were community non-governmental organisation (NGO) intervention mechanisms. Both *salish* and NGO interventions have some shortcomings in addressing the problems of violence against women and rendering necessary services to victims.

On the other hand, adoption of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 was an outcome of the long-standing struggle of various legal aid/women's rights organisations in Bangladesh and an important breakthrough to protect women that confronted violence at home. Nonetheless, based on the perceptions and experiences of the frontline implementers, it was found that the performance of this policy was exceedingly poor in the study areas. Implementation of this policy suffered from a lack of publicity, low-level orientation and knowledge of the implementers, low-level case filings, resource constraints, lack of coordination, antipathy of the implementers, lack of guidance and support from the top, absence of special courts, and so on. Surprisingly, there was no strategic plan of action from the top management at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) to oversee and accelerate the implementation process of this policy at the local level.

The present study provides a comprehensive, subjective understanding of the problem of domestic violence based on the lived experiences of the victims and also

based on the perceptions and experiences of the members of the community that were within the close proximity of the victims. Overall, rural women's vulnerability in the event of domestic evident in all dimensions. Although the study was predominantly conducted for the most part with Bengali women and in the Bengali community, on a limited scale, it also explored the experiences of violence confronted by women from the indigenous matriarchal Garo community as well as the perception and activities of some important Garo community members. Patriarchal influence was also evident in many aspects of this community, which acts as a source of violence.

Based on the findings of the research, two categories of recommendations are provided. The first category of recommendations includes measures to prevent or eliminate domestic violence from the society; and the second category of recommendations includes measures to improve the performance of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010. Overall, the study has significant academic and policy contributions and enriches the body of knowledge in the field of development administration in some important ways concerning domestic violence as a public policy issue.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Abbreviations	Equivalence
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AHRC	Asian Human Rights Commission
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASK	*Ain-o-Salish Kendra* (Legal and Arbitration Centre)
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust
BNWLA	Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association
BPATC	Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CiC-BD	Citizens' Initiatives on CEDAW-Bangladesh
CiDV	Citizen’s Initiative against Domestic Violence
CJM	Chief Judicial Magistrate
CLS	Community Legal Services
CT	Computerised Tomography
CWFW	Concerned Women for Family Development
DLAO	District Legal Aid Officer
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid

DVPPA 2010	Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010
DWAO	District Women Affairs Officer
EO	Enforcement Officer
et al.	*at alia* meaning ‘and others’
FGC	Female Genital Cutting
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measurement
GSPA	Graduate School of Public Administration
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HBVA	Honour Based Violence Awareness Network
HDR	Human Development Report
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICDDR,B	International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh
ICRAW	International Centre for Research on Women
JATI	Judicial Administration Training Institute
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDGIF	Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund
MKKA	*Manab Kallyan Kami Anathaloy* (Human Welfare Asylum)
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
MSP	Medical service provider
MSPVAW	Multi-sectoral Programme on Violence against Women
n.d.	Meaning ‘no date’

NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NIDA	National Institute of Development Administration
NIPORT	National Institute of Population Research and Training
OC	Officer-in-Charge
OCC	One Stop Crisis Centre
PO	Police Officer
PTSD	Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
PWDVA 2005	Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005
SHSP	Shelter Home Service Provider
SP	Service Provider
SUS	*Sabolombi Unnon Samity* (Self Reliance Organisation)
SVAW	Stop Violence against Women
SWAO	Sub-district Women Affairs Officer
TWA	Tribal Welfare Association
UC	Union Council
UNDOC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN	United Nations
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNWOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WHO	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This is the introductory chapter of the study. It describes the statement of the problem, and the significance and scope of the study. It includes the research questions and expresses my personal interest in conducting the study. Finally, it elucidates the organisation of the thesis.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Violence against women is a pervasive form of abuse which has spread over the entire world irrespective of cultural, geographic, social, or economic demarcations (Naved & Persson, 2005). It is so widely and commonly spread irrespective of country and society that it is considered by some experts as normal (Levy, 2008). Millions of women in the world are the victims of violence. It hinders women in participating freely and wholly in many aspects in society. It also has brought about numerous consequences for women. Notably, it is a major cause of death of women resulting from murder or suicide (Cheung, Dios, Karlekar, & Juree Vichit-Vadakan, 1999). All over the world women confront violence from many actors such as the state or armed groups, the community, or even their own family. It is like a global epidemic which serves as a tool of the violation of human rights (Amnesty International, 2004). It is evident in the whole life cycle of women, from the pre-birth stage to girlhood through adolescence and adulthood (WHO, 1997, as cited in Dios, 1999), and is extended both in the public and private spheres in women's lives.

Domestic violence against women, perhaps the most common form of violence against women, takes place in their families or at the private level mainly within marital relations (Heise, Raikes, Watts & Zwi, 1994, as cited in Schuler, Bates, & Islam, 2008). Domestic violence or violence that takes place at their home accounts for a major portion of the violence that occurs worldwide against women (Perillia,

Lippy, Rosales, & Serrata, 2011). Such violence has been acknowledged as a world-wide social problem (Hague, Mullender, & Aris, 2003). Specifically, domestic violence which is perpetrated by the husband cuts across socio-economic, religious, and ethnic boarders (Richardson, Coid, Petruckevitch, Chung, Moorey, & Feder, 2002). Domestic violence is a common, normal, and accepted feature within many societies (WHO, 2005a). In some countries, wife abuse is not considered as a crime and is often considered as a private matter that should not involve the police or the court (Maryniak, 2000). Domestic violence against women is a dangerous practice and it is often said that the safest palace for men is the home; alternatively, the home is the least safe place for women (Edwards, 1989). It is generally estimated that one in four women in their lifetime and between one in ten women experience violence annually (Women's Aid, 2009), and between 8% and 67% of women around the world are physically assaulted by their intimate partners at some point in their lives (Aldarondo & Castro-Fernandez, 2008). Several global studies suggest that half of the women in the world that die from homicide are killed by their husbands or partners (UNDOC, 2011). Nonetheless, it is always difficult to discover the true extent of domestic violence since most women usually do not report their experience because of cultural values and social taboos (Waters, Hyder, Rajkotia, Basu, & Butchart, 2005). Moreover, women may be at greater risks of harm when they seek help or are at the point of leaving the relationship (Mullender & Morley, 1994, as cited in Abrahams, 2007). The prevalence of domestic violence has a profound impact on the physical, sexual, reproductive, psychological or behavioural health of women and is a major cause of fatal health-related consequences (WHO, 2005a). Domestic violence is strongly associated with major depressive episodes, posttraumatic stress disorder, injury or burnt, and death in women (Campbell, Glass, Sharps, Laughon, & Bloom, 2007). Millions of women are injured and thousands are killed each year as a result of domestic violence (Hattery, 2009). Not only is domestic violence a major concern in terms of public health (Kaur, & Garg, 2010), but is a direct and unacceptable violation of human rights (Buvinic & Morrison, 2000). It is also a serious impediment to the achievement of equality, development, and peace (Johnson, Ollus, & Nevala, 2008).

Men's violence against women in Bangladesh is a serious social, cultural, and economic problem. It has far-reaching consequences and impacts the society and the development of the country (MDGIF, 2013). It is treated as an insidious phenomenon

in contemporary Bangladesh (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). In 2000, Bangladesh was marked as a country that has retained the worst record on violence against women (Khan, 2005). The practice of violence against women is deeply embedded in the social structure of Bangladesh and has put women's lives at risk in almost all parts of the country (Farouk, 2005). Although various forms of violence are perpetrated against women, the state of domestic violence perpetrated by husbands is very serious in Bangladesh. It is often treated as a part of the normative order in social relations and only comes to light if it results in serious injury. In fact, many women tend to accept it as a reality of their life (Siddiqi, 2006). Such violence is one of the most extorting cultural practices in all times in Bangladesh (Bhuiya, Sharmin, and Hanifi, 2003). For example, the old Bangladeshi proverb-"a wife's heaven is under the feet of her husband" (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007) and "the part beaten by the husband goes to heaven" (Ameen, 2005) reflect some explanatory elements with regard to the power and control mechanism embedded in the culture and social position of women, as well as the cultural acceptance of domestic violence in Bangladesh. Violence at the domestic level is the most serious and repugnant of all types of violence, and the intimate context makes it difficult for the victims to seek redress and at the same time, the closed family structure makes it favourable for the aggressor to repeat violence in the cultural and structural context in Bangladesh (Mannan, 2002). For many Bangladesh women home is a place of pain and humiliation, where violence is an integral part of everyday life and not a matter for public discussion (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). The findings of all the current literature confirm that violence against wives by their husbands is alarmingly prevalent in Bangladesh, and it represents a health and human rights concern of the highest level in Bangladesh (Silverman, Gupta, Decker, Kapur, & Raj, 2007). Further, women are threatened with multiple forms of domestic violence (Sambisa, Angeles, Lance, Naved, & Thornton, 2011). As a public policy problem, the government of Bangladesh has made strides in harmonising the national legislation with international commitments to protecting the rights of women and eliminating violence against them (Johnston & Naved, 2008). Despite having interventions from the government for the protection of women in Bangladesh, domestic violence is continuing and in some cases increasing day by day (Khatun & Rahman, 2012). Tackling violence against women is a challenging issue for the

society since the implementation of laws regarding violence against women in Bangladesh remains very weak (UN, 2003). With this backdrop, in the following, I present the significance of conducting a study on some aspects of domestic violence against women in the context of rural Bangladesh.

1.2 Significance of the Study

I designed the framework of this research predominantly to address the major gaps and loopholes in the existing literature on domestic violence against women perpetrated by their husbands in Bangladesh. The review of the literature specifically on domestic violence against women in chapter two will show in detail how much research has been done on this issue. In Bangladesh, there is no evidence of exploring the important aspects of domestic violence such as forms, causes, consequences, help-seeking, and coping strategies in a comprehensive way. It is said that unless researchers begin to see domestic violence in a comprehensive manner, there is a possibility to analyse, research, and address only pieces of women's reality (Perilla et al., 2011), and discussing the problem in piecemeal way may result in a fragmented view and minimise its extent and its insidious nature (Zaman, 1999). In this connection, it should be stated that globally most data on violence are collected through surveys and these surveys strive to generate knowledge on "prevalence indicators," which usually cover the various forms of violence that a woman confronts, particularly within her lifetime and within the last 12 months. None of the two indicators can accurately present the multifaceted types of violence that women meet, which stands as barrier to the development of effective measures to combat violence (Ertürk & Purkayastha, 2012). Moreover, it is noted there are different inconsistencies in explaining the prevalence of domestic violence, which creates problems in understanding what domestic violence is (Ellsberg, 1997). In fact, quantitative methods and survey approaches in particular are not sensitive to women's experiences or concerns (Skinner, Hester, & Malos, 2005). Such an assumption is completely true of the context of Bangladesh. Most of the literature in Bangladesh stems from a quantitative or positivist approach and has dealt with the problem in a segmented and restrictive manner; it thereby has been unable to provide a

comprehensive understanding of the diverse sufferings of the victims from their own perspective.

Furthermore, it is important to explore the views and experiences of the local community in regard to domestic violence. Community networks know about domestic violence long before any outside agency. The community can either recognise it as a problem, can support women that are abused, or they can ignore women (Kelly, 1996a). However, the risk of wife abuse increases when the cause of the abuse is seen as "legitimate" by the community (Rao, 1997). Nonetheless, the aspect of the community, which is within women's networks, is seldom addressed in domestic violence research initiatives, yet in the long run it may prove to be a key resource not only in establishing safety for women but also in beginning to decrease the prevalence of domestic violence (Kelly, 1996a). Moreover, if the prevention of violence is a goal for policy, greater participation of the community will eventually increase safety for the victims (Jenkins & Davidson, 2001). In fact, the community, if mobilised, can create public pressures to properly implement laws, policies, and practices to prevent violence against women (Graffunder, Cline, & Lane, 2011). Thus, community attitudes and actions with respect to domestic violence provide valuable information about the environment of domestic violence in a particular social setting (Abeya, Afework, & Yalew, 2012). Community networks might play a significant role in providing social and legal support for the victims of domestic violence (Schuler et al., 2008). Hence, excavating the experiences and views of the local community about the various issues associated with domestic violence is immensely valuable for a better analysis of the problem and for suggesting effective intervention strategies, keeping in mind the role of the community in preventing or eliminating domestic violence.

On the other hand, over the years, the government of Bangladesh has promulgated a number of institutional and legal measurers to address various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. Specifically, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 (Act 58 of 2010), in short, the DVPPA 2010, has been enacted to protect women from family violence. It has specifically assigned the duties and responsibilities of various frontline policy implementers in regard to implementing policy. Street-level bureaucrats or frontline policy

implementers play a critical role in citizens' entitlement, and these bureaucrats and implementers are public officials. They are the key persons in delivering government policy and programmes. At the same time they are the people to whom the citizens have the most immediate access (Lipsky, 2010). My study sought to evaluate the implementation or what is called "implementation assessment" (Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, 2004) of the DVPPA 2010 at the local level based upon the experiences of frontline implementers. Assessment of the implementation of domestic violence laws is critical. Such assessment will make the governments accountable for adhering to legal obligations, documenting best practices, and identifying the shortcomings in the laws (UNIFEM, 2009). It has been viewed that failure to provide effective interventions might lead to the continuation of violence from one generation to the other (Corcoran & Allen, 2005) and appropriate assessment can suggest what measures can be taken up to accelerate the implementation of particular policy intervention.

Based on the contextual premises mentioned above, my research delved into answering the following research questions in the rural context of two Bangladeshi districts, namely, Mymensingh and Netrokona, located in the middle part of the country.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions of my study are as follows:

1) What are the women's experiences of domestic violence with regard to forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies and help-seeking practices?

2) What are the perceptions and activities of the local community regarding domestic violence against women?

3) What are the perceptions and experiences of frontline policy implementers with regard to the implementation of the DVPPA 2010?

4) What measures can be used to combat or eliminate domestic violence and accelerate the implementation of the DVPPA 2010?

1.4 Personal Interest in the Study

My personal, educational, and professional background has greatly influenced me in carrying out this study. Since my research followed the qualitative approach, it is important for my readers to know how I "position myself" (Creswell, 2013) in the study or what my personal reflexivity in conducting the research was. Personal reflexivity means a researcher's beliefs, values, experiences and interests shape the product and process of qualitative research, and those are explicitly stated (King & Horrocks, 2010). As the researcher is the key instrument in a qualitative study, it is necessary to include information about the experiences, perspectives, and interests of the researcher in conducting a particular study (Patton, 2002).

Growing up as a woman in Bangladesh is a matter of many bitter experiences. My own experience of growing up as a male in a middle-class patriarchal family is relevant to understanding the situation in which girls are discriminated against and oppressed by the deliberate system of the society. I am the only son of my parents and the youngest as well. When my fifth and last sister was born my father became very upset and when my mother heard of the birth of another daughter she instantly lost her senses. Apparently, her position was very vulnerable as one who was primarily giving birth to daughters. Finally, when I was born, I became the most precious asset in the family and my birth changed my mother's status in it. Since my childhood, I have enjoyed all the favours that my sisters have not. I was sent to the best school, served the best food, and dressed in the best clothes. My most minor illness was a matter of great concern for my parents. I was allocated a separate room in a four bedroom house. On the other hand, my sisters have grown up with few facilities or amenities. There was nothing special for them. They used to help my mother with cooking, washing, and other household chores, including carefully looking after me. They all used to sleep and study in two rooms which were allocated to them. Their movements were very restricted outside the home. All of them got married before they completed their education. Still today and at this age as well, I receive special treatment from my parents and other members of my family. This is the process of socialisation by which patriarchal norms are infused into a male member of a family who, in turn, learns that he is unquestionably superior to the female members. Men's idea of their perceived

superiority is one of the root causes of violence against women in all societies in the world. I have grown up seeing the dominance of my father as a true patriarchal ruler. In our family he is the supreme commander, he is the final decision maker, and he does not tolerate anything which goes against his will. He is like an autocratic king in his kingdom and others under his family reign are his docile subjects. Since my childhood, I have noticed that my mother is very afraid of my father and I find her always concerned about what my father likes or dislikes, and what would be the consequences if anything went against my father's will. Seemingly, I had grown up in such a social and cultural world which believes that men are superior and have the every right to control women by any means deemed necessary in order to reinstate their superiority. As a matter of fact, the social and cultural world that I know and understand determines that the task of women is to abide by the rule of men, who believe have every right to control women by any means necessary since they are perceived as superior within the gendered social hierarchy in Bangladesh. I have seen that women have very little authority over either the public or the private domains, and this limited scope in exercising their power and rights has made them extremely vulnerable to the deliberate oppression by men. As a man, I cannot avoid the responsibility of women's vulnerable situation. I feel myself extremely empathetic towards all the oppressed women in Bangladesh. Here lies the main impetuous for me in conducting such a study.

In this connection, I would also like to mention that my previous postgraduate degrees in both sociology and women's studies have given me extensive insight into the issues related to women and gender and have helped to mould me to be more empathetic toward the problems of women. I deem that it is the moral and ethical responsibility of men to try to internalise the problem of violence against women and to be actively involved in eliminating violence against them from the society. Therefore, I want to be a part of a campaign against violence against women. I do adhere to Hearn (1998) in his suggestion for opposing violence against women as a political act for me. At the same time, I also strongly believe, in line with Flood (2011), that some men are part of the problem, while all men are part of the solution. I want to be a part of the solution as my political drive. Thus, my research was an endeavour to show some solutions to the problem from a public policy perspective.

Moreover, qualitative research is my passion. I am deeply obsessed with it. I am not comfortable with numbers and figures. I became oriented to qualitative research as a postgraduate student in women's studies at the University of York in the United Kingdom during 2006-2007. I have also learnt this particular research approach more rigorously being a doctoral student in development administration at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand. Both courses have deeply infused into me the assumption that subjective knowledge is more important and valuable than mere quantification. I am of the strong opinion that it is seemingly impossible to explore human experiences from mere quantification or from a positivist approach. I behold quantitative research as andocentric, unable to understand women's lives, experiences, or their pains and pleasure. Unfortunately, most of the research work on violence against women in Bangladesh has been conducted using the quantitative approach. In this circumstance, I have had strong motivation to conduct a study that is absolutely subjective, and can truly reflect the experiences and perceptions of the participants surrounding my research questions. In this connection, I would also like to mention that some scholars do not want to give space to men to study women on the pretext that men cannot experience reality in the same way as women. Men, thus, are unable to understand women's situations or concerns (Schacht & Ewing, 1997). Some scholars have indicated that empathy or sympathy of men cannot be a replacement for the internalisation of the sufferings or experiences of women since it is not possible for men to accurately internalise the feelings of being women or their experiences (Berliner & Falen, 2008). Therefore, being a man, I took the challenge to prove that a man can successfully study women's personal lives if he has the strongest motivation and persistence and if he can "position himself" in the subjective world of women.

My professional identity as a faculty of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) has further provided some opportunities to work for women. As a faculty member of BPATC, I have been actively involved in orienting and sensitising public servants and policy makers of Bangladesh concerning the problematic areas of women so that they can understand, internalise, and undertake appropriate measures against the problems of women. Unarguably, domestic violence against women is one of the problematic areas for women in Bangladesh, and an

important issue in the field of development administration. In this regard, my firm conviction is that civil servants and policy makers have the highest responsibility to adopt the proper policy approaches and initiatives and must be reflexive and responsive to the needs and demands of oppressed women. It is noteworthy that research in public administration has a definite aim to find solutions to the issues and problems of public problem. Public administration conducts research both on policy and for policy (Thiel, 2014). Markedly, my orientation toward development administration as a doctoral student has opened up various links to policy and administrative issues that will help me to guide and make suggestions for the public administrators and policy makers in my country so that appropriate programmes, interventions, and policies for the victims of domestic violence in Bangladesh can commence and be implemented in a correct manner. Therefore, there is a clear linkage between the domestic violence issue and that of development administration. My decision to assess the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 profoundly highlights that linkage. At least, my findings will inform the concerned policy makers on what is going on in the field with regard to implementing this policy, and how to improve its implementation. Moreover, I strongly believe that any policy issue can be better addressed with the involvement of the community. It is equally important to know how the community perceives and responds to the problem. Therefore, it was my interest to know how the local rural community views and responds to the problem of domestic violence against women since it happens in the social environment of the community. In all respects, my impetuous in conducting the study as a student of development administration has some definite justification. Domestic violence is not only a women's problem or a family problem. It is broadly a social problem. Thus, it is a public policy issue, and development administration as a discipline has a lot to do with this problem, particularly in terms of developing new knowledge as well as providing solid recommendations. It has been stated that understanding domestic violence as a policy problem will provide significant directions for future domestic violence policy implications covering key aspects such as protection, prevention, and provision (Murray & Powell, 2009).

Outwardly, my political, professional, and academic interests have left a strong imprint upon me in conducting this study. Depending on the deepening

contextual positioning discussed above, I employed myself in the whole process and product of this research.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Geographically the scope of this study was limited to the rural areas of two Bangladeshi districts, namely Netrokona and Mymensingh. I have provided justifications in the methodology chapter with regard to selecting the rural areas of these two districts. Primarily, it is apparent that no qualitative study has ever been attempted on domestic violence in any part of these districts, which made this study justifiable as far as the geographical scope is concerned. On the other hand, in terms of research issues, the scope of study was limited to particular aspects. It primarily aimed at researching rural women's experiences of domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands (former or current) on issues related to forms, factors, consequences, help-seeking, and coping strategies. There was no restriction in terms of excluding or including women that had had the experience of domestic violence by their husbands regarding the criteria of age, religion, socio-economic background, caste or creed. In addition to that, my study also included important members of the rural community, local public representatives, religious leaders, local elders, locally-operated non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or other members of the community-to whom women are used to seeking informal support, or that were deemed to have the authority to speak of domestic violence. The purpose of the inclusion of community members was to explore how they view or deal with domestic violence against women in their respective capacities. Additionally, my study also closely looked into the implementation process of the DVPPA 2010 in these two districts. It included various concerned front-line policy implementers from these two districts that are directly involved in the implementation of the act in these two districts in order to explore their experiences and perceptions with regard to the implementation of policy at the local level. Moreover, as part of this assessment, it looked into the background of the adoption of this policy and policy planning/strategies by taking into account concerned legal aid activists and ministry officials respectively since information related to policy adoption and policy planning/strategies dictate many issues with regard to current policy performance.

1.6 Textual Presentation of the Dissertation

The textual presentation of this study was carried out in the first person "I," which articulates attention to my authorship. When we use "I" we question traditional styles of academic writing where "we," "the author," and "he" are meant to represent distance and objectivity. Using "I," therefore, challenges the traditional style of academic writing (Morely, 1996). In using the first person pronoun, a researcher takes responsibility for what he/she writes. Using "I" in an academic text is, therefore, an important necessity (Letherby, 2003). Moreover, in qualitative research the subjective position of the researcher in the study is of prime importance. "I" expresses the involvement of the researcher in the study (Creswell, 1998). Most importantly, my research was based on the qualitative interpretative paradigm, and the study under this paradigm is usually written as in the first person, which confirms the researcher's involvement and engagement in the research process (Bailey, 2007). Therefore, I appreciated the value of using the first person "I" in the research and used it in my dissertation.

Then again, it is also important to consider the use of language in relation to who is being studied. In reading research accounts it is possible to find reference to those that are being studied as "respondents," "subjects," "participants," or "informants" (Letherby, 2003). The words "informants" and "participants" are commonly used by qualitative researchers. The term "subject" has been intentionally discarded by those that conduct qualitative research (Sheridan, 2001). Notably, the researchers with the aim of equalising the researcher/respondent relationship have begun to refer to the researcher as "participants" (Letharby, 2003). The word "participants" has a significant meaning for the researcher, the reader, and also for the participants. It provides the meaning that that it is the participants, not the researcher, that are the experts on the phenomenon being studied (Sheridan, 2001). I considered the experiences of my participants highly valuable to my research. They were the experts in producing knowledge for my research. For that reason, I termed them as "participants" in my research.

1.7 Organisation of the Dissertation

I structured the entire research so that it could help answer the research questions. This thesis is organised into seven chapters as follows.

Chapter one provides the introductory frame of reference of this study. In this chapter, I presented the statement of the problem, the significance behind the study, research questions, and the scope. I informed my personal interests in conducting the study, and discussed the textual presentation of the dissertation.

Chapter two is a review of the related literature. In this chapter, I broadly focused on various conceptual and theoretical works on domestic violence/violence against women. I also discussed the prevalence of violence against women, along with the global response to domestic violence/violence against women. By specifically delving into various aspects of domestic violence in Bangladesh, I identified the shortcoming and gaps, and based on that, I justified my arguments for conducting the study. Moreover, in this chapter, I also discussed the conceptual issues related to policy implementation and assessment, existing policy interventions on violence against women in Bangladesh, and the state of the implementation of those interventions. Finally, I also put in place my arguments for conducting an implementation assessment of the DVPPA 2010.

In chapter three, I discussed the methodological approaches that I employed in this research. It begins with a discussion of the philosophical paradigm of the study, followed by the unit of analysis, selection of the setting and research participants, and gaining access to them, the various approaches and methods used in the study, and the procedures of the data analysis and various means for ensuring the trustworthiness of the study. I also presented the relevant research procedures in tabular form.

The findings of the study are presented in chapters four to six. In chapter four, I discussed the abused women's varied experiences of domestic violence in their marital lives, which broadly included forms, factors, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices. In chapter six, I presented the findings related to community perceptions and activities concerning domestic violence. Here I presented the perceptions and experiences of important members of the rural community, and also the activities of community-based NGOs. In addition to that, I presented the

community perceptions and activities of the indigenous Garo community concerning domestic violence. In chapter six, I presented the findings related to the state of implementation of the DVPPA 2010 from the experiences and perceptions of frontline implementers. In addition to that, I also discussed the experiences and perceptions of legal aid activists from the organisations involved in the drafting process of this act and officials of the concerned ministry about policy adoption and policy planning/strategies respectively. In these three chapters, I presented the findings on the basis of creating themes and sub-themes. I presented some findings through developing relevant case analyses as well. I also incorporated relevant secondary sources of information in order to supplement the primary data.

In the concluding chapter, I recapitulated the research context, the findings, and put in place my own reflections on the findings. I also discussed the academic and policy implications of this study. Finally, I offered two sets of recommendations. The first set includes how to eliminate domestic violence from Bangladesh and the second set includes how to accelerate the performance of the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 in Bangladesh. I also discussed the constraints of the study and provided directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter sketches a map of the pertinent literature on domestic violence against women, and specifically such literature in the context of Bangladesh. Literature reviews help researchers better explain an issue and what is already known and what is needed to be known (Levy & Ellis, 2006). Notably, in this review, I discussed both domestic violence against women and violence against women interchangeably in some inextricable cases. At the beginning of the review, I clarified the definitional issues surrounding domestic violence/violence against women. Then, I provided a "snap-shot" of the global prevalence of violence against women, and the prevalence of domestic violence against women in some of the countries nearest to Bangladesh. I also moved into excavating the chronicle of global response to domestic violence/violence against women from the perspective of the global feminist movement and the United Nations (UN). After that, I mapped the literature on Bangladesh. Upon reviewing the prominent empirical research on domestic violence against women in Bangladesh, I delved into the gaps and pitfalls and put in place my arguments in conducting the research since a literature review helps to identify the existing gaps and to raise questions to address the issue (Boote & Beile, 2005). Moreover, I discussed the theoretical issues related to policy implementation and violence against women policy implementation in Bangladesh, followed by justifications for conducting an implementation assessment of the DVPPA 2010 in the context of Bangladesh.

2.2 Domestic Violence/Violence against Women: The Phenomenon

Violence against women prevails in every country. Nonetheless, it has no broadly-accepted global or universal definition or terminology. Definitions of violence against women considerably differ from a number of perspectives and orientations such as the following: theoretical orientation, political orientation, policy perspective, human rights, and development perspectives (Pickup, Williams, & Sweetman, 2001). On the other hand, the definitions also depend on local, national, and time-specific shaping and formations. Violence in one situation or time may not be treated in similar fashion in another situation and time (Hearn, 1998). It is a complicated issue and difficult to study, and research results are also inconsistent. There is no objective way to think about the issue. In fact our values, beliefs, and emotions affect our thinking about the issue (Levy, 2008). In such a case, it is extremely difficult to define violence since it reflects an attitude of tolerance toward violence that has existed for centuries.

Traditionally, acts that cause physical injury or harm are termed "violence" (Gordon, 2000), but focusing on only the physical aspect is nothing but a narrow level effort of defining violence (Pickup et al., 2001). Such traditional as well as widely-used definitions however were challenged by the women activists and feminists when they took initiatives to resist the discriminatory and repressive attitude against women, and deliberately included those acts which were previously considered socially acceptable (Kelly & Radford, 1998). Therefore, the definitions given by feminist researchers are much wider with more explanatory components, including not only physical violence but also sexual, psychological, emotional violence. These definitions further include harmful cultural practices against women and girls (Senn, 2000). For example, feminist Liz Kelly (1988, as cited in Levy, 2008, pp. 3-4) defines violence against women as follows:

> Behaviour that is violent, uses physical force or threat, [and] is intimidating, coercive, [or] damaging to women"; it includes "physical, visual, verbal or sexual acts that are experienced by a woman or girl at the time or later as a threat, invasion or assault" and acts "that have the effect of hurting or

> degrading her and/or taking away her ability to control contact [intimate or otherwise] with another individual.

This definition includes not only "physical violence" but also other forms of violent behaviours. It also includes the effect of violence on the victims. Other than feminists, the UN has also produced a good number of definitions through various international declarations, conventions or reports. In 1992, the assigned committee to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defined violence against women in its General Recommendation No.19 as follows:

> Violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman, or violence that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty (as cited in UN, 2006, p. 15).

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104) in Article 1 defines violence against women as follows:

> Violence against women means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (as cited in UN, 1993, p. 3).

It was suggest by Tjaden (2004) that any definition of violence against women should include not just violent acts, such as physical and sexual assault, and threats of physical and sexual assault, but must also include various nonviolent acts such as stalking, psychological, and emotional abuse. A particular definition should be thoughtfully chosen for a particular purpose because the definitions are not only very important but they have generated political, public, and professional debates (Levy, 2008). Debates on the definitions include several important issues such as forms of violence against women, measurements of violence, and the adequacy of

governmental measures of the magnitude and nature of the problem (Kilpatrick, 2004).

Specifically, the term “domestic violence” has many names and meanings. It necessarily includes “intimate partner violence, “domestic abuse”, “domestic assault”, “battering”, “partner abuse”, “marital strife”, “marital dispute”, “wife beating”, “marital discord”, “women abuse”, “dysfunctional relationship”, “intimate fighting”, “mate beating” (McCue, 2008), “spouse abuse”, “wife abuse”, “wife assault” (Ellesberg, 1997; Mears, 2003), “conjugal violence”, “marital violence”, “family violence”’ (Hearn, 1998), “gender violence” (Harne & Radford, 2008), “partner aggression”, and “intimate terrorism” (Aldarondo & Castro-Fernandez, 2011). Domestic violence is a subset of violence against women. It is perpetrated by intimate partners in the family such as husbands and other family members (Kishor & Johnson, 2004; Kelly, 2003). The term domestic violence remains the most popular way of talking about men’s violence to known women throughout much of the world (Hearn, 1998). Besides, the term “abuse” is also widely used to mean violence from the latter half of the 20th century (Hanmer, 2000). In violence research, the terms “violence” and “abuse” are used in reference to domestic violence or domestic abuse (Tonsing, 2013).

On the other hand, to label men’s behaviour in abusing women, the terms “perpetrator” and “batterer” are often used in the literature. The term “batterer” is solely meant for men that inflict physical violence, but the term “perpetrator” is used to label men that inflict both physical and non-physical violence. On the other hand, women that confront violence are labelled as “victims” (Sugihara & Warner, 2002) and also “survivors” (R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1992). In this research, I used “victim” to label women that have experienced domestic violence. However, I also used “victim,” “abused women,” and “women” interchangeably. By the term “domestic violence against women,” I specifically mean husbands’ violence against their wives. I used “perpetrators” to label husbands that inflict violence. In some cases, I also used “abuse,” “domestic violence,” and “violence” interchangeably to refer “domestic violence against women.”

2.3 Domestic Violence/Violence against Women: Global and Regional Prevalence

In the following, I present a discussion of the global prevalence of domestic violence/violence against women, followed by a specific discussion on the prevalence of domestic violence in some of the countries geographically close to Bangladesh in order to provide some information about the problem beyond the boundaries of Bangladesh.

2.3.1 Global Overview

Numerous forms and practices of domestic/violence against women are prevalent in various regions and countries across the world. Acid violence against women, for instance, is broadly practiced in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Ethiopia, and China (Anwary, 2003). Most of the victims of acid violence are women, and it is particularly directed toward younger women to destroy their appearance (Swanson, 2002). Killing or stoning women through misuse of *fatwa*[1] is practiced in many Islamic countries. On the other hand, in some parts of Africa and India violence is perpetrated against older women in the name of witchcraft (Pickup et al., 2001). Honour killings[2], for example, are practiced by the family members of women and girls. Honour killing is prevalent in the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, particularly in India and Pakistan. It is also prevalent in some parts of Latin America and Africa (Blanchfield, Margesson, & Seelke, 2009). It is estimated that around 5000 honour killings take place per year around the world (HBVA, n.d.). On the other hand, dowry-related violence is a common problem in South Asian countries, particularly in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Husbands and in-laws of women inflict violence or even kill women for their failure to bring a sufficient dowry during and after marriage (Blanchfield et al., 2009). In India, according to one estimation,

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[1] In Islam, *fatwa* means a religious verdict issued by a well-versed *mufti* or religious scholar. Theoretically, *fatwa* is necessary when a sufficient *explanation* is required from the Holy *Quran (*the holy book of Islam) on a specific issue, *Hadith* (the sayings and practices of the prophet), and other Islamic doctrines (Hossain, 2002). However, in practice, local religious leaders often punish women for their involvement in their self-defined immoral activities (Farouk, 2005). .

[2] Honour killing is the murder of a woman or a girl by their family members (Sheri & Bob Stritof, 2005, as cited in Grewel, 2012).

one woman dies every hour because of dowry related disputes (Virmani 2012). Further, Female Genital Cutting (FGC) or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a common cultural tradition in many African and Middle Eastern countries. FGM/FGC pushes women and girls to severe consequences such as risk of HIV, sterility, and long-term effects on psychological health (Amnesty International, 2013). Early marriage for younger girls aged between 10 and 12 as harmful practice of domestic violence is prevalent in parts of the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa (Blanchfield et al., 2009). Preference for sons is a common patriarchal feature in many countries of South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and of course, in China due to the adoption of the one-child policy in 1979 (Pickup et al., 2001). In Asia, at least 60 million girls are assumed to be missing due to prenatal sex selection (UNFPA, 2005).

On the other hand, according to a recent aggregated factsheet of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN) on the global prevalence of violence against women, it was revealed that 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not considered a crime. Around 80% of the people that are trafficked annually are women. On the other hand, 100 to 140 million women have experienced FGM, and around the world, 7 in 10 women, have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at least at some point in their lifetime. It has also been noted by the factsheet that 60% of sexual violence is committed against girls under 16. Alarmingly, more than 100 million girls are missing due to prenatal sex selection and over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides or victims of child/early marriage. It has been further estimated by the factsheet that 1 in 4 women experience physical and sexual violence during pregnancy, and the annual estimated cost due to perpetuation of domestic violence in some countries is calculated to be between US$ 1.6 to US$ 5.8 billion UNWOMEN (n.d.a). Then again, the UNFPA (2005) estimates that more women aged between 15 and 44 are killed or disabled than from cancer. The toll caused by violence against women on women's health surpasses traffic accidents and malaria combined. The direct medical costs and productivity losses in the world due to violence against women stand between 1.6% and 2% of the gross domestic product annually. Such an estimation is about the average annual public spending on primary education in many developing countries (World Bank, 2013).

The above estimates and information vividly certify that women and girls in all parts of the world are in extreme danger of domestic violence/violence against them.

2.3.2 Overview of Some Countries Nearest to Bangladesh

2.3.2.1 India

The prevalence of domestic violence is very high in India (Ackerson & Subramanian, 2008). The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted in 29 states during 2005-06 found that a significant proportion of women are victims of domestic violence by their husbands at some time in their lives (Chaudhary, 2013). According to the report, 40% of Indian reproductive-age women have experienced physical (35%), sexual (10%), or emotional (16%) violence by their husband (NFHS, 2007 quoted in Krishnan, Subbiah, Khanum, Chandra, & Padian, 2012). The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported for the year 2011 highlighted that the percentage share of domestic violence against women jumped from 3.8% in 2007 to 4.3% in 2011 (Chaudhary, 2013). Dowry demand is one of the major causes of domestic violence against women across India. In the Indian context, the dowry issue plays a major role in the initiation and perpetration of violence against women (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004). Violence is more likely to be perpetuated when dowries are perceived to be inadequate (Rao, 1997). Domestic violence also occurs because of poverty, and also because of the prevalence of lower levels of education among men (Gerstein, 2000). In India, despite the tremendous impact of domestic violence, it is a "crime of silence" (Pillai, 2001). Nevertheless, domestic violence is a dangerous practice and is deeply rooted in the cultural norms of patriarchy, and is widespread in all communities and socio-economic and cultural subgroups. Many women are taught not only to accept but also to keep their experiences within themselves (Kimuna, Djamba, Ciciurkaite, & Cherukuri, 2012). Due to enactment of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in 2005, domestic violence against women is now an offense in India. Yet, the majority of the victims do not seek recourse to this Act. Individual and social acceptance, social stigma, fewer options, and economic dependency do not motivate the victims to seek recourse (Krishnan et al., 2012).

2.3.2.2 Nepal

Domestic violence is a problem for many women in Nepal. Despite its severity, the problem is not well documented in the academic literature (Oshiro, Poudyal, Poudel, Jimba, & Hokama, 2011). Neglect and abuse of women is a daily routine in almost all families and communities in Nepalese society (Joshei & Kharel, 2008). Oshiro et al. (2011) in their study explored the idea that physical violence perpetrated by husbands was at 33.8% among the urban poorer population. A stronger association between domestic violence and alcohol consumption was also observed by them. In another study, Rajbhandari (2006) revealed that out of 203 victims of domestic violence, one third (36%) had experienced physical violence. Earlier, in 2000, a study found the 66% of the women in Nepal endure verbal abuse, 33% emotional abuse, and in all cases, 77% of the perpetrators were the family members of the victims. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the women that experienced domestic violence confirmed it as a routine activity of their husbands (Joshei & Kharel, 2008). Paudel (2007), on the other hand, revealed that one-third (35%) of women in Nepal experience violence at home. The factors of inflicting domestic violence included the low educational status of women and their husbands, dowry demand, and no control over resources by women. Domestic violence in Nepal is mostly unreported and unrecorded in informal or formal institutions. At the same time, women usually do not strongly protest against violence, as they mostly try to cope with it. For example, a study conducted by Sharma (2007) confirmed that 50% of the women tolerated violence as their destiny. The common factors in tolerating violence included fear of retribution, lack of options, concern for children, emotional dependency, lack of family support. Interestingly, victims also hope that their husband will change in course of time. Despite the passing of a Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) bill in parliament in 2002, women hardly seek recourse to it because they are ashamed of discussing domestic violence experiences in public (Joshei & Kharel, 2008).

2.3.2.3 Pakistan

Pakistan maintains bad records regarding violence against women, especially in domestic violence (Zakar, Zakar, & Krämer, 2012). This is almost prevalent in all strata of the society (Shaikh, 2003). A study conducted in Karachi city

documented that the lifetime prevalence of marital physical abuse was 49.4% (Fikree, 2005). A study found that the incidence of depression and anxiety was higher amongst Pakistani victims of domestic violence (Haqqi, 2008). Five hundred women in Pakistan are believed to have killed themselves in 2000 mostly because of domestic disputes (Niaz, 2003). The Domestic Violence (Protection and Prevention) Act was passed in 2009 (Zakar et al., 2012), but women usually do not want to report abuse outside the family because they think that this would bring shame and dishonour to the family. They are also of the opinion that disclosing experiences of domestic violence outside the family might make matters even worse. Therefore, women try to mitigate their problems through familiar means (Andersson et al., 2010). In fact, the cultural norms in Pakistan stipulate that violence against women is not to be discussed openly (Rabbani, Qureshi, & Rizvi, 2008), and the formal reporting of the incidents of abuse against women happen only in extreme cases (Hayat, 2002).

2.3.2.4 Myanmar

It was reported by WHO (1999) that violence against women in Myanmar was not as seriously prevalent as in Bangladesh and Nepal. However, it has now been recognised to some extent as a problem that brings about serious health and social consequences. As a result of this, and with the motivation to support women, counselling centers have been set-up in every state and division (Kyu & Kanai, 2005). However, empirical studies on domestic violence are surprisingly very limited in the context of Myanmar. A study in two townships reported the rates of domestic violence as 3.4% to 8.9% physical violence and 10.8% to 18.9% mental violence (WHO, 1999). As of now, the most comprehensive study on domestic violence was conducted by Kyu and Kanai (2005), which confirmed that domestic violence was not a rare event in Myanmar. Twenty-seven percent of the women had the experience of physical violence perpetrated by their husbands and 69% women had the experience of psychological violence. The major factors of domestic violence included the husband's unemployment, alcohol abuse, and witnessing parental violence. The study further revealed that women hardly seek formal interventions. Only 6% of the respondents of this study sought formal intervention.

2.3.2.5 Sri Lanka

Domestic violence against women is the most pervasive form of violence Sri Lanka (UNWOMEN, 2011a). Various studies on different populations

and age groups confirm that the prevalence of domestic violence ranges between 30% to 60% (Subramanium & Sivayogan, 2001; Jayasuriya, Wijewardena, & Axemo, 2011). According to the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment survey, more than 60% of the women are victims of domestic violence. It was further reported that 44% of pregnant women also experienced it. The common forms of domestic violence included physical violence, sexual violence, threats, intimidation, various emotional and social abuse, and economic violence in the form of deprivation (UNWOMEN, 2011a). The Prevention of Domestic Violence Act was enacted in September 2005. Until its enactment, domestic violence was largely publicly invisible, and unrecognised and accepted by society at large (Jayasundere, 2009). However, the majority of the Sri Lankan abused women do not consider disclosure as an option in the event of domestic violence (Jayasuriya et al., 2011).

2.3.2.6 Thailand

Although domestic violence is a significant social problem in Thailand, only fairly recently has domestic violence, particularly wife abuse, been brought to the public attention (Costa & Matzner, 2004). Earlier, a study conducted in Bangkok found that physical violence against women was largely prevalent (Hoffman, Demo, & Edwards, 1994). A study conducted by Juree Vichit-Vadakan (2000) also confirmed wife beating as the most common form of domestic violence in Thailand. Sometimes women are beaten routinely and so severely that they need medical treatment. Alcoholism and complex relationships with mother and wives create the field of practicing domestic violence. The study further revealed that Thai women of all levels are subject to various forms of psychological and emotional violence (Juree Vichit-Vadakan, 2000). It is mention worthy that WHO's (2005a) multi-country study on domestic violence on ten countries including Thailand revealed that 41% of the women in Bangkok and 47% of the women in the province had experienced either physical or sexual violence by their partners or husbands. The findings of that research suggest that domestic violence affects a significant number of women in Thailand (Kritaya Archavanitkul, Churnrurtai Kanchanachitra, Wassanana Im-em, & Usa Lerdsrisuntad, 2005). In Thailand, women alone have to cope with the problem and often opt to suffer silently. This practice is rooted in the conviction that domestic violence is a personal matter and should be solved personally. Usually women do not

choose to tell other people out of a sense of embarrassment or fear (Archavanitkul et al., 2005). Notably, Thailand has enacted the Protection of Domestic Violence Victims Act in 2007. The act comes with the provisions of rehabilitation, counselling, probation, public service, and parole to the offenders and also obliges them to pay compensation to the victims (UNWOMEN, 2011a).

Evidence from the empirical literature on the six countries close to Bangladesh attests the fact that domestic violence perpetrated by husbands is widely prevalent in these countries. However, the good point is that some countries have specific domestic violence policy measures.

2.4 Global Responses: The Role of the Second-wave Feminist Movement and the United Nations: The Gateway to Public Policy Making on Domestic Violence/Violence against Women

Today, governments throughout the world are looking for pragmatic and appropriate solutions to domestic violence/violence against women. Nevertheless, historically, domestic violence was treated as a private matter rather than a social or public policy problem which requires public intervention (Fineman & Mykitiuk, 1994). Broadly, violence against women as a problem was first addressed systematically through the impetuous actions of the second-wave feminist movement or the women's movement in the late sixties and early seventies (Matthews, 1994). The second-wave feminists or women's movement raised considerable public awareness about violence against women. Feminists organised speak-outs for women and allowed supportive environment and space for women to talk openly about their experiences (Renzetti & Bergen, 2005). Although at the beginning of the movement violence against women was an unspectacular issue, when feminists emphatically looked at the issue it rapidly received global recognition as a problem instead of a mere private and personal problem (Bart & Moran, 1993). It was the beginning of a new era when feminists began to examine and speak about their own experiences of violence, and also when support was extended to the victims (Maynard & Winn, 1997). The idea of "the personal as political" was the central focus of feminist work on violence against women. This idea helped to make subsequent attempts to theorise,

study, campaign and support works in this area (Radford, Kelly, & Hester, 1996). Feminists arrived at a decision that the personal problems of women can only be solved through political means and political actions (Pateman, 1989).

Initially, the second-wave feminists targeted two forms of violence: wife beating and rape. Until the 1970s wife beating was viewed as a private matter and the problem of a few dysfunctional couples. Sexual abuse, on the other hand, was viewed as a crime committed by mentally disturbed men, and such violence was also viewed to be provoked by women (Renzetti & Bergen, 2005). Feminists since then have examined the extent, meaning, and nature of domestic violence (Wilcox, 2006). Feminists with their many affirmative efforts gained public sympathy for the victims, and helped women's aid groups in extending support to battered women (R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1979). Moving from thought to action with issues related to domestic violence against was the unique diversity of this movement (R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1979). Feminists established the first rape crisis centre in the USA in 1972, and the first refuge centre for battered women in England in 1972 (Kelly, 1988, as cited in Maynard & Winn, 1997). Women's shelters, as a matter of fact, helped spread awareness of domestic violence and campaigns against rape (Connell, 1995).

Reforming the criminal justice system was an immediate target to protect abused women and to address violence against women (R.E. Dobash, & R.P. Dobash, 1992). In fact, the second-wave feminist movement targeted the criminal justice system in protecting women (Bart & Moran, 1993). In the 1970s, feminists pointed out many drawbacks of the criminal justice system as a means to violence. They also identified social services and the criminal justice system a having a patriarchal bias (Bart & Moran, 1993). Accordingly, they emphasised the need to reform the patriarchal criminal codes in order to make them reflexive and responsive to the experiences and needs of the victims (Tjaden, 2005). Feminists also tried to introduce new laws and procedures to facilitate the prosecution process for violence and to provide better support services to the victims (Bart & Moran, 1993). Since the beginning of the movement, campaigns to change public policy, legislation, and administrative practice have seen a number of interventions and have succeeded on a significant scale (R.E. Dobash, & R.P. Dobash, 1992). Over the years, western countries have pioneered public polices and services for domestic violence victims

and have acted as a source of information and support for other countries (Postmus & Hahn, 2008). For example; in 1976, the Pennsylvania coalition against domestic violence was the first advocacy organisation to approach the state to adopt civil restraining order legislation (the Protection from Abuse Act) in the USA. By 1994, all fifty states had adopted some form of domestic violence protection order (Levy, 2008). In this way, criminal justice systems throughout the world have made many reforms in public policies, and because of these reforms, domestic violence against women has begun to be viewed as an offense which invariably requires positive intervention (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 1999). Thus, the contribution of second-wave feminism in analysing and addressing the problem of violence against women has been enormous. Moreover, it has provided straightforward and practical guidelines on how to solve the problem. The problem of violence against women is nowadays being talked about in so many circles and in so many ways, it is often forgotten that the second-wave feminist movement was behind every initial effort on the global scale (Hooks, 2000).

Today, the global movement towards violence against women is being heralded by the UN. The Second World Conference on women held in Copenhagen in 1980 adopted a resolution on violence in the family as a health concern. It called for developing programmes in order to protect women from physical and mental abuse (UN, 2006). The declaration stresses the need to extend research on domestic violence, and also to establish centres for treatment, shelters, and counselling for victims of violence (UN, 1980). After the conference, public health globally was adopted as a potential approach to addressing violence against women (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). According to Kilpatrick (2004), there are some important differences between public health and the criminal justice approach. The public health approach defines similar types of acts to those defined by the criminal justice system, but also includes acts that psychologically harm women, including acts of deprivation and neglect, and puts more emphasis on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. In fact, the public health approach is boarder than the criminal justice approach since it includes those acts which are not commonly treated as criminal (Tjaden, 2005). The second-wave feminist movement primarily emphasised the criminal justice approach as an immediate means to redressing violence. The public

health approach, on the other hand, suggests that violence can address the ways in which public health concerns have been prevented or reduced throughout the world (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002).

The Third World Conference on Women held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985 confirmed violence against women as a societal problem, and urged governments to uphold the dignity of women and strengthen efforts to launch or establish mechanisms such as shelters, support, and legal and other services in the family and at the societal level in order to provide assistance to victims. It also urged governments to undertake public awareness programmes and to establish policies and legislative measures to ascertain its causes and to prevent and eliminate violence (UN, 1985). Overall, violence against women as a global issue became more prominent and more focused at this conference (UN, 2006).

Although violence against women was fundamental to the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979, the original CEDAW articles did not specifically cover the issue (Cheung et al., 1999). Nonetheless, in 1992, the assigned committee to monitor the implementation of the CEDAW adopted General Recommendation No.19, which recognised violence against women as a form of discrimination that hinders women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms equal to those of men. Moreover, it specified the obligation of state parties to take into consideration such means of discrimination when reviewing their laws and policies (UNICEF, 2000).

Violence against women is now globally viewed as a breach of women's human rights. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 provided the opportunity to launch a global campaign to uphold women's human rights and dignity. The Vienna conference not only recognised women's rights as human rights but also demanded that violence against women should be recognised as a breach of women's human rights. Following a demand raised at the conference, within six months, the UN General Assembly passed the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104), which came up with a mandate to deal with violence against women as a human rights issue (Amnesty International, 2004). The declaration outlines that nation states should take the necessary steps to implement policies on counselling, health, and social services along with various

preventative, punitive, and remedial measures to address violence against women (Pickup et al., 2001). Following another demand of the conference, in 1994, the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women was appointed for analysing, examining, and documenting different forms of violence against women. Such an appointment has further strengthened the recognition of violence against women as a human rights concern (Reilly, 2007). The Rapporteur closely monitors the problem around the world, and recommends initiatives on how to eliminate it at the local, regional and international level (Cheung et al., 1999).

The Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 included elimination of all forms of violence against women as one of the twelve areas of concern and suggested that the nation states, the UN, international agencies, civil society, and NGOs take pragmatic actions in this regard (UN, 1995; UNICEF, 2000). The Beijing declaration reaffirmed violence against women as both a violation of human rights and an obstacle for women to fully enjoying human rights (UN, 2006).

Based on the pivotal premises mentioned above, towards the end of the last millennium violence against women received a new dimension apart from being a criminal justice or a public health issue (Tjaden, 2005). It is the human rights approach which has provided the opportunity to include the experiences of women from the perspective of human rights violations and to find out remedies (UN, 2006). In December 1999, the UN designated 25 November as the international day for the elimination of violence against women, and urged governments, international organisations, and NGOs to organise activities to raise public awareness about violence against women with specific programmes on that day (UN, 2000a). The optional protocol to the CEDAW (adopted in October 1999), on the other hand, gives women an opportunity to seek recourse at the international level for violation of their rights. Therefore, it is now possible for the victims of violence and those acting on their behalf to make direct complaints to the CEDAW. This protocol has also allowed the CEDAW committee to undertake investigations of the abuses directed towards women (Amnesty International, 2004). CEDAW is an important international tool for civil society groups around the world in terms of putting pressure on governments to take affirmative measures to combat violence against women (UNFPA, 2007).

One of the major achievements of the last millennium was to develop a linkage between violence against women and development. The Human Development

Report (HDR) came up with a linkage between human rights perspectives and developmental interventions (Pickup et al., 2001). In 1995, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measurement (GEM) in its human development report. Apparently, many of the indicators used to assess GDI and GEM were directly or indirectly linked with violence against women. The Millennium Declaration in 2000 recognised violence against women as a development concern. The UN declared its commitment to combating all forms of violence against women and to implementing the CEDAW (UN, 2000b). As a matter of fact, the existence of violence against women is inconsistent with all of the millennium development goals (UN, 2006).

The creation of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNWOMEN) in 2010 from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was a historical step towards achieving gender equality and eliminating all forms of violence. The UNWOMWN works on establishing legal frameworks and specific national actions with a view to preventing violence at the grassroots level. It also supports the collection of data and information on violence against women and facilitates new understanding of the issue (UNWOMEN, 2011b). UNiTE to End Violence against Women is an important global campaigns of the UNWOMEN. Importantly, this campaign places emphasis on the need to engage men against violence against women. Around the world, there are now encouraging initiatives aimed at engaging men in the prevention of violence against women (Flood, 2011).

The above chronological depiction confirms the impressive advancement of the discussion of prevention of violence against women. At the outset, the feminist movement succeeded in raising awareness of violence against women and acted as a political forum at the international level (Antrobus & Sen, 2006). Finally, it came as a responsibility for the UN to shoulder subsequent activities. Due to increasing international pressure, over the years, the issue has been a recognised problem in law, policy statements, and in policy implementation (Hearn, 1998). Therefore, it is evident that the public policy making on various aspects of violence against women, including domestic violence, is vividly an outcome of such a long-standing journey where the feminists and the UN played the major role.

2.5 Forms of Domestic Violence/Violence against Women: Some Widely-Used Categorisations

Domestic violence/violence against women can be of many forms and practices and these can be extended throughout a woman's life. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (A/RES/48/104) came up with a comprehensive categorisation of violence against women in Article 2 in the following manner:

> (a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;
> (b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;
> (c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs (as cited in UN, 1993, p. 3).

As noted by Farouk (2005), such categorisation made by the declaration is not all-embracing since in different parts of the world different forms of violence are practiced. However, it is very difficult for any single attempt to cover all practices and forms that extend around the world. Nonetheless, it has provided groundwork and a guideline for labelling different forms and practices of violence.

The In-depth Study Report on All Forms of Violence against Women: Report of the Secretary General (A/61/122/Add.1) emerged in 2006 and included practices of violence that are perpetrated by the family, community, the state, and during armed conflict. Battering, marital rape, sexual violence, dowry related violence, female infanticide, early and forced marriage, and traditional harmful practices are the major forms and practices that women meet in the family (UN, 2006). Community acts of

violence include femicide, rape and sexual harassment, trafficking, and forced prostitution (UN, 2006). State agents may commit violence on the streets or in state custody. Moreover, state laws and policies might control women's sexual behaviour by imposing polices on forced sterilisation, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, virginity tests, and forced marriages (UN, 2006). During armed conflict different forms of physical, sexual, and psychological violence are also perpetrated by both the state and non-state actors (UN, 2006). With regard to specific forms of domestic violence, the In-depth Study Report has specifically identified physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and economic violence. Physical violence includes physical force, strength or a weapon to harm or injure the woman. Sexual violence includes abusive sexual contact, engaging women in non-consensual sexual act, and attempted or forced sex with a woman that is ill or disabled. Psychological violence includes controlling or isolating the woman, and humiliating or embarrassing her. Economic violence includes denying the rights of a woman to get access to and control over basic resources (UN, 2006).

On the other hand, according to the Advocates for Human Rights (2013), forms of domestic violence include: physical, sexual, economic, psychological assault, and emotional abuse. Various practices of domestic violence under each of the forms have been categorised in the following manner.

> Physical violence involves the use of physical force against another. Examples include hitting, shoving, grabbing, biting, restraining, shaking, choking, burning, forcing drug/alcohol use, and assault with a weapon, etc. Physical violence may or may not result in an injury that requires medical attention;
>
> Sexual violence involves the violation of an individual's bodily integrity (sexual assault), including coercing sexual contact, rape, and prostitution, as well as any unwelcome sexual behaviour (sexual harassment), including treating someone in a sexually demeaning manner or any other conduct of a sexual nature, whether physical, verbal, or non-verbal. Sexual abuse also includes behaviour which limits reproductive rights, such as preventing use of contractive methods and forcing abortion;

> Psychological abuse is often characterised as intimidation, threats of harm, and isolation. Examples include instilling fear in an intimate partner through threatening behaviour, such as damaging property or abusing pets, constant supervision, or controlling what the victim does and who they talk to. Spiritual abuse may be included as a type of psychological abuse. It involves the misuse of spiritual or religious beliefs to manipulate or exert power and control over an intimate partner (i.e., using scripture to justify abuse or rearing the children in a faith or religious practice the partner has not agreed to);
>
> Emotional abuse involves undermining an individual's sense of self-worth. Examples of emotional abuse include constant criticism, name-calling, embarrassing, mocking, humiliating, and treating like a servant;
>
> Economic abuse involves making or attempting to make the victim financially dependent on the abuser. Examples of economic abuse include preventing or forbidding an intimate partner from working or gaining and education, controlling the financial resources, and withholding access to economic resources (as cited in the Advocates for Human Rights, 2013, para. 3-7).

WHO's (2005a) "Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women*"* includes various forms and practices of domestic violence by a male intimate partner such as the following: physical violence (slapping, hitting, kicking, dragging and beating), sexual violence (forced intercourse and other forms of coerced sex), emotional violence (intimidation, threat and humiliation) and controlling behaviours (restrain from seeing friends and family members, ignoring and suspecting women). On the other hand, UNICEF (2000) categorised domestic violence as the following: physical violence (slapping, beating, kicking, strangling, choking, murder, twisting and also traditional practices physically harmful to women), sexual violence (coerced sex, forcing unwanted sexual acts or forcing sex with others), psychological violence (threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement, surveillance, threats to take custody of children, destruction of objects, humiliation), economic violence (denial of funds, denial of food and basic needs, controlling access to health care, employment, refusal to contribute financially).

The above categorisations have considerable merits in understanding the forms domestic violence. Similar to defining domestic violence, categorising domestic violence is also difficult. The recognition of an act as violent may be different for different women. For example, some women may consider a push, shove or slap as a mere accident, and some women may consider only serious injury which requires medical treatment as violence (Harne & Radford, 2008). Women may feel that violence is a painful or wrong behaviour against them, but they may not necessarily define it as a crime. Many women, for instance, do not define forced sex by the husband or intimate partner as rape (WHO, 1997). Cultural values and religious beliefs also play a significant role in shaping women's experiences and understanding of violence (Levy, 2008). Moreover, women's perceptions of violence differ greatly than those of men (Hanmer, 1996). Therefore, drawing a definite conclusion regarding the forms of violence is extremely difficult. However, exploring the individual woman's subjective experiences is extremely important in order to obtain insight into the forms and practices she encounters in her marital life.

2.6 Causes of Domestic Violence against Women: Various Explanations

A vital part of preventing a social problem is to have an understanding of what causes it (Crowell & Burges, 1996). Vast ranges of conceptual and theoretical understandings of the causes of domestic violence/violence against women have been developed across various social sciences (Hearn, 1998), such as psychology, sociology, and feminism (Hird, 2002). Even though no particular theory/explanatory model can fully explore the nature of domestic violence, there is constant debate on the matter of analysing why domestic violence against women occurs in society (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2011). In fact, the problem of domestic violence has become so widespread and diversified or far from being unified, which has made it difficult to explain the problem by a single theoretical model (Delphy, 1998, as cited in Romito, 2008).

2.6.1 Psychological Explanations

Psychological explanations of domestic violence depend on a number of factors, including personality, one's internal defence system, mental illness (Hird, 2002), substance use, and other intra-individual phenomena (Ahwaza, 2009). A wide variety of psychiatric and personality disorders such as being passive-dependent, lacking impulse control and infantile behaviour have been diagnosed among violent men (Prentky, 1990, as cited in Crowell & Burges, 1996; Bogard, 1988). It has been argued that domestic violence is responsible for a number of conditions of the perpetrators, such as schizophrenia, depression, and severe personality disorders (Steinmetz, 1989, as cited in E.S. Buzawa & C.S. Buzawa, 2003; Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 1996). It is also said that men that batter their wives or partners struggle with anger and hostility (Hamberger & Holtzworth-Munroe, 2009). Aggressive people that inflict violence are usually angry people (Murphy & Eckhardt, 2005), and they are more likely to exhibit hostility to their partners than non-violent men (Barbour, Eckhardt, Davison, & Kassinove, 1998).

On the other hand, women that are highly critical of their husbands' performance and status might experience violence from their husbands as this leads to psychological problems and tensions. Perpetrators release their problems, and tensions through violent means (Snell, Rosenwald, & Robey, 1964, as cited in Ahwaza, 2009). Many studies have found a significant positive association between acts of domestic violence and the use of drugs and alcohol (E.S. Buzawa & C.S. Buzawa, 2003; Hamberger & Holtworth-Munroe, 2009). The argument is that when men are drunk or consume drugs they become mentally out of control. Therefore, it gives men an excuse to perpetuate violence against their wives (Kantor & Straus, 2009a; Hird, 2002). Feminist scholars are particularly critical of this type of "abuse excuse." They feel that violence against women has no space to be treated as an individual problem; rather, it is a social and political problem (Barnett et al., 1997). Many domestic violence incidents occur in the absence of alcohol, and many people drink without engaging in violent behaviour (Kantor & Straus, 2009a). At the same time, the majority of people that are suspected of having different psychological problems do not perpetrate violence against women (Levy, 2008). Moreover, through a focus on mental illness, psychologists ignore the fundamental question of power or

gender (Bogard, 1988). Although some of the psychological explanations are controversial, at least, these provide some basic understandings of how to develop the linkage between psychological factors and the perpetuation of violence against women.

2.6.2 Sociological Explanations

Sociologists are the leading academicians that have internalised the problem of domestic violence as well as developed a theoretical model to analyse the problem (Barnett et al., 1997). One of the most influential sociological models is the family violence perspective, which deals with the internal relations of the family members (Gelles, 1993). It is theorised that the problem of domestic violence lies in the nature of the family structure (Levy, 2008). Violence is perpetuated due to stress and inter-individual conflict that exists within every relationship in family (Straus, 1973, as cited in Ahwja, 2009). In fact, families are prone to violence because of many structural factors (Barnett et al., 1997). Alternatively, the cultural-normative system of a family defines appropriate treatment for women and is a good ground of sociological explanation. For example, the use of physical force to make women controlled and disciplined is often acceptable, encouraged or even glorified (E.S. Buzawa & C.S. Buzawa, 2003; Heath, Kruttschnitt & Ward, 1986, as cited in Barnett et al., 1997).

On the other hand, the association between low income and domestic violence also provides an influential sociological model for analysis of the problem. Though domestic violence is prevalent in all strata of society, it is mostly found among people living with poverty. For example, the prevalence of domestic violence in some ethnic and minority groups is due to the persistent poverty among these groups (E.S. Buzawa & C.S. Buzawa, 2003). In this connection, one line of thought suggests that domestic violence against women is common across all ethnic and minority groups. Conversely, the other line of thought suggests that it is practiced only by lower socio-economic groups (Mears, 2003). Due to insufficient financial resources, most families cannot cope with the structural stress derived from insufficient financial resources, which leads to developing tension between husband and wife, and often results in violence (Gelles, 1999).

There is a significant relation between socio-demographic characteristics and domestic violence. Age is an important risk factor for violence since a greater risk is associated with young women (Jewkes, 2002). Studies indicate that early marriage makes women more vulnerable to abuse (Jejeebhoy, 1998). As older women gain more power and prestige within the family, being the mother of adult children, they are less likely to become victims of violence than younger women (Howell & Pugliesi, 1988). The instigation of violence may also be transmitted from one person to another (social learning theory). Children that observe violence in the family may learn that violence is a proper means to relieving tensions, mitigating conflicts and expressing anger (Kalmus, 1984, as cited in Hines & Saudino, 2009), and they may also reproduce the specific types of violence their parents used when they grow up (Hines & Saudino, 2009). In fact, home is the first place where persons first experience violence and also learn how to justify their violent acts (Gelles, 1999). In contrast, some scholars have explored the idea that many men that abuse their wives do not experience violence in their homes in their early lives (Hird, 2002). Therefore, the idea remains greatly inconclusive whether childhood exposure or experience of violence is associated with the perpetuation of adult violence toward women (Barnett et al., 1997). This kind of idea does not properly reflect the dimension of gender. For example, if boys become violent by observing violence, what happens in the case of girls (Hearn, 1998)? Feminists are particularly critical about sociologists' explanations as these explanations are very general, and they tend to minimise the dimension of male domination and power (Bogard, 1988).

2.6.3 Feminist Explanations

Feminist explanations are the most influential in terms of analysing domestic violence against women. Feminist explanations have developed over a period of time, have become broader and are more inclusive, and in some cases complex as well (Kelly, 1996b). The key understanding of the feminist perspective is that violence is a reflection of unequal power relations between men and women, a pattern of domination that men enjoy over women in society and specifically within their personal relationships (Maynard & Winn, 1997). In fact, feminist analysis concerning violence against women focuses on patriarchal culture, power, and on gender

relations. Violence is the most effective and overt means to dominate women within gender relations (Bogard, 1988). Patriarchy provides the fundamental feminist understanding of all forms violence against women including domestic violence (McCue, 1989; Hird, 2002). In fact, the root of wife abuse or domestic violence is embedded in the subordinate status of women and in their subjection to male authority and power that have been institutionalised in the patriarchal family structure (R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1979). The structure of gender inequality or women's subordination is associated with a culture of violence against women. The more unequal women are compared to men in a society, the more likely it is that men will inflict violence against women (Yodanis, 2004). In patriarchal culture, men dominate women and take all the advantages gained by subordination of women (Mooney, 2000). Male dominance is reflected in all patriarchal social, political, economic, and ideological institutions and practices. Such dominance is quite natural or normal to all members of the society (Edwards, 1987). Explicitly speaking, the term patriarchy is applied to identify the origin of women's oppression (Stacey, 1993) and is a powerful apparatus which gives men the opportunity to practice domination, oppression, and exploitation of women (Walby, 1996).

Critics are doubtful whether the term patriarchy can appropriately internalise the complexities and diversities of gender relations (Alcoff, 1988; Barnett & Philips, 1992; Walby, 1992, as cited in Walby, 1996), and some argue that patriarchy is dead and no longer dictates male-female interactions in gender relations (Barnett et al., 1997). Family sociologists argue that patriarchy is only a factor in diverse lists of causes (Straus, Gelles, Steinmetz, 1980; Gelles, 1993). The term patriarchy has no justification for the men who do not use violence even living in the patriarchal societies (Zakar, 2012). Nevertheless, despite some controversies or disagreements, feminist explanations are still the most powerful, dominant, and pertinent in explaining domestic violence against women (Gelles, 1993).

In the above, I have discussed some of the dominant theoretical explanations with regard to understanding the root causes of domestic violence against women. Despite having some controversies, these explanations are relevant to understanding the fundamental causes of domestic/violence against women.

2.7 Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women: Some Critical Concerns

It may not be possible to obtain a precise and solid picture of the actual extent of domestic violence against women, but the consequences of it are fairly clear (Miranda, 1994). Domestic violence is in many ways linked with various consequences (Kyu & Kanai, 2005). Numerous psychological problems, emotional suffering, and suicidal behaviour are often associated with the victims of domestic violence (WHO, 2005a). In fact, abused women may have a significantly higher level of anxiety, depression, and somatic complaints. At the same time, they have the higher rates of suicide due to depression or anxiety (Miranda, 1994). On the other hand, violence brings a sense of diminished quality of life for the victims, which is associated with the fear of being isolated, and fear and lack of freedom that are inflicted on the lives of victims (Crowell & Burges, 1996). On the other hand, performing everyday routine activities in an effective manner is severely hampered as many victims of domestic violence suffer from long-term emotional and psychological symptoms (Gorde, Helfrich, & Finlayson, 2004).

Women that are sexually abused by their husbands/intimate partners are more likely to have been affected by sexually-transmitted diseases, urinary tract infections, and gynecological complaints than other women (WHO, 1997; WHO, 2002). Many women that cannot refuse unwanted sex are at risk of unwanted pregnancies since they cannot discuss contraception due to fear of a negative reaction (Heise, Ellesberg & Gottmoeller, 2002). At same time, domestic violence during the pregnancy period can have detrimental consequences for both the mother and the unborn child (UNICEF, 2000).

Domestic violence is the major cause of physical injuries to women, ranging from minor to severe health-related injuries such as fractures, injuries, sprains, and so on (Ratner, 1998, as cited in Kyu & Kanai, 2005). Head trauma is a major concern for many women that confront domestic violence as the perpetrators often bang women's heads, shake their head and shoulders, or pull the hair which can result in traumatic brain injury (Muelleman, Lenaghan & Pakieser, 1996). On the other hand, physical assaults are likely to produce anxiety and fears of pain, injury, and even death. In fact, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to domestic violence is documented in many

studies (Coker, Williams, Follingstad, & Jordan, 2011). In most extreme cases, women are also killed by their husbands or intimate partners. Death may also result from injuries or ill health. Nonetheless, the death of women is the most brutal consequence of domestic violence (Harne & Radford, 2008).

Violence also has an impact on women's ability to work, earn an income, or to make independent decisions (Vyas & Watts, 2009). Women abused at the domestic level often live in an economically-vulnerable situation (Fox & Benson, 2006), are often forced to give up enjoyable or rewarding activities (Dutton, 1992), and have more health care visits and higher health care costs annually (Ulrich, Cain, Sugg, Rivara, Rubanowice, & Thompson, 2003). On the other hand, children that have witnessed domestic violence may be more fearful and anxious than other children (Rossman, 2001, as cited in Harne & Radford, 2008). When children make an attempt to protect their mother or they become involved in an incident of domestic violence by a matter of chance, it is not likely they might be injured or killed by the perpetrator (Miranda, 1994). Then again, children that witness violence are very likely to exhibit health and behaviour problems, including problems with their weight, eating, sleeping, coping with the school environment, and maintaining close and positive friendships (UNICEF, 2000).

Beyond enormous individual affects, domestic violence against women also brings about various social costs, including expenditures on psychological counselling and medical treatment, police services, costs imposed by the legal system, housing and shelter for women and their children, social services, health and welfare services, emergency services, and other security benefits (UNICEF, 2000; Miranda, 1994). Over all, domestic violence is a critical barrier to the economic development of a country (Vyas & Watts, 2009), and it continues to have adverse consequences for abused women, communities, and the society on a whole (Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, & Engel, 2005).

2.8 Usual Patterns of Women's Coping Strategies and Help-seeking Practices

Women's coping strategies and help-seeking practices in relation to domestic violence have been conceptualised in various ways. The strategies that women adopt

to cope with violence are related to a variety of issues (Abraham, 2000). Women's responses to violence and coping choices are principally dependent on the nature of the threat of violence and the options available before them (Zakar et al., 2012). Coping strategies against domestic violence may differ on the basis on socio-demographic characteristics and factors such as age, education, income, occupation, class, ethnicity, and financial empowerment, and accessibility to the support system (Rhodes & McKenzie, 1998; Abraham, 2000). The expectations that women would show their submissiveness, would consider the importance of family more than their own needs, and the stigma associated with divorce and separation may preclude women from seeking help from others (Liang et al., 2005, as cited in Flicker et al., 2011) and force them to cope with violence. They often do not disclose abuse because of the prevailing perceptions about violence as normal or not serious. They are also afraid of the consequences associated with disclosing such as further violence by the perpetrator and the threat of losing children (Miller et al., 2010; Fanslow and Robinson, 2011, as cited in Decker et al., 2013). In addition, women also think that their experiences might not be believed or they might be blamed (WHO, 2005a). Moreover, many women often are not aware of any agencies or persons to contact, which also creates obstructions in terms of seeking help (Fugate et al., 2005). Nevertheless, in order to cope with violence women usually adopt some personal strategies, including pacifying the husband, avoiding contact with him, fighting back verbally or physically, temporary and permanent separation, and even committing suicide (Abraham, 2000).

Help-seeking, on the other hand, is defined as the disclosure of violence in order to attain assistance from others (Mays, Caldwell, & Jackson, 1996; Taylor, Hardison, & Chatters, 1996, as cited in Morrison, Luchok, Richter, & Parra-Medina, 2006). Help-seeking has been divided into two categories: informal and formal (Cohen, 1999; Flicker et al., 2011; Sabina, Cuebas, & Schallay, 2012). Victims usually begin help-seeking efforts by using informal supports. However, informal supports are sought when the abuse becomes more severe or chronic (Macy, Giattina, Parish, & Crosby, 2010). Informal help-seeking strategies include seeking help from family members and relatives, friends, neighbours, and informal organisations in the community (Abraham, 2000; Sabina et al., 2012). Relatives, friends, and neighbours

are the primary means to extend immediate and useful support to the victim. If the responses from informal support are inadequate, this can increase women's sense of helplessness, and lack of control and fear (Pickup et al., 2001). Women's formal help-seeking includes seeking support from various service providers such as police, courts or the criminal justice system and social services (Abraham, 2000; Sabina et al., 2012). Decisions of help-seeking also depend on many social dimensions and factors (Kaukinen, 2004; Rhodes & McKenzie, 1998). Some victims find no difficulty in requesting assistance from others or seeking help. However, for many victims in need, asking for help involves numerous social and psychological obstacles such as shame and embarrassment, which also preclude many women from seeking help (Cohen, 1999; Fugate et al., 2005). For example, many studies confirm that women that seek help from the criminal justice system often encounter stereotypical and victim-blaming attitudes from professionals, police, judges, and magistrates, who lack understanding of the dynamics surrounding domestic violence (Carcach, 1997; Felson & Paré 2005; Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, & Engel, 2005, as cited in Meyer, 2011). However, most researchers are of the same opinion-that disclosing experiences of domestic violence and seeking help from informal and formal support networks might help to mitigate or lessen the long-term impact of abuse (Coker et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2000, as cited in Postmus et al., 2009).

2.9 Community and Domestic Violence: An Overview

One of the important informal ways of seeking help is to seeking help from the community. The term community has been defined in many different ways in the sociological literature and many scholars view that endowing the term with a scientific precision is difficult (Poplin, 1972). Usually, community is understood as a local social arrangement beyond the private sphere of home and family (Crow & Allan, 1994). It comprises persons having social interactions and that live close geographically (Hillery, 1955, as cited in Poplin, 1972). The community may be small in scale but solid in structure and respond at the grassroots level to fundamental human problems (Nisbert, 1960, as cited in Poplin, 1972).

The community influences many aspects of our lives and patterns of actions, including violence against women. It is important to note that preventing domestic violence requires commitment from and the engagement of the whole community (Michau, 2005). The attitude of the community toward domestic violence is very important (Ellesberg, Heise, Peña, Augurto, & Winkvist, 2001). In fact, when a woman decides to seek help for her domestic violence experiences, the response she receives from the community determines her future course of actions (Ruiz-Pérez, Mata-Pariente, & Plazaola-Castaño, 2006). It is not unusual for women that report instances of domestic violence to the community to not be believed, or they may be blamed for the violence. Some studies report that women are often advised by the community leaders to reconcile with their husbands, regardless of the continuing danger to their safety (Pickup et al., 2001). Nevertheless, women's involvement with the community might play an essential role in shaping their views of their coping or help-seeking options, which might encourage them to seek help and protection from the perpetrators. At the same time it might motivate them to seek advice about the best way to cope with the situation of violence before taking any further space (Haj-Yahia, 2000). Most importantly, a community-based approach to prevent domestic violence has been proved to be very useful in many countries (Coles & Kelling, 1999, as cited in Jenkins & Davidson, 2001).

So far, I have discussed various conceptual and relevant issues regarding domestic violence. In the following sections, I have shifted my focus to the empirical literature on domestic violence in Bangladesh.

2.10 Domestic Violence against Women in Bangladesh: Mapping the Relevant Literature

The issue of violence against women has been a concern mainly from the 1980s in Bangladesh (Yasmin, 2000). This is the outcome of the second wave of the feminist movement throughout the world during the 1970s (Salam, Alim, & Noguchi, 2006). The pressure from women's groups has also resulted in the reportage of violence against women in media and newspapers from the 1980s (Guhathakurta, 2004). With regard to the broader picture of violence against women, various

newspaper and agency reporting and documentation confirm that globally the highest rate of acid attack incidents take place in Bangladesh, and these account for a total of 9% of the burn injuries in the country (Farouk, 2005). From 1999 to 2013, a total of 3148 incidents of acid attacks occurred and 67% of the victims were women (ASF, 2014). *Fatwa*, though legally banned, is practised against women in many parts of the country. Recently, the newspapers published 74 *fatwa* related news (50 in 2012 and 24 in 2013) across the country (BNWLA, 2014). The trafficking of women and children is an alarming practice in Bangladesh. Approximately, 70-80 women and children are victims of trafficking everyday to other countries, and mostly those victims are forced into prostitution and other bonded labour (Chowdhury, 2004). Rape outside the home is far more common in Bangladesh. According to various media sources, from 2009 to March 2014, a total of 414 women or girls were murdered after sexual assault or rape, and 80 women committed suicide after being raped or sexually assaulted (MSPVAW, n.d.).

On the other hand, some agencies, based on newspaper reports, court cases, reported incidents to the police, also have produced data and information in their own ways about domestic violence in Bangladesh. For example, the Bangladesh Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA) yearly reporting based on newspaper reporting stated that a total of 1819 serious domestic violence incidents occurred in 2012-13, which included abuse by husbands, in-laws, parents, relatives and sexual, and economic and mental abuse (BNWLA, 2014). Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), another legal aid organisation based on newspaper reporting confirmed that from January 2014 to December 2014 there were 488 very grievous incidents of domestic violence against women, which included torture and murder by the husband and in-laws, and incidents of committing suicide (ASK, n.d.) However, due to the lack of standard reporting practices, the majority of the gathered information was contradictory, uneven, selective and, in some cases, overlapping and even under representative. In fact, globally there is a problem with accurate reporting of domestic violence. It is too often considered a normal aspect of gender relations in many countries (Pickup et al., 2001). In the context of Bangladesh, Naripokkho and Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (n.d.) found discrepancies among the figures on domestic violence in different newspapers. Farouk (2005) identified that newspapers in Bangladesh as being more

interested in covering sexual crimes rather than domestic violence. Since official media reporting is problematic, field-based empirical research is the most authentic source for ascertaining the true nature of domestic violence in Bangladesh. At the same time, it is essentially important to have a general overview of the situational aspect of women in Bangladesh. It is assumed that a number of probable mechanisms and issues connect the dimensions of women's status or situations to forms of violence against them (Yodanis, 2004).

2.10.1 Situation of Women in Bangladesh: Trapped by the Draconian Enemy "Patriarchy"

Bangladesh is one of the very few countries in the world where men outnumber women and this is reflected in the existence of discriminatory treatment against women (UN, 2003;Aminuzzaman, 2011). Women in Bangladesh are not a homogenous group; they belong to the rich, middle, and poor classes and are from different cultural and ethnic minority groups. They are also differentiated by rural and urban settings. Various indicators reveal that the status of women is much lower than that of men (Farouk, 2005). The social structure of Bangladesh is primarily rural in character, a predominantly a Muslim country belonging to what has been defined as "classic patriarchy" (Kandiyoti, 1988). Classic patriarchy is evident in some forms in the Muslim Middle East, North Africa, and South and East Asia (Kandiyoti, 1988). Nonetheless, there are two forms of patriarchy: private and public (Walby, 1990), and women and girls in Bangladesh are invariably in the trap of both forms. I will briefly discuss women's situation in both forms of patriarchy.

Family is the basic private patriarchal institution. Patriarchal roles and regulations are maintained, nurtured, and reproduced in the family. The birth of a son in Bangladesh is a matter of joy and hope for a family. Conversely, the birth of a daughter is a matter of sorrow, and she receives very cool reception. A boy is an asset to the family and a daughter is a burden (Zaman, 1999). Her position in the family is compared to the idea of "watering the neighbouring tree; you take all the trouble to nurture the plant but the fruit goes to someone else" (Kabeer, 1988). She is treated as "a bird of passage," "another's property," "a guest in the parent's house," "a thing to be preserved for an outsider," or "a thing which to be given away" (Mannan, 2002).

Such patriarchal and patrilocal ideologies discriminate against daughters in every respect. As the girl matures she becomes used to various discriminatory practices. She learns of the preferential treatments received by her brothers, her father and other male members of the family. She also becomes aware of the fact that the family's aim is to get her married off early and, subsequently, for her to live with her husband's family. She is traditionally expected and taught how to be a docile daughter, an obedient wife, and a reliable mother (Kabeer, 1988). As the socio-cultural environment in Bangladesh contains pervasive forms of gender discrimination, girls and women face many obstacles to their development (UNICEF, 2010). For example; although the practice of child marriage has decreased in Bangladesh, it is still practiced in rural areas and urban slums, particularly among the poor (BBS, 2012). Although legally women can choose their spouse, in practice, the male members of the family choose spouse for them (Alam, 2007). If the girls do not agree to get married they have to confront much physical and psychological violence by their parents (BNWLA, 2002). Upon marriage, the legal guardianship for the woman passes from father to husband (Alam, 2007).

On the other hand, Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in girls' education, and girls outnumber boys in primary and secondary schooling (MSPVAW, 2010). However, net enrolment rates in secondary education are still very low, at only 53% for girls and 46% for boys (UNICEF-BBS, 2010). In tertiary education, there are only 24% girls against 76% boys, which is a reflection of big gender gap at this level (GoB, 2012). Therefore, it can be inferred that most of the Bangladeshi girls get married before they enter the level of tertiary education. In terms of property sharing it is evident that although Muslim law allows women half the share of sons, it creates a system in which most Muslim women do not claim that. Families even deliberately deprive women of their due share in their parental property (Chowdhury, 2013). In Hinduism women are not allowed to inherent parental property (Mitra & Kumar, 2004). Hence, they are more discriminated against than Muslim women.

On the other hand, as sons are valuable assets for the maintenance of patriarchy, failure to produce a male child often brings various severe consequences for a woman, and it is grounds for divorce (Mannan, 2002). However, a woman's status in the family improves with the birth of children, especially sons, since descent

in Bangladesh is organised along patrilineal lines (Kabeer, 1988; White, 1992). Social expectations concerning women still pivot around child rearing and household management. The practice of *purda* (seclusion), although changing, is still socially valued. In rural Bangladesh, the division of labour still remains gendered, and the expectation is that women work inside, while men work outside (Alam, 2007; Chowdhury, 2009). This division is relaxing to some extent, but husbands often appropriate the earnings of working wives (Chowdhury, 2009).

Many discriminatory practices prevail in the public sphere of patriarchy as well. The share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector is only around 19.8% (GoB, 2012). Women are the potential sources of cheap labour in profitable businesses. For example, in the ready-made garment manufacturing sector, the main export-earning sector of the country where women have the largest labour force participation, they earn less than their male colleagues based on the pretext that men work at more skilled jobs and are more qualified for those jobs, and overall, their wages are roughly 60-65% of the wages of males (World Bank, 2008). Then again, women are often the first to lose their jobs in times of market fluctuation or reduced demand (Aminuzzaman, 2011). Moreover, the exercise of political rights is also limited for women in Bangladesh. Women's participation in both the political process and the decision making structure is inadequate in spite of various measures undertaken to increase their participation (Aminuzzaman, 2011). Despite having reserving quotas, in the parliament, women's share is only around 19.7% of the total seats (GoB, 2012).

Bangladesh ratified the CEDAW in 1984 with reservation on four Articles: 2, 13(a), 16(1) (c) and (f). Later on, the Bangladesh government withdrew its reservation on Article 13(a) and 16(1) (f) but did not reconsider its stand on Article 2: pursuing a policy on the elimination of discrimination against women, and Article 16(1)(c): the same rights and responsibilities as men during marriage and at its dissolution (Aminuzzaman, 2011). Bangladesh has not ratified certain articles of the CEDAW since they conflict with *sharia*[3] laws based on the *Quran* and *sunna*[4] (Brandt & Kaplan, 1995). As a result, the traditional patriarchal practices, such as polygamy and

[3] *Sharia* is the code of living in Islamic ways. It is the entire body of Islamic law.
[4] *Sunna* is the second source of Islamic jurisprudence, which comes after the Holy *Quran*

verbal divorce and *hillah*[5], are still practiced in many parts of Bangladesh. Apparently, Bangladesh does not want to invite tension by bringing changes to traditional laws, customs and practices, which are favoured by the discriminatory ideologies of patriarchy. Nonetheless, these two clauses are important in terms of gender equality. Equality in every sphere of life, whether in private or public, is a pre-condition for minimising violence against women (Kamal, n.d.). Specifically, reservation on Article 2 appears to negate Bangladesh's commitment to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (Freeman, 2009). The reservation on Article 16(1) (c), which guarantees equal rights in marriage and its dissolution, deprives women of their fundamental rights. Importantly, Bangladesh is not governed by *sharia* law that such reservation has to be retained (CiC-BD, 2010).

From the preceding discussion it is evident that the subordinate position of women in Bangladesh is prevalent in every sphere of their lives. While discussing domestic violence it would be wise not to forget that women are victims of violence not only because of structural, familial or individual factors, but also because they are in some sense victims of a society in which inequalities or subordination are deeply-ingrained (R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1979; Ameen, 2005).

It is suggested that a literature review should be selective, comprehensive, critical, and current (Neuman, 2006). In selecting the literature on Bangladesh, I mainly relied exclusively on the studies published online in refereed, reputed international academic journals. In addition to that, I also used some of the important research reports prepared by some agencies. I excluded review studies, and included only empirical studies on the topic of domestic violence/intimate partner violence in Bangladesh. Stating from 1996, my review surrounded issues related to (1) forms and factors of domestic violence; (2) consequences of domestic violence; and (3) coping strategies and help-seeking practices. In Appendix A I summarised the methods of the data collection, the number of respondents/participants, the key findings, and the locations of the research sites. Since no study has been conducted on community perception pt activism on domestic violence in Bangladesh, I could not provide any specific evidence as such. However, few aspects of community activities were evident

[5] *Hillah* is a practice of marriage imposed on a divorced woman to marry a second husband for an interim period to enable her to remarry her previous husband if they want to reunite. This is a requirement under Islamic *sharia* law.

under coping strategies or help-seeking practices. Moreover, there were no published articles on the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 in any international refereed journal.

2.10.2 Bangladeshi Literature Specifically on the Forms and Causes of Domestic Violence

Khan, Rob, and Hossain (2000) revealed a high prevalence of domestic violence in two sub-districts of Bangladesh. In the study, women admitted to having been scolded, mentally tortured, or physically abused by their husbands. Some of the common forms of violence were identified as scolding 40%, mental torture 24%, slapping 44%, severe beating 19%, and forced sex 15%. The study found five important factors for triggering violence: not meeting the husband's expectations in managing household work, sexual relationship, poverty, dowry demand, and the economic dependence of women.

A comprehensive rural study was conducted by Mannan (2002), where 46% of victims reported to have been physically abused, while 67% reported to have been psychologically abused by their husbands. The most common factors of domestic violence included: meals not ready on time, meals not well prepared, children not well cared for, house not well managed, instigation of others, economic constraints, dowry demands, husband's second marriage, and suspicion. The most common forms of physical violence included: slapping, beating, and pulling the hair, while the most common forms of psychological abuse were identified as excessive controlling, verbal abuse, curtailing or disrupting routine activities, social relationships, and access to money.

Bhuiya et al. (2003) investigated the forms, nature, and correlates of domestic violence in a remote rural area of Bangladesh. It was revealed that 66.8% of the women were verbally abused by their husbands while 50.5% of the women reported having been physically battered. The victims mentioned seventy-three (73) reasons for verbal abuse by their husbands, and fifty-three reasons for their husbands hitting them, and fifty (50) reasons why they continued to live with violence. The most frequently-mentioned reasons for violence included: questioning the husbands in day-to-day matters (29.1%), followed by failure to perform household work satisfactorily,

economic hardship of the family, poor childcare, not conforming to using a veil or other expected behaviour, and refusal to bring a dowry from the natal home.

Koening, Ahmed, Hossain, and Khorshed (2003) found that physical abuse by husbands was common among a large segment of the population. The prevalence of physical violence was higher in the cultural conservative areas, with a 47% prevalence compared with the less conservative area (39%). The study identified verbal abuse as an almost universal event among wives (79%). Fortunately, the study found that increased education, higher socioeconomic status, being non-Muslim, and extended family residence was associated with lower risks of violence.

Bates, Schular, Islam, and Islam (2004) examined the severity of physical domestic violence, and the socio-economic factors and processes associated with domestic violence in six villages. In this study, 67% women had experienced domestic violence by their husbands while one third of the women reported having experienced major violence such as being kicked, burned, or having a weapon used against them. In addition, the practice of dowry demand was recognised as a common tool of extraction and exploitation, and the experience of domestic violence was significantly higher among women (46%) with a dowry arrangement than among women (25%) with no such arrangements.

A study conducted by Naved and Persson (2005) during 2000-2001 explored the factors associated with spousal physical violence in urban and rural areas in Bangladesh. The demand of dowry in marriage was positively associated with domestic violence in both areas. On the other hand, based on the data and findings of the preceding study, Naved and Persson (2010) further confirmed that dowry demand predicts the extent, frequency, and severity of domestic violence in households. Women are more likely to be physically abused if the dowry demand is not met. About 61% of the rural women and 20% of the urban women in the lowest income quartile reported dowry demand at marriage. Other than dowry, family problems such as trouble, disputes, or altercations arising between the couple in regard to the marital or natal family, disobedience, any fault in carrying out household chores, and financial problems also invited violence by the husbands.

WHO's (2005b) multi-country study on ten countries including Bangladesh confirmed that Bangladeshi women experience a significant amount of physical and

sexual violence by their intimate partners. The lifetime prevalence of physical and sexual violence was reported at 62% in the rural site and 53% in the capital city. Sexual violence was reported to be more frequent than physical violence in rural sites. The study revealed various types of emotional violence such as insults, humiliation, and threats. The study further confirmed that the experience of physical and/or sexual violence tended to be accompanied by more controlling behaviour by an intimate partner.

Khan and Aeron (2006) investigated the prevalence, nature, and determinants of domestic violence and found that 80% of the women in the survey and 71% of the women in the in-depth interview reported to have been physically, sexually, emotionally or mentally abused. Physical violence included slapping, hitting, beating, punching, depriving food or clothing; sexual violence included forcing sex physically or through threats and persuasion, while emotional violence included insulting women and their parents, criticising, scolding, and restricting movement. Refusal of sex, influence of in-laws, failure to meet the husband's expectations and poverty were some of the determinants of domestic violence.

Sambisa et al. (2011) explored the prevalence and correlates of physical violence in slum and non-slum urban areas through a population-based survey on currently-married women, revealing that the prevalence of past-year physical domestic violence was higher in slums (35%) than in non-slums (20%). Slapping/arm-twisting and pushing/shaking/throwing something at the women were the most commonly-reported acts of physical abuse. The risk of spousal physical abuse was lower among older women, women with post-primary education, and those belonging to rich households.

Schular and Islam (2008) examined the prevalence of physical violence within marriage in six rural villages. In the study, it was found that 67% of the women had experienced physical violence. In addition, the researchers found that women were vulnerable to domestic violence because they have no options other than marriage and are absolutely dependent upon their husbands in all respects.

Schular, Hashemi, Riley, and Akhter (1996) found that falling short of patriarchal role expectations, demand for a dowry, and the husband's perceived legitimacy over the wife were some of the major factors of wife beating. It was found

that 47% of the women have been beaten by their husbands and younger women were more likely to be beaten by their husbands. The study also examined the relationship between domestic violence and participation in credit programmes from the NGOs. In an ethnographic study, Schuler, Hashemi, and Badal (1998) also looked at such relationships, and further revealed that men beat their wives over trivial matters out of the husband's frustrations and in most cases for demands of dowry.

Hadi (2005) studied the prevalence of marital violence such as mental torture and physical assault by the husbands in seventy villages in ten districts of Bangladesh. It the study, nearly 28% of the women were mentally abused and 22% were physically assaulted by their husbands. Mental torture included the threat of being beaten, divorcing and/or abandoning the wife, and physical assault included beating, pushing, slapping or throwing things at the wife. The situations that invoked violence against women included failure to perform expected roles in the household. Hadi (2000) had earlier studied the context of marital sexual violence in seventy (70) villages in ten (10) districts of Bangladesh. The study revealed that 27% of the women had been sexually abused in such acts for example as coerced sex, intercourse during pregnancy, and during the neonatal period by their husbands. Notably, both studies conducted by Hadi (2005) and Hadi (2000) also examined the relationships between micro-credit programmes and domestic violence.

Ahmed (2005) through a cross-sectional survey also examined the relationship between micro-credit and perpetration of domestic violence against women. The most common forms of physical violence were identified as slapping, kicking, and beating, and emotional violence included verbal abuse, the threat of violence or a second marriage, and not allowing women to visit the natal home. Poverty, patriarchy, systematic discrimination, and early marriage were some of the predictors of domestic violence. A recent survey conducted by Bajracharya and Amin (2013) revealed that microcredit group members reported a significantly higher level of physical domestic violence (28.03 %) than nonmembers (21.48 %). The study asserted that domestic violence was more likely among people from poor backgrounds.

The cross-sectional investigation of a study conducted by Rahman, Hoque, and Makinoda (2011) on currently-married women confirmed that nearly one in every four (24%) married Bangladeshi women has experienced both physical and/or sexual

violence, while 10.5% experienced sexual violence in the absence of physical violence, and 19.4% experienced physical violence in the absence of sexual violence by husbands. Sexual violence was significantly lower in urban (9.0%) than in rural (11.3%) areas. Slapping was the most common act of physical violence.

Recently, Naved (2013) explored the magnitude and nature of marital sexual violence and the factors associated with forced sex by husbands in urban and rural Bangladesh using population-based survey data from 2001. The results showed a high prevalence of lifetime sexual violence: 37% in urban and 50% in rural areas. The study further revealed that about 75% of the sexually-abused women experienced other forms of violence by husbands as well such as physical and emotional violence. The common factors associated with physically-forced sex by husbands were dowry demand, history of physical abuse of the husband's mother by his father, and controlling behaviour of the husband.

2.10.3 Bangladeshi Literature Specifically on the Consequences of Domestic Violence

Some studies have been conducted with a dominant focus on the consequences of domestic violence on women's mental, sexual, reproductive, and physical health. Ahmed, Ginneken, Razzaque, and Alam (2004) surveyed the trends of the types of death that women suffered during the period of 1982-1998 and found that deaths caused due to violence at the domestic level remained the same while deaths caused by other factors decreased during the study period. In addition, the researchers found that suicides and homicides were often preceded by physical and mental abuse by husbands and relatives. Half of the suicide deaths (45.7%) were caused by quarrels and serious tensions with the husbands.

WHO's (2005b) multi-country study also looked at the consequences of domestic violence. Abused women in Bangladesh reported experiences with various health-related problems as a result of violence, such as injury, losing consciousness, emotional distress, suicidal ideation, and miscarriage. In two research venues (rural and urban) in Bangladesh, on average, approximately 11% of the women were beaten during pregnancy and 4% of the women were not only beaten during pregnancy but were also kicked and punched in the abdomen. Again, on average, around 18% of the women in both venues thought of committing suicide.

The main purpose of the study conducted by Salam, Alim, and Noguchi (2006) was to find whether there was an association between spousal violence and the reproductive health of women. Their survey in urban slums revealed that spousal sexual violence adversely affects women's health. It caused pelvic pain, reproductive tract infection (RTI), irritable bowel syndrome, injuries, and unwanted pregnancy. About one third (30.4%) of the women were found to be abused physically and/or sexually and about one third (30.9%) of their births in the last 5 years were reported unintended. The study further confirmed that about 50% of the physical injuries were minor while 10% of the injuries were serious.

Naved and Akhter (2008) explored the prevalence of lifetime suicidal ideation among reproductive aged women. The study confirmed that lifetime suicidal ideation among reproductive-aged women in Bangladesh was high (11%–14%) in comparison to other countries in the world, and that rural women that were physically and mentally abused by their husbands were four times more likely to report suicidal ideation compared with women who were not exposed to such violence. On the other hand, urban women that were physically and mentally abused by their husbands were twice more likely to report suicidal ideation compared with women that were not exposed to such violence.

In another survey, Silverman et al. (2007) found that three out of four (75.6%) Bangladeshi women experienced violence from husbands. These women were more likely to report both unwanted pregnancy and a pregnancy loss in the form of miscarriage, induced abortion, or stillbirth. Using a cross-sectional investigation on currently-married women, Rahman, Sasagawa, Fuji, Tomizawa, and Makinoda (2012) found that 64% of the women that were sexually abused by their husbands were more likely to have an unintended pregnancy than those that did not suffer violence. Again, the women that had experienced severe physical violence were 60% more likely to classify their pregnancy as unintended. The prevalence of unintended pregnancy among married women that experienced severe physical violence was 1.60 times higher than those that reported no abuse.

Domestic violence not only threatens the health and well-being of women but also has a negative impact on the health and well-being of their young children. For example, Silverman, Decker, Gupta, Kapur, Raj, and Naved (2009) conducted a survey

on younger mothers from both rural and urban areas and found that women that experienced domestic violence were more likely to report acute respiratory tract infection (ARI) and diarrhoea among their young children compared with those that did not experience such violence. The experience of trauma and anxiety was more common among children that were exposed to violence. A survey conducted by Åsling-Monemi, Tabassum, and Persson (2007) revealed that severe spousal violence and controlling behaviour in marriage increased the risks of under-five deaths among daughters of educated mothers in rural Bangladesh, and suggested that child mortality is a gender-bias consequence of domestic violence.

2.10.4 Bangladeshi Literature Specifically on Women's Coping Strategies and Help-seeking Practices

Only a very few studies have focused exclusively on various aspects related to women's help-seeking behaviours and coping strategies in the event of domestic violence. Some studies focused on this issue as part of other objectives. For example, WHO's (2005b) multi-country study noted that two-thirds (66%) of women that had been physically abused by their partner in Bangladesh had not told anybody about the violence. In effect, the study identified Bangladesh as one of the lowest self-reporting countries in terms of reporting to different agencies and service providers. Only 12% of women reported the incidence of severe physical violence to at least one agency. The most common reason for not seeking help was either the women considered violence as normal or that they feared consequences such as further violence, losing their children, or bringing shame to their family. Some women felt they would not be believed or that it would not help.

Bhuiya et al. (2003) found that women seek some help from the family and neighbours rather than the formal justice system. For example, in 23.9% of the cases family members directly took a mediating role by requesting the husband not abuse his wife verbally or physically. The study also found that women try to cope with the violent situation because of the children (32.1%), followed by having no place to go (12.7%) and social stigma (12.2%).

Naved, Azim, Bhuiya and Persson (2006) confirmed that women keep silent about their abuse due to fear of further assault, uncertainty about their own or their

children's future, stigma and belief of men's right to be violent as well as other reasons. In their study, two-fifths of the women reported to have been physically abused by their husbands but 66% of them never told anyone of their abuse. This study found a higher prevalence of physical violence and a higher percentage of silence. Only 2% of women ever sought institutional help, doing so only when the violence was life-threatening.

Schuler et al. (2008) found that abused women rarely seek recourse in the event of domestic violence. The majority of the women confirmed they had few options for preventing or stopping domestic violence. When they sought recourse they had very little success. In fact, having no alternative, women have to accept the violence condoned by their husbands. The study further explored that poverty, gender inequality, and patriarchal attitude discouraged abused women from seeking recourse to others. Women even avoided *salish*[6], a community-level informal dispute resolution mechanism which is traditionally dominated by men and elites. Women often do not like to make family matters public and the decisions made in *salish* are often biased towards men.

Sayeem and Khan (2012) made an attempt through a qualitative inquiry in a rural area to explore women's strategic responses to physical violence. The usual coping measures adopted by women are abstaining from the household and using the no-talk strategy. In some cases, women leave the scene or try to divert the attention of the husbands. However, when physical abuse is serious, women go to their parental home but come back after some time. The other strategies of abstinence include not talking to other family members, not talking to children, abstaining from food preparation, and abstaining from food intake, ranging from a few hours to a few days. Women were found less likely to seek help from others. The women who sought help from others mostly turned to family members and neighbours; and no one sought formal social or legal support.

Recently, Sayem, Begum, and Moneesha (2015) examined women's attitudes towards informal and formal social and formal legal support-seeking strategies against

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[6] *Salish* refers to a method of local dispute resolution. According to National Encyclopaedia of Bangladesh, *salish* is a social system for informal adjudication of trivial disputes both civil and criminal by local notables, such as *matbars* (leaders) or *salishkars* (adjudicators).

intimate partner violence. The women's attitudes significantly varied according to the their age, their working status, experience of violence, receipt of micro-credit, their decision-making authority, the husband's age and education, and the family's economic status and type. Amongst the participants, 72.4% were in favour of seeking advice from social services for finding out ways to improve the behaviour of the husband, 68.8% were in favour of asking social services to persuade the husband to seek therapy, and 71.1% were in favour of going to a battered women's shelter. Interestingly, a greater percentage of women wanted to change their own behaviour in order to change their husbands' violent behaviour.

2.10.5 The Major Academic Gaps in the Domestic Violence Literature in Bangladesh: A Critical Analysis and the Justifications of the Study

As shown above, various scholars have captured many important dimensions of this problem. However, many issues of domestic violence against women are yet to be explored. The number of limitations of the previous studies regarding the choice of research methodology, research scope, methods of analyses, and of course, policy preferences instigated me to conduct the study.

First, the empirical studies on domestic violence against women in Bangladesh have limitations in that most of the studies have been conducted using a quantitative research approach, such as those of Bhuiya et al. (2003), Koeing et al. (2003), Ahmed et al. (2004), Ahmed (2005), WHO (2005b), Salam et al. (2006), Åsling-Monemi et al. (2007), Silverman et al. (2007), Naved and Akhter (2008), Silverman et al. (2009), Johnson and Das (2009) Sambisa et al. (2011), Rahman et al. (2011), Rahman et al. (2012), Sayeem et al. (2013), Bajracharya and Amin (2013), and Naved (2013), and some studies have used both qualitative and quantitative approaches such as those of Schuler et al. (1996), Hadi (2000), Khan et al. (2000), Mannan (2002), Bates et al. (2004), Hadi (2005), Naved and Persson (2005), Khan and Aeron (2006), Naved et al. (2006) and Schular and Islam (2008). Under closer inspection, it is understandable that the purpose of qualitative approach was to support the quantitative approach. These studies, thus, were unable to grasp an inclusive picture of the subjective experiences of women. Arguably, quantitative measures may permit researchers to

define the acts that contribute to the understanding of the types of violence, but may not accurately represent the experiences of the victims (Gondolf and Beeman, 2003). Then again, quantitative research has been proved to be useful for understanding the magnitude and some of the main features of domestic violence, including its effects on women's health and well-being, it is often unable to provide a holistic understanding of women's experiences of violence (Ellesberg, 1997). Moreover, accurately quantifying domestic violence is often difficult and does not provide sufficient rigor since it is inextricably linked with socio-cultural contexts, norms, beliefs and practices (Shaikh, 2003). It is only women's subjective experience that can better describe their own experiences of domestic violence. Understanding the experiences of domestic violence from the women's subjective point of view may also greatly help in the development of need-based intervention modalities, and long-term goals for preventing violence against women (Crowell & Burges, 1996; Varnda, 2013). Thus, I deliberately wanted to fill-in such an important methodological gap that prevails in the existing literature.

Secondly, in Bangladesh, only a very few attempts have so far been made to explicitly use the qualitative approach to studying domestic violence. Schuler et al. (1998) used such an approach specifically to explore the prevalence of wife-beating in relation to women's use of micro-credit. Schuler et al. (2008) and Sayeem and Khan (2012) used the approach in order to explore women's help-seeking practices. Therefore, there is a huge dearth of literature with regard to excavating women's subjective experiences of domestic violence regarding the major dimensions of the problem.

Thirdly, upon reviewing the existing literature in Bangladesh, I found that no attempt has been directed towards providing a comprehensive overview in a single survey on different forms of domestic violence (physical, sexual, economic, emotional and psychological), antecedent causes, consequences and coping-strategies, and help-seeking practices. The existing studies have covered various forms of domestic violence and their antecedent causes in a quite dispersed and uneven manner. For example, some studies focused exclusively on physical violence such as those of Schular et al. (1996), Schular et al. (1998), Bates et al. (2003), Naved and Perrson (2005), Ahmed (2005), Naved et al. (2006), Schular and Islam (2008) and

Bajracharya and Amin (2013). A few studies concentrated on only two forms of violence such as those of Bhuyia et al. (2003) and Koeing et al. (2003), which studied physical and psychological/verbal abuse or those of Sambisa et al. (2011), Rahman et al. (2011) and Rahman et al. (2012) which examined physical and sexual violence. Hadi (2005), on the other hand, examined physical and mental/emotional torture. However, studies conducted by Khan et al. (2000), Mannan (2002), WHO (2005b), and Khan and Aeron (2006) studied physical, sexual, and psychological and/or emotional forms of violence, while Hadi (2000) and Naved (2013) exclusively examined the magnitude of within-marriage sexual violence.

It is true that not all forms of violence might be experienced by all women within the same scale or intensity but it is only the prolonged in-depth interview with research participants that can explore women's experiences of the different forms of domestic violence. Moreover, sometimes forms of domestic violence are interlinked and interwoven. For example, if a woman refuses sex with her husband, she might be physically battered, emotionally or psychologically tortured, or economically abused. Unfortunately, as most of the studies were conducted through a quantitative or positivist approach, these studies have failed to exhume the important dynamics underlying the problem. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that no attempt as yet has been made to specifically explore women's various experiences of economic violence, although little evidence is available with regard to women's participation in credit programmes. Economic violence has already been recognised as a specific form of violence within the major international documents. For example, the in-depth study report (UN, 2006) has specified this type of domestic violence. In Bangladesh, the DVPPA 2010 has also specified varied forms of economic violence in the policy document.

Some studies in Bangladesh have examined psychological or emotional abuse interchangeably. In these circumstances, readers might get confused concerning the distinction between psychological and emotional violence. For example, Khan and Aeron (2006) included insulting women and their parents, criticising, scolding and restricting movement as emotional violence, whereas Mannan (2002) included excessive controlling, verbal abuse or scolding, curtailing or disrupting routine activities, social relationship as psychological abuse. Some of these practices

mentioned above are, for sure, overlapping. Therefore, it is my firm conviction that creating a clear demarcation between these two forms of violence is needed in order to enhance the body of knowledge.

Since qualitative studies in Bangladesh are very limited, the factors and consequences of domestic violence arrived at through the quantitative approach in the existing literature appear to be very mechanistic and straightforward. For example, the studies which aimed at exploring the consequences or impacts of domestic violence such as those of Ahmed et al. (2004), WHO (2005b), Salam et al. (2006), Åsling-Monemi, et al. (2007), Silverman et al. (2007), Naved and Akhter (2008), Silverman et al. (2009), and Rahman et al. (2012) used exclusive quantitative tools and techniques. These studies provide a straightforward or linear understanding of the consequences, however, it must be recognised that the social world is very complicated and even more complicated for abused women. Without digging into that complexity we only produce a partial picture of the social world. Research needs to become much more comprehensive in order to capture the complex and distinctive picture of domestic violence so that clear indications for adopting measures for its elimination are possible (Perilla et al., 2011).

Fourthly, my review confirms a big lacuna in the existing literature with respect to victims' coping strategies and patterns of help-seeking in Bangladesh. Bhuiya et al. (2003), WHO (2005b) and Naved et al. (2006) studied coping strategies or help-seeking practices as part of other objectives and Schular et al. (2008), Sayeem and Khan (2012) and Sayeem et al. (2015) studied this aspect solely to explore the victims' responses to domestic violence. Notably, the studies conducted by Bhuiya et al. (2003), WHO (2005b), Naved et al. (2006) and Sayeem et al. (2015) were fundamentally based toward the quantitative approach and as such were not able to go more deeply into the issues related to women's coping or help-seeking practices. The study conducted by Sayeem et al. (2015) only explored women's coping strategies and informal help-seeking practices. It said nothing about women's formal help-seeking practices such as seeking help from the police, the court or other government agencies. Only Schular et al. (2008) made a substantial effort to uncover women's formal and informal help-seeking practices, including *salish*, an important community activity. However, that study did not explore women's informal support from

community NGOs. The NGOs in Bangladesh constitute a dynamic entity. This sector in Bangladesh is globally recognised as one of the most mature and effective national development networks, and it occupies a central stage in the developing initiatives of the country (Devine, 2003). Today, many NGOs work exclusively at the grassroots level on women issues, particularly to combat violence against women and to ensure women rights. Realising the magnitude of the problem of violence against women, the government is increasingly recognising the role of NGOs in building a united social movement against violence against women (Khandaker, 2009). Therefore, the need to conduct further study on both coping strategies and help-seeking practices covering important stakeholders was obvious.

Fifthly, it is arguable that the nature of domestic violence and the victims' coping strategies or help-seeking practices have a robust interface with the perceptions and experiences of local communities. This is an area which is largely ignored by the researchers in Bangladesh. In this connection, Ellesberg and Heise (2005) stated that if a researcher plans to contribute to policy intervention on violence against women, he or she must exploit opportunities to internalise community attitudes toward violence and the responses and experiences of various institutional actors. Three key studies on women's help-seeking/coping strategies in Bangladesh, Naved et al. (2006), Schular et al. (2008) and Sayeem and Khan (2012), mentioned whom women usually seek for formal or informal support. These studies found that other than family members women sometimes seek help from immediate social networks which form an informal support mechanism. Therefore, apart from understanding the views and experiences of the victims of domestic violence, the perceptions and experiences of the local community is of paramount importance. In this regard, Perilla et al. (2011) stated that research that excludes or at least significantly reduces the participation of the community means creating knowledge about domestic violence that only pertains to certain groups. Therefore, inclusion of the community in order to explore their perception and activism concerning domestic violence had significant implications for my study.

Finally, as there has been no academic attempt regarding the "implementation assessment" of the DVPPA 2010 in Bangladesh, I was strongly motivated to make an in-depth investigation of the effectiveness of the policy. In 2013, BNWLA prepared a

brief institutional monitoring report on the implementation of this act. As it was not an academic study, it lacked not only theoretical support for policy implementation, but also was lacking in depth and breadth. In fact, it was more of report than an insightful study which requires academic analysis and interpretation. Moreover, this study was conducted only in areas where BNWLA has specific programmatic interventions for the promotion of the DVPPA 2010. Hence, what happens in other areas was unknown from this study. Notably, neither the Mymensingh nor Netrokona district was included in this study. I shall discuss more about conducting this implementation assessment in the following section.

2.11 Issues Related to Implementation Assessment: The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010

Before I specifically put in place my arguments that prompted me to assess the implementation of the DVPPA 2010, I would like to provide an overview of various conceptual and theoretical issues surrounding policy implementation and implementation assessment, and also general observations made by different scholars, reports, and agencies concerning various policy measures about violence against women in Bangladesh, and the implementation of those measures.

2.11.1 Policy Implementation

The term "policy implementation" has been defined by many scholars from various perspectives. Implementation is an important stage of the policy-making process. It means the execution of the law in which various stakeholders, organisations, procedures, and techniques work together to put polices into effect with a view to attaining policy goals (Stewart, Hedge, & Lester, 2008). The study of policy implementation has grown substantially since the seminal book "Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington are Dashed in Oakland" of Pressman and Wildavsky was published in the early seventies (Love, 2004). As a case study, it explored the difficulties encountered by the Economic Development Administration in Oakland, California when trying to implement a job creation programme during the 1960s. The research resulted in demonstrable progress in at least two respects. First,

there is now an enhanced understanding of the meaning of implementation and how it varies across time, polices and government; and secondly, it links policy design and implementation performance (Stewart et al., 2008). Policy implementation is the process of the interactions between setting goals and the actions directed towards to achieving them (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Implementation is usually incorporated in a statute in order to carry out a basic policy decision, but it may also be formed in important executive orders or court decisions (Maznamin & Sabatier, 1989). It is the carrying out of activities by implementers to achieve the set policy's objectives and goals (Chaval Chompucot, 2012). Although government agencies are the primary implementers of public policy, other actors may also be directly involved in policy implementation or act to influence government agencies or both (Anderson, 2011). As a matter of fact, both public and private individuals act in carrying out the policy implementation (Meter & Horn, 1975).

2.11.2 Implementation Assessment and the Frontline Implementers

There is an intimate relationship between implementation and evaluation/assessment. Implementation and evaluation are "opposite sides of the coin." Implementation provides information about the queries of evaluation, and evaluation provides insight into the implementation (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). In fact, an implementation evaluation tells decision makers what is going on in the policy intervention (Patton, 1987). Implementation evaluators/assessors have much to contribute to strengthening policy implementation, achieving results, and building a performance-oriented organisational culture (Love, 2004). In effect, implementation assessment is a kind of evaluation which assesses the reliability and effectiveness of a policy. It is also called process evaluation and is concerned with how well an intervention is functioning by critically looking into the service delivery performance, the effectiveness of intervention management, the utilisation of programme resources, and other such matters (Rossi et al., 2004). Process evaluation examines the gaps between the intended and perceived attitudes embodied in the policy and observes the on-going progress or initial output (Vedung, 1997). Process evaluation focuses on the means by which a policy is delivered to the clients or the way in which the policy is implemented (Bingham & Felbinger, 1989). Moreover, when an intervention is new, a

process evaluation provides invaluable feedback to manage the programme for achieving high performance (Wholey & Hatry, 1992, as cited in Rossi et al., 2004).

One of the important ways of studying the effectiveness of policy implementation is to a gather detailed, descriptive information about what the programme or policy is doing, keeping in mind the experiences of the clients, the services rendered to the clients, the performance of the implementers, the organisation of the intervention, and the possible consequences of the policy in the future (Patton, 1987). Rossi et al. (2004) stated that many policies are not implemented or executed according to their design. A policy intervention may simply be poorly managed or be compromised by political interference. Sometimes personnel are not available or facilities are inadequate; sometimes frontline implementers are unable to carry out the intervention due to a lack of motivation or expertise. Policy design may also be poorly structured or the original design may not be transmitted well to the staff. Moreover, the indented policy participants may not exist in sufficient numbers or may not be identified precisely or may be found to be non-cooperative. Other scholars have also studied policy implementation from a number of perspectives and their observations confirm that proper implementation of any policy can be seriously undermined due to lack of sufficient resources (Meter & Horn, 1975; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; Brinkerhoff & Crosby, 2002), lack of incentive (Meter & Horn, 1975; Bridgman & Davis, 2004), lack of a competent staff, implementors' negative disposition (Meter & Horn, 1975), lack of inter-organisational communication (Meter & Horn, 1975; Bridgeman & Davis, 2000), lack of professional and technical resources (Goggin, Bowman, Lester, and O'Toole, 1990; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989), lack of official commitment to statutory objectives (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989), lack of delegation of authority and flexibility (Fox, Bayat, & Ferriera, 2006), lack of sufficient autonomy (Wali, 2010), inter-organisational complexity and conflict (Stocker, 1991), intra-agency antipathy and complexity of joint actions (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973), in impact of economic, political, and social conditions, etc. (Meter & Horn, 1975), lack of specified technical know-how, lack of administrative capabilites, in prevelence of self-serving goals of street-level bureaucrats, and absense of administrative willingness (Vedung, 1997).

It is noteworthy that Lipsky (1980), who came up with the term “street level bureaucrats,” stated that they are the front-line public officials or implementers implementing government policies. The scholar further stated that there is a common trend to blame frontline implementers for their inability to provide responsive and appropriate services (Lipsky, 2010). Perhaps there might be some reasoning for such blaming, but in order to make a fair judgment we also need to know the pains and constrains encountered by the frontline implementers in implementing polices (Graham, 2005). Failure to recognise the complexity of front-line implementation might create severe implementation problems (Weimer & Vining, 2011). Lipsky (2010) affirmed that frontline implementers may experience a number of adverse conditions and these may include: 1) resources constrains; 2) increased demand for services; 3) vague, ambiguous, or conflicting goal expectations; 4) difficulties in goal achievements; and 5) involuntary clients. Recent interest in implementation has focused some attention on what happens in the field. Unfortunately, these studies have overlooked the pressures facing public servants and have frequently arrived at the quick conclusion that implementation has not been handled properly without excavating more deeply the pressures on field-level public servants and they ways that these pressures cause problems (Carroll & Siegal, 1999). Nevertheless, policy implementation is linked with the realities of a specific and dynamic environment and plays an important role in the practical implications of the nature and services rendered (Fox et al., 2006). Finally, it should be kept in mind that a good policy, if poorly implemented, may fail to achieve the policy goals and objectives (Edwards & George 1980). Specifically with reference to domestic violence policy, Frattaroli and Teret (2006) stated that a well-designed policy on domestic violence may end in failure if it is underfunded, mismanaged, or not properly enforced. If implementation goes wrong, an evaluation of the policy may conclude that the policy is ineffective (Frattaroli & Teret, 2006). Then again, evaluators have much to contribute to help managers and staff in strengthening implementation and achieving results (Love, 2004).

2.11.3 Policy Interventions Regarding Violence against Women in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, there are some specific policy interventions for redressing violence against women. The legal measures which specifically are in place to punish the perpetrators and to eliminate violence against women include: the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980; the Acid Crimes Control Act 2002, the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment, 2003), the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, the Domestic Violence (Prevention, & Protection) Act 2010, the Human Trafficking (Deterrence and Suppression) Act 2010, and the Pornography Control Act 2012. Centrally, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) is the focal authority that deals with matters relating to violence against women and children. It has adopted a number of affirmative polices and initiatives to combat violence against women. A cell for the prevention of violence against women and women support centre has been established under the Department of Women's Affairs of this ministry to extend free legal assistance, counselling, and rehabilitative support to the victims of violence (MSPVAW, 2010). At the field level, violence against women prevention committees have been set up at the district level[7], sub-district level[8], and union level led by the union council (UC)[9] (GoB, 2011a). In addition, women and children repression tribunals have been setup all over country to try cases under the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003) (MSPVAW, 2010).

The Multi-sectoral Programme on Violence against Women (MSPVAW), launched in 2000, is being implemented using an integrated inter-ministerial approach with targets at reducing various types of violence against women and extending medical, legal, police assistance, and rehabilitative and counselling services to the victims. It also works in country-wide mobilisation against violence against women. Under the MSPVAW, one stop crisis centres (OCC) and one stop crisis cells in various hospitals to provide medical, legal, social, and psychological support to

[7] A district is a tier of field administration in Bangladesh. There are sixty four districts in Bangladesh. A district comprises several sub-districts.

[8] A sub-district is a local level administrative unit and comprises several union councils (UC). Public officials or frontline implementers working at the sub-district level look after matters related to rural administration and law enforcement, and rural social and economic development.

[9] The union council (UC) is the smallest local government unit operated by elected public representatives. It comprises a number of villages or rural areas.

female survivors of violence. The MSPVAW also manages deoxyribonucleic (DNA) laboratories at eight medical college hospitals in order to ensure speedy and smooth disposal of cases of violence against women and children. Under the management of the MSPVAW, victims are also given counselling services through the national trauma counselling centre located at Dhaka (MSPVAW, 2010). A national helpline for violence against women and children has been established under the MSPVAW in 2012 in order provide appropriate guidelines, advice, service, and support to the victims, their families, and other stakeholder round the clock (GoB, 2013a).

The legal aid cell of National Women Organisation is a state-owned autonomous body offering oppressed women free service for upholding their legal rights and enhancing their socio-economic status (MSPVAW, 2010). The victim support centre has been setup by the police in Dhaka and 21 additional centres across the country to provide professional support to victims (UNWOMWN, 2011a). The prevention of repression against women cell within the Bangladesh Police Headquarters has been set up to take specific cases and complaints involving violence against women (Yusuf, n.d.). Moreover, the Department of Health and Family Welfare has also been involved in combating violence against women through its activities, programmes, and actions. The women friendly hospital initiatives is one of the important efforts undertaken by the health department (MSPVAW, 2010). In addition, the government of Bangladesh has built a burn unit at Dhaka Medical College particularly to provide urgent care to victims of acid attacks (Swanson, 2002). Overall, the government of Bangladesh declared a National Women Development Policy-2011, which acts as a guiding framework for all subsequent actions for the protection and advancement of women in Bangladesh (GoB, 2011a). In 2013, the MoWCA launched the National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2013-2025 for appropriate implementation of international commitments and to prevent violence against women and children through a comprehensive approach (GoB, 2013a). Despite having all of these encouraging policy measures, what is the status of the implementation of those interventions? In this regard, in the following, I have drawn an overview based on observations made by different scholars and agency reports.

2.11.4 The Implementation Status of the Policy Interventions Regarding Violence Against Women in Bangladesh: Some General Observations

Successful implementation of public policy in Bangladesh is very low (Chowdhury, 2005). Despite having good interventions and intentions in place to combat violence against women, the situation of violence against women has not been improved significantly. Enforcing and implementing the existing laws, acts, and agreements, even for severe violence, are often found to be very challenging in Bangladesh (Johnston & Naved, 2008). In this connection, Guhathakutra (1985, 2004) has stated that the laws relating to violence against women are often ambiguous and difficult to implement. Laws do not really seek to challenge or change the subordinate status of women in society, without which it would be difficult to make legal provisions effective. Despite having a number of laws/polices, due to inherent conceptual defects of some of the laws, the state often fails to punish the perpetrators of violence against women. These laws are often useless and are mere additions to the statute books. Lack of funds, protecting the victims and witnesses, improper documentation of testimony, and lack of understanding and sensitivity regarding violence against women among police, judges, doctors, social workers and concerned agencies lead to poor implementation performance in terms of ensuring punishment of the perpetrators and inadequate redress for the victims. The laws tend to be ornamental, as perpetrators receive inadequate redress for their crimes and the medico-legal system fails to respond appropriately to women's needs (Chowdhury, 2007). Legal solutions have had limited success in curbing and preventing violence against women in Bangladesh. Complex bureaucratic practices, and procedural delays and costs associated with recourse-seeking, discourage women from seeking legal assistance for domestic violence (Huda, 2006). On the other hand, the attitude of police towards women is often objectionable, and they are unwilling to become involved in marital disputes or to file cases of domestic violence (Naripakko & Mahila Parishad, n.d.; Farouk, 2005; Ameen, 2005). A woman dares not file complaints, sometimes fearing negligence and harassment at the police station (Farouk, 2005). In fact, there are many cases of rape, maltreatment, and sexual assault of women in police custody as well (Khan, 2005).

Moreover, lack of inter-ministerial coordination at the various levels of health, police, and the criminal justice system is particularly evident in terms of providing

necessary support to women for cases of violence against them (Naripakko & Mahila Parishad, n.d.). For any legislation to be effectively implemented, especially to combat violence, coordinated efforts at all levels are extremely important (Ameen, 2005). On the other hand, lack of effective agencies offering supportive intervention and lack of sensitivity and understanding regarding women's rights among the implementers stand as barriers to proper enforcement and implementation of the existing laws (Waheed & Bhuyia, 2007). On the other hand, critics of the law point out that instead of protecting women as intended, redress laws related to violence against women are widely used to harass people (Huda, 2006).

It is further evident that rural women's access to legal and institutional resources for violence against women is limited and further diminished by poverty and lack of knowledge about their legal rights and whatever polices are available to protect them (Bhuyia et al., 2003). Lack of knowledge about the laws and remedies related to violence against women stand as a major impediment to proper implementation of policy interventions in Bangladesh (ICDDR,B & Population Council, 2013). The expense required to seek recourse with legal authorities in terms of such elements as lawyer's fees, court fees, and other incidental expenses makes it very difficult for poor, illiterate, and disadvantageous rural women to even think of legal solutions or seek redress through criminal proceedings (Farouk, 2005; Waheed & Bhuyia, 2007). On the other hand, the legal solutions for women are cumbersome, burdensome, and exhaustive mentally, physically, and financially (Mannan, 2002).

Of late, the UN Rapporteur to violence against women observed that the ineffective implementation of existing laws, the lack of responsive justice systems, and impunity for acts of violence are the rules rather than the exception in Bangladesh. It was further remarked by the UN Rapporteur that domestic violence is the most pervasive form of violence against women in Bangladesh and called upon the government to ensure the effective implementation of laws and measures that protect women from violence (UN News Centre, 2013).

2.11.5 Justifications for Assessing the Implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010

Based on the general observations of some scholars and agency reports, as mentioned above, it is understandable that that the successful implementation of

policy related to violence against women in Bangladesh is a challenging task. When a policy is new, a process/implementation evaluation provides invaluable feedback to policy makers in order to adopt further measures to improve its performance. Very specifically, the DVPPA 2010 as a policy intervention is relatively new in the context of Bangladesh. Therefore, continuous assessment of it can put forward valuable feedback to policy makers on matters concerning how it is being implemented and what measures should be taken to improve its implementation strategies. For example, the brief institutional monitoring report prepared by BNWLA (2013) provides some indications of the constraints in implementing the act, such as lack of conceptual clarity, stakeholder awareness, legal training, and logistic support. However, a more in-depth assessment based on the theoretical foundation of policy implementation was imperative for this act. Therefore, my intention was to do an in-depth implementation assessment/process evaluation of the DVPPA 2010 of Bangladesh by taking into consideration specifically how the frontline policy implementers are assigned to "put policy in action" and "upon whom action depends" (Battett & Fudge, 1981, as cited in Wali, 2010), how they view the existing policy intervention, and what experiences they have had in implementing it. Studies on implementation from the perspective of frontline implementers are quite rare (Graham, 2005). Moreover, I was also fully convinced with the arguments made by UNIFEM (2009), which states that information gathered through the evaluation of domestic violence legislations would greatly assist future policy formulation and law reform strategies. Considering all of the factors and contexts mentioned here, I undertook the implementation assessment/evaluation of the DVPPA 2010 in the context of my study areas.

2.12 Conclusion

The discussions in this review confirm that domestic violence against women is a serious problem around the world, and also in Bangladesh. However, in the context of Bangladesh, many issues associated with domestic violence are unexamined or under-studied. In this review, I have discussed the problem both in a general way and a specific way. Focusing on the context of Bangladeshi literature was its specific endeavour, while discussing issues related to concepts, prevalence,

theories and chronological features was its general endeavour. One of the fundamental features of this review was that it categorically argued why the research was needed in the context of Bangladesh. In fact, there is evident of dearth of subjective understanding about the various forms, causes, consequences, coping-strategies and help-seeking practices, and community perception and activities with regard to domestic violence. Moreover, my arguments with regard to assessing the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 were also significantly justified. Broadly, the information and arguments provided in the review inextricably fit the purpose of the study, and they ways in which I designed my research questions.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a frame of reference of the methodological approach adopted in this qualitative study. Methodology in social research deals with the rules and procedures with a view to making knowledge valid and trustworthy (Ramazanoğlu & Holland, 2003). Methodology is the blueprint or set of decisions and procedures that governs the study, which covers strategies with respect to sampling, data collection, and data analysis. It is, stated in another way, the research design (Schensul, 2012). In this research, I employed a qualitative research approach as the strategy for collecting and analysing the experiences of my research participants, and I sought recourse to various qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods broadly explore socially-constructed reality, and expose the close relationship between the researcher and the participants. It also highlights the situational constraints that stand as barriers in research inquiry (Denzin & Lincon, 1998). Qualitative research is used by the researcher for the purpose of exploring a complex and comprehensive understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2013). Specifically, qualitative research has the strength to explicitly facilitate the exploration and analysis of women's own experiences, understanding, and the commonalties of their lives (Holdsworth, Clisby, Fairbank, & Miles, 2007). However, my study not only explored women's lived experiences of domestic violence, and the experiences and perceptions of the community, but also assessed how the DVPPA 2010 is being implemented at the local level in Bangladesh based upon the perceptions and experiences of the frontline implementers. Policy evaluation is a major area of qualitative research. In the 1960s and 70s, qualitative research was adopted in policy evaluation studies (Mathison, 2005). It was a period when qualitative research independently or with the quantitative method began to be applied

in evaluation (Yüksel, 2010). Using qualitative research in assessing/evaluating implementation in the local context is ideally suited since it takes a holistic and very rich grasp of the local context. It also explores the unique diversities and constraints in relation to policy performance (Patton, 1987). Most importantly, the policy implementation itself requires evaluation, and qualitative research methods provide exceptional ways of providing information about policy implementation (Ezzy, 2002).

3.2 Philosophical Paradigm of the Research

A paradigm has been referred to as a worldview. Each paradigm or worldview contains a set of beliefs or guiding principles (Guba, 1990) which guide the research design (Avramidis & Smith, 1999). A paradigm is a model of understanding and interpreting the social world (Babbie, 2007). The paradigmatic belief of the researcher influences the purpose of the research and the whole process of research, including values, bias, and ethics (Baiely, 2007).

I used the social constructivism worldview or paradigm in this study, which is often described as interpretivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Wilhelm Dilthey (1864-1920) developed interpretivism with the argument that *verstehen* (understanding) was the goal of social science research and the lived experiences of humans provide the foundation of knowledge (Willis, 2007). *Verstehen* refers to the understanding that the researcher studies the life of people from their own perspective, and in their own contexts and words (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). Therefore, for interpretivists, the meaning of the world or realty of the persons being studied is critically important (Willis, 2007). Under the interpretive framework it is assumed that the empirical world is not a single entity; personal views and perspectives of reality are socially constructed (Hennink et al. 2011; Thiel, 2014), and thus, individual experience is immensely important to research (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In this worldview, individuals develop the subjective meanings of their experiences and the researcher attempts to achieve a complex understanding of those meanings (Creswell, 2013).

The research methods in interpretivism or social constructivism are typically humanistic. These may include face-to-face interactions in the form of in-depth interviews or observations or a combination of various methods (Willis, 2007;

Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The methods used in interpretive research are concerned with exploring how individuals interpret the world around them. In interpretivism, the more the open-ended the questioning, the better it is, as the researcher listens carefully and empathetically to what people say or do in their social world (Creswell, 2013). I also used a focus ground discussion in my research. There is a debate on using this method since it seems to be less suitable for the interpretive researcher. Interpretive research is more concerned about interpersonal than group experiences (Millward, 2012). However, focus groups have also been used in interpretive works (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The argument is that if the researcher is convinced that participants are able to discuss their personal experiences adequately, despite the presence of group dynamics, a focus group may be suitable for the interpretive approach (Smith, 2003, as cited in Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). On the other hand, case study is also embedded in the interpretive paradigm of reseach as it extensively relies on using cases (Willis, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Moreover, interpretivism provides useful guidelines for policy assessment as well. An interpretive policy evaluator expects that different stakeholders of a policy would have different experiences and perceptions about the policy and those experiences have obvious importance. As such, the interpretive evaluator attempts to capture these diverse experiences. He/she also closely examines the implications of these experiences (Patton, 2002).

In an interpretive approach, researchers make an interpretation of their findings, which are determined by their own experiences and background (Creswell, 2013). The notion that the research should be “truly value-free” is questioned by the interpretive paradigm. As such, the subjectivity of the participants and researchers is acknowledged, and the background, interests and values of a researcher are also acknowledged. These important aspects influence the creation and interpretation of data and information (Hennink et al., 2011).

Under the above contextual factors, I believe that my personal, professional, and academic experiences, and using multiple methods and approaches such as in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), observation, and case study under the interpretive framework, helped significantly to present and interpret the findings stemming from the experiences and perceptions of the participants.

3.3 Unit of Analysis

A unit of analysis is defined as what or whom the researchers wish to study (Patton, 1987; Babbie, 2007). It is the main focus of inquiry. Qualitative studies typically focus on individuals. However, it also focuses on dyads, groups, processes, and organisations. The unit of analysis in qualitative research helps to focus on subsequent decisions on data gathering and analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). My qualitative research was directed towards exploring women's experience of domestic violence. It also aimed at understanding the views and experiences of the members of the local community concerning domestic violence. In addition, I excavated the views and experiences of the frontline policy implementers particularly concerning the implementation of the DVPPA 2010. Such an attempt gave me substantial information about "what is happening to the individuals regarding the policy" (Patton, 1987). In all respects, my study dealt with the experiences and perceptions of the individuals. Therefore, the unit of analysis of this study was invariably the "individuals."

3.4 Selection of the Research Settings and Research Participants

The first problem/step in doing a research is to select a topic or theme for investigation or inquiry (Krishnaraj, 2005; Ellesberg & Heise, 2005). The selection of the topic is often influenced by personal interest. It happened to my case as well. The second step was to select an appropriate site. Geographical and related practical considerations always influence the choice of the settings, and researchers are often concerned about easy access to the site (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992). Rossman and Rallis (2012) are of the opinion that the ideal site can be considered one which does not make entry impossible, helps to develop strong relationships with the participants, and ethical and political considerations are not disturbing. I considered all of these factors in selecting the research sites. In this sense, my research was "particularistic" or "site specific" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). I have detailed some of the reasons for being "particularistic" or "site specific" in the following few paragraphs.

Any site in Bangladesh is a suitable setting for study because of the high levels of domestic violence there. Accordingly, I had the opportunity to conduct research anywhere in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, I restricted myself to some specific rural sites of two neighbouring districts; namely, Mymensingh and Netrokona, which are located in the middle part of the country. Notably, the majority of Bangladeshis live in rural areas, and currently 77% people live there, and the rest live in urban areas (BBS, 2012). I hail from a village named Manasree, under the sub-district Mohanganj of Netrokona district. It was in the early eighties that my family moved from the village to Myemensingh district, but we were not detached from the village. I used to visit my village off and on. I have a strong affinity with both Mymensingh and Netrokona districts. My relatives are spread in different areas of these two districts. When the issue of choosing a research site was considered, I took the opportunity to exploit my close acquaintances and familiarity with these two districts. In any sense, Mymensingh and Netrokona districts might be labelled as "use of one's own area" for conducting the study. I also consider my research as "insider research." Insider research refers to conducting research in the areas or populations with which a researcher is also a member (Kanuha, 2000). Insider research facilitates greater understanding of the culture and society being studied (Pugh, Mitchell, & Brooks, 2000). Importantly, belonging to the same community and culture has some particular importance in qualitative research, as it helps to situate the researcher in the research process (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991, as cited in Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) and facilitates the interview process to a great extent (Bailey, 2007).

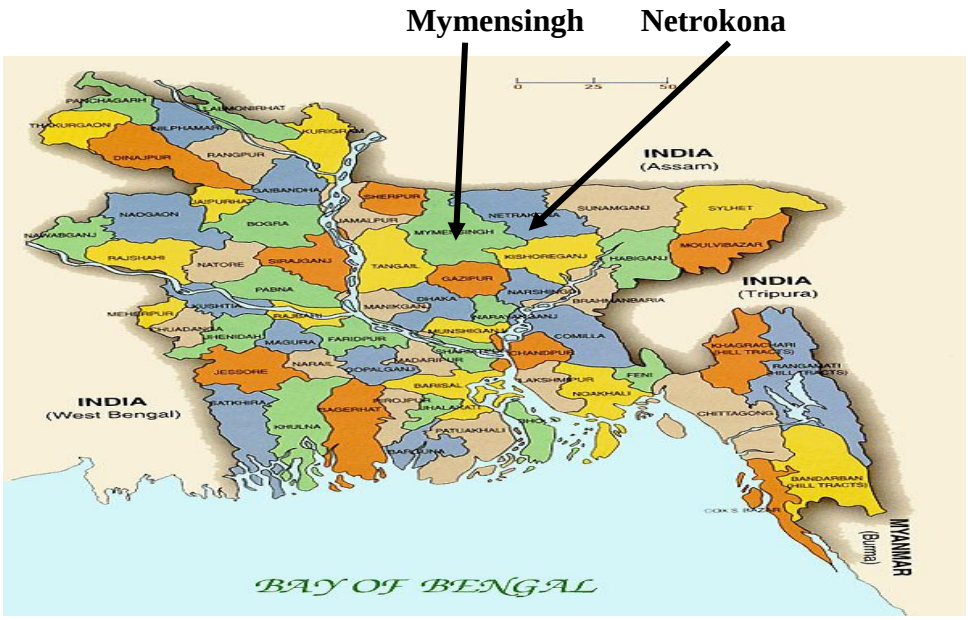

Figure 3.1 Study Areas in the Map of Bangladesh

Selecting own research setting not only helped to obtain easy access to the participants, but also helped to reduce the time required for data collection and to find a feasible location for the research. Importantly, it helped to build the trust of and rapport with the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Selecting my areas of acquaintance as a study area helped me to interview the maximum number of participants within the shortest possible time. Finally, I was fully motivated by the observation made by Silverman (2010), who is of the opinion that researchers can utilise their existing relationships and contacts for their research, and cautioned that trying to gain entry to a new site might be time consuming, and might end in failure if the topic of the research is sensitive in nature. Indisputably, domestic violence is a sensitive topic. Therefore, I was concerned about how easily I would have gained access to the participants. Moreover, the existing literature on violence against women suggests that no research has been conducted using qualitative approach in any part of these districts. The apparent dearth of academic study also motivated me to conduct the study in the rural areas of these two districts.

The following table shows the geographical coverage of my research settings.

Table 3.1 Research Settings and Participants

District	Sub-district/area coverage	Participants	District	Sub-district/area coverage	Participants Covered
Mymensingh[10]	Sadar[11]/district headquarters	Implementers Community Victims	Netrokona[12]	Sadar/district headquarters	Implementers Community
	Muktagacha	Implementers Community Victims		Purbadhala	Implementers Community Victims
	Bhaluka	Implementers Community		Mohanganj	Implementers Community Victims
	Trishal	Implementers Victims Community		Durgapur	Victims
	Isharganj	Implementers Victims		Barhatta	Implementers Victims
	Goforgaon	Community Victims			
	Dobawra	Implementers Community Victims			
	Dhaka city (capital)	Ministry officials Legal aid activists			

The selection of research participants or sampling is a critical but important issue in planning a research (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011). Sampling in qualitative research is often flexible (H.L. Rubin & I.S. Rubin, 1995). There is hardly any rule for sample size in qualitative inquiry. The research purpose is a determinant of selecting the sample size Moreover, one's stake in the research, the availability of resources and time, important factors, and issues related to credibility are important in this regard (Patton, 1990). Sample size in qualitative research is not overtly deterministic.

[10] Currently the Mymensingh district comprises thirteen sub-districts.
[11] *Sadar* (Headquarters) is a Bengali word and its meaning is a main part of a certain area. Usually, in each district there is one sub-district, which is called *sadar.* It includes the headquarters of that district.
[12] Currently the Netrokona district comprises ten sub-districts.

Nonetheless, it is usually important to have a reasonably good sample size. A good sample size can adequately provide a substantial meaning of the data and analysis of the data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, as cited in Tonsing, 2014). The act of focusing through sampling in qualitative research should be as strategic as it is practical (Mason, 2002). In selecting my sample, I was both strategic and practical. Since I had three categories of participants, along with a very few from the ministry and legal aid organisations, I deliberately made my sample size a little bigger. I specifically explored the lived experiences of thirty-nine victims of domestic violence from different rural areas. Notably, until I finished my field study in November, 2014, two cases were filed for two victims under the DVPPA 2010 in my study area. I interviewed the victims for the purpose of my implementation assessment of the DVPPA 2010. Moreover, I organised a *salish* or informal community dispute resolution to solve the problems of a victim. I specifically documented my interview with her as part of the case study developed to understand community interventions in relation to domestic violence. Since the realm of the community is wider, I recruited a substantial number of rural community persons. In this sense, I employed my own intuition, knowledge about the Bangladesh rural community, and also relied on the referrals of other people in selecting them. I interviewed twenty-six different persons (both males and females) from the community. Moreover, I conducted a FGD with an indigenous community consisting of seven participants. Then again, according to the DVPPA 2010, the categories of implementers of this act varied significantly, so I included participants from each category. In total, I had discussions with thirty-two frontline implementers mostly based at the sub-district level, and only a very few were based in the district headquarters, such as magistrates and district legal aid offices. Irrespective of their official base, all of the implementers deal with the problems and issues of rural areas. Moreover, for the purpose of exploring the background of enactment of this act, I talked to three legal aid activists from the organisations involved in the drafting process of the act. I also talked to two officials of the concerned ministry in order to know the overall policy issues regarding the act. Both legal aid and ministry officials are based in the capital city Dhaka. The details of the research participants are as follows.

Table 3.2 Number of Research Participants

Frontline implementers along with officials from the ministry and legal aid activists	**No**	**Community**	**No**	**Victims**	**No**
Enforcement officers	7	Sub-district women vice chairman[13]	2	Victims[14]	39
Police officers	6	Union council (UC)[15] female commissioners	3	Victim[16]	1
Magistrates	5	UC chairman	1	Victims[17]	2
Medical service providers	4	UC male commissioners	2		
Shelter home service providers	2	Muslim religious leaders	2		
Service provider	1	Hindu religious leaders	2		
Lawyers	5	Village elderly	2		
Government legal aid officer	2	Muslim marriage register	1		
Concerned officials from the ministry of women and children affairs	2	Hindu marriage register	1		
Legal aid activists from the organisations involved in drafting of the act	3	Teacher	1		
		Writer	2		
		Community NGO officials	2		
		Others (former UC commissioners, local/village leaders, social workers)	5		
		Indigenous Garo community	7		
Total	**37**		**33**		**42**

[13] In every sub-district (sub-district council) there is one chairman, a vice chairman, and a woman vice chairman. They are elected public representatives.
[14] I discussed thirty-nine victims' lived experiences in chapter 4.
[15] A UC consists of a chairman and twelve members/commissioners, including three women. They are elected public representatives.
[16] I developed a case on one victim in chapter 5 based on community activity to mitigate her problem through informal dispute resolution or *salish*.
[17] Finally, I developed cases on two victims in chapter 6 based on their experiences of recourse-seeking under the DVPPA 2010

In selecting participants for all cases, I looked for participants that were "information-rich" (Hennink et al., 2011) for the purpose of the study. I exploited an array of "formal and informal networks" (Hennink et al., 2011), which included relatives, friends, government agency officials, NGO officials, and community people as participants. Purposive sampling is a common strategy in qualitative research. Under the rubric of purposive sampling, a researcher selects individuals and sites that can purposefully provide information and have understanding of the research problem (Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Thus, purposive sampling was the dominant strategy in selecting the research participants. Moreover, I extensively used the snowball sampling technique as well. Notably, snowball sampling is used when the researcher gets access to research participants through contact or network information provided by the participants that are involved in the study (Noy, 2007). Snowballing is a kind of situation where the target sample members are involved in a kind of network or relationship (Aber, 2001). I used both sampling techniques interchangeably. For example, I was very much purposive in selecting the frontline policy implementers since those that are the implementers of this policy are clearly stated in the policy documents. In that case, I tried to cover as many areas as I could where the implementers were officially based. Sometimes I contacted them over the phone, and sometimes I just appeared and described my purpose. Overall, selecting and interviewing the implementers were neither difficult nor time-consuming. Notably, once I was in the field, for the purpose of my study, some implementers specifically referred me to some concerned officials and professionals whose duties and responsibilities were not stated in the policy document, but they were inextricably linked with the policy implementation of the DVPPA 2010, such as lawyers and government legal aid officers. Therefore, I also included them. On the other hand, I was also purposive in selecting ministry officials and officials from the legal organisations. These two categories of participants were based in the capital city, Dhaka.

I began interviewing the victims staying in my maternal uncle's village in Purbhadhala sub-district. I stayed there for some days. My uncle has been a UC chairman for the last fifteen years, and is experienced in dealing with many domestic violence incidents. Using his capacity, I could easily find and talk to some victims.

Usually, the victims, who were currently living with abusive husbands, were invited for interviewing at my maternal uncle's house in order to ensure their safety. In other cases, particularly those that were separated, expelled from home, or divorced, I personally visited their current place of living to interview them. Similarly, I stayed for a long time in my own village in Mohanganj sub-district. Community members and family members helped me to find and talk to victims from my own village and surrounding villages. One victim personally came to me to talk about her experience. I also stayed in the villages of some other relatives and friends in other sub-districts. They also helped me find victims to talk to. Some of the victims even helped in their respective capacities to select participants. Sometimes, government agency officials and NGO officials also helped me in contacting their clients, who were victims of domestic violence. In these cases, the victims were called by the officials to come to the offices, and I was given a separate space to talk to them. With regard to gaining access to the victims, and interviewing them confidently, freely and openly, I was concerned with my identity as a male researcher since disclosure of violence issues might be affected by many factors, including the sex of the interviewer (Ellsberg et al., 2001). I was more careful about gaining the trust of my participants through building appropriate rapport. I developed rapport before each interview so that the barrier between the male researcher and female participant was minimised as much as possible. In all cases, I had many informal discussions with the participants and that helped to gain their trust quickly. I must admit that in some cases, I had some difficulties making them open-up to my expectations, but with my utmost efforts I could overcome most of the difficulties, and took great delight in every interview.

I interviewed victims that were part of the typical Bangladeshi patriarchal social structure. It also came to my mind to know what happens to women in a matriarchal structure with regard to domestic violence and how the community views and handles the problem. This was the most flexible and emerging aspect of my research. "Garo," a matriarchal indigenous group is spread in some parts of the two districts where I conducted my study. I purposefully contacted the Tribal Welfare Association (TWA) of Dobura sub-district of Netrokona district through the sub-district administration. With the help of the TWA, I also managed to talk to two victims, and had discussions with important members of the community.

Specifically, selecting and recruiting community people and community NGOs was not a difficult task for me. I recruited a good number of community people from my maternal uncle's village and from my own village. I also recruited community people from some other parts of these two districts with the help of friends and relatives. I found that the community members were always enthusiastic to talk to me, and their support helped me to deeply internalise the uniformity, diversity, and uniqueness of community perceptions and activities. Although theoretically a community is a big concept, I carefully included relevant and important persons of the community. Again, my "informal and formal" network helped me to select community members based on purposive and snowball sampling techniques as I applied my own sense and the referrals of other people. For example, my research included victims from Muslim, Hindu and the Garo community, so, in selecting participants, I recruited key persons from all three communities. Importantly, in some cases, I recruited persons that were actively involved in community services such as s*alish*. I also deliberately included female public representatives. To add "extra flavor" to the perception of the community, I recruited two writers/literary persons from the community, who helped me with some intellectual in-puts concerning the problem of domestic violence. Moreover, I purposefully examined the activities of two community-based NGOs dealing with violence issues from each district. Overall, the selection of research participants was an admixture of snowballing and purposive sampling.

3.5 Research Approach and Methods

3.5.1 Phenomenological In-depth Interview

The social constructivist or interpretive paradigm is embedded in phenomenological study, which seeks to explore the experiences of individuals (Moustakas, 1994, as cited in Creswell, 2013). A researcher using phenomenology strives to understand the deep meaning of persons' experiences and the interpretation of the experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Originally developed by philosopher Edmund Husserl (Bernard & Ryan, 2012), phenomenology focuses on the exploration

of the lived experiences of the persons being studied (Polinghorne, 1989), and it concentrates on these lived experience regarding a particular phenomenon and the ways in which those experiences are internalised (Creswell, 2013). Phenomenology enables the researcher to tap the participants' thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and assumptions through having a deeper reflection captured through face-to-face interaction (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Human experience is the foundation of knowledge, and it is impossible to have a human world without experience (Becker, 1992).

Phenomenological in-depth interviewing was the principal mode of gathering information from my research participants. It helped me to explore the full meaning and understanding of the participants' experiences. In-depth interviewing has received increasing attention in qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Specifically, a semi-structured in-depth interview is the most commonly-used method of collecting information through phenomenology, which is open-ended and provides maximum flexibility. This technique enables the researcher to ask questions and to respond further to the participant's replies so that considerable details of the participant's story and perspective can be captured (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Semi-structured interviews are framed by the open-ended questions that were determined beforehand. Usually, they are followed by other questions when there are interactive dialogues or a flow of discussion between the interviewer and interviewee (DiCicoo-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). While a researcher uses the semi-structured interview, he/she can easily modify or change the order and details of the topics covered (Berand & Ryan, 2012). It provides an opportunity to capture in-depth information and substantial reasoning and meaning (Jupp, 1995). I used the semi-structured interview as the prime technique for my study. On the other hand, qualitative evaluators interact with people regarding their experiences and perceptions concerning policy (Yüksel, 2010). In-depth interviewing is the major source of the evaluation of qualitative data. When an evaluator uses in-depth interviewing, he/she can easily enter into the participants' subjective understanding and perspective concerning the policy/programme under study (Patton, 1987). As an evaluator, I interviewed frontline policy implementers, and some concerned officials from the ministry and legal aid organisations using the semi-structured interview technique as well. I designed my interview guidelines in

line with the research questions. While interviewing the participants, I used a voice recorder and took notes as well.

3.5.2 Case Study

Case study was another approach adopted in the present study, for which a few cases were developed. The reason for selecting a case study approach was to effectively delve into the phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context (Yin, 2014). In fact, the main purpose of a case study is to seek in-depth understanding of a particular case that generates the deepest explanatory reflections (Babbie, 2007). Notably, nowadays, case study is used not only in connection with one case, but also with small numbers of cases (Swanborn, 2010). A case study research is quite frequently applied in public administration research as well (Thiel, 2014). Case studies take the reader into the setting with complete vividness and in detailed formats by thoroughly describing complex phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Moore, Lapon, & Quartaroli, 2012).

In case study research, multiple techniques or a variety of data-gathering techniques are used, which in the long run enhance the trustworthiness of the research (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003, as cited in Baxter & Jack, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). It ensures that the issue or the problem is not explored from a single point of view but rather from a variety of viewpoints, which allows the reader to understand the phenomenon more explicitly (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Notably, various methods such as observation, interviews, documents, audiovisual materials, archival records, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts can be used in case study (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014), in addition to the impressions and statements of others about the cases (Patton, 1987). A typical case study thus takes a holistic approach, and data are gathered regarding everything that is connected with the case, and nothing should be left out without reason (Thiel, 2014). Under the contextual premises mentioned above, in developing my cases, I relied on various methods such as in-depth interview, relevant documents or contents and observation, and made my cases as in-depth as possible.

3.5.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD has enjoyed popularity in recent years in qualitative research (Barbour, 2008). It is also called group interviewing. Usually a group interview or FGD permits a researcher to ask questions of several individuals systematically and simultaneously (Babbie, 2007). Depending on the research plan, an FGD can be both a primary source of data collection or part of other methods used in the data collection (Lambert & Loiselle, 2007, as cited in Milliward, 2012). In order to quickly gather substantial amounts of data, I conducted one FGD in my research particularly to tap the experiences of the Garo community members. By conducting the FGD with the important members/leaders of this community, I could easily explore group experiences and perceptions concerning domestic violence against women simultaneously and systematically.

3.5.4 Observation

Observing functions or activities is an important method in qualitative field research. It is fundamentally naturalistic as it occurs in a natural context. The aim of observation is to gather "factual information" (Patton, 1990). Observation helps to attain the "first-hand experience" of a particular phenomenon (Mason, 2002). It was an emerging method in my study. I made an overt observation of a local *salish* arranged to mitigate the problem of domestic violence of a victim. By arranging a *salish* and observing the process of conducting it I could gain insight into the entire phenomenon. I had fundamentally three targets for observations: the physical surroundings, participants, and actions (Bailey, 2007).

3.5.5 Content Analysis

Content analysis was one of the important methods in my research. It helped me to gather first-hand information about different issues related to my research topic. In content analysis, a researcher studies various written materials, reports, policy documents, memos and other sources of written information (Thiel, 2014). I reviewed various policy documents, reports, court orders, applications and statistics used by various government and non-government agencies.

The overall data collection strategy of my research was as follows:

Table 3.3 Qualitative Research Matrix

Research Questions	Approach	Methods
1. What are the women's experiences of domestic violence with regard to forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies and help-seeking practices?	Phenomenology, Case study	Semi-structured interview, Content analysis
2. What are the perceptions and activities of the local community regarding domestic violence against women?	Phenomenology, Case study	Semi-structured interview, FGD, Observation, Content analysis
3. What are the perceptions and experiences of frontline policy implementers with regard to the implementation of the DVPPA 2010?	Phenomenology, Case study	Semi-structured interview, Content analysis

3.6 Data Analysis

One of the most critical parts in qualitative research is analysing the data and information. Data analysis brings order, structure, and meaning to the collected data. Data analysis is a time-consuming process, but is a creative and fascinating endeavour (Rossman & Rally, 2012). There is no hard and fast rule in analysig qualitative data; it depends upon the researcher's intuition, judgments, and choices. However, qualitative data analysis ideally begins simultaneously with data collection so that the researcher can grasp emerging insight into the research questions (DiCioo-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). This became evident in the course of my study. In this study, I conducted the data analysis in line with the research questions. Data analysis is a combination of various closely-linked techniques or procedures such as organisation of the data, generation of categories and codes, and the transformation of codes into themes. Once the themes are generated, the researcher defines and refines them. In the end, he/she presents the whole story of findings under the relevant themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Accordingly, in analysing my findings, I used the thematic analytical technique. Specifically, the thematic analytical framework identifies and analyses themes and puts them together to form a comprehensive picture of the collective experiences of research participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Notably, there is no

specific rule on how to develop themes, as themes can also be developed on relatively little of the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I conducted the entire research process through interactive means and as such, was familiar with the data and had some initial thoughts as well in framing the themes. Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim by me. Thematic analysis demands close reading of the interviews. Although it was a laborious process, it gave me a firm grip of the data. I concentrated slowly and line by line on the transcribed conversations or interviews, and carefully identified the regular-recurring experiences, perceptions, and feelings of the research participants. I grouped all of the similar patterns or categories together, and picked them as "themes." Under broader themes, I also generated several "sub-themes." In framing the themes I gave importance both to the most prevalent and unique patterns of experiences, and developed themes and sub-themes that "capture[d] something important to the research questions" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Finally, I developed a textual and structural description from the findings. Notably, I put equal value and time into going through each participant's narrative and did not consider that any person's experience was more important than another's.

In this study, I developed a few cases as well. When a case approach is used in qualitative analysis, the first course of action is to bring together the data relevant to each case and to write an all-encompassing case study report (Patton, 1987). A researcher makes a detailed description of the important aspects of the cases in order to understand the complexity of the cases (Yin, 2009, as cited in Creswell, 2013). A complete findings section of a case study involves the description of the case and themes that were explored in studying the case (Creswell, 2013). In the final interpretive stage, the researcher reports of the findings (Creswell, 2013). My analysis of the case study included: describing each of the cases, finding out appropriate themes or patterns, and interpreting them for a broader picture of the data.

In the concluding chapter, I made overall reflections about the findings of this study. Specifically, with regard to the implementation of the act, my reflections broadly concentrated on the aspects related to process evaluation or implementation evaluation.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Research

I made the following attempts to ensure and enhance the overall trustworthiness of the study. In addition, I also adopted appropriate ethical strategies. For a study to be trustworthy it must be reliable and valid, and must be conducted, keeping in mind full sensitivity regarding ethical issues (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

3.7.1 Prolonged Engagement

It has been suggested that the qualitative researcher has to be in the field for a prolonged period of time (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell, 2013). Prolonged engagement or spending a substantial amount of time with the research participants during the interviews helps to obtain an overall view of the phenomenon (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) and significantly increases the quality of the subjective data (Toma, 2000). I tried to engage myself with the participants in discussion as much as possible. Specifically, I spent more time with informal discussions with the victims of domestic violence in order to develop rapport, gain their trust, and create an appropriate environment for them to discuss their experiences freely and openly. The actual interviews with different categories of participants lasted between 30 to 70 minutes. Generally, a semi-structured interview can take from 30 minutes to several hours to complete (DiCioo-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In the lone focus group discussion, I spent around one and half hours with the participants. Most focus group researchers agree that between 1 and 2 hours is the standard duration for each session (Millward, 2012).

3.7.2 Thick Descriptions

Description is an important analytical tool. Qualitative data analysis demands a thick description (Hennink et al., 2011), and descriptions should be concrete and in sufficient detail (Bailey, 2007). A thick description means that the researcher provides a detailed description of a case or a theme (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, I detailed all of the interactions and processes and reported them in such a way so that the descriptions were “context-rich, meaningful and thick” (Gertz, 1973, as cited in Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). I used the participants’ own narratives, words, and

views in the text as much as possible so that the descriptions become not only thick but also lively.

3.7.3 Clarifying Bias and Subjectivity

The researcher's biasness is not viewed negatively in qualitative research. It is presumed to be a normal aspect of research as the researcher is the key instrument of the investigation. However, the ways in which bias and subjectivity are viewed and managed are extremely important in qualitative research (Morrow & Smith, 2000). Experiences, biases, prejudices, and orientations can shape or influence data interpretation and a researcher must make it clear to his/her readers those factors (Creswell, 2013). Researchers that adhere to the interpretive paradigm believe that they cannot totally leave behind their understanding of the world and they have no inclination toward objectivity. They willfully reject that notion of value neutrality (Bailey, 2008). Therefore, biasness and subjectivity automatically stem from the interpretive approach. At the beginning of this dissertation, I informed my personal interests and different orientations in relation to the research. I intentionally embraced those biases and that subjectivity in conducting the study.

3.7.4 Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of different sources of information which helps both to conform and to improve the clarity and accuracy of the findings of the research (Lewis & Richi, 2004). A study which includes multiple cases, multiple participants, and more than one data-gathering method can greatly strengthen the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Of course, the research purpose determines the type of triangulation chosen. Triangulation in qualitative research broadly includes: triangulation by data source, method, researcher, theory, and data type (Miles et al., 2014). The strategy of triangulation can capture multi-faceted ways of looking at the same phenomenon. As such, it can ensure great credibility or dependability about the research findings (Patton, 2000). In my research, I used different triangulation techniques to enhance the dependability or credibility of the research. I used two different research approaches, phenomenology and case study, used different methods to collect the data, collected the data from different sources, included different

categories of participants, and provided reflections on the results in line with various relevant literature.

3.7.5 Data Transcription

A qualitative researcher must carefully check the transcripts. If the transcription is not done properly, it might weaken the reliability of the interpretation (Silverman, 2010). At the same time, the importance of generating insightful and meaningful data through the translation process is paramount (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore, I deeply engrossed myself in each narrative verbatim so that originality was maintained and errors were kept to a minimum while translating them into English for the text. I was very careful so that the contexts and meanings of the findings were appropriately reflected in the English language in the text since I conducted all of the interviews in the local language, Bengali. Finally, the whole text was edited by a professional English language editor, which increased the reliability and readability of the transcripts.

3.7.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations seep into every aspect of the research process, beginning with selecting the research topic to disseminating the results (Bailey, 2007). Any research topic on violence against women demands that safety concerns must be considered very carefully from the very beginning of the study through its implementation and dissemination (WHO, 2001). Research on violence against women is a sensitive type of research and might harm those involved. At the same time, such research often makes data collection and data gathering difficult. Moreover, there are also problems in relation to the dissemination of the research findings (Lee & Renzetti, 1990, as cited in Fontes, 2004). Sensitivity is associated heavily with the social context as well as potential consequences of undertaking research (Sieber & Stanley, 1988, as cited in Sampson, Bloor, & Fincham, 2008). For example, in the context of Bangladesh, domestic violence is treated as a sensitive issue and admission of its existence is a matter of shame and humiliation. The victim of domestic violence often fears that an admission of its existence will invite disharmony in the family as well as it be against the usual norm of the family

mn(Ameen, 2005). There are many guidelines in the literature on how to maintain ethical standards. Some important guidelines are as follows; 1) obtain informed consent from the participants; 2) ensure that participation is entirely voluntary; 3) inform participants of any risks involved in the research; 4) protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participants; and 5) ensure that participation does not cause any harm to the participants (Kirsch, 1999, as cited in Plummer, 2001). I adopted number of specific steps for maintaining the ethical standards in my research. For example, with prior approval of the research participants, I used a voice recorder during the interview because I was concerned that without gaining such permission, trouble might arise later (Yin, 2011). However, four implementers did not allow me to use a voice recorder. In those situations, I had to rely exclusively on notes and mental notes (Davidson & Layder, 1994). I used pseudonyms for the victims of domestic violence. However, for two participants that had filed cases under the DVPPA 2010 in the study areas, I used their real names since they were already exposed in some way because of seeking formal support. In the case of the other participants, I used their initials. Using initials and pseudonyms protected the participants from the disclosure of their identities and from any effect of the findings. I particularly placed emphasis on the safety of the women that were currently experience an abusive relationship so that they would be protected from their husbands and in-laws. For all participants, participation in the study was voluntary, and their verbal consent was obtained before each interview. I explained to them the nature and purpose of the study and offered tangible incentives, such as money and/or small gifts (for the victims), and intangible incentives such as expressed appreciation for their participation (for implementers and community people). In fact, compensation to the participants demonstrates that a researcher gives value to the viewpoints and time of the participants and overtly recognises their contributions (Fontes, 2004). I admit that the time and thoughts spared by my participants were extremely valuable to the research and could be compensated by no means. Moreover, I was also concerned about producing accurate data, since fabrications are unethical in any research.

3.8 Conclusion

I enjoyed the whole research process-from the beginning to the end. The extensive use of phenomenology and development of cases significantly reflected the participants' varied experiences from a number of points of view surrounding the research question. Choosing areas I was familiar with as research sites helped me to negotiate many problems, but not all, associated with the research. On the other hand, in many ways, I could make my research flexible both for myself and for my participants. Flexibility is an important component of qualitative research. Nevertheless, I do not claim that my methodology is free from drawbacks or pitfalls. I believe if I had ample of time, I could have handled the entire research process more rigorously. In particular, because of limited time factor, I could not visit my participants more than once and crosscheck the findings with them, which is important for qualitative research. I started my fieldwork in early August 2014 and finished in late November 2014. I had almost ninety hours of interviews with the participants. However, regarding some important points and updates, I had telephonic conversations and email communications with some participants on some relevant issues even from Bangkok after coming from the field. Overall, various means of triangulation represented the major strength of the research design. In line with the research questions, I designed the entire research process in such a way so that it well suits interpretive qualitative research.

CHAPTER 4

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: FORMS, CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES, COPING STRATEGIES, AND HELP SEEKING PRACTICES

> "If there such a thing as rebirth, I do not want it for me. It is a sin to be born as a woman. I do not want its repetition. I do not want any more suffering (excerpt of a participant)."

4.1 Introduction

Domestic violence against women by their husbands is a widely prevalent and deep-rooted problem in Bangladesh society, although it is frequently misinterpreted as a private issue. It engulfs women in myriad ways and means. The violence that women face in the family is the denial of their rights to live safely and peacefully. This chapter delves into rural Bangladeshi women's varied experiences of domestic violence within marital relationships. I excavated the lived experiences of rural women using their own voices and meanings with regard to forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices from two Bangladeshi districts; namely, Mymensingh and Netrokona. I jotted down their experiences in different themes and sub-themes. While discussing with the participants, I explored the idea that the home is a very dangerous place for these women, and some of them faced violence not only from their husbands but also from their in-laws. I found that domestic violence is a multi-faceted problem in rural society typically enmeshed in a complex web of social relations, which makes women extremely vulnerable and help-less. Domestic violence against women in Bangladesh appears to be a systematic and structural manifestation of controlling women. After the study, I, as a man, personally felt very culpable since men are grossly responsible for creating all of the harm to women in the domestic sphere.

4.2 Profiles of the Participants

I interviewed thirty-nine victims of domestic violence from different rural settings of Mymensingh and Netrokona districts in Bangladesh. I contacted them based on a array of networks and referrals. I have specifically detailed their profiles (socio-demographic) in the Annexure B**.** The socio-demographic characteristics of the participants revealed that the average age of was twenty-eight, ranging from seveteen to fifty. The majority of the participants were from Bengali Muslim community (thirty-three), followed by Bengali Hindus (four) and the indigenous matriarchal Garo community (two). In terms of their marital status, the majority of the participants were deserted by their husbands (fourteen), separated according to their own wish (nine), living with husbands (eight), divorced (three), and husband living abroad (one). Moreover, four participants had two different types of relationship status because of being married twice. One participant was divorced by her first husband and deserted by the second husband, one was divorced by the first husband and later separated from second husband according to her wishes, one became widowed, and got married again, but was divorced, and one became widowed and was deserted by the second husband. Besides the participants that were formally divorced, the rest of them still had marital relations with their husbands on paper irrespective of their current living status.

Six participants were full-time salaried employees, twelve were self-employed in small businesses, and the rest were completely dependent for their livelihoods either on their husbands or other family members such as parents, brothers, and sons. With regard to educational status, ten participants were illiterate, and ten literate. One participant had completed graduation and one had a post-graduate degree. Three participants had passed the higher secondary school examination, two participants had passed the secondary school examination, and three participants had passed the primary school examination. On the other hand, three participants had studied up to the secondary level but could not complete it, and six participants had studied up to the primary level but could not complete it. Most of the participants were married before their eighteenth birthday, which is the minimum legal age to marry for women in Bangladesh. On average, each woman had two children.

4.3 Forms of Domestic Violence

The participants reported different forms of violence perpetrated by their husbands, including physical, economic, psychological, emotional, and sexual/ reproductive. While sharing their experiences, the victims often separated different types of abuse, but some of them also discussed different forms of abuse together. The following two cases encompass many forms of violence into a single plot.

> Case Rosy: Various Forms of Simultaneous Abuse
>
> *Bachar bap* (father of son)[18] kept 14000 taka with his mother, one day she found 14000 taka was missing. At one stage, both of them charged me for that. I got surprised. He took a stick, started beating and name-called me by using derogative words like; 'daughter of a bitch', 'daughter of a thief', and told me to keep the money in the same place by tomorrow. Meanwhile, my mother-in-law called a *kabiraj* (who assumed to have some extraordinary power of healing illness and finding out missing materials) to find out the money. He gave me a kind of sweetmeat to eat provided that if I steal there would be bleeding from my mouth on the following morning. I said I have no problem to eat. I was terribly shocked. I was ordered not to take food or drink. I was pregnant at that time. I required food, at least, for my baby. On the following morning, nothing happened to me even though they kept their charging continued until the afternoon when the money was recovered. My mother-in-law hid the whole amount of money in different parts in different places. She forgot where she kept the missing amount. I asked my husband for blaming and beating me without any reason. He did not repent for that and even told me that it was a lesson for me for future (Rosy).

[18] While interviewing all of the abused women I carefully noticed that the women rarely called their husbands by their given names. In Bangladesh culture it is still considered disrespectful to call her husband by his given name; instead he is referred to as "father of" their sons (Smith, 2007). I mostly noticed that women referred to their husbands as "he" or "father of children/son/daughter" and "my husband" rather than directly using their names. Interestingly, even having been abused by their husbands such types of culturally-respectful practices were prevalent.

Rosy's experiences are intertwined with physical, emotional, and reproductive violence. Rosy was falsely blamed as a thief, and verbally abused by demeaning words which were practices of emotional abuse. Moreover, she was further humiliated by calling a *kabiraj* and forced to accept his treatment. She was physically battered even during pregnancy and was not allowed to take food, which was a violation of her reproductive right.

Case Nova: Various Forms of Simultaneous Abuse

I was born in a very poor family. Therefore, I always wanted that my husband should work hard and earn something. Unfortunately, my husband does not like to work. I have to manage the family through hardship. How much money can I earn as a maid? On and often, he used to borrow from others, sometimes from moneylenders, sometimes from neighbours and sometimes from friends and relatives. He spends money on gambling. Most of the time, I have to pay the money back to the creditors. It was an immense burden on me. One day, I paid almost 1000 taka which he borrowed from a creditor. After that, I had nothing in my hand. I promised that I would not allow him to enter house until he promises to work and not to borrow again. That night when he returned home, I did not open the door. I told him I would let you enter if you promise to work. He became very angry and started shouting. After sometime, he broke the door and entered the room. Immediately he pulled my hair and said, "*khanki-magi* (derogative word meaning prostitute), how you dare insult me? You kept me standing outside-I would kill you." He punched, kicked and battered me as his wish. Moreover, while I was sleeping at night, he again attacked me, and forcibly made physical relation with me. He also threatened if I tell anything about work, he would remarry and oust me from home (Nova).

Nova's experiences depict the multi-faceted nature of domestic violence. In the above example, Nova was clearly a victim of different types of violence following one incident. Her husband financially abused her by creating a situation so that Nova had to pay the money he borrowed from others. It was a burden for a poor woman

who works as a maid. Nova was always under threat of the borrowers, which created immense psychological pressure on her. Her husband also physically abused her and perpetuated sexual violence without her consent. Moreover, he called her *khanki-magi* (prostitute), which is a serious derogative address for women, and a practice of emotional abuse. Moreover, her husband psychologically threatened to expel her from the home and marry again.

4.3.1 Physical Violence

Physical violence was the most commonly-recognised, experienced and reported form of violence. It was not conclusive that all women confronted physical violence in the same manner, as its intensity and infliction were dependent on many factors. Nevertheless, there were many similarities amongst women's experiences of physical violence. Importantly, it was strongly evident that for many women psychical violence started incrementally and intensified over a span of time, as one participant remarked:

> Every time he beats me as if to test my level of endurance (Sriti).

In the following few sections, I draw upon the participants' varied and important experiences of physical violence using their own words as much as possible.

4.3.1.1 Physical Violence: Often Not the First Form of Violence

Many victims reported that their first experience of violence was not physical; rather it was scolding or some other practices verbal abuse. For some victims, the first experience of physical abuse just came as a surprise. A participant recalled her experiences in the following manner:

> My husband first laid hands on me after around a month of our marriage. Before that, he sometimes scolded me for this or that. Initially he only slapped me or pushed me aside-kicking and hitting with a stick were introduced after a few months. The intensity of beating intensified gradually (Soma).

Although the majority of the women experienced physical violence within a short span of their marital lives, a few women reported that their husbands perpetuated that even after some years of marriage. Before that, they experienced some other forms of violence. For example, Amena got married in 1984, and her relationship with the husband was good. She first experienced physical battering in 1998 following the engagement of her husband in extramarital relations.

However, the above examples indicate that there were considerable variations amongst the participants with regard to the first experience of physical violence: sometimes it took time to happen and sometimes it was followed by other forms of violence.

4.3.1.2 Physical Violence: Often Accepted as Normative

Some women perceived ordinary practices of physical violence as a normal part of marital life. In their opinions, the husbands can beat them if it was not so serious. They opined that if ordinary practices of physical violence were counted as violence, it would be difficult to continue marital relations. One such example is as follows:

> Following the few days of my marriage, he started beating me for reason and no reason. Nevertheless, those were not any serious attacks; sometimes a slap or a shove. I thought it was normal. It happens in our society. My mother said that a woman has to endure many things (Jhorna).

The above assertion depicts how women define physical violence particularly as an event of ordinary practice. This also indicates acceptance of ordinary practices of physical violence as part of their lives. They thought that if they would pay heed to every event, marital problems would engulf them right away. However, such ideation derives from women's low-level self-esteem and self-dignity. It reflects their subordination to an extreme.

4.3.1.3 Physical Violence: Manifested in a Specific Way

Nevertheless, physical violence in most cases is not limited to only an ordinary scale; it often expands to a much wider scale. It comes with myriad ways and practices. It is often brutal in nature and often a routine activity. In this context, some

women reported that their husbands used certain specific strategies to abuse them. For example, two women reported that their husbands usually preferred to beat them behind closed doors so that no one could step forward to be of assistance. In such cases, their husbands could beat them as long as they could. The follow is one example:

> My husband prefers battering me behind closed doors. One night he battered me very seriously. He rushed near to the main door, closed it tightly from inside. My two sons were in other room. He took off his waist belt from his trousers, and started lashing me. It was terrible. He also forcibly took off my cloths and continued lashing. He kicked and punched me in between. I was screaming for help. My elder son was knocking the gate hard and screaming. When he stopped, he dragged me near to the door and wanted to open it so that my sons and others could see me naked. I kept holding the door bar hard to avoid serious humiliation. I earnestly requested him to lash me as long as you can but not to humiliate me. Yet he tried to open the door. Fortunately, he pacified after sometime (Renu).

Tonima's husband often also applied the technique of battering her behind closed doors so that no one could come out for her assistance and he could beat her as her wished. Both the experiences of the victims demonstrated that a perpetrator can be more ferocious if he is sure that no one would help his subject during the battering. It is serious form of abuse which could push a victim into a disastrous situation at any time, and make them extremely vulnerable and helpless.

4.3.1.4 Physical Violence: Targeting Specific Parts of the Body

A few participants reported that during the battering, sometimes their husbands deliberately targeted some exposed areas of the body to create some visible impressions of physical abuse. This is also a peculiar and a serious practice of physical violence. Two examples are as follows:

> He battered me particularly targeting some parts of my face. He used to pull my hair hard from the back and pressed my forehead and head against the

wall. Such types of battering often swell-up the areas instantly with injuries. When my husband batters in that way, in the following morning, I cannot go to school. How can I go? If my colleagues ask me something about my injuries, what would be my reply? Should I say husband batters me (Sriti)?

Sometimes he used to hit me hard with his fist on my face, particularly on my lips. His attacks often swelled up my face or cut my lips and resulted in bleeding. He used to intentionally attack in that manner so that I could not go to work on the next day (Helen).

Both Sriti, a primary school teacher, and Helen, an NGO worker, hold the assumptions that their husbands purposely used some specific techniques of battering so that on the following day they feel embarrassed to go out for work and interact with others. They assumed that their husbands used such techniques to restrict their mobility. Apparently, this is special technique to ensure subordination of women.

4.3.1.5 Tools Used to Injure

A few participants stated that their husbands used specific tools while battering them. In such cases, they also used those tools targeting some specific parts of the body. Unlike the above incidents, they were not bothered about showing the imprints of violence to others; rather, they used to practice this out of their abnormal habits.

He sometimes used a pliers to batter me. While using it he hugged me hard so that I could not move. Afterwards, he pinched either my skin or fingers with it. Sometimes he even pinched my nose, terrible (Momina)!

He used to use a small hammer to attack me. While using it he targeted mostly my ankles, elbows and knees (Amena).

The participants said that using specific tools for battering targeting some specific parts of the body was excruciating, and they were very scared while their husbands used those tools. It was obvious that such inflicting tools while

battering not only physically harmed the women but also mentally terrified them. Such violent behaviour is very intimidating.

4.3.1.6 Household Utensils and Weapons as Tools of Violence

There were many examples of using household objects as weapons to attack women. A victim named Molly said that her husband often attacked her with kitchen utensils. Benu and Hena, on the other hand, often battered with a broom. Shoheli was battered several times with slippers. Bokul was often hit with a plastic chair, and once her husband even broke the plastic chair by hitting her. On the other hand, a few participants also reported that they were threatened with deadly weapons. Some experiences are as follows:

> Sometimes my husband strangles my throat hard, and threatens me with a knife to stab me at my stomach. I know he intimidates me, but I am sacred if he really does so out of his anger (Kabita).
>
> He had a habit of drinking. If he were angry, he used to break the bottle, strangles my throats and threatens me to stab with it (Pallabi).

In fact, household objects were the easy-to-find tools for the husbands to use while battering. Therefore, many women had experiences being battered by household objects. On the other hand, threatening with deadly weapons could have brought devastating consequences to the victims if they were really used.

4.3.1.7 Physical Violence: Humiliating and Devastating

It was reported by some participants that while battering, their husbands used means which were not only injurious but also humiliating. At the same time, some participants reported that while battering their husbands became completely frenzied. They hit them without thinking of the consequences. The excerpts of two victims are as follows:

> Few months back he punished me severely with a bamboo stick. I got almost unconscious. Nevertheless, he did not release me. He fell me down on floor and forcibly opened my mouth. He first spit inside my mouth and slept my face abruptly. At one stage, he pissed inside my mouth. I vomited

immediately. Even then, he was not happy. He started kicking me in the same way a footballer kicks a ball. I was rolling on the scraps of my vomit (Bristi).

He punched straight on my mouth. It was such a hit that uprooted instantly the front tooth of my upper jaw (Rahiman).

Humiliating and devastating attacks like the above were confronted by other participants quite a number of times in their marital lives. Such incidents indicate that an abused man can act like an insane person during violence.

4.3.1.8 Spilled over Physical Abuse onto Other Members of the Family

On the other hand, some participants stated that their history of violence was not limited only to them; sometimes it also included children and other members of their family, particularly those that were in support of the victims. Often such violence was practiced interchangeably with the violence that was perpetrated against women.

One day he was battering me mercilessly and I was screaming for help. My mother came out for my help. Seeing my mother, he became more ferocious, and shouting, "Today, I would beat your mother as well so that she would never come out to your help." Saying that, he started battering my mother with a stick. My mother escaped from the scene immediately (Kariman).

Usually he batters me behind closed doors, but ever he batters me in open areas my elder son often tries to protect me. At times, his father also batters him (Renu).

During my filed study, I noticed one very crude form of violence, which caused a different type of physical punishment to a baby and its abused mother. Sara, the victim, was expelled from home after severe battering by her husband. Her husband and in-laws did not allow her to take her five-month-old suckling baby. Since then, she could not breast-feed the baby. She had been suffering from severe pain in her breasts due to excessive possession of milk. Sara said:

I hear from the others that my baby cries for milk. I cannot go and breast-feed it (Sara).

Although such a context seems to be a violation of woman's reproductive right, I reckon it as physical abuse since it was physically hurting both Sara and her baby.

4.3.1.9 Physical Battering during Pregnancy

Some victims encountered physical attacks by their husbands during pregnancy as well. Some excerpts in this regard are as follows:

My husband is so cruel that he even battered me a day before my delivery. He hit my back very hard with a rolling pin. Thanks God, he did not hit me in my abdomen (Momina).

While I was pregnant, he battered me mercilessly several times. One day he gave a kick directly targeting my abdomen and shouted, "Today, I will kill you and your baby" (Jhorna).

It is obvious that an attack during pregnancy is often a traumatising event since it could cause harm not only to the victims but also to the unborn baby. It is a serious violation of women's reproductive right, and can cause great harm.

4.3.1.10 Physical Violence: Perpetrated and Participated in by in-Laws

It was reported that in-laws often joined the physical abuse of their husbands. Sometimes they played an active role, and sometimes they played a supportive role. In the following, I present a few examples:

Pulling hair and slapping are the common practices of my mother-in-law. In most occasions, both my husband and mother-in-law beat me together. Sometimes my husband's elder brother also joins (Rosy).

Everybody beats me-my husband and all in-laws. Even the younger brother of my husband battered me sometimes (Sara).

It is well evident that in Bangladesh, in-laws always play a big role in the perpetuation of domestic violence, particularly when they live in joint or an extended family under a patrilocal structure. As such, women are more susceptible to violence from their in-laws.

4.3.1.11 Attempted Murder

Most alarmingly, three participants reported that their husbands attempted to murder them. Fortunately, all of them survived those attempts. Notably, in the case of Rasu, the husband was not directly involved in the attempt but rather hired men to do this. In the case of Bristi, in-laws also joined the attempt, and in the case Bokul, the husband himself made the attempt.

Case Bristi: Attempted Murder

> It was around midnight. He dragged me out of the room. In-laws were waiting outside. They all started beating me haphazardly. Someone pulled my hair, someone hit me with a bamboo cane, and someone kicked me. They were planning to hang me on a tree. Hearing that, I screamed with all my energy for help. Thanks to Allah (God), some neighbours could hear my screaming, and rushed to the spot and saved me (Bristi).

Case Rasu: Attempted Murder

> One evening, he went out home. After 10-15 minutes there was knocking at the door. I went close to the door and heard voices of some strangers. They shouted to open the door. I got scared. Immediately, I called the house owner. Meanwhile, they were pushing the door hard to break it. It has been around 10-15 minutes. Suddenly, I heard the shouting of the house owner. After sometime, he told me to open the door, and said I am safe. He called my husband to come back home immediately, and in front of the house owner he pretended that he does not know anything. When I charged him after the departure of the house owner he angrily admitted that he had hired people to kill me. He pulled my hair and said if required, he himself would kill me. The following morning, I left home (Rasu).

Case Bokul: Attempted Murder

One day he proposed that I go with him to search for a new job in Barishal (a city). I thought he had changed himself. One evening, we boarded on a ferry from Sadarghat (a ferry station in Dhaka). He hired a separate cabin. He made many funs and we had physical relations. After that, I feel asleep. At around 4.00 am he woke me up. He was standing with my scarf. Suddenly, he attacked me and twisted my throat with the scarf. I applied all my energy to release and could give him a kick. He fell down. I rushed to the door, but he caught me and dragged me to the bed. This time he took a pillow and pressed my mouth. Again, I somehow managed to release myself. I was just fighting between death and life. I do not know from where I gathered all the energy. At one stage, I pushed him hard aside. I got a few seconds to open the door and went out. I rushed to the ferry crew and told them everything (Bokul).

The above there cases indicate, at times, that domestic violence can also become life threatening. All three women could survive because of their own striving. If they had not made their own effort, they would have been dead by this time.

So far, I have described some of the dynamics of women's experiences of physical violence in their marital relations. There were many unique as well as serious features of physical violence. In the following few sections, I will discuss some other forms of violence, such as emotional, psychological, economic, and sexual. It should be noted that many practices of physical violence can easily be recognized, as these often make imprints on the victims, but other forms of violence such as psychological and emotional violence, are far more pervasive but often invisible and unrecognised by others (Juree Vichit-Vadakan, 2000). The existing studies on forms of violence rarely make distinctions between psychological and emotional abuse as these are often discussed interchangeably. In my research, I have tried to categorise both forms distinctively. I have included those practices as emotional abuse, which the participants perceived had undermined their sense of self-worth, self-dignity, and self-confidence (Juree Vichit-Vadakan, 2000), and the practices of psychological abuse, which they characterised as threats of harm, intimidation, and various controlling behaviours (The Advocates for Human Rights, 2010).

4.3.2 Emotional Violence

The women in this study reported different practices of emotional abuse which greatly undermined their self-worth and self-dignity as human beings. I present them according to the following categories.

4.3.2.1 Name Calling

Name calling was a frequent and a demeaning feature of emotional abuse directed towards women. It was not limited to women, but it was directed at women's parents and relatives too. Moreover, a good number of women also encountered name calling by their in-laws, particularly by their mother-in-laws. Some participants said that their husbands never call them in a sober address rather referred to them as *tui.*[19] Other than *tui*, the participants reported being referred to by different patterns of degrading words such as *khankimagi* (prostitute), *chutmarani* (fucker), *nadi* (prostitute), *bandi* (servant), *harami* (idiot), *sali* (daughter-in-law), *beker/okormer dheki* (unworthy/of no regard), *gadha* (ass), etc. The degrading words that were directed to their parents included *nadir je* (daughter of prostitute), *tor mare chudi* (fuck your mom), *khanki magi* (daughter of prostitute), *chutmaranir je* (daughter of fucker), *sourer bacha* (daughter of swine), *haramir bacha/je* (daughter of idiot), *bandir bacha* (daughter of servant), *nababer dulai* (daughter of queen in negative sense), etc. Some of the participants reported that they were called *opoa* (woman with bad luck/ominous), *atkora/baja/bandha* (sullied) due to giving birth to a female baby or failure to give birth. However, such name calling as a means of emotional abuse stopped once they could give birth to a baby or a male baby. One example is as follows:

> If my husband found anything wrong with me, immediately called me *atkura* (sullied), I endured with such an unfortunate remark for around ten years until I could give birth to a child (Pallabi).

The following is a lived case of serious name-calling.

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[19] The literal meaning of *tui* is you. *Tui* is a very degrading word in an intimate relationship between a husband and a wife. If in such a relationship a person calls another *tui*, he or she is humiliated to the extreme. Usually, a wife is not dear enough to call her husband *tui*; it is the husband that calls his wife *tui* when he is angry.

Case Rosy: A Victim of Name Calling

Rosy, before marriage, used to work as domestic help at our residence for many years. Her mother Jaida was also a domestic help at our residence. During my interview with Rosy she stated that throughout her marital life her husband and in-laws have name-called her in different ways. Commonly she is called as *bandir bacha* (daughter of servant) and her mother as *bandi* (servant). She added that when her mother visits her, her husband and mother-in-law call a servant has come to another servant. Moreover, Rosy was also name called as *deborer je* (daughter of brother-in-law) on the ground that her mother after the death of her first husband married to her brother-in-law, and gave birth to Rosy. After the death of Rosy's father she again married another man. On this ground they also called her mother *kahnki* (prostitute). All of those were very emotionally-shocking events for Rosy.

4.3.2.2 Abandonment is a Source of Emotional Abuse

Many women in the study were the victims of abandonment. Once abandoned, the women had to come back to their family of origin. Coming to the family of origin is a matter of shame and disgrace for a woman in Bangladesh society. Sara, for example, was a victim of a complicated type of emotional abuse due to abandonment. She has "come and gone" for the last fifteen years and passed ten years in her father's home in that way. With such a manifestation of abandonment, she was emotionally very dejected.

On the other hand, a good number of women in this study were staying for a longer period of time in their family of origin due to the abandonment of their husbands or even their own wish due to violence, which put severe emotional pressure upon them. They confronted pressures even from their family members, relatives, and sometimes from their neighbours as well. The following excerpts contextualise this harsh fact:

> When our neighbours ask me when I would go back to my husband's house, I cannot answer. I just avoid them. I know they are very curious about me, sometimes they also laugh at me (Seuti).

> I am in this situation because I am a woman. A woman is not a human being. All is my *kismet* (fate). I cannot face the neighbours and relatives. They criticise me (Tanni).

In the typical Bangladesh patriarchal culture, marriage is an important determinant in women's life and their status is dependent to a great extent on maintaining the marital relationship. Ironically, when there are problems with marital relations, women are often blamed for it and society looks down upon the women whose husbands abandon them. Family members also do not want their daughters to come back since a lot of social stigma is attached to such return. In all cases, women have to confront serious emotional pressure.

4.3.2.3 Neglect is a Crude Form of Emotional Abuse

Being neglected or ignored by the husband was one of the common practices of emotional abuse. Many women experienced such abuse in a varied ways. Some examples are as follows:

> You see, I stammer a little bit, and for that, ignored me. He often repented for marrying me. He felt shame to accompany me anywhere. He did not even allow me to go out and talk to people. It hurt me very hard (Sulekha).
>
> He prides himself as smart and handsome. In his eyes, I am ugly. He also says nobody will believe that he is a father of two sons. He always feels shame to go out with my children and me and says I am misfit to his smartness (Renu).

Being ignored or neglected is a practice that engulfs women's confidence and morale largely as a human being. For example, one participant said:

> There is no worth to live if a husband ignores her wife. I realised it in very phases in my marital lives (Jhorna).

By inflicting emotional violence a husband severely hurts a woman's feelings and emotions. A victim of such violence often feels very excluded and it

hurts them more than any other form of violence since Bangladeshi women usually want to be closely attached to their husbands and greatly expect love and affection from them.

4.3.2.4 Emotional Abuse due to "Other Women"

At the same time, the existence of "other women" in the women's husbands' lives caused the hardest emotional pain for them. Some women in the study were the victims of the husbands' practice of polygamy and extramarital relations. Some examples are as follows:

> When I saw my husband sleeping with his new wife, laughing at her, going to the market and eating together-I just washed myself in tears. Is it for such a return I loved and married him? Such sufferings were unbearable (Amena).
>
> The day my husband came home with his new wife, I also came back to my father's home with my children with tears. My own-made up garden is now under other's custody. How shall I forget this pain (Jinat)?

Two Garo women in the study also considered the extramarital relations of their husbands as a source of serious emotional abuse. Moreover, as they were the heads of the families, such practices of their husbands degraded them socially. They had lost their self-worth to a great extent. The following excerpt by one woman signifies the level of degradation of self-worth.

> Since in our culture women are the head of the family, my husband's relationship with another woman; and marrying that woman socially degraded me. I feel like rubbish and worthless (Bobby).

The above are some of the examples of the emotional sufferings caused by the practice of polygamy and extramarital relations. Such practices degrade women's self-worth to a great extent. A victim considers herself defeated by another woman.

4.3.2.5 Case on Crisis of Identity: An Unusual Form of Emotional Abuse

The disappearance of the husbands for two Hindu women acted as a means of serious emotional abuse. Their husbands pushed them into a state of serious identity crisis for rest of their lives. Sulekha's husband used to stay at Sulekha's parents' residence as *ghor-gami* (son-in-law that stays permanently at the father-in-law's house). He used to come and go to Sulekha's village due to business purposes. When she proposed marriage to Sulekha, her mother without inquiring much about his whereabouts, agreed to allow Sulekha to be married to him since she was widowed at that time and had problems with stammering. However, within a year Sulekha's husband disappeared, leaving her alone. It was a kind of emotional cheating to Sulekha. Nevertheless, Sulekha did not give up using three must-use symbols[20] of a Hindu Bengali married woman: *shindhur* (vermillion that is used for hair parting), *shakha* (white bangles made of conch-shell), and *pola* (red bangles made of red corals). A married Hindu woman must use those symbols all the times unless she is widowed. As Sulekha was not sure about her husband's state, she was wearing those symbols. Suchanda, another woman, also encountered problems with her husband's disappearance. Her husband eloped with another woman, and she did not know the whereabouts of him. Like to Sulekha, she was also using these symbols. I noticed that they had serious emotional loadings with regard to their existing identities. For example, Sulekha said:

> *Shindhur, pola* and *shankha* have no value to me at present, but I must use these unless I am sure he is dead. Otherwise, community will speak ill of me. I do not want him to return. He must be liable to *Bhagaban* (Hindu God) for the mental pains he has given to me and my child (Sulekha).

Suchanda, on the other hand, strongly desired her husband to come back. She said;

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[20] A Hindu woman applies a *shindur* (vermilion) dot on the forehead and a line on the hair parted above the dot. It indicates that she is married and her husband is alive. From the similar identical practice, *shankha* and *pola* are worn on both hands until she becomes widowed.

> In Hindu custom, there is no divorce. Therefore, I wear s*hindhur, pola* and *shankha*. I hope he will come back one day (Suchanda).

Notably, both women were putting extreme symbolic effort into coping with their emotional plight. According to Hindu religion, marriage is a sacred relationship. As such, it does not approve of divorce or separation. Therefore, these two women were on the horns of a dilemma. They could neither divorce their husbands nor put off permanently the symbols of marriage. Moreover, they would not be able to marry again unless they were sure that their husbands are dead. In all respects, these women were in a serious identity crisis and it reflected their vulnerability as women to a great extent.

4.3.3 Psychological Violence

The participants in the study also encountered various practices of psychological abuse. In the following, I discuss different categories of such violence.

4.3.3.1 Social Exclusion and Being Barred from Home and Relatives

One of the serious practices of psychological abuse was making the women socially excluded. Exclusion is a means of controlling women's movement and behaviours. Some of the women in the study experienced various forms of social exclusion. One example follows:

> He used to lock the door from outside every time he goes out of the room. He thought I might flee away. If I do so, his money-making machine will be out of his hand. Even in the opera house where I work as a singer, I was not allowed to talk fellow performers. He always kept close eye on me. I had no liberty (Momina).

Some women reported having restrictions imposed on them in terms of going to the parents' home or communicating with them and other members of the families by their husbands. By doing so, the husbands also socially excluded the women. One example is as follows:

> On the following day of my marriage, I was clearly instructed by my husband and by mother-in-law to forget members of my family. Even the day my grandmother died, my husband did not allow me to go there immediately upon hearing the news (Shirin).

Both social exclusion and barring women from home and family members are very cruel practices of domestic violence. They are the deliberate attempts to psychologically subsume women, and pose a threat to the dignity of women as human beings.

4.3.3.2 Marginalising Means

Some women reported having experienced various psychologically marginalising means of violence such as separation from the bed, not talking, forcing them to stay outside the room during the night, not allowing them to take food together, forcing them to take food last, and so on. Some experiences are as follows:

> Sometimes he forces me to go out of the room during night and keeps the door locked from inside. He even does not open the door if my child cries for me. Sometimes I have to wait for long hours (Shirin).
>
> After each serious beating, he does not allow me to sleep on the same bed at least for some days (Shoheli).
>
> Immediately after marriage, my mother-in-law and my husband told me that a wife of a home must eat last and must get up first in the morning and prepare food for everybody. Therefore, I used to eat last, and wake up from bed when everybody still asleep (Joita).

The above excerpts are clear manifestations of marginalising women and harsh means of psychological abuse. These practices exemplify women's extreme level of vulnerability and helplessness.

4.3.3.3 Various Threats: Threat of Divorce, Threat of Being Sent to the Home of Origin and Threat to Remarry

Some women reported that their husbands always intimidated them with the idea of divorce. Since marriage is so valuable to women in Bangladesh, being

threatened with divorce definitely puts tremendous psychological pressure upon them. Some examples of such violence are as follows:

> Even for a trivial mistake, he threatens me to divorce. I am always scared if he really divorces me-how much time does it require to utter three *talaqs*[21] (divorce) (Kabita)?
>
> He often says that if it were permitted by the religion[22] (Hinduism), he would have divorced me by this time. Having been married for so many years if threatens in this way, it is very disgraceful (Pallabi).

With regard to divorce, I explored an interesting aspect of psychological abuse. In this case, men do not directly threaten the women with divorce; they threaten the women to divorce them. This was particularly evident for some women that were deserted by or separated from their husbands. It is also a form of psychological pressure since most Bangladeshi women usually do not want to divorce their husbands unless it is inevitable. They expect their husbands to be normal at some point of time. Moreover, putting pressure on women to divorce their husbands is a means of threatening them psychologically as well as disregarding their rights associated with divorce. For example:

> He tells me to give him divorce since he will not pay[23] any money by divorcing me. But I do not want to divorce him; I wish he would be alright one day (Nahar).

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[21] This is a term used in Islamic divorce. A divorce is accomplished by saying *talaq* or I divorce you. Traditionally, it has to be pronounced thrice consecutively. Only a husband can use this term to divorce his wife. This type of divorce is effective under Islamic *sharia* law., Since Bangladesh is not governed by *sharia* law, *talaq* through utterance has no legal recognition. Nevertheless, it is still practiced in rural areas amongst the uneducated poorer people.

[22] Although Hindu civil code permits divorce only on certain grounds, religion does not permit divorce since it is a sacred union. Therefore, divorce is rarely practiced amongst the Hindus.

[23] It is commonly believed particularly amongst lower socio-economic strata that if a wife divorces her husband, the husband does not need to pay a dower *(danmohor)* to his wife or maintenances for the specified period of time (ninety days) after divorce. A dower is the bride-price and a religious obligation in Islam. Usually, some parts are paid during marriage, and some parts remained left to be paid later. Legally, once divorced, a husband must pay the remaining amount of the dower and maintenance for the specified period to his wife no matter who divorces whom. I shall discuss it more under the theme of economic violence.

Some women reported that their husbands and in-laws often threatened them with having to leave the home and go to their natal families. Threatening them by telling them to go to their home of origin is a harsh practice of psychological abuse. An example follows:

> If there is any altercation on any matters, he threatens me to send me back home. I know the condition of my parents, they are in no way are in a position to bear my burden. Moreover, if I go back home what people would say? Despite having his threats, I stay by any means (Khodeja).

On the other hand, some participants stated that they experienced the husbands' threat to remarry in a number of occasions. The threat to remarry is an immense form of psychological pressure upon women. In Islam, a man can legally take four wives at a time. Although marrying more than one at a time has been reduced considerably, many men put pressure on women based on the provision of Islam. However, women usually do not want to be the victim of the husbands' practice of polygamy, so when their husbands threaten them with remarriage, they become afraid. In fact, both practices are the manifestations of women's vulnerability in the family.

4.3.3.4 Intimidation

Intimidation is a serious form of psychological violence. There were many modes of intimidation in the study, including the threat of killing, and the threat to do harm to the women, their family members, and children. A few examples are as follows:

> He often threatens to float my children and me in the *Brahmaputra* (a river) after killing. Sometimes, I think if he really does so (Renu).
>
> Badal (her husband) threatens me that he would bring similar consequences for me to his previous wives. Both of his earlier wives committed suicides-one by hanging from the fan and the other by consuming poison. Who will not be scared if someone says like that (Hena)?

On the other hand, creating a terrifying environment also pushed a few women into a state of state of fear and intimidation. The husbands deliberately created such an environment in order to psychologically control and repress the women on a continuous basis. The crudest example is as follows:

> He had a particular rule. I was scared of his rule. Breakfast must be ready at 8.00 am, lunch at 1.00 pm and dinner by 8.00 pm. Immediately after breakfast, I had to arrange his pair of shoes, clean and his clothing and watch in front of him. If I were late for some reasons, he would not forget to lay hands immediately on me. I was in constant fear (Rasu).

It was evident from the experiences of the participants that the state of intimidation in the martial relationship created a serious unhealthy situation for the women in the family, and was a source of psychological pressure.

4.3.3.5 Detaching or Isolating Children

Some husbands psychologically abused their wives by forcibly detaching or isolating the children from their mothers. In such a case, when a woman is ousted by her husband she is not allowed to take her children with her. Earlier, I discussed Sara's case whose husband kept her suckling the baby while ousting her from home. Another example is as follows:

> I feel very dejected for my baby. I cannot sleep at night. I always think what the he is doing, what he is eating. My husband is such a crude person who demands 60000 taka for bringing my baby. How can I manage such an amount (Jhorna)?

Detaching women from their children is not only the crudest form of psychological abuse on women; it is also a similar type of abuse to the children, and a barrier to their healthy upbringing.

4.3.3.6 Suspicious Husbands

Finally, a few women reported that their husbands were unnecessarily suspicious about them with regard to whom they could talk to and where they could

go. Suspicion in an intimate relationship creates a huge psychological pressure upon a woman and largely obstructs her movement. The following excerpt of Khodeja illustrates this fact:

> He suspects me for no reason. If I talk to any male person in village he suspects, and scolds me. He also battered me many times for that. When he returns home from outside and does not find me around, he suspects. Even he suspects if I go out to respond to nature's call at night (Khodeja).

The practices of both psychological and emotional abuses against the victims in this study were widely extended. For some women, emotional and psychological violence was more extorting than that of other forms of violence. Such forms of violence were sustained for a long period in their lives and disturbed them in a number of ways and means.

4.3.4 Economic Violence

The participants in the study discussed various practices of economic abuses against them perpetrated by their husbands and, in some cases, by their in-laws. I present some of the major forms of economic violence in the following manner.

4.3.4.1 Non-payment of Dower is the Beginning of Economic Violence

I asked each of the Muslim participants whether their husbands paid them a dower at any stage of their marital lives. It may be in cash or kind. Islamic *sharia* law confers the mandatory right of a dower to the wife. In practice, it is completely different. The payment of a dower is only written in the marriage document; the husband rarely pays it to his wife. Usually, as a tradition, on the wedding night, a husband seeks forgiveness from his wife for not paying it. It is a sort of emotional blackmail to a wife. For example, I myself did the same thing on the wedding night and yet paid the dower to my wife. However, the written document that specifies the amount of the dower is only effective during the time of formal divorce when a man is legally bound to pay the remaining dower to his wife. Practically, none of the participants was paid any dower in her marital life. A few women received it since they were formally divorced by that time. Interestingly, some of them even were surprised as if I were asking something very unusual. Some excerpts are as follows:

> Do husbands pay anything like this to their wives after marriage? That was finished on the wedding night (Rosy).
>
> At that night, he said if I do not forgive him off the dower, he would be liable to Allah (God). My family members also told me to forgive my husband before I have any physical relationship with him. I happily forgave him. He never paid anything like this (Seuti).

Paying no dower to a wife paves the gateway toward financial abuse. Doing so, a husband knowingly or unknowingly eliminates a wife's financial right. Living in a subordinate situation, women dare not claim that right during their marital lives.

4.3.4.2 Demand of Dowry: The Strongest Means of Economic Violence

The reverse practice of paying a dower to a wife is the demand for a dowry. During my field study, I found that the demand for a dowry was the most critical reason for different pending forms of domestic violence against women. A dowry is an unpleasant but inevitable custom in Bangladesh society despite being outlawed by legislation. Almost all the families of the victims had paid dowries, either in cash or kind. Many women were also under the threat to pay a greater dowry even after marriage. A few examples of dowry payments are as follows:

> During my marriage my father gave him 50000 taka. It was so difficult for him to manage the money. He sold his two cows and mortgaged his only piece of agricultural land (Soma).
>
> My husband's demand is endless, sometimes says bring money for doing business, sometimes he wants money to go abroad and money other purposes. How many times should I ask money to my family for him (Nahar)?

The concept of a dowry originated from an ancient Hindu custom called *kanyadaan* (the gift of a daughter). The act of *kanyadaan* is not complete until the bridegroom is given cash or kind (Ameen, 2005). The dowry has been a great burden on Hindu families for a long time, irrespective of social class or caste. One of the

reasons for giving a dowry as a gift is that a Hindu woman does not have any right to her father's property. Therefore, the groom's family claims an ample dowry. All of the Hindu victims in my study admitted that during marriage their parents gave many dowries to their husbands. Muslim families also follow this Hindu custom, although it is not permitted by Islam.

4.3.4.3 Control of Women's Resources

A number of women in the study reported that their husbands and in-laws took control of their resources either through putting pressure on them or through cheating. One of the worth-mentioning examples came from Molly, a woman from the indigenous matriarchal Garo community. Garo women inherit property from their mothers through the matrilineal line; men do not inherit property. Yet, men adopt different strategies to take control of the women's property, as happened to Molly in the following manner.

Case Molly: Crude Victim of Economic Violence

> Gilbert always used to ask money from me. He abused me in a number of ways for that. One day he came with a Bengali man and told me to register ten decimal lands to that man as Gilbert borrowed money from that man and promised to give ten decimal lands. I requested that man to take money instead of land, but he was not agreed. I had to register lands. Gilbert remained good for some months. Then again, he came with another Bengali man and asked me to register fifteen decimal lands. There were many conflicts on that matter between us. My family members also intervened into the matter but nothing happened. The Bengali man demanded lands only, and I had to register. Few months later, he came with another Bengali man with a demand to register more fifteen decimal lands. This time the issue was raised to the tribal association, but nothing happened. He always borrowed money from Bengali men since they are the majority and do not listen to our requests. Gilbert exhausted me to the extreme. Later on, I came to know that he purchased lands to his name in other village with the money he borrowed from those Bengali men. He cheated my very cleverly (Molly).

Another example can be cited from the experiences of Seuti. Her father gave her in-laws 100000 taka as a dowry, and requested them to purchase some land in her name. They, of course, purchased the land, but did not register it in the name of Seuti; instead they used her husband's name. On the other hand, gold jewelry is a precious asset for women in Bangladesh. Women consider it their strength and a vital resource. During marriage, as a tradition, irrespective of economic conditions, the parents strive to present as much jewelry as they can to their daughters. Some participants reported that their jewelry was taken by their husbands or in-laws or even sold out forcibly. For example:

> Immediately after my marriage, my mother-in-law ordered me to put off my earrings on grounds that the dowries that were paid were not enough. My husband also ordered me to give those earrings to his mother (Tanni).

Another woman, Momina, who was a singer in a village opera house, reported that her husband used to take all her income immediately after the show ended, including the tips she received. Her husband used to consider Momina as his moneymaking machine. Momina could never independently use her income.

4.3.4.4 Micro-credit: A Means of Economic Violence

Bangladesh is globally renowned as the land of empowering women through micro-credit. Many women in rural areas are the direct beneficiaries of micro-credit from many NGOs. They use the credit for various income-generating activities. However, some women in my study faced serious problems concerning independently using the money due to the unwanted interventions by their husbands. I noticed that the micro-credit acted as a means of economic abuse against some women. A few manifestations of such abuse are as follows:

> He told me to give him the money so that he could buy an auto-rickshaw. I believed him. I borrowed money from an NGO and gave it to him. Finally, he purchased nothing, wasted all the money on gambling and betting. Now the NGO officials are putting pressure on me since I have become irregular in paying the instalments. If I see NGO officials coming, I hide myself (Kankan).

> He often snatches or steals my NGO credit money. Once I borrowed 20000 taka to buy a cow, knowing that, he beat me and snatched my money. I had to suffer a lot to repay the money-I borrowed from another NGO to pay the amount back. Now how would I pay this new amount (Kabita)?

The above examples clearly show how women were forced to face trouble due to the interference of their husbands regarding their credit money. Such interferences obstruct women's ability to earn income, and place an enormous amount on economic pressure on them while they do not have other sources of income.

4.3.4.5 Stopping Education and Obstructing Employment

The measures for preventing women from getting an education or creating such a situation so that women's employment is obstructed were also reported by some participants. I think that these are vivid manifestations of economic abuse. If the women are obstructed from obtaining a higher education it eliminates their potential, and forces them to be economically dependent on their husbands. At the same time, if situations are created in such a manner so that women feel challenged to maintain a balance between home and work, their economic mobility is bound to be restricted. For example:

> By the time I was married, I already appeared the higher secondary school examination. My in-laws promised my father to continue my study. After passing the examination, I wanted to be admitted into the bachelor programme. My husband and in-laws said that they do not have enough money to bear my expenses. I had to stop my study (Seuti).

Sriti already completed her post-graduate degree in chemistry before she got married. Although she used to work in a rural primary school, she aspired to have a good job. After marriage, she was not given the opportunity to study for job interviews. She was forced to keep excessively busy with household work. Moreover, she had babies in quick succession. Her mother-in-law and husband said that if she manages a good job in the city then who would take care of her babies? With all these troubles, she remained in a job that was far below to her qualifications. Sriti said:

> They deliberately created situation in such a manner so that I cannot study, apply and appear for good job on the pretext that I might leave my husband if I manage a good job (Sriti).

Helen's husband did not like her not to ride in the same motorbike with her NGO colleagues to collect instalments micro-credit from the borrowers living in different villages. Her husband even threatened to steal the money. According to Helen, it was a trick so that she would quit the job. Rasu, on the other hand, was a graduate during marriage. After marriage, she wanted to join a school but her husband did not allow it; she was able to join a school once she was divorced.

4.3.4.6 Destruction of Property

Destruction of property was another way of financially abusing a wife. I found a few cases where the perpetrators deliberately destroyed the property used by women to generate income. Such destruction made women's lives very problematic. The following excerpt clarifies such an assumption.

> One night after altercation on matters of her extramarital relations he battered me as his wish, and at one point of time, he pulled my sewing machine, and struck it hard on the floor repeatedly until it broke into pieces. That was my only source of income (Renu).

Suchanda was a small shopkeeper in a village market. Following an altercation with her husband inside the shop, he became very angry, broke into pieces the showcase used for keeping food items and threw away most of the food items into a small canal passing behind her small shop. It took her long time to recover from the shock. She had to borrow money from an NGO to rebuild everything. There were also examples of deliberate destruction of household property or utensils by the husbands, which did not generate income but such destruction brought financial burden to the women because in most cases the women had to replace those items. Some women had to borrow from the NGOs to recover from the loss.

4.3.4.7 Giving No Pocket Money

Most of the participants commonly reported that their husbands did not give them any allowance or pocket money for their own expenses. They never thought

about the women's own needs or necessities. Some excerpts in this regard are as follows:

> He never gave me any pocket money. He even did not want to buy anything for my children. My father used to give me few saris (a traditional South Asian female garment) for a year and other necessary items (Soma).
>
> Everything is controlled by my mother-in-law. My husband used to send money from his salary to his mother but he never sent any money for me. Even when he comes home, he always hides his wallet as if I were a thief (Seuti).

Due to the crude practices of financial abuse as seen above, sometimes women had to ask for money from their parents to meet their own needs. Not meeting women's economic needs is a violation of their economic right by their husband. It illustrates that husbands do not consider women as human beings that have their own needs.

4.3.4.8 Indifference about Familial Responsibility

Some husbands were indifferent about familial responsibilities, which adversely place financial pressure upon the women. In that case, often the women also had to rely on the financial assistance of their parents or other means.

> He disappears on and often. Sometimes he goes for *Tabligi-Jamat*[24] even for months. He does not give any maintenance, does not even think how I manage the family. I work as a domestic help. I have to ask money from my parents as well. Each day is like a year for me (Urmy).
>
> Since he is very indifferent about family maintenance, having no alternative, I had to engage my two young sons as day labourers. On and often, he snatches their income as well. My little sons work and he spends (Rokeya).

[24] It is a religious movement of preaching Islam. Basically, a group of people preach Islam to Muslims and non-Muslim through short-term tours or long-term tours both in the country and outside the country.

The list of economic abuse is wider and multi-faceted. I have only discussed a few examples, and there were many other examples of such abuse. Based upon the experiences of the victims, I conclude that domestic violence ignites many complicated features of financial abuse, and engulfs women to a great extent.

4.3.5 Sexual Violence

As a male researcher, it was the most difficult part of the study to intervene into the most personal matters of women. For that, I had to develop appropriate contexts and had to show a great deal of persistence. However, I admit that I was not fully able to get some women to talk about this matter or specify the matter. The participants in the study did not directly utter the term "sex;" rather they used different wordings such as "that thing," "that activity," "sleep with," and "physical relation." Many women admitted to having been sexually abused by their husbands in a number of ways. Two participants also reported having been sexually abused by their in-laws. On the other hand, I found that the various practices of sexual violence were closely associated with women's reproductive issues. Hence, I included those experiences in this chapter.

4.3.5.1 Forced Sex

Since most of the women were married during the early stage of their lives, it was my keen interest to know how they experienced and viewed their initial physical relations with their husbands. Some of them admitted that their first experience was forced sex. For example, Kabita got married at the age of fourteen. She was very scared on the first night while having sex with her husband:

> He forcibly made it (sex) for a number of times during that night. It continued in that way for the next few days. When I went to my parents' home for a *nayer*[25], I did not want to return. But I was forcibly sent back by my mother and faced the same situation. I realised I have nothing to do but accept it (Kabita).

[25] This is a visit which a married woman makes to her father's home. Usually, it comes once or twice in a year. This visit is very significant for rural women, and they long for such a visit.

I found that sex was a matter of abuse and a cause of familial conflict if the women were unwilling to respond to their husbands' sexual urges. The husbands considered their wives as their sexual property. They rarely counted the desire of their partners. They physically forced women to have sex them. In the following, I present one such experience:

> My husband always wants that thing (sex) with me. At times, if I refuse to have that, he becomes very ferocious. He batters me for that (Shirin).

The above are only a very few examples which illustrate how women become subject to being forced to have sex by their husbands. Such activity represents vivid manipulation of power and control by the husbands in order to fulfill their sexual desire and control the female body. Forced sex was often preceded or followed by physical violence.

4.3.5.2 Coerced Sex

At the same time, there were some examples which did not explicitly include physical force for having sex, but included a kind threat or intimidation if the women refused to have sex with the men. I specifically call this feature coerced sex.

> One night I was very tired to do this. He became angry and forcibly took off all my cloths, kept them under his pillow, and slept in that way. I was in that way until the morning. He returned my cloths and said, if you refuse next time, punishment would be like this (Kabita).
>
> His rule was whatever the reason he needs me at night. One night, I felt very bad, I was sleeping on the floor-he took his cigarette lighter and threatens to fire on my blanket. I got scared and went to bed with him (Tonima).

On the other hand, the threat to remarry, divorce, or go to a sex worker was a common tool used by husbands as a means of coerced sex. For example, the husbands of Benu and Rokeya threatened them with going to a sex worker if they did not allow them to have sex on demand. Hence, out of that fear, they usually did not refuse them to have sex.

4.3.5.3 Extramarital Relations and Polygamy are Linked with Sexual Violence

A good number of women reported that their husbands maintained extra-marital relations or were adulterous with other women. In most cases, the husbands that were engaged in extramarital relations did not like to have sex with their wives. Not having sexual relations was also a kind of sexual violence for the women. The following experience is relevant to this context:

> My husband hardly wanted that thing with me. If I wanted that, he used to say that he does not find any interest on me, I have nothing to attract him and there is bad odour in my body. At one stage, I went to a doctor. Doctor examined me wholly and found no problem. The doctor asked whether my husband has extra-marital relation or not? I said, "Yes." The doctor replied, "This is the problem with your husband and you have to find out your own solution" (Bristi).

The husband's extra marital relationship kept each of the victims in the study sexually deprived to some extent, and they considered it humiliating for them. Similarly, polygamy was also linked with sexual violence. Some women in my study were the victims of the husbands' practice of polygamy. Such victims also felt sexually dejected and deprived.

> There is only one room in the house separated by a false fence. My husband always used to sleep with his second wife on the other side of the room. Usually he used to come to sleep with me in every 10-15 days. However, he does not understand that I also need him (Rokeya).

The above examples depict the idea that not only were women the victims of forced or coerced sex; there were situations that forced the women to feel sexually dejected or deprived. Making the women feel sexually dejected or deprived is a kind of sexual violence as well, and a clear manifestation of the violation of women's sexual rights.

4.3.5.4 Demeaning Remarks about Sexuality are Manifestations of Sexual Violence

A few participants reported that their husbands used sexually-demeaning remarks at them. Some constructs used by perpetrators are as follows:

> My husband always used to say me "eunuch." If I were a eunuch, how could I give birth to two babies? It hurts me (Soma).
>
> You are a black woman. I loathe sleeping with you (Pallabi).
>
> You have nothing, you are old, and you have no attraction (Suchanda).

Using these remarks was closely related to sexual violence since this undermined women's sexuality. Sexuality is an important part in one's life. Raising unnecessary questions about it is demeaning for women. In fact, the participants whose sexuality was questioned by demeaning remarks felt dejected to an extreme

4.3.5.5 Forced Pregnancy

On the other hand, forced pregnancy was also a commonly-reported practice of sexual violence. In this case, a husband forcibly puts pressure upon his wife to conceive, and does not use any contraceptive methods or even does not allow his wife to use any. For example, immediately after marriage Rasu's first experience was forced pregnancy. She was not expecting a baby so early, but her husband did not listen to her on the pretext that Islam forbids using protection. Sriti, an educated schoolteacher, was a worse sufferer of forced pregnancy twice just within three years of her marriage. It created a problem for her in terms of creating a balance between home and work. Sharifa already had two children from her late husband. Hence, she wanted sometime to conceive when she married again, but her husband wanted a baby, and at one stage, he even directly asked Sharifia's mother:

> Have I married your daughter only to feed her? If she does not stop taking pills, take your daughter back (Sharifa).

Tanima was a mother of three daughters at the age of only twenty one. I found her and her children seriously malnourished. Moreover, in between, she gave

birth to two stillborn babies. She was the worst victim of forced pregnancy in the study. Forced pregnancy is a serious violation of women's reproductive rights and ability to make decisions, and often has serious consequences. It might restrict women's mobility as well.

4.3.5.6 Forced Abortion

Apart from forced pregnancy, some participants were the victims of forced abortion. Alarmingly, the practice of abortion is also closely linked with the prospective sex of the baby. The women were forced to have an abortion most often when it was learned that the baby was a female. I provide one example of forced abortion in the following:

> Now I am nine months' pregnant. My husband and my mother-in-law took me to the town while I was five and half month old pregnant to undergo an ultra sonogram test. The report said I would give birth to a girl baby. Knowing that, they pressured me to abort. However, they could not move me even an inch from my stance (Bobita).

Abortion goes against the broader Islamic culture of Bangladesh and is legally prohibited unless essential on medical grounds. Nevertheless, abortion is practiced in many private clinics in small towns and cities. Many rural people in Bangladesh are aware of the ultra-sonogram image for tracing the sex of the baby. In most cases, husbands force their wives to take indigenous medicine to abort as happened to some of the participants. Nevertheless, abortion on any illogical ground is an insidious form of sexual violence.

4.3.5.7 Physical Violence during Menstruation and Pregnancy

A few participants also reported having been sexually abused during menstruation and the critical period of pregnancy. Nevertheless, on a number of occasions the participants had to bow down to their husbands' desire to have sex during these periods. Kabita's experience is on example of sexual violence during menstruation.

> My husband is like an animal. He never considers that I have a particular period in a month when everything is *haram* (forbidden) for women in our religion. He always forces me to have that thing even during those dates. I cannot fight with an animal (Kabita).

In this connection, I would like to discuss Bobita's experience further, who was pressured to abort after the ultra-sonogram results. She stated that while she became pregnant her husband sometimes honored her request not to have sex. However, after having the ultra-sonogram, he changed completely. Since then, he did not pay any heed to her request since Bobita would give birth to a female baby. Both Tonima and Tanni were the victims of forced or coerced sex during pregnancy. Seuti, on the other hand, gave birth to a stillborn baby. Although the reason is unknown, she blamed her husband for having sex during a critical period of the pregnancy. In her opinion, her baby died because of her husband's sexual desires.

4.3.5.8 Serious Assaults on Sexual Organs

Two participants reported having their sexual organs seriously assaulted with objects without penile penetration. In this context, Sharifa's recalled her husband's attempts to penetrate a rolling pan into her sexual organ.

> Following an altercation, he got ferocious, went out of the room and came back with the rolling-pin. He hit me several times with that, laid me on the ground, forcibly put off my cloths, and then attempted to penetrate the rolling-pin. It left with several injuries in my secret (vagina) area (Sharifa).

Amena experienced the spreading of ground pepper into her sexual organ. Her husband had extramarital relations with another woman. Following an altercation between them on that matter, he rubbed ground pepper on her vagina. He recalls the incident:

> I fell asleep at that time. Suddenly I felt hands on my lower part. My husband was forcibly rubbing something under my sari. Immediately I felt severe-biting. Somehow, I could rush to the washroom and found pepper ground spread in and around my secret (vagina) area (Amena).

The above two are extreme as well as unique examples of sexual violence. These attacks targeted specifically the sexual organ. This kind of infliction might cause serious damage to the women's sexuality as it can make them sexually crippled.

4.3.5.9 Sexual Violence from In-laws

I would like to conclude the women's experiences of sexual violence by discussing the experiences of two women that were victims of sexual violence by their in-laws.

> During that time, I was at my husband's village. He was in his working place. One night while I was sleeping suddenly found that the younger brother of my husband hugged me hard and forced to do something abnormal. I screamed hard for help. Then he disappeared. Hearing me, my mother-in-law came. I expressed her all. She told me to look into it in the morning. Surprisingly, in the morning, my mother-in-law told me to forget everything and said it is usual in the village (Rasu).
>
> Several times the elder brother of my husband harassed me in different ways although he could not do anything serious. As my husband does not stay home, he wanted to take opportunities. I was always scared of him. I brought all those to the notice of my mother-in-law, but she always threatened me not to tell anyone (Nahar).

Examples as the above indicate that women are not only the subjects of sexual violence by their husbands; they might be the victims of sexual violence from other intimate relatives. Such examples demonstrate the extreme vulnerability of women in the family. Most alarmingly, no action was taken when the victims complained to their mother-in-laws. This further indicates that the victims were not given any worth or consideration, which further undermines them as human beings.

It is evident from the preceding few sections that the victims in the study experienced five major forms of domestic violence: physical, sexual, economic, psychological, and emotional, and each form is multi-faceted in nature and expresses

women's extreme subjugation. In the following, I discuss the major causes of such violence.

4.4 Causes of Domestic Violence

Contextualising the causes of domestic violence was an important aspect of my research. Every experience of the women with regard to domestic violence has a context. Although earlier discussions on the forms of violence invariably provided many clues regarding the causes of domestic violence, in this section, I shall make the causes more prominent and more focused.

4.4.1 Dowry Demand

The demand for a dowry was the most common factor in the perpetuation of domestic violence, and it is rooted in the social acceptance of the practice. Everybody knows that a dowry is a necessary and unavoidable condition if the parents want to get their daughters married. The majority of the women in the study reported that they were abused in a number of ways due to the demand for a dowry. The following excerpt is very significant in terms of contextualising this problem.

> If Allah (God) would make a money-plant and if my husband would pluck money from it, he would be the happiest man in the world (Jhorna).

Some victims were often sent back to their family of origin following physical or mental abuse due to a dowry demand and could only go back by bringing a dowry. Some victims were either permanently sent back or forced to return to the home of origin due to excessive demand for a dowry. For some husbands, the demand for a dowry was a routine activity. They always forced their wives to bring a dowry from their parents. If they failed, they abused their wives to the extreme. Two excerpts are as follows:

> When I could bring money from my brothers, he was happy. If finished, he again forced me to bring money (Sharifa).

> One day my in-laws call my father, and told him to take me back. The reason was they demanded huge sums of money, which my father was unable to pay at that moment. They said send your daughter back if you can meet the demands (Seuti).

On the other hand, one of the reasons for Joita being divorced was a dowry demand. Her father failed to meet the demands of her husband and in-laws. Moreover, threatening the wife with divorce was a common weapon unless the demand a for dowry was met. Many women experienced serious physical violence due to the demand for a dowry. For example, Bristi was one of the few victims where finally murder was attempted against her only because her father could not pay the demanded amount of the dowry. Bristi shared that her husband began the dreadful scene in the following way:

> You have brought 100000 taka and stayed more than three years. It is more than enough. You could not bring the rest, so you must vanish. I will marry again and get more money (Bristi).

Similarly, Renu also thought that one of two main reasons (another one was extramarital relations) for attempting to murder her was the demand for 500000 taka as a dowry by her husband. Her case was interesting. Her husband did not demand any dowry during marriage. After having been engaged in an extramarital affair with his student he started demanding a dowry and abused her on those grounds so that Renu would leave him permanently. Shirin had to flee from her husband's home failing to cope with the dowry demand, as she indicated in the following:

> The intensity of his physical violence for demand for dowry was escalating, and he was even threatening me to kill. I thought the way he is moving at any time he might kill me. So, one morning, I fled from home (Shirin).

Soma's husband hit her leg severely with an iron rod since she failed to bring a dowry as per her husband's expectation. He also threatened her in the following rough way:

> If you find “husband” is tasty, then in order to have this taste you must buy it by fetching enough money from your father. If you fail, I would stitch your mouth for ever (Soma).

According to Hindu custom many dowries are paid to the groom during marriage, even though some Hindu participants said that the demand for a dowry of their husbands continued even after marriage. For example, during marriage, Sulekha’s mother gave money to her husband and registered a piece of land in the name of Sulekha. Nevertheless, her husband abused her in many ways so that Sulekha transferred that land to her husband. Sulekha thought that one of the reasons for the disappearance of her husband was due to the fact that she did not transfer the land to his name. There were many examples in the study concerning the demand for a dowry which acted as a factor in domestic violence.

4.4.2 Polygamy and Extramarital Relations

“Women against women” in many ways acted as a source of domestic violence. Some participants were the victims of husbands’ practices of polygamy and extramarital relations. However, these two practices were invariably linked with all of the forms of violence. In the following, I specifically present a few of the women’s experiences of domestic violence caused by polygamy or extramarital relations.

The existence of another woman in Suchanda’s husband’s life devastated her. She got married to Shukumar in 1996. Suddenly in 2012, her husband developed a relationship with a Garo woman. On the matter of this relationship, there were many conflicts between them. Finally, he eloped with the woman. Her husband abused her in many ways. Her shop and its materials were destructed, she was deliberately sexually deprived and she was even beaten cruelly in front of many people in the market area. Amena was married in 1984. Her husband became engaged in extramarital relations with a few women after 1997. Finally, in 2007, he married a woman of her eldest daughter’s age. Amena was also severely abused in many ways by her husband on the matters of conflict concerning her husband’s extramarital relations and marriage. She even had to stay as a co-wife in the same house, which further brought a tremendous emotional pressure upon her. Rokeya’s husband got

married to another woman. When Rokeya's husband came back home permanently with his new wife, Rokeya had no option but to stay with them in the same residence. Several times her husband abused her on matters of that relationship. She remarked:

> My husband said if I marry what is wrong with you? There is no harm if a man marries more than one (Rokeya).

Molly and Bobby, two Garo women in the study, were also the victims of the husbands' extramarital affairs at some point of time. Once having had an affair with other women, their husbands abused them in many ways. Both Jinat and Shoheli came back to their family of origin with their children once their husbands got married again. Afterwards, their attempts to enter into their husbands' residences were foiled by both their husbands and their new wives. This clearly shows that nothing but polygamy kept them from attaining their own rights and the rights of their children. Hena, on the other hand, got married to a widower after being divorced by her husband. However, within a year, her new husband married three more times. She was also abused in many ways. Finally, he expelled Hena from the home. Hena remarked:

> This man says that he does not keep a wife for more than a year (Hena).

Rasu's husband maintained an illicit relationship with one of his female students. On the matter of that relationship, Rasu's husband abused her in many forms. He even seriously battered her during the period of her pregnancy, and made an attempt to murder her. In this context, I noticed another unusual example of the "women against women" syndrome. Surprisingly, the mother of that student pressured Rasu in many ways to allow her husband to marry her daughter. One day the mother of the student reacted angrily to Rasu in the following way:

> You neither allow your husband to remarry nor bring dowry-so you have to find out your own ways if they marry each other (Rasu).

On the other hand, some women unknowingly became victims of the polygamy of their husbands. When these women came to know about their husbands previous marriages and asked about them, their husbands abused them. For example, Tonima's husband concealed the fact that he was married twice before and had children as well. Sriti, the most educated woman in this study, unknowingly became the victim of the second wife although her husband divorced his first wife before he married Sriti. However, quite often, it was a matter of altercation between them. There were some other examples of polygamy and extramarital relationship which largely acted as a critical source of the perpetuation of violence.

4.4.3 In-law Syndrome

One of the common factors of domestic violence in Bangladesh is the involvement of in-laws in the perpetuation of violence. Based upon the experiences of a number of participants, it is my firm conviction that in-laws instigate, both directly and indirectly, domestic violence against women. In this research, the participants mostly reported the involvement of their mother-in-laws in such perpetuation. Regarding the involvement of the mother-in-law, Hena's comment is worth mentioning. Her husband divorced her over the phone from abroad only based on the complains of his mother.

> Mother-in-laws become happier if their sons cannot live with their wives and if they abuse them. This is unfortunate for women. Once women become mother-in-laws, they forget that they were daughter-in-laws as well (Hena).

Tanni's mother-in-law stopped her education and took possession of her jewelry. She also put pressure on her to bring a dowry and many issues related to domestic chores. Most shockingly, she imposed serious stigma on the character of Tanni and created grounds for abusing her by her husband:

> Until two months after my marriage, I was not experiencing any menstruation. I could not understand the reason. Nevertheless, it happened when I came home for a visit, and that created the problem. My mother-in-law became

> suspicious. She told that I have released my illegal foetus at my parents' home. My husband also believed that and battered me (Tanni).

Joita had to engage in all sorts of domestic chores following the day of her marriage. If her mother-in-law would find any fault, she used to scold and batter her. Moreover, she always used to speak ill of her to his son. Her husband used to abuse her for all those complaints made by her mother. Similarly, the mother-in-laws of Nahar, Seuti, Rosy and Shirin not only physically and mentally abused them for different purposes, but also created scope for further violence by their husbands. Nahar depicted her experience:

> My mother-in-law presents a tray full with ills of me, my husband swallows (abusing her) one by one (Nahar).

Seuti also shared an interesting experience;

> My mother-in-law often secretly pours fresh water and adds salt and chilli so that food becomes insipid. My husband several times battered me for that, and other in-laws scolded me as well (Seuti).

The mother-in-laws of both Bobita and Benu were unhappy since Bobita was expecting to give birth to a girl child and Benu already gave birth to female twins. The mother-in-law of Bobita created a situation so that she was compelled to leave the husband's house and the mother-in-law of Benu told her husband to expel her from the home.

One of the important features of the in-law syndrome was the reluctance of the in-laws to prevent their sons from abusing their wives. A number of women reported that the perpetuation of violence went high since there was no intervention from their in-laws. I conceived the idea that it was an indirect support of the in-laws to perpetuate violence. One example follows:

> When I complained to my mother-in-law about violence she said if you cannot manage your husband, it is your fault, I can do nothing (Sharifa).

However, the findings above confirm that the in-laws particularly, the mother-in-law, influenced in myriad ways the perpetuation of domestic violence against many women in the study. Such violence is a very common factor in Bangladesh since in the traditional patriarchal and patrilocal family pattern women can be subjugated very easily by their in-laws. In a patriarchal and patrilocal system a woman's life becomes very complicated, not only in terms of discharging obligations and responsibilities to other members, but also in maintaining healthy relations with them.

4.4.4 Childless or Sonless State

Although the above category was not applicable to all the women, some women were abused in different ways by their husbands for being childless or sonless. In Bangladesh culture, it is still highly expected that a woman will not only produce child but also male child. A woman's status increases in the family if she can produce a male child. A woman is solely responsible for not giving birth to a child. It is assumed that men do not have problems. For example:

> Immediately after marriage, we tried to have a baby, but failed. I asked him let us go to doctor for treatment. He replied, *khanki magi* (daughter of prostitute), how dare you ask me to go to doctor? If I marry again then you will understand whether I have problem or not (Hena).
>
> He took a wine bottle and said, "You say I have problem; I will insert the bottle into your area so that it would produce baby" (Pallabi).

Women whose first child was a female encountered various forms of violence, but violence on this ground at least stopped once they could produce a male child; if not, it further escalated. Rosy, Nova, Kankan, Sharifa and so on reported that their first baby was a female, and for that they had to encounter a lot of violence by their husbands and in-laws, but they became happier when the next baby was a boy. Rosy's comment is worth mentioning:

> During the birth of my first baby he warned me if you give birth to a female baby, I shall divorce you-although it was a female, but thanks Allah (God), he did not do anything like that (Rosy).

Benu could not give birth to a baby for around four years. Her husband and mother-in-law in many ways abused her for that. Finally, she gave birth to twin female babies, which made her life even more problematic. Knowing about the birth of twin female babies, her husband came back from the hospital without paying the bill. Benu's father had to pay it. After a few months, her husband expelled her from the home with the babies. She said:

> My condition was relatively better when I had no baby, birth of these twins have made my life bad to worse (Benu).

Amena thought that one of the reasons for her husband having extramarital relations and finally marrying a woman was her giving birth to three consecutive female children. He also called Amena *opea* (woman with bad luck) for that. For Bobita, the tracing of the prospective baby's sex as a female made her life seriously miserable. She had to leave her residence due to unbearable violence during the pregnancy.

4.4.5 Questioning Husbands

Some women confronted violence in different ways when they had questions about the various activities and habits of their husbands. The participants reported different bad habits of their husbands such as alcohol consumption, drug addiction, gambling, bingo playing, and so on, which generated many altercations between the wife and husband. Usually, husbands do not like to be questioned by their wives and in return, they use violent means to control them. Amongst all the bad habits, gambling was reported by the participants to be the most common habit of their husbands. For example, Suchanda stated the following:

> He wastes a lot of money on gambling, if I ask him to stop, he beats and bullies me. Often says, “Am I playing with your father’s money? I will waste my money as the way I want. You can only ask me to stop if you bring money from home” (Suchanda).

Apart from bad habits, low income, poverty, and indifference to performing familial activities by the husbands also generated violence. The husbands were in no way ready to be questioned about their income and responsibilities. Since most of the families in the study were of lower economic status, conflict concerning low income and poverty was integral within family life. Asking for daily necessities, income, pocket money, and maintenance easily paved the way for the escalation of violence. For example:

> Many times, he punished me for asking him to increase money for family expenses (Champa).

On the other hand, I mentioned before under forms of violence that Rahiman’s husband uprooted one of her teeth. He attacked Rahiman since she questioned his income. Sharifa became extremely humiliated when her husband wanted to attack her vaginawith a shovel in front her younger brother following an altercation on matters of family expenses.

4.4.6 Not Meeting Expectations

Not meeting the husbands’ and in-laws’ expectations in managing domestic chores or everyday activities often triggered violence. Most of the participants reported that they were under constant pressure in terms of cooking, serving meals, childcare, care of the in-laws, attention to husbands, washing clothes, and cleaning the house. With regard to the various expectations of the husbands, the following examples are worth-mentioning:

> I must make everything ready for the day before I go to school. Again, after coming from school, I have to take care for everything. I do not find rest. Even though, my mother-in-law and husband are not happy and find faults (Sriti).
>
> I am always in a constant fix about cooking, if the food is not tasty, husband and in-laws scold me roughly. Sometimes they call me *Akarmer dheki* (unworthy) and *Baper bari hote kichu sekhe nai* (nothing learnt from parents' home) (Kabita).

The behaviour of the children was always a problem for some women. The husbands used to blame the women if the children were naughty, if they did something wrong. They expected that it was a woman's responsibility to ensure proper behaviour of the children. The following excerpt of one of the participants represents the whole gamut of the husbands' expectations.

> My husband does not like anything of me. Once he is at home, he only finds faults with me. If children are naughty-it is my fault; if the room is not tidy-it is my fault; if his dress is not clean-it is my fault; if the plates and glasses are not clean-it is my fault; if he does not like the food-it is also my fault. My life is full with faults. Sometimes I think my existence is also a fault (Khodeja).

In fact, there were numerous examples of the husbands' expectations regarding everyday activities like the above, which many participants considered as easy sources for perpetuating violence against them. From the causes, I shall now focus on the consequences of domestic violence.

4.5 Consequences of Domestic Violence

Every type of violence has its impact. Specifically, while sharing the experiences of the consequences of domestic violence, the victims not only identified various negative impacts of domestic violence on them, but many of them categorically identified that domestic violence contributed to various negative impacts

on their children and members of their families. The victims' overall experiences of domestic violence invariably had impacts on the children and family members.

4.5.1 Consequences on Women

Domestic violence had various impacts on the victims with regard to their physical, sexual/reproductive, and mental health. Moreover, it created many impacts related to their economic activities.

4.5.1.1 Impacts due to Grievous Physical Injury

Domestic violence was the major cause of physical injury to women. Physical injury ranged from minor injuries to severe injuries. A few participants reported that they had encountered major attacks to their heads. For example, one day Suchanda's husband struck her with a wooden chair on her head that made her unconscious for some days. Some neighbours took her to the hospital where she received treatment. Pallabi was also struck at her head by her husband, which caused her severe bleeding, swelling, and pain. Most alarmingly, head injuries created some neurological damage for Nova. She shared her experiences in the following manner:

> One day after battering, suddenly, he banged my head against a wooden pillar of the house. He did it several times. My skull hurt badly. I fell down on the floor, almost lost my sense. He got scared and left home immediately. Some of my neighbours called my father. My father came and took me to Mymensingh Medial College Hospital. A CT (Computerised Tomography) scan identified that I had a brain injury. After the incident, sometimes I lose my balance and speak out of control although everything becomes normal after some time. Doctor said it would take time to recover completely (Nova).

There were some other examples of severe consequences due to physical violence. Soma's husband hit her, targeting her breasts, with a stick a number of times. The attacks were severe and painful. She still bears the pain and particularly feels problems when she breast-feeds her baby. On another day, her husband punched her deliberately, targeting her right eye. She sustained severe pain in her eye. She had bruises that swelled up. Renu had to undergo treatment due to a serious attack on her

waist by her husband. For several days she could not even get up from the bed independently. Still she feels pain around her waist. Likewise, Kariman's husband fractured her leg by hitting her with an iron rod. During the interview, I noted that she could not walk normally. Similar to Kariman, Joita's husband also fractured her leg by deliberately attacking here with a stone. Moreover, she reported loss of hearing in her left ear following a hard punch by her husband with his fist. Bristi was also a sufferer of severe physical assaults, including a murder attempt. Similar to Joita, she also experienced a serious assault on her ear. She said:

> He assaulted me in various ways in one night. At one stage, he threw a fierce blow targeting my left ear. I dropped on the floor. Instantly, I felt severe pain on my left ear and a ringing sound around my ear. On the following morning, I went to the doctor. After examining, doctor said that the hit had severely damaged my ear. I cannot hear properly with that ear (Bristi).

In fact, Bristi's husband punched her very hard on her left ear, which made her hard of hearing. When I talked to her, I also realised that she had some problems in listening. Violence had brought permanent damage to one of her vital organs.

4.5.1.2 Problems Related to Sexual and Reproductive Health

Some victims in this study encountered serious problems related to sexual and reproductive health due to domestic violence. The physical violence inflicted by the husband was a dangerous experience for some women during the pregnancy. For example, following an altercation, Rahiman's husband kicked her, aiming at the abdomen. At that time, she was around two or three months pregnant. As a result, after some time, she experienced heavy bleeding and immediately rushed to the doctor. After examining her, the doctor said she had a miscarriage. Tanni's husband pushed her so hard that she immediately fell down on the floor, which displaced the baby. Luckily, the baby survived. Momina was physically forced by her husband to perform on stage even during the advanced stage of her pregnancy. She later realised that her baby's position in the womb had been displaced due to continuous stage performances. During delivery, the baby had overturned, and there

were many complications as a result. Tonima's husband did not like using contraceptives and did allow her to use any birth control methods. Hence, she became a mother of three by the age of twenty. Some women's first pregnancy was forced and some of them were not mentally or physically ready to conceive. This is because they got married very early, and they had no voice to argue with their husbands on using or not-using contraceptives. Such forced pregnancy had a grim impact upon them. Many women in this study were the victims of the husbands' practices of forced and coerced sex. These practices had also brought serious implications to the victims' sexual and reproductive health. The victims with the experience of forced/coerced sex also developed a serious antipathy to having sexual relationships with their husbands. For some women, sex was never a matter of pleasure, rather a matter of pain. Many women that were the victims of the husbands' practices of polygamy and extramarital relationships also felt completely dejected regarding many aspects of their sexual and reproductive lives.

4.5.1.3 Mental Agony

I found a large number of women that encountered mental woes due to domestic violence. They considered themselves helpless and dejected. The following excerpts can be considered as stern examples with regard to the mental agony and pressure associated with domestic violence.

> When I come to know that my husband is coming from Sylhet (a district where victim's husband has a business) I immediately got scared as if my *Malak-al-maut* (in Islam it is the angel of death) is coming. The time he stays at home seems to me as if I am in the graveyard. I live like a dead woman (Jhorna).
>
> I was on fire; I was very scared of my husband. In order to save myself, I fled away from home several times (Momina).

The above experiences clearly illustrate that living with violence can increase the women's severe mental sufferings. Similar to the examples mentioned above, some other women had also experienced serious mental pressures due to the various practices of domestic violence in many phases of their lives. In fact, there is a strong association between domestic violence and mental health implications.

4.5.1.4 Ideas of Suicide and Attempts to Commit Suicide

Due to the depression and anxiety caused by violence, death was the better option than life for some women. Very alarmingly, a few of them developed ideas of suicide. The following examples illustrate the extent of their suffering:

> He beats me as the cowboy beats the cows. So many people are dying every day so why not me? This life is worthless to me. I am burning as a *sati*.[26] Often I think it is better to committing suicide than burning continuously (Kankan).
>
> On one side, my husband always beats and scolds me; and on the other side, my parents say it is your problem as I married my choice. At times, I think Allah (God) takes lives of so many people every day, can't he take mine? Hasn't he eyes to see me? If suicide were not a sin in our religion, I would have committed it (Sriti).

Further, I had an opportunity to meet two women that not only developed the idea of committing suicide but had attempted to do so. Sara, a severe victim of domestic violence, expressed her experience of committing suicide in the following manner:

> One day he forced me down to the floor and strangled my throat with his leg. No one could stop him. He did it for around five minutes. Later I thought what is the value of life? So I decided to kill myself. On the following late night when everybody was asleep, I went out home with an extra sari to hang myself in a tree. I was trying to climb up a tree near to the road. Suddenly torchlight pointed on me and I saw Manann, our neighbour. He shouted at me. He understood everything, and forcibly took me to his home (Sara).

The experience of Sara is one of the extreme examples with regard to the impacts of domestic violence. It confirms the extent of the vulnerability of women

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[26] An ancient Hindu practice of burning a widow with the husband's corpse. It is legally banned now.

in society. In another story, Helen's husband was always suspicious about her relations with the male colleagues at her NGO. Once Helen proposed her husband to have a baby, and in response her husband said that he did not want his child to be borne by a prostitute. Hearing that, life seemed to be very unworthy to Helen. During midnight, she consumed many sleeping pills. Later, her father and brothers took her to the hospital and she survived luckily.

4.5.1.5 Effects Due to Traumatising Events

Three women in this study informed that there were deliberate attempts to murder them. All of them were carrying the impacts of those traumatised events in their lives. In fact, they became seriously traumatised after them. Their expressions are as follows:

> If I remember that night, I tremble in fear. Sometimes, I have had a dream of that horrified night (Bristi).
>
> I do not want to remember that event, but there are some events in your life which you cannot avoid and will attack every now and then. The incident is like that to me. It has sucked all my remaining strength in life (Bokul).

The comment of Rasu is noteworthy. The attempt to murder her by her husband made a stern impact on her personal world-view as a human being.

> I deserve that since I was born as a woman, not as a human being (Rasu).

Murder or the attempt to murder is, perhaps, the most serious consequence of domestic violence. Fortunately, these three participants could survive from such attempts by their husbands, although they had to sustain severe mental trauma for a long time. On the other hand, the utterance of Rasu of being born as a woman symbolises the existence of the diminished quality of the life for a woman. This diminished quality of life is a serious consequence of domestic violence.

4.5.1.6 Various Economic Difficulties

Evidence of my study confirms that violence had numerous economic consequences for the women. Some women specifically mentioned that domestic violence disturbed them economically as their husbands grasped their money borrowed from the NGOs to be used for income generation. These women were mostly indebted to numbers of NGOs in order to adjust their loans. As such, violence had numerous economic impacts upon the women. Some women in the study became permanently dependent on their parents and family members due to the displacement caused by violence, and were facing serious financial troubles. For example:

> My sister-in-laws has already given said that family expenses are increasing because of my children and me. I cannot contribute anything (Tonima).
>
> I have only one sari to put on and it is torn. I need to buy another one, but my poor father is unable to afford. Therefore, after having a bath, I let it dry and put on a sari of my sister-in-law for the time being. Once my one is dried up, I put it on again (Sara).

Furthermore, the women faced numerous economic difficulties, as their husbands did not give them pocket money or any sort of allowance. Some of them were living as penniless, and faced serious trouble meeting their own needs, and sometimes the needs of their children. Such impacts remind one of the vulnerability of women in the home in Bangladesh.

4.5.2 Consequences for Children

Many victims stated that domestic violence had a strong impact on their children. On this front, most of the participants were concerned about the future of their children, and their healthy upbringing. If the children witness domestic violence they could develop fear and anxiety and they also might be injured if they try to protect their mothers. This can also develop long-term behavioural problems. Some victims said that their children developed negative impressions about their father due to witnessing violence for a long period of time. The following excerpts perfectly depict some of the inevitable impacts upon children.

> My elder son hates his father. Sometimes he tells me that he would go far away with me when he would be grown-up (Renu).
>
> All my three daughters hate their father although I tell them to respect him since he is their father. They often say it is better not to have father like him (Amena).

Sharifa, another victim, said that her children were very afraid and developed serious antipathy towards their father since they had observed the violent activities of their father against Sharifa. In fact, they do not like their father at all. Sharifa sometimes tells them to go to their father and try to be close to him, but they are not interested at all. In that connection, I had a rare opportunity to talk to Sharifa's eight-year-old son, who was accompanying her mother while she was giving the interview. At one stage, he remarked:

> I will batter my father when I grow up (Sharifa's child).

Assertions like this indicate the development of a negative image in a child's mind about his or her father, which is a very negative symptom. On the other hand, some children of a few women had not yet seen their fathers. It must create a great impact on them when they grow up. One mother reacted in the following way:

> If my son ever asks me where his father is, I would say he is dead (Sulekha).

Another woman, Chameli, who was deserted by her husband informed that her daughter always questions her in many ways about her father. Thus, the deliberate detachment of the father from his child must has negative implications for the child. I mentioned before under forms of violence that Benu's husband left her in the hospital once twin girl babies were born. When she returned home, her husband and her mother-in-law did not look after the babies. When Benu lost her breast milk supply, it had a great impact on the health of the babies. Her cruel husband and in-laws said that they could not arrange any milk for the babies. The example of Benu's babies clearly

demonstrates a very crude practice of violence that had a bigger impact upon the health of the babies. When I met her, I found the babies seriously malnourished.

4.5.3 Consequences for Family Members

The victims viewed that apart from the impact on the children, violence also had many negative impacts on their family members. For example, the demand for a dowry not only physically or mentally impinges on women but also greatly impinges on their family members. In this study, the victims of dowry demand informed that in all cases their family members had to supply dowries, which certainly gave them a huge financial burden as most of them were from poor socio-economic backgrounds. Sometimes their family members had to borrow money at a higher interest rate from the rural loan sharks, and sometimes they had to sell or mortgage assets to meet those demands. For example, Sara's husband often used to oust her from the home demanding a dowry, and she could only re-enter if she could bring it from her father. Her poor and landless father was under continuous pressure to meet the demands of his son-in-law. Sara said:

> Out of deepest distress, my parents' often say that they would be happier if I were dead (Sara).

In addition, there were examples with regard to forcibly ousting women, divorce, and women's voluntary withdrawal from their home due to violence. In almost all cases, the women took shelter in their parents' homes. Their return added enormous financial burden to their parents, which ignited a huge amount of psychological, financial, and emotional pressure on them. Benu was living with her family of origin with her twin babies after being deserted by her husband. As she lost he breast milk, her rickshaw-puller father had to arrange packaged baby milk for the twins, which is very expensive. It was a huge financial burden on him. The victims mostly said that due to their return from the husbands' families, their parents became concerned about their future and the future of their children. Based upon such a context, some experiences of women are highlighted as follows:

> My father, at times, expresses his deepest dismay about my future and the future of my child (Rasu).
>
> My parents do not want me to feel their concerns about my fate, but I understand it hurts them and it hurts them very much (Helen).

Rosy's mother got very hurt when her husband first abused her in front of her mother. Her mother cried and said, "I have kept you on the fire." Her statement was absolutely true since Rosy was always on fire. She was a continuous victim of harsh domestic violence by her husband and in-laws, which made her mother very concerned. Shoheli, in another case, said that her eldest brother personally chose her husband and arranged the marriage. After being deserted by the husband, her brother, despite his weak financial condition, had to take care of her and her children. Her brother always repents and makes himself responsible for her fate. Another case, Tanni's brother was a carpenter by profession and he had made all the furniture for her husband as a dowry. He was shocked seeing Tanni being abandoned by her husband and the persistence violence against her. Tanni expressed her brother's woes in the following manner:

> My brother often cries and says that he is unlucky since the furniture he made could not ensure peace for me (Tanni).

According to the preceding three sections, it can be established that domestic violence, as a menace, is responsible for many serious negative consequences, not only for the victims but also their children and family members.

4.6 Coping Strategies and Help-seeking Practices

One of the important aspects of this research was to explore women's coping strategies and help-seeking practices in the event of domestic violence. I explored many important features about the victims' coping strategies and help-seeking practices.

4.6.1 Coping Strategies

The participants broadly adopted the following strategies to cope with the violence of their husbands.

4.6.1.1 Making the Marriage Work

The most important coping strategy for women was to continue in their marriage. They had been socialised by their parents to sustain their marital relationships at any cost and were advised to cope with adverse situations. The following remarks made by the participants are very important in this context:

> My parents said that you can only comeback when you are dead. There is no place for you if you come back quarrelling with your husband. That is why, at any cost, I try to maintain marital life (Kankan).
>
> My parents said husband is everything for a Bengali woman, and making marriage workable is your responsibility (Tanni).
>
> My mother said never go out of your husband's home, if he batters you, accept it, even he kills you, you will go to heaven (Pallabi).

These remarks illustrate the socialisation of the women in terms of maintaining martial relations at any cost. Perhaps, for such socialisation, most of the women in the study admitted that their main goal was to maintain the relationship with their husbands. Hence, they initially did not tell anyone about their experience of violence. As one participant said:

> In our society if marriage is broken society blames women. Hence, I tried to maintain the relationship at any cost, and never told parents and others anybody unless I failed with my efforts (Seuti).

These perceptions and experiences of women confirm that they were socialised to take no step against their violent husbands unless it was unavoidable. Of course, many of the participants in this study adopted different strategies and even sought formal and informal help, but they did so only in extreme situations, or when their own efforts failed. The participants considered the stigma associated with

divorce and separation as factors for not taking any action against their husbands. Moreover, marriage is an important cultural identity and matter of social status for women. At any cost, they wished to continue their marital relations as an accepted social norm.

4.6.1.2 Concern for the Children and Themselves

Most of the women were concerned for their children and themselves, and therefore were also forced to tolerate violence and maintain their relationship with their husband. Divorce and separation were bad for women. Since women are economically and socially dependent on men in Bangladesh, leaving their husbands would mean inviting problems not only for themselves but also for their children. The following excerpts reflect this:

> I want to see how much suffering I can endure, but if I leave him, my suffering will increase rapidly since I have three children. My mother cannot support us. At least now my children and I have three meals without problem (Rosy).

Similarly, other women also said that a husband could push them into a state of extreme vulnerability so they always wanted to live with them in any type of relationship. Such a vulnerability was explicitly expressed by the following remarks of two abused women that were even willing to live as co-wives.

> If my husband returns home with his new wife, I have no problem. If needed, I shall create a partition in the house. I cannot bear the burden of the family. People are saying many things against me. Moreover, children need their father (Suchanda).
>
> If I am sure that my husband will not perpetuate violence anymore, I have no problem with living as a co-wife. It is impossible for me otherwise to rear the children properly (Renu).

Rokeya was an exclusive example in the study, who was even living as a co-wife since she knew that living without her husband would be more problematic.

Amena also at some point lived as a co-wife in the same house considering her future and future of her daughters. Finally, when she could manage a job with a local NGO she left her husband and started living separately with her daughters. Similarly, a few women such as Jinat and Shoheli, who were deserted by their husbands, at least made some efforts to re-enter home considering their future and the future of their children. The testimonies from the victims indicated that many women expected their relationships to continue as they were very concerned about their children and themselves.

4.6.1.3 Fight Back

Some women fought back verbally against their violent husbands. However, none of them said that they had ever fought back physically, and none did so soon after marriage. For some women it took years before they actually retaliated. Although the consequences of fighting back were always bad, it often led to an escalation of violence. Only a few fought back during certain phases of their abusive relationships. A few such examples are as follows:

> He always called my parents names, one day I told him if I called your parents names how would you feel? If you do it again, I too will call your parents' names. He replied that if I did so he would kill me (Kabita).
>
> If ever I talked back to him, he battered me harder. Even then, I sometimes did so (Shirin).

The remark made by a woman, Nahar, is interesting with respect to fighting back. She called herself a "shadow," and in extreme cases, a shadow may fight back, as she said:

> If you attack a shadow repeatedly, it might fight back. I was like a shadow. Sometimes I fought back against my husband and mother-in-law, although I was battered for that several times (Nahar).

There were two good counter examples of fighting back. Suchanda sometimes fought back against her husband and she also fought against the woman

with whom her husband had an extramarital relationship. One day Suchanda said to her husband that she must have an extramarital relationship with another man to show him that she is not finished. However, her husband became very angry at her comment. On the other hand, Suchanda several times also threatened the woman with whom her husband was both physically and mentally engaged. Rokeya's fighting back was somewhat different. Her husband one day told her that if she gives him money he would never be violent. However, Rokeya countered this with the following remark:

> I don't need you anymore. My children are earning. The suffering that you have given to me is enough. I do not want to extend it (Rokeya).

Fighting back verbally was an important strategy which some women in the study adopted. It is interesting to note that most of these women mentally desired to fight back physically, but they were not in a position to materialise that practically. Some of them even said that it was not good for women to become arrogant physically.

4.6.1.4 Leaving the Scene

Some women left the scene, a strategy that was not possible for women immediately after a violent event. Some participants did this following extremely abusive situations. In some cases, this strategy ended the relationship. Of course, there were some that were deserted or were forced out by their husbands, but this was not a coping strategy for the women, but rather one that the former adopted. Some women left permanently or temporarily before they formally separated from their husbands. Momina, for example, fled her husband's home three times before she permanently divorced him. Her husband forced her to return home twice and on the third occasion she contacted a lawyer and divorced him. Bristi and Bokul permanently left their abusive husbands when they tried to kill them. Bristi had left earlier as well, but some of her husbands' relatives persuaded her to go back. In another instance, Rasu's husband did not directly try to kill her, but after the incident, she left and came back, but left him permanently later when he was violent again. Rasu remarked:

> I made a mistake in going back to his home. There was no change in him (Rasu).

However, some women left when their husbands got married again. It is also notable that even after leaving the first time, Jinat and Shoheli both tried to go back, but their husbands and their new wives did not allow them to do so. Therefore, they had to leave permanently. In this regard, Shoheli's comment is significant:

> It would have been better if I did not leave his home before, at least, I could ensure my children's future. Now it is difficult to survive (Shoheli).

The women adopted an extreme strategy of leaving the scene following their failure to bear the violence perpetuated by their husbands and in-laws. Sometimes they adopted it as the last strategy, and sometimes they had to relinquish this strategy and returned. In some cases it was the gateway to pursuing various help-seeking practices, which I will discuss in the following sub-section.

4.6.2 Help-seeking Practices

Seeking help during domestic violence was an important decision for many women. There were two types of help-seeking support for women, which I term formal and informal.

4.6.2.1 Informal Support

Many participants shared their experiences with various informal networks and sought support. It was one of the first ways to seek help from others. Informal support seeking included support from parents, relatives, in-laws, community people, and community NGOs. However, the results of informal support varied quite significantly. I found at least three categories of results: pacified the husband for the time being, escalated further violence, and brought no significant results.

1) Support of Parents and Relatives

The most common form of informal support was from the victims' family members, including parents and relatives. Most victims that sought

such help said that when they first disclosed their problems to their family members, they were usually advised to bear things, manage, or resolve things on their own. For example:

> When I told my parents about my problems, they suggested I should bear it silently since it was not possible for them to shoulder my burden. They also advised me not to disclose things to our relatives (Nova).
>
> When I first told my parents, they advised me to take care of the children properly so that they could make me happier in future and suggested complying with everything at all costs (Kankan).

However, at times, the parents and relatives of the victims tried to resolve the problems by giving gifts in cash or kind if an inadequate dowry was the cause of violence. Alternatively, they requested their daughters' husbands to stop being violent, or requested the in-laws to intervene. In fact, the parents and relatives tried their best to minimise the problems and to find amicable settlements. Sometimes such informal interventions worked for a short while or not at all. For example:

> One day I informed my uncle about everything when I was at home. My uncle came and requested my mother-in-law and husband to be kind to me. After he left, they blamed me for informing him (Nahar).
>
> Knowing about things, my father came with many gifts, and requested my mother-in-law and husband not to be violent with me. Although they scolded me for informing my father, they were better for some days at least. But then, everything became as before (Seuti).
>
> My brother even told him (her husband) he would build a shop for him and requested him to change his behavior (Kariman).

When informal approaches did not work, sometimes some family members sought community support or legal support in favour of the victims.

2) Support of Neighbours

Some women said that they sometimes confided in some of their neighbours, but found no significant solutions. Some wanted to help but did not dare to do so for fear of retaliation. Such support seeking also led to further violence; for example, if Kankan ever sought the help of a neighbor, her husband would abuse her severely. Soma's in-laws even told their neighbours to ostracise her, rather than help. The husbands of both Benu and Rosy had warned them against approaching neighbours and that they would permanently expel them from their homes. However, there were some good examples of neighborly support as well. When Rasu's husband sent some men to kill her and tried to break the door of the house, she phoned her house owner, who immediately rushed to the spot and saved her. Khodeja received the help of neighbours. If she ever approached them to request her husband not to be violent, they would do so and he remained peaceful for some days. But the neighbours of some victims were very reluctant because they did not want to interfere in others' personal matters. For example:

> Sometimes after serious battering, I tried to approach some neighbours and request them to intervene. They pacified me and said they could not intervene in my personal matters and advised me to tell my parents. But I could take only stay for a while in their houses (Kabita).

In a similar way, Momina's neighbours were afraid of her husband. Hence, she never received any support from them although she did approach them. She concluded that nobody wanted to invite unnecessary trouble. In fact, there were many mixed experiences with regard to support from the neighbours.

3) Support of In-laws

A few victims sometimes approached their in-laws. In most cases they did not receive any positive reactions from them. On the other hand, some in-laws deliberately made some positive steps in favour of the victims. A few but rare experiences are as follows:

> My in-laws were very good. The moment I approached them, they intervened, but the problem is that he does not listen to them (Renu).
>
> My father-in-law several times came forward to save me when my mother-in-law battered me. He even told her that how would you feel if the mother-in-law of her daughter does the same thing against her, but my mother-in-law never cared for my father-in-law (Nahar).

In-laws in Bangladesh have a bad reputation for being violent against women along with the husbands. They may also passively support or instigate the violence. Many women in this study had such bad experiences. Interestingly, some in-laws also made some positive steps in favor of the victims when the victims approached them.

4) Support from Community Members

An important means was seeking the help of community leaders. Some women, their parents, or other relatives approached some community leaders, including village leaders, village elders, and local UC representatives during some phases of their abusive relationships. In some cases, the community members called the perpetrators and their family members and ordered them to not perpetuate any more violence. In other cases, they organised *salish* or informal arbitration for both the parties. There were mixed reactions amongst the victims regarding the *salish* and interventions made by the community leaders. As the evidence suggests, the *salish* could not bring any significant results for the victims in the study. In this regard, some experiences of the participants are as follows:

> One day he battered me seriously, and I informed my parents. My father approached to local leaders of that village, and a *salish* was arranged by the leaders. He remained normal for some days. Again, he started being violent and even more so (Jhorna).
>
> My mother complained to the union council chairman. The chairman called them and scolded them. However, interventions of the chairman could not save me. They became even more violent because of seeking intervention by the chairman (Tanni).

On the other hand, Chameli's father arranged a *salish* to solve her problems, but her husband and in-laws did not attend. Urmy also requested the village leaders to make her husband at least responsible for family matters. They tried but failed to mobilize him. Bokul under her own initiative arranged a *salish*. In the *salish*, her husband agreed to take her home and to not be violent, but once Bokul was at her husband's home, again, he became violent. A few women said that they did not opt for *salish* because they knew that community leaders took bribes and if they did not offer these, there would be no results in their favor. Women's problems in the *salish* are not taken seriously, as the system is male-biased. Sometimes the victims are not even called in the *salish*, and a verdict is given knowing about the incident from others. One experience is as follows:

> He (her husband) managed some members of that *salish* through unfair means. There was no solution in the *salsih* (Kariman).

In the case of Rasu, her father did not approach the community leaders; rather he sought intervention by the religious leaders, who arranged the marriage between Rasu and her husband. Her husband admitted all his faults before them, remained normal for some days, but quickly returned to his earlier behavior. The Garo community, on the other hand, has its own social system (family clan) and tribal welfare association through which disputes are settled; they do not seek intervention by government services. *Salish* is also the usual means of resolving disputes. Molly complained against her husband to the tribal welfare association. When the association ordered her husband to reform, he became normal for some days, but then started behaving as before. Others such as Bobby had no faith in the association and according to her, it cannot ensure justice and lacked transparency.

5) Support from the Community NGOs

Seeking intervention by the local community NGOs was another feature of informal support. The prime *modus operandi* of dispute mitigation by these groups was to organise a *salish* between the parties. The participants in the study sought help from at least four locally-functioning NGOs: *Sabolombi Unnon Samity* (Self-Reliance Organisation or SUS), *Alokito Manush* (Enlightened Human

Being), a program of Concerned Women for Family Development (CWFD), Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust (BLAST), and the Community Legal Services (CLS), a program of BNWLA. The participants had different experiences with regard to seeking support from the NGOs, and they sought recourse with these NGOs since they worked in their close vicinity and no financial involvement was needed. Moreover, as the NGOs worked close by, it was easy for them to approach them:

> I came here as the madams (NGO women workers) informed us through *uthan baithak* (yard meeting) that no money is needed to seek help (Hena).
>
> You have to give money to Police, but here no money is required (Rahiman).

NGOs first serve notices to the perpetrators of violence to attend a *salish*. If they do not come, they send two more notices, and if no solution is attained through the *salish* or if the perpetrators do not respond to the notices, they may send applications to other agencies for legal intervention. However, extending legal support to victims depends upon the policy of the NGO. For example, the CLS program seeks to file only one legal case a year with its own funding. However, in most cases NGO intervention did not have significant results for the victims studied here. The experiences of some participants are as follows:

> My husband did not respond to any of the notices. When madam (NGO officials) calls him, he replies, you come to me; I shall not go to you (Chameli).
>
> All the notices sent by the NGO came back since she did not receive any notice as such (Shoheli).

Nevertheless, some participants also received some benefits from NGO interventions.

> When NGO madams told him not to do bad things, he became little better than before. Now he beats me less and is afraid of the NGO madams (Khodeja).

> When I left my husband, some people suggested me to go to CWFD for legal support. CWFD officials helped me to contact BLAST. BLAST offers free legal support to the victims. With the help of BLAST, I filed a case against him (Shirin).

From the above discussions, it is clear that the outcomes of various informal support interventions are not worth mentioning. Nevertheless, some women also benefitted to an extent because of these. Many problems were associated with these informal support systems such as corruption, non-compliance by perpetrators, the sense of impunity of the perpetrators, fear of retaliation, weaker NGO intervention, and so on.

4.6.2.2 Formal Support

Several government agencies extended support to the victims of domestic violence at the local level. These comprise the formal support mechanisms available to victims. Typically, the government agencies which extended support in rural areas included the sub-district women affairs office, the police, government legal aid offices, and the court. It is noteworthy that only a few participants had ever sought any sort of formal support, and that too only after informal interventions had failed.

1) Legal Recourse

Within seven days after leaving her husband, Shirin filed a case directly with the court under the Women and Children's Repression Act, 2000 (Amendment 2003) against her husband with the help of a community NGO. The court ordered the police to bring back Shirin's child to her from her husband, with which the police complied. Meanwhile, there would be more hearings in the court before it finally gave a verdict, and she was waiting for court verdict during my study. Bristi also directly filed a case with the court under the same act following a murder attempt on her. The court ordered an inquiry to be undertaken by a concerned sub-district women affairs officer. Rahiman filed two cases, one for maintenance and another against demands for a dowry. However, one day her husband approached her and begged her pardon. Rahiman forgave him and withdrew one of the cases. The other one for maintenance remained pending for a long time. With the assistance from the CLS program, Champa, who was abandoned by her husband, lodged a case for

maintenance. Before the court, her husband agreed to pay 1500 taka monthly as maintenance and to take her home. As a result, Champa went back and her husband gave her maintenance for some months. Later, when they were on a visit to Champa's father's home, he abandoned her and she did not go back to him.

In another case, failing to find an appropriate solution via an NGO's intervention, Chameli filed for maintenance. At the first hearing, he promised to take her back home and provide for her, but he did not abide by the promises that he had made before the court. On the second hearing, the court ordered him to appear at the third hearing, either by coming to a mutual solution with Chameli or by paying maintenance; otherwise he would go to jail. Afterwards, Chameli's husband threatened her that the court could do nothing to him and the third hearing was yet to be held.

Case Sharifa: Seeking Legal Recourse Did Not Work

The case of Sharifa, who had long experience of seeking legal procedures, illustrates that legal intervention did not work. After failing to get any relief through community interventions, she filed a case in August 2007 under the Family Court Ordinance 1985 for maintenance and payment of a dower since her husband neither gave any maintenance nor paid her the dower. In 2011, the court decreed in favor of Sharifa for the payment of maintenance. However, the defendants appealed against the order in a higher court, which was pending when I interviewed her in August 2014. As Sharifa had received nothing from this order, she filed another case against her husband in March 2013 under the Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961, for marrying again without her prior permission. According to this, such an offense is punishable with a prison sentence of a year or a fine of 10000 taka or both. When I interviewed her, the court had not given a ruling against Sharifa and just a few hearings had been held. Sahrifa expressed her deepest dismay regarding the court proceedings:

> I made two great blunders by filing two cases. I thought legal recourse will be good for me, but it has been worse for me. It took four years to get a decree on my first case. My first lawyer cheated me through delays in filing cases. I realised that my husband had influenced him somehow. Therefore, I changed

> lawyers, but lost important time. However, my new lawyer was good. It took four years to get a decree in my favor but my husband appealed in the higher court against the order. Therefore, I got nothing out of that decree; it is still pending. I do not know how many years it will take to have a final decision on this appeal. Justice is very slow in coming for me. In the meantime, when I lodged the case, my husband divorced me right away, and immediately married that woman. He attacked my home at night and threatened to kill me. People suggested I file another case for marrying again without my permission. I managed to raise money and filed it. The court gave some hearing dates, but sometimes I could not produce witnesses who wanted money from me to appear before the court. Moreover, he (her husband) somehow also influences my witnesses. Sometimes some of them promised to go, but finally did not. He even lied in the court that he did not marry without my permission. I am financially exhausted now. I have nothing to spend after these cases. I have sold my land; although my brothers did not say anything and are still supporting me financially, I understand their suffering (Sharifa).

It is evident that in this case procrastination was the main problem in getting recourse from the formal justice system. Moreover, the lawyer's lack of cooperation was also evident. There was a hidden understanding between her husband and her lawyer that caused great suffering to her. Moreover, seeking formal legal recourse caused her more harm, as her husband not only divorced her after she filed the case, but also married again. It was also evident that producing witnesses before the court was a problem for Sharifa, as her husband influenced her witnesses too. Importantly, she was financially exhausted by seeking legal alternatives, which also exposed her vulnerability as a woman.

2) Negative Police Attitude

There were a few examples of seeking intervention by the police. Momina's experience in this was bad. One day when her husband assaulted her seriously and cut her hand with a knife, and she went to the police station to file a complaint and the police demanded 200 taka for doing so, and as she could not pay, no complaint was registered. Later on, following another serious attack, she again

approached the police and again they demanded 800 taka and transportation costs to arrest her husband. Again, she failed to give any money and so the police gave no support. She angrily reacted:

> Every time I go to the police, they ask for money. Where can I go? I have no faith in government and its laws. Nobody gave me any protection. Moreover, knowing that I went to the police, my husband battered me even more (Momina).

Another woman, Suchanda, went to the police station to lodge a complaint against her husband, but they did not register the case and suggested she approach the local public representatives, as they did not want to intervene in private matters. Another woman, Renu, also went to the police station to file a general diary[27]. However, the police advised her to file a case so that they could arrest her husband, but demanded money to do so. She neither gave money nor filed any case. Her husband also battered her even more when he learnt she had gone to the police.

3) Recourse from Women Affairs Office

There were a few examples of seeking recourse from the government women's affairs office. Failing to get police intervention, Renu approached the women's affairs office in Mymensingh. They fixed a date for a hearing and gave notice to both parties. Unfortunately, on that day, her husband did not attend. Another woman, Soma, complained to the district women's affairs office in Netrokona. Following a number of procedural steps, the office finally decided to file a case for her, using government legal aid support. However, she had to wait for a long time to get any response.

The above experiences indicate that the women that sought formal support did not receive substantial results in their favour. The legal processes are cumbersome and the agency responses were not very proactive, and in some cases there was evidence of negative attitudes. Most alarmingly, the court and agency orders were also violated by the perpetrators.

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[27] General diary is the term used by the police in Bangladesh to record incidents within the jurisdiction of a police station.

4) Difficulties in Seeking Legal/Formal Recourse

In this connection, I asked other participants why they did not opt to seek formal government support. The purpose of such an inquiry was to know about the situational hindrances in seeking formal recourse. Helen desired legal recourse but not at the expense of their family honour. She said:

> I personally want severe punishment for Sohel (her husband), but I do not want to make my problems public. It would demolish my family honor (Helen).

Both Tonima and Bokul thought of a legal recourse but they had no support to back them up, and did not have money to spend after that. Therefore, despite Bokul husband's attempt to murder her she did not seek any legal intervention. In this context, Tonima's comment is worth-mentioning, which expresses her helplessness:

> To catch him, I need to run, but as poor woman how will I run with my three little children (Tonima)?

Rosy's mother told her not to think of any legal and formal intervention, as they did not have the capacity to fight her husband. Therefore, endurance was the only solution for her. Moreover, she knew that legal processes were very cumbersome. For both Garo victims it would really be degrading in the eyes of the community if they opted for legal solutions. Indigenous community people never seek formal legal intervention in their familial matters. Suchanda, however, had thought of filing a case against her husband, but later realised that she could not manage the family without him and so desperately wanted him back home as he had eloped with another woman. She also did not know of his whereabouts as the exact address of a person is required to file a case against him. Sulekha did not want to take any legal action against her husband and just wanted to forget him. In fact, after the disappearance of her husband as a woman she lost all hope from the world.

In contrast, some participants really wanted to seek a formal recourse but they did not have any guidelines, support, or information about the existing formal mechanism.

> I want legal recourse otherwise who would give maintenance of my children? But the problem is that I do not know how to seek so and who would help me in this regard (Jhorna)?
>
> I need legal remedy. I must ask people for that, but I cannot go far if money is needed for that (Tanni).

Amena, on the other hand, did not have any confidence in legal or formal procedures. She emphasised social mobilisation against violence against women and the empowerment of women.

> One can only get temporary remedy from legal solutions. Women must learn how to stand up their feet. Therefore, I have taught my daughters on how to fight against violence and empower themselves (Amena).

The above few excerpts illustrate that there were number of contextual factors for not seeking support to formal mechanism by some women. The barriers mainly included concern for the family honour, lack of resources, no clear information, culture, and skepticism about legal frameworks.

5) Orientation about the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010

Since one of the objectives of the study was to explore the implementation status of the DVPPA 2010, my final intention was to explore the level of orientation of the victims about the act as a part of formal support. In the course of doing this study I found that no women ever sought recourse using this act. Surprisingly, none of the victims was aware of it and a few excerpts from the participants are as follows:

> I have heard that are some laws for women but I have never heard of the domestic violence act. Nobody ever told me about this (Tanni).

> NGO madams (officials) said something about acts during *uthan baithak* (yard meeting). They did not say anything about domestic violence act (Jinat).
>
> I went to the court several times after I first lodged the case against my husband, but nobody informed me about this act. I am sure no woman in the village has heard of this (Sharifa).

It was evident that from the excerpts no attempt was made by any agency or concerned persons to let the women know about the Domestic Violence Act. Informing women about their legal rights would be an important step in helping them seek legal intervention.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides a detailed and lived account of the participants' varied experiences of being victims of domestic violence with regard to the forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices. The experiences of the participants clearly highlight that the domestic violence perpetrated inside the four walls of a home is widespread, is insidious and continuous, and provides a very disgraceful picture of the domestic life of women. Women's vulnerability was clearly reflected at every stage linked with this problem. From the public policy perspective, it is undoubtedly a matter of serious concern and a big challenge for making the domestic environment free from violence and repression. Lack of knowledge on the part of the victims about important legal rights such the DVPPA 2010 may cast doubt on the implications of the act, which is made to protect women from violence at home. Nevertheless, as the stages of the problem appeared to be very complicated, elimination or prevention of domestic violence and extending required support to the victims perhaps is not solely possible by the public administrators dealing with domestic violence issues. In this regard, the community has a big role to play and can supplement or complement the task of the public administrators. The next chapter, therefore, looks into the community perceptions and activities concerning domestic violence and will provide more information about the problem from a different perspective.

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND ACTIVITIES REGARDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter vividly illustrates that domestic violence is a stern problem for rural women in Bangladesh. This chapter is a shift from the victims' perspective to the community perspective. It turns to examining the perceptions and activities of the local community with regard to domestic violence. The community is a basic unit of social organisation and it influences many aspects in our lives and patterns of actions. Domestic violence against women is an issue of community concern. In the previous chapter, I showed that considerable numbers of participants approached informal community networks including neighbours, village leaders, and community NGOs in order to seek recourse for domestic violence. Thus, it was important to examine how important community members perceived the problems, and what measures were in place to redress this problem. Moreover, it also took into account the perception and activities of the indigenous matriarchal Garo community regarding domestic violence. Therefore, at least, it is now possible to compare the similarities and differences about the dynamics of domestic violence between the majority patriarchal Bengali community and the matriarchal Garo community.

5.2 Perceptions Regarding the Forms of Domestic Violence

For the purpose of the study, I included community members from different rural areas of both Mymensingh and Netrokona districts. The participants from the majority patriarchal Bengali community confirmed the existence of domestic violence in the community and viewed it as a problem for the community. With regard to

various forms of domestic violence, the participants put forward the following observations.

5.2.1 Domestic Violence Is Not Only Physical, But Has Other Forms

Most of the participants in this study opined that domestic violence against women is not only physical but also psychological/emotional, sexual and economic. At the same time, most of the community members were of the opinion that physical violence is the most frequent and most widely practiced form of violence against women in the community. For example, AK, a schoolteacher remembered a common proverb of rural Bangladesh, which states, "If you want to control your wife, you have to batter her thrice in a day: morning, afternoon and at night." With regard to various forms of domestic violence other than physical violence, HZK, a UC chairman for around fifteen years, said that in his long experience he found many types of violence such as physical, emotional/psychological, sexual and financial. He expressed his experience in the following manner:

> Usually women come with complaints of physical violence, but when I inquire into their history of abuse, I find they are the victims of many forms of abuse, and some of them are even more pervasive than that of physical violence (HZK).

Other participants also outlined that women encounter different forms of abuse other than physical violence. For example, DP, a female UC commissioner, said other than physical battering, sexual, psychological/emotional and financial exploitations on women are also treated as abuse. On this point, specifically, the village elderly opined that in earlier days only physical violence was treated as domestic violence. Even a certain amount of physical violence was not treated as domestic violence and no woman was bothered about the husband's verbal abuse, forced pregnancy or practice of polygamy. They used to assume that these practices were a part of their lives. MAS, an educated village elderly, informed:

> In earlier days, people only used to talk about extreme cases of physical abuse as domestic violence. Many husbands used to keep a stick at home to chastise their wives. Women did not mind to have been battered unless it was serious. Now-a-days, people talk about many forms of violence, which were never considered as domestic violence. For example, polygamy was practiced freely. There was a proverb in rural area that during harvesting season a rat keeps seven wives to help him collecting rice. Many head of the families had also more than one wife. Today, polygamy is not easy to practice. Many women do not accept it easily. Everything is a part of social change (MAS).

In short, according to the community participants, the perception regarding domestic violence has changed significantly over time. People are more concerned about and aware of various forms of violence. In fact, there has been a considerable amount of understanding about domestic violence as a matter of concern for women.

5.2.2 Psychological/Emotional Violence

According to the participants, psychological/emotional abuse was a part of many women's lives. They are frequently verbally abused or name-called by their husbands and in-laws, often threatened to remarry, to be divorced or driven away from the home. Some of them are the victims of the husbands' practices of polygamy and extra-marital relations, which also cause psychological/emotional abuse to them. RA, a female UC commissioner, cited a cruel example as follows:

> One of my neighbours perpetuated many forms of emotional/psychological abuse against his wife. He wanted to marry again. At one stage, he started propagating that his wife is mentally disturbed although she was not like that. At one stage, failing to cope with husband's constant emotional abuse, she really became mentally disturbed to some extent (RA).

However, according to community perceptions, there are many forms of psychological or emotional violence, which most of the women endure silently.

5.2.3 Sexual Violence

With regard to sexual violence the community members said that it is, of course, difficult to trace how a husband sexually abuses his wife since it is a very personal matter. However, they understand the problem in many different ways. They viewed frequent childbearing, forced pregnancy and forced abortion as a means of sexual violence toward women. Many women in the community still give birth at frequent intervals during their reproductive age. Sometimes they are forced to abort as well. Notably, all of the female community members specifically indicated that some victims had shared with them their experiences of sexual violence by their husbands including forced sex, sex during pregnancy and menstruation, abortion, forced pregnancy, etc. MP, a female UC commissioner, stated a case of sexual violence as follows:

> A girl who was married at the age of twelve evaded from her husband's residence just after two days since she got scared about physical relations with her husband. Her mother came to me for suggestions. I talked to the husband and his mother and requested them to allow the young girl to be physically and mentally grown-up. Nevertheless, after few days, her husband did the same thing, and she again evaded (MP).

Although given the social and cultural context of Bangladesh, sexual violence is still not a frequent issue to discuss with others, some community participants, particularly female public representatives, had a considerable amount of information about sexual violence. Overall, the community members were aware of various forms of sexual violence, and considered it as a part of domestic violence.

5.2.4 Economic Violence is the New Form

Economic violence is a new addition to the list of domestic violence. Over the years, the extent of economic abuse has taken a pervasive form. Many rural women are engaged in many small-scale income-generating activities, particularly by borrowing money from the NGOs. However, quite often, husbands snatch their

money and put pressure on how and where to spend it. MZ, an imam of a mosque and a religious leader, said:

> According to Islam, a wife is not obliged to give her income to her husband and she is also not required to pay anything after family expenses. Husbands are solely responsible for that. Husbands who snatch the income of their wives will be held responsible to Allah (God). It is a violation of women's rights (MZ).

MAH, a local leader and a former UC commissioner, said:

> Women borrow money from the NGOs. Quite often, their worthless husbands snatch their money. Some husbands also take away wives' chickens, goats and ducks and sell them. It is a common problem for women who want to earn independently (MAH).

Very specifically, the community members opined that many women neither can extend their income nor can repay the instalments of the NGOs in a timely way due to the misappropriation by their husbands. If they cannot repay the instalments within the due time, the NGOs usually do not consider them extending credit support further. In such cases, the women have to adopt many different means to negotiate with the NGOs, which restrict their economic mobility and is surely a form of violence.

5.3 Perceptions Regarding the Causes of Domestic Violence

5.3.1 Patriarchy is the Main Cause of Domestic Violence

Most of the community people explicitly stated that patriarchy is extensively prevalent in the society. Being rigidly socialised as superior to women, the men in the community use this institution as a means to control and dominate their wives. The patriarchal mechanism puts women in such a position that they become the easy prey of male domination and violence. From the family a boy conceives the idea of

superiority and a girl learns that she is inferior to a boy. Such perception leads to the condoning of domestic violence in later life. TM, a female writer, remarked:

> In Bangladesh, a girl's own family socialises her in a way so that she considers herself as inferior to a boy. Her movement is restricted and her expectations are curtailed. The term 'NO' is appropriate to her, and 'Yes' is appropriate for a boy. She is taught that her ultimate objective of life is to get married off quickly and to become a good wife. "Stay fine at husband's home, return only while you are dead" is the message during marriage. On the other hand, the notion of superiority is cultivated in a boy very firmly in the family. When he is grown up, he looks for a bride who is lower to his status, which invariably helps him to dominate her throughout the marital life (TM).

On the other hand, JS, a professor and a writer, specifically mentioned that patriarchy determines women's movements, behaviours, duties, responsibilities, and their ideas and thoughts. Women are strictly governed by the rigid patriarchal rules and any deviation forces women to confront men's violence. SS, a Hindu religious leader, , said that a woman is controlled under the vicious cycle of patriarchy: as a girl she is under the control of her father, as a wife she is under the control of husband, and as a mother is under the control of the son. Men take advantage of women's inferior position, and subdue them in all respects. Perpetuating violence is an effective means to subdue a wife in the family. Other community members also expressed similar opinions on how patriarchy paves the way for perpetuating domestic violence against women.

In this regard, the remark of GR, a village leader and a former UC commissioner, is worth mentioning:

> Patriarchy prevails in every aspect in our society. Some men consider women nothing more than servants. They think they are the lords and have full authority over the servants, and have rights to perpetuate violence against their servants (GR).

In fact, according to opinion of most of the participants, patriarchy is highly prevalent in the community and act as the most inflicting mechanism to commit domestic violence against women. This traditional powerful institution inflicts women to the extreme. A husband's perceived idea of supremacy act as opener to domestic violence.

5.3.2 Early Marriage: The Gateway to Domestic Violence

Most of the participants opined that early marriage is a grievous problem in the society. It is a harmful practice, which immediately curtails many of the rights of a young girl and often leads to many forms of domestic violence. Poorer parents consider their daughters a burden, and they want to get relief by marrying off their daughters. Moreover, it brings many detrimental and long-term effects on the physical, sexual, and mental health of a young girl who is married off at an early age. Some participants specifically mentioned that early marriage is the major cause of forced pregnancy and leads to a high risk of complications with pregnancy and childbearing. It is also a leading cause of sexual violence and other forms of violence. TM, a female writer, remarked:

> Early marriage means early pregnancy since women still considered nothing more than a baby-making machine. Early pregnancy is one of the leading causes of maternal mortality in Bangladesh. Moreover, a young wife from the poorer family never receives nutritional in-takes and caring (TM).

AR, a sub-district vice chairman, commented:

> The majority of the girls become married within fourteen or fifteen. These little girls become wives before they fully understand what marriage is and what family is. Their husbands perpetuate sexual violence against them. For many such girls, sex is a matter of trauma. They do not know how to perform familial activities properly. Failure to comply the expectations of their husbands and their families, they become the victims of domestic violence very quickly and easily (AR).

Some of the participants commented that the immaturity of a younger wife leads to the perpetuation of domestic violence. For example, HM, a social worker and a village leader, said:

> Girls are married off before reaching full mental maturation state. They do many things whimsically which their husbands and in-laws do not like. Moreover, they cannot comply with the expectations of their husbands and in-laws due to immaturity which makes them vulnerable to violence (HM).

Some of the participants said that despite having the Child Marriage Restrain Act and various government and non-government interventions, the practice of early marriage in the community has not been reduced to any significant level. According to this act, the minimum age of marriage for a boy is twenty one, and eighteen for a girl, but such guidelines are hardly followed. They shared some problems with the existing mechanism associated with the prevention of early marriage. HZK, a UC chairman, commented:

> Registration is a legal compulsion for Muslim marriages, but marriages are registered frequently without birth certificates or by hiding information or collecting false certificates, and sometimes marriages take place without registration (HZK).

The condition of Hindu girls is also critical. According to Hindu religious tradition, no registration is required since marriage is a bonding forever. In 2012, the government of Bangladesh passed the Hindu Marriage Registration Act. Yet, the obligation of a marriage registration remained optional due to the pressure from fanatic Hindu leaders. On this point, SB, a Hindu Marriage Registrar, shared his perceptions in the following manner:

> Child marriage paves the way of domestic violence. Obligation to marriage registration could have eliminated early marriage from the Hindu community.

> Unfortunately, the Act has made registration optional. There is no implementation of this Act. People still prefer custom to law (SB).

On the other hand, some of the participants expressed their strongest dismay regarding the activities of the government and other non-government activities in mobilising people against child marriage/early marriage. In their opinions, existing efforts to curb this menace were not sufficient. That is why it is still a prevalent practice amongst the rural people in the community. In short, the participants were very concerned about the menace of early marriage since it makes young girls susceptible to domestic violence very quickly.

5.3.3 Dowry Demand: A Chronic Custom That Leads to Domestic Violence

Community members considered the dowry demand as a major source of domestic violence. There was a notable consensus amongst the participants to consider the demand as a chronic custom in the community. A dowry is a transfer of cash or goods in kind from the brides' families to the grooms' families.

5.3.3.1 Dowry Demand Exists at All Levels and Sometimes Demands Never Stop

The dowry exists at all levels of the community. It has made marriage a commercial and profitable means of transaction. MAS, a village elderly, said:

> This is the unwritten custom in the community. Although government has enacted Dowry Prohibition Act, this Act is of no use. No one can think of getting her daughter married off without paying dowry. It is an evil but a necessary condition during marriage (MAS).

GR, a village leader and a former UP commissioner, stated:

> The slogan of the government is that no dowry during marriage. But it is transacted in at least in 95% marriages in rural areas (GR).

Specifically, some participants said that the problem associated with the dowry demand was often not a one-time phenomenon. Husbands and their family members continue with demands even after marriage. HZK, a UC chairman, said:

> Such a demand is often endless. If a woman can bring a dowry her situation remains stable, but if she cannot bring dowry it worsens largely (HZK).

The community participants opined that parents of women are the suppliers, at any cost; they try to arrange dowries considering the future of their daughters. Once there is a gap between supply and demand, the women become the victims of violence.

5.3.3.2 Poverty and Bad Habits Are Linked with Dowry Demand

Although the dowry demand exists at all levels of the community, most of the participants related this custom to poverty since most of the families in the rural areas are extremely poor and have no specific sources of income. Therefore, the families of the prospective grooms consider marriage as a source of capital for generating income and a safeguard against all sorts of economic volatilities. They want to improve their fate from poverty, unemployment, and uncertainty by exploiting the families of the brides. On the other hand, some participants viewed that many husbands in the rural are engaged in various bad habits such as gambling, addiction to drugs, alcoholism, and bingo. They desperately need money to meet their needs. They pressure their wives their wives to bring dowries so that they can meet their needs.

5.3.3.3 Dowry Demand Is Due to Women's Vulnerability

Some of the participants also commented that husbands and in-laws often take advantage of women's vulnerable condition. They know that once married women have no place to go, and if they are pressured to provide a dowry, their parents sill be compelled to meet their demands. Failure to meet the demand of dowries is one of the causes of divorce, abandonment, and the practice of polygamy in rural areas. RA, a female UP commissioner, opined:

> Often women are threatened to divorce or abandon if they do not bring dowry demanded by their husbands and in-laws. Finding no other alternatives, they ask their parents and relatives to give dowries. In my experience, 90% divorces of women in the rural areas are caused due to failure to meet the dowry demands (RA).

If the women are sent back to their families of origin, if they are separated or divorced, their parents have to face serious troubles since in Bangladesh, separation, divorce and abandonment are not socially acceptable. In the existing patriarchal residence pattern women are virtually extremely subjugated, and demand of dowry just adds fuel to it. It is understandable that in a matriarchal resident pattern placing such demand is often impossible. It was well-evident that the menace of dowry plays a notorious role in expanding the context of domestic violence in the local area.

5.3.4 Involvement of and Conflict with the Mother-in-law

Most of the community participants prominently viewed involvement of and conflict with the mother-in-law as a dominating factor in domestic violence in the rural community. Interestingly, not all of the community people made the mother-in-law directly liable for the perpetuation of domestic violence; rather, few of them also made the daughter-in-law responsible for their own fate. On this point, HZK as a UC chairman, shared an interesting experience:

> A mother-in-law forgets that once she was a daughter-in-law and was abused by her mother-in-law as well. I received many complaints of daughter-in-laws against their mother-in-laws. Interestingly, these mother-in-laws, when they were daughter-in-laws, also complained me against their mother-in-laws. It is a very complicated dynamic (HZK).

However, according to some participants, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is a woman versus woman game. Each one is the enemy of the other. In the following manner, they shared their experiences as to why being a

woman a mother-in-law perpetuates or helps perpetuate violence against her daughter-in-laws and vice-versa.

5.3.4.1 Involvement of the Mother-in-law

The mother-in-law has a considerable amount of impact on the perpetuation of domestic violence against her daughter-in-law by creating trouble between her son and his wife. She can easily dominate her daughter-in-law and instigate the perpetuation of various forms of violence. NI, a UC commissioner, said:

> It is true that joint family structure in rural is breaking down. Even though, a mother-in-law still she enjoys considerable amount influence over her sons. Many incidents of violence in rural areas take place due to the influence of the mother-in-laws. Whatever a mother-in-law says against her daughter-in-law is believed by her son, and based on that belief, he perpetuates violence against her wife (NI).

Some of the participants said that the mother-in-laws often want to take revenge on their own mother-in-laws by making their daughter-in-laws scapegoats. That is why they perpetuated violence against them. MAS, a village elderly, remarked:

> There is a saying in the rural area that my mother-in-law had given me troubles; I would also make daughter-in-law's life hell (MAS).

Some of the participants commented about the natural attachment between son and mother, and that a mother can influence her son because of this attachment. Although the overall status of women is lower than that of men in the society, once they become mother-in-laws they can enjoy a dominant position in the family and can influence every aspect of their sons.

5.3.4.2 Conflicts with the Mother-in-law

Apart from the facets of involvement of the mother, there were aspects of conflicts with the mother-in-law which also acted as instigating factors of domestic violence. According to this line of thought, many daughters-in-law do not like their

mothers-in-law, do not pay respect to them and often humiliate them. By doing so, they invite trouble for them since the husbands always expect their wives to show respect and honour to their parents and do not tolerate any disrespect or dishonour. Therefore, they inflict violence against their wives. Professor JS explained the disliking attitudes of the daughters-in-law towards their mothers-in-law by citing a few examples from the local folk literature.

> My mother-in-law died in the morning, I might cry after lunch, if time allows (JS).
>
> My mother-in-law has gone to river to take a bath; I wish a tiger would take her away (JS).

He mentioned that literary elements are not detached from reality since many daughters-in-law are not comfortable in living with mothers-in-law according to the patriarchal residence pattern. Some other participants also held a similar assumption. MAH, a village leader and a former UC commissioner, commented:

> Daughters-in-law consider their in-laws as a burden. They do not feel like to show respect and often find ways and means on how to humiliate them. Most cases they are not succeeded since their husbands prefer their parents to them and often punish them for their ill behaviours (MAH).

Hence, according to some community participants, bad intentions and disrespect of the daughters-in-law towards their mothers-in-law create a context for perpetuating violence against them by their husbands. Moreover, many women feel uncomfortable living in a patriarchal system with the in-laws. That is why they get involved in conflicts with their mothers-in-law.

5.3.4.3 Problems between Mother-in-Law and Daughter-in-Law Are Due to Patriarchy

There were also opinions amongst the community members that the tussle between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law is created by patriarchy. For example, professor JS said the following:

> This system is created by patriarchy. Both the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law fight against each other to win a game of capturing a man (JS).

Both TM, a female writer, and AR, a UC female vice chairman, expressed similar opinions that domestic violence is difficult to eliminate in the society unless women themselves stop fighting against each other, and added that by doing so they are only promoting patriarchy.

The involvement of the mother in-law and conflict with the mother-in-law create many grounds for the perpetuation of domestic violence. In so doing, women stand against each other. In the patriarchal resident pattern in Bangladesh it is a commonly-reported form of problem, particularly the involvement of the mother-in-law in the perpetuation of domestic violence against her daughter-in-law.

5.3.5 Extra-Marital Relations, Practice of Polygamy, and Inability to Give Birth to A Male Child and Childlessness

Some of the participants viewed extramarital relations, women's inability to give birth to a child or a male child, and polygamy as instigating factors for the perpetuation of domestic violence. In their opinions, all of these issues were inter-linked and created grounds for domestic violence in the community.

5.3.5.1 Extramarital Relations of Both Men and Women

Extramarital relationships create problems in the family. It is alarmingly becoming widespread in the rural community. However, it often leads to many forms of violence when women intervene in the affairs of their husbands. MCP, a Hindu community leader, had the following observation:

> Extramarital relationships have taken a widespread form in the community. When a married man engaged in an extramarital relationship, his wife obstructs him in many ways. He becomes angry at his wife's interventions and perpetuates violence. He also threatens her to divorce or divorces her too (MCP).

The community participants also blamed women for being engaged in extramarital relationships. The women's engagement in extramarital relations provokes their husbands' to perpetuate violence against them. A husband always prefers a faithful and devoted wife and never allows any illicit relationship of his wife. As women are increasingly coming out of the home for many purposes, they sometimes develop a relationship with others without considering the consequences. Such women become more vulnerable to being divorced or abandoned by their husbands. On this point, AK, a schoolteacher, said that the wife of one of his neighbours became engaged in an extramarital with a distant relative and when her husband came to know it, he not only punished her severely but also drove her away from the home forever. On the other hand, one of the female relatives of MNI, an imam and religious leader of Netrokona district, said that one of her female relatives became involved in an illicit relationship with her brother-in-law. Knowing that, her husband not only punished her, but also brought the issue to the community and the community expelled her from the village. However, according to most of the participants, extramarital relation is an erosion of social values as well as religious values. It is also a deterioration of trust between a husband and a wife.

5.3.5.2 Practice of Polygamy

Extramarital relationships are closely linked with the husband's practices of polygamy. Some of the participants opined that not only are women physically abused due to their interference into their husbands' extramarital relationships, but also, quite often, they become the victims of husbands' practices of polygamy. Polygamy is a serious form of emotional/psychological violence. However, the formation of practicing polygamy has changed from before. MAS, a village elderly, said:

> In earlier days, almost all men used to marry more than once. Now-a-days, such practice has been reduced to some extent due to social mobilisation. But a man now practices polygamy in different ways-he often divorces his wife and immediately gets married to a new woman. Many men in the community in this way married twice, thrice or even four times in their lifetimes (MAS).

Some of the participants said that although Islam permits four wives at a time, due to economic hardship many men cannot keep more than one wife. Many husbands for many reasons abandon or divorce their wives, and marry again. This is how polygamy is practiced in rural areas quite freely and openly, and acts as a source of domestic violence.

5.3.5.3 Inability to Give Birth to a Male Child and Childlessness

The most commonly-reported factor of polygamy was associated with the current wife's inability to produce a male child or a child. In that case, the husband divorces or deserts his wife and quickly gets married with a hope that the new wife will be able to produce a child or a male child. This also generates many forms of violence. DP, a female UC commissioner, said:

> Producing a male child or child is very important as a wife. It increases her status in the family. Many men in the rural area remarry primarily because of the perceived inability of their wives to bear a child (DP).

The participants also opined that women are usually blamed for a childless or sonless state. Still in the rural areas, failure to bear a child is considered a problem with the wife, not with the husband. A woman, thus, becomes very vulnerable to violence when she does not have such so-called "reproductive ability."

5.3.6 Domestic Violence is Associated with Poverty and Low Income

Many participants in the study related poverty and low family income as aggravating factors for domestic violence. Earlier I mentioned that the dowry demand is linked with poverty. Other than dowry demands, the participants specifically mentioned that the widespread prevalence of poverty and low income in the family often act as sources of numerous conflict between a husband and a wife. Most of the rural people depend on unfavourable and volatile agriculture-based sources of earnings. Other sources of income are also very limited. Hence, most of the families remain critically impoverished. Failure to perform the appropriate responsibilities by the husbands creates grounds for domestic violence. HM, a social worker and a village leader, expressed his opinions:

> There is a proverb, "when poverty comes in at the door, love flies out of the window." Many families in the rural areas live in extreme poverty state. When wives ask husbands about their low income, they become frustrated, irritated, and resolve the situation through violent means (HM).

On the other hand, a few participants also blamed women for creating trouble concerning the matter of poverty and low income. In their opinions, women often fail or do not try to understand the ability of their husbands and the opportunities available for income. SI, a village leader, said:

> If a husband can earn only 100 taka daily, and a wife asks for household necessities amounting to 200 taka, it must create problems in the family. Many wives cannot understand the situation of their husbands. By doing so, they invite troubles (SI).

In any circumstances, poverty and low-income act as leading causes of the perpetuation of domestic violence. Men usually do not like to be questioned about their breadwinner role. Therefore, they control their wives by inflicting violence.

5.4 Perceptions Regarding the Consequences of Domestic Violence

The community participants opined that domestic violence has multifarious effects on women. They were concerned about the physical, reproductive/sexual, mental health implications, and about the financial difficulties faced by women. Moreover, some of them had talked about social impacts, and impacts related to seeking recourse. The impacts on children and the women's family members were also identified by them.

5.4.1 Impacts on Women

5.4.1.1 Effects on Physical Health

There was a consensus amongst the participants with regard to the effect on women caused by various physical assaults. In their opinions, domestic

violence often has serious impacts on women's physical health. For example, the following excerpt of a UC chairman makes an inclusive account of the various serious impacts caused by physical assault.

> I have received many complaints about dangerous physical assaults on women by their husbands and in-laws including broken bones, head injuries, injuries to eyes and ear, burnings, deep cut on the body and so on. Although there was no murder case during my tenure, in Bangladesh many women are murdered by their husbands quite frequently (HZK).

According to the participants, physical health is the most immediate impact caused by domestic violence. Sometimes the husbands intentionally assault their wives in a grievous way, and sometimes they are not aware of the consequences of the serious assaults.

5.4.1.2 Effects on Sexual/Reproductive Health

With regard to various sexual and reproductive health impacts, the dominant perceptions of the participants included complications during pregnancy, lack of nutritional and physical care during pregnancy, forced pregnancy/multiple-child bearing, and so on. AR, a female sub-district vice chairman, said:

> A woman is forced to give birth number of times in her lifetime. Giving birth is a routine activity for many women. In poor families almost no attention is paid to her nutritional and medical needs and rest. She has to work very hard even during pregnancy. Often a husband physically and mentally tortures her during pregnancy. With all bad experiences, many women develop complications during their pregnancy, and that also cause bad impacts upon the baby (AR).

Some of the participants mentioned early marriage and its impacts on pregnancy, maternal mortality and the development of trauma due to the physical relationships with the husbands. In fact, the community participants held numerous perceptions about the sexual/reproductive, health-related consequences of domestic violence.

5.4.1.3 Effects on Mental Health

Some of the participants pointed out a number of issues with regard to the mental health consequences on the victims. They said that women suffer from serious emotional and psychological disturbances and dejection due to husbands' threat to divorce, abandon, and remarry. TM, a female writer, said:

> In our society, marriage is so important to a woman, when her husband threatens her to divorce or abandon, she really gets very scared and suffers from mental agony (TM).

Moreover, the community participants said that the continuous demand for dowry, verbal abuse and name calling in a demeaning manner also made them mentally disturbed. Further, unhealthy relationships with the in-laws, the husbands' extramarital relations also ignited many negative mental health consequences on women. Suicidal ideation is an extreme mental health consequence. MP, a female commissioner, said:

> When women finally fail to cope with domestic violence, some of them might develop suicidal ideation. In our area, a woman named Sara, failing to comply with abuse, wanted to commit suicide by hanging from a tree (MP).

In short, according to the community participants, domestic violence victims might suffer from numerous mental health-related consequences. Victims often bear those sufferings for a long period, and this engulfs women to the extreme.

5.4.1.4 Financial Impacts Due to Violence

Most of the participants specifically mentioned that domestic violence economically disturbed women, as many husbands grasp women's money borrowed from the NGOs or even direct them on how to spend it. Moreover, the husbands also sell or misappropriate the women's income-earning sources. By doing so, vhusbands create many economic problems for the women. SI, a local leader of Mymensingh district, said:

> Women borrow money to become self-reliant or to help with family expenses, but when the money is captured by their husbands, they fall in deep trouble. Sometime women become burdened with numbers of borrowings to adjust each with the other (SI).

Obstruction of women's economic activities is a recent phenomenon after the women's wide involvement in NGO activities. Nevertheless, it is often a source of economic impact on women since they have to adjust their borrowing in many ways and sometimes they become indebted with a number of borrowings. Moreover, some community members said that sometimes women are not given maintenance or pocket money for their own expenses, which also pushes them to confront numerous economic disturbances.

5.4.1.4 Effects Due to Help-seeking

Some the participants indicated that the women that opt to seek recourse with either formal or informal agencies also confront many bitter experiences. In their opinions, many women do not get proper justice through informal means, and the formal justice system is cumbersome, lengthy, and requires financial involvement. Moreover, if they seek recourse living within the marital relationship, sometimes they encounter more violence from their husbands and in-laws. In actual fact, women's decision to see help often adversely affects them. MAS, a village elderly, commented:

> There are a few examples of divorcing or abandoning women in the locality by their husbands after they made complaints with the UC or community people about their problems. Their desire to make things normal turned into worse (MAS).

It is interesting to note that the community members viewed that help-seeking had some negative impacts on women since such mechanisms failed to ensure proper support to the victims. This indicates the internal shortcomings of those mechanisms, as well as the women's vulnerability.

5.4.2 Social Dislocation

On the other hand, some of the participants talked about social dislocation as an effect of domestic violence. In their opinions, finding no other alternatives, many abused women decide to go to Dhaka or some other cities to work as a garment worker. Sometimes they cannot take their children with them. Family breakup is a consequence, and women also become disconnected from the villages. HMM, a social worker, observed:

> The trend of going to Dhaka and other cities by the poorer abused women for seeking garment jobs is escalating, and family breakups are the ultimate consequences. Despite our efforts, we cannot tackle this trend (HMM).

Although women are making significant contribution to the national economy, it is often overlooked that some women do so at a huge cost of their family issues. It is a hidden side of economic prosperity.

5.4.3 Impact on Children

Almost all of the participants were very concerned about the impact on children due to domestic violence against their mother, and with issues such as divorce and abandonment. They said that the conflicts between father and mother adversely affected children in many ways. The children become afraid of their father and, often, develop a negative image of him. Proper upbringing of the children is impossible in a violent environment. Divorce and abandonment of the mother often stops their education. In that case, many children become engaged in income-generating activities.

5.4.4 Impact on Family Members

On the other hand, some of the participants mentioned the impacts on family members of women due to dowry demand. When the husbands and in-laws put pressure on women, they have to ask their family members to meet the demands. The family members, in most cases, either have to sell property or borrow money to meet

the demands, which has a stern economic impact on them. The following excerpt of KNB, a female sub-district vice chairman, perfectly depicts the context:

> Guardians think they would be relieved once their daughters are married. Hence, they do their best to give dowries during marriage. In most cases, their expectations do not come to true. Their daughters are quite often pressurised by their husbands and in-laws to bring more dowries from their families. Burden of dowry is endless for many poor families (KNB).

The demand for a dowry is a longstanding social curse in Bangladesh, which not only makes women susceptible to violence but also has many negative impacts on their families since many poorer women have no alternative other than asking the family members to meet those demands.

5.5 Perceptions Regarding Coping Strategies and Help-seeking Practices

Under this theme, I have discussed the issues related to women's coping strategies and help-seeking practices. The participants had different opinions about women's coping strategies and help-seeking practices regarding domestic violence.

5.5.1 Disclosure is Not the Prime Option

According to most of the participants, abused women usually do not want to discuss or disclose their experiences of domestic violence. They try to cope with the violent experiences within themselves. Only in extreme cases do they disclose their experiences with others, including parents, relatives, and community people. HZK, a UC chairman, explicitly stated:

> Usually most of the victims of domestic violence endure the suffering within themselves due to shame and disgrace attached with disclosing. It is a typical character of Bangladeshi women. Only in extreme cases, they would tell to their parents or relatives. If they fail to bring solutions to their problems, they

> would disclose to us or the NGOs. We try to bring amiable solutions either through *salish* or other means. When all efforts fail in vain, they might seek recourse to formal agencies. However, only few women do so (HZK).

The above excerpt presents full details about the characteristics of the victims, and their usual coping strategies and help-seeking practices. However, there was a general consensus amongst the participants with regard to vsocio-economic background of the women and their motivation to seek help and not to seek help. Usually, women from lower socio-economic background disclose their experiences of domestic violence to others, while women from middle-income and upper-income classes hardly share their experiences with others since they consider that disclosure is embarrassing for them and for their families. AL, a UC commissioner, said:

> Only women from the lower-socio-economic strata prefer to disclose. Educated and women from affluent, middle-class families do not disclose anything about domestic violence. They think it would demean their families and themselves (AL).

Although most of the participants agreed that women with a lower socio-economic status disclosed their experiences, according to some participants, such an option is only a recent phenomenon. Traditionally, women from all levels hardly shared their experiences of domestic violence with others; rather, they used to cope with the incidents by themselves. In this regard, MKS, a village elderly, opined:

> Domestic violence is an endurance test for many women. They think if their husbands divorce or abandon them they would fall into the well. At the same time, they are also concerned about the future of their children. They know if they seek recourse, their condition and the condition of their children might be more problematic. Hence, they want to cope with the test (DP).

The above perceptions of the community clearly indicate that disclosure is still not on the preference list when domestic violence occurs. Before talking about her

experience, an abused woman has to consider many issues, which often preclude them from seeking recourse.

5.5.2 "No-Provision of Divorce" Makes Hindu Women Less Interested in Help-seeking

Specifically, the coping strategies and help-seeking practices of women from the Hindu and Muslim community vary quite significantly. According to most of the Hindu community leaders, the "no-provision of divorce" in the Hindu community has created fundamental differences with regard to expressing the experience of domestic violence. MCP, a Hindu community leader, said:

> Hindu women worship their husbands. They know marriage is an insoluble binding and a part of religion. A Hindu woman hardly speaks out of her experiences of domestic violence to the public. As there is no provision of divorce amongst the Hindu community, a Hindu woman knows that she must maintain the relationship (MCP).

In fact, according to Hindu religion, marriage is a permanent binding and sacred relationship between a husband and a wife, and unlike in Islam, it is not a contract. Hence, Hindu women at any cost try to retain their marital relations. Hence, by disclosing their experiences of violence, they do not want to create trouble in their marital lives, and they consider that coping with violence is the best strategy.

5.5.3 "Help is Sought by Those Who Have No Sense of Honour and Dignity": A Stigma and Deterrence against Help-Seeking

Very interestingly, a few participants viewed that disclosure was preferred by those women that did not have any feeling or sense of shame or dignity. In their opinions, the issue of domestic violence was not a matter to be frequently discussed with others; rather, it should be solved through familial means. They said that the lower class women lacked a sense of shame and dignity and because of that they bring their personal matters to the public. In so doing, they degrade themselves, their husbands, and their families. HM, a social worker and a village leader, opined:

> In my opinion, many women do not have the sense of dignity and honour. They feel encouraged by telling others about their problems. Their endurance level is very low (HM).

The above perception or attitude of some community members was not very unusual. It makes one question why an abused woman would feel shame for seeking help and it demonstrates the prevalence of the patriarchal mindset amongst the community members. The prevalence of such an attitude amongst the community members might encourage the violent husbands to perpetuate more violence and also inflict it women if they ever seek help with the community members. The women thus might be discouraged from seeking help.

In the preceding few sections I discussed the various perceptions of the community people regarding domestic violence concerning issues related to forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices. In the following section, I have discussed various types of community activism concerning domestic violence.

5.6 Community Activities against Domestic Violence

This section is divided into two parts. In the first part, I discuss the major interventions undertaken by the local people, and in the following part, I develop cases about two local NGO interventions.

5.6.1 *Salish*-The Most Powerful Community Intervention

Salish is a very important community dispute resolution mechanism through which local disputes are resolved very quickly. It is organised by the *salishkars* (arbitrators). However, there is no definite rural structure or size of the *salish*. It usually comprises local leaders, local elites, local public representatives, religious leaders, and the elderly. On this point, HM, a social worker and local leader, stated as follows:

> There is no specific committee in the rural area for conducting *salish*. When a village leader or a UC chairman receives a complaint, he calls *salish* and a

> jury board is formed. Members of the jury board are chosen based upon the choice of the complainant and the defender. Usually, a poorer victim of domestic violence cannot make her own choice instead her relatives make choices. When both the parties agreed on inclusion of the members, a date is fixed for conducting *salish.* Usually, both the parties choose members those who are recognised in the community as *salishkars* (HM).

It should be noted that all of the participants admitted that the members of the jury board are usually men. Even the families of the victim never choose any female member to act on the jury board. The female public representatives are not invited to act as jury board members on women's issues. In their opinion, the formation of the *salish* is highly male-dominated. KNB, a female sub-district vice chairman, stated:

> In the rural area, men dissolve women's problems as if they are the sole authority to do so. There is no participation of female members in the *salish* (KNB).

RA, a female UC commissioner, said:

> I am never invited to attend *sailsh* even on critical women's issues. Sometimes as public representative, I willingly want to join the *salish,* but *salishkaraks* quite often pass comments as *salish* is the purview of men, women need not to come here (RA).

The exclusion of female public representatives from women's issues is unfair. It could greatly subsume women's rights and voices, and be a hindrance to ensuring justice for women. Men usually cannot fully understand the problems of women. In most cases the victim will also not disclose her sensitive personal problems to men. When women's representation is not ensured, their bargaining capacity is sidelined. In that case, s*aliskaorks* can freely show their bias towards men. Nevertheless, this system in the village has been in place for centuries. It also helps the poorer people to avoid the hassles associated with seeking recourse with the formal justice system.

Most of the community participants I interviewed had had the experience of working with this informal justice system and they said that when they act as members of *salish* they always try to create an amiable solution between the parties. The organisers also impose fines and give minor punishments. However, the acceptance of a verdict is important for having a successful result through the *salish.* Some of the participants admitted that in order to find a solution to the problem of domestic violence they deliberately do not highlight the problems of the victims, rather force the victims and their families to accept their settlement. Thus, the decisions taken during the *salish* are highly male-biased. HZK, a UC chairman, admitted:

> I admit that not all decisions on domestic violence are made fairly. During *salish* we try to minimise the problems, and do not highlight women's problems largely. We just impose minor punishment on the husbands so that they become happier and live peacefully with their wives (HZK).

AL, an UC commissioner, said:

> Often women do not get accepted justice from us. We make them understood if they do not accept our solutions, their conditions might be worse (AL).

On the other hand, the participants also mentioned that at any cost they want to come to a decision in the *salish* in order to help the poorer victims avoid the hassles associated with the existing institutional support mechanism, such as the court and the police. As GM, a former UC commissioner and a village leader, indicated the following:

> We manage everything through our social means in such a way so that the victims do not need to go to the court or to the police. If they go there, they will be harassed. Therefore, we strongly pressurise them to accept our solutions (GR).

Some of the participants said that despite their efforts to arrive at mutual solutions, sometimes further conflicts between the husband and wife evolve. In that

case, they arranged another *salish* if the parties want it. Sometimes, they also keep an eye on the troubled families and warn them not to get involved in further altercations. On the other hand, acceptance of a decision depends upon the parties, sometimes the decisions of the *salish* are not accepted by them. NI, a UC commissioner, admitted:

> At times, we fail also. Both the victims and the perpetrators sometimes get aggrieved with our decisions, and sometimes do not comply our decisions. Since we have no legal entity, there is no harm if they do not comply (NI).

Some of the participants honestly admitted that the *salish* process is not only male-dominated or male-biased, but also corrupt. In their opinions, the victims often do not get the expected results since the defenders mange the people involved in the *salish* through unfair means and push the decisions in their favour. MKS, a village elderly, said:

> Today's *salish* process is absolutely corrupt. Young leaders dominate the whole process and do whatever they like through unfair means. Victims cannot expect proper remedies for their problems (MKS).

Nevertheless, the *salish* is a very important community intervention mechanism for addressing the domestic violence issue in the community. However, the above context clearly illustrates that this traditional rural institution often forces women to accept the decisions of the *salishkaroks*, which is unfair. It further confirms that the non-inclusion of women as *saliskaroks* regarding women's problems is also an indicator of injustice. Moreover, when the system is corrupt, it will further sideline women's problems.

5.6.2 The Case of Ritu[28]: Community *Salish* Failed to Solve Her Problems

During October 2014, I was in my village for the purpose of my research. One afternoon, a young woman came to me and sought help against the violence of her husband and in-laws. The details of her case are as follows:

5.6.2.1 Background

Ritu, hardly around seventeen or eighteen years old, was from a nearby village. She studied up to the ninth grade. She was married to Sumon, a twenty two-year-old commercial motorbike driver, in July 2014. They had pre-marital physical relationships. However, at one stage, Ritu realised that Sumon lost interest in her and was reluctant to get married. Therefore, she informed everything to her family members. One day, when Sumon went to her village, her family members captured him. They called his father and forced Sumon to marry Ritu the same day.

5.6.2.2 Experiences of Violence

Ritu said that a few days after marriage her husband and in-laws forced her to tell her mother to give Sumon a good cell phone and a motorbike. At one stage, she informed her mother about their demands. Her mother purchased a cell phone for Sumon and requested some time to buy a motorcycle. Sumon and his parents were not happy with this, and started physically abusing Ritu. They always called her and her many names. Moreover, as her complexion was not fair, they also insulted her by saying that she was *kali* (black). If she ever uses cosmetics, her husband and mother-in-law mock her complexion.

Ritu experienced some serious physical assaults and psychological and emotional violence within this short tenure of marital relations. For example, once late at night, her husband woke her up and abruptly cut her hands with a blade. On another day, her husband hit her with an axe at her back. Sometimes he also kicked her in the abdomen. Her husband has the habit of going to prostitutes. One day, while she asked him about that he replied that he has no problem if she sleeps with other men. Another day, he told her that one of her friends agreed to give her 1500 taka if she slept with him. On the other hand, her mother-in-law always kept her busy with domestic chores. She even battered her if there was something wrong with the household

[28] Pseudonym of the victim. I developed this case based on an interview with the victim, and observing the *salish*.

activities. A few days before, her husband and father-in-law together seriously battered her with bamboo canes in front of the neighbours. Following the incident, she became very dejected. Suddenly she rushed to her room, locked the door from inside and wanted to hang herself from the ceiling. However, her effort to commit suicide was not successful as her husband and father-in-law broke the door. Both her husband and father-in-law again battered her because she wanted to commit suicide. In their opinions, by committing suicide, she wanted to make them arrested by the police.

5.6.2.3 Motivations for Seeking Help

Ritu never shared her experiences of abuse with anybody other than her mother. Her mother always suggested that she cope with the situation. The day she approached me, her husband battered her seriously and told her to go back to her family of origin. Then, she suddenly decided to come to me with a hope that I could help her. She came to know about me from one of her neighbours. However, she did not want separation or divorce; she only desired that her husband and in-laws would behave humanely with her.

5.6.2.4 *Salish* Organised

I was completely motivated to help Ritu. I talked to my family members and decided to organise a *salish* for her. Moreover, for the purpose of my research, I also wanted to observe the *salish* process. At this stage, I adopted the observation method. My uncle called a few local arbitrators to come to our residence to hold the *salish.* He called a village elderly, a former UC commissioner and two village leaders. I requested him to include a female UC commissioner as well. My uncle called Ritu's husband and father-in-law. Within an hour, all of the arrangements were completed. Meanwhile, some neighbours also joined as spectators. Although Ritu's husband and father-in-law appeared to be disappointed with such an arrangement, as it was an intervention from our family they did not say anything against it.

I observed that the arbitrators first selected the village elderly as the head of the jury board and informed both parties about the proceedings. They would first listen to the problems from both parties and allow them time to argue and counter argue. Finally, they would make their decisions. Accordingly, the organisers listened to the complaints made by Ritu first, and then after that, listened to the statements of Ritu's husband and in-laws. I observed while the arguments and counter arguments

began, and the situation became very intense. Ritu's husband and father-in-law called Ritu arrogant. They blamed Ritu's family for compelling them to get her married. Moreover, they also raised the question of a dowry and said that by marrying a poor woman they did not get anything. Ritu, on the other hand, admitted that sometimes she argues with her husband and in-laws. The village elderly, on behalf of the arbitrators, suggested that Ritu not show any arrogance in the future and ordered her to seek forgiveness from her father-in-law. Ritu agreed and sought forgiveness for any of her previous misconduct. The arbitrators, on the other hand, ordered Sumon and his father to promise not to condone any violence or place any demand for a dowry. Sumon's father promised to follow the order. Suddenly, Sumon said that he did not like Ritu and was not interested in continuing the relationship. He roughly said that he could not promise not to commit violence. Everybody was surprised at his sudden remarks as everything was going to be normal. Ritu really got nervous, and said she would not return. If she returned, Sumon would kill her, she said. There was a huge clamour in the *salish,* and both the parties stood against each other. Suddenly, Ritu ran away and disappeared quickly from the scene. At the same time, Sumon also disappeared. This is how the *salish* ended without any solution.

5.6.2.5 Analysis of the Case

Ritu had experienced numerous forms of domestic violence. She was married to Sumon only four months, and within this short time, she became a harsh victim of domestic violence perpetuated not only by her husband, but also by her in-laws. Most strikingly, by this time, she had developed ideas of suicide. She was in desperate need of support. While listening to her history, I thought a *salish* might have been an effective means to help her out.

Earlier I came to know from the community that there is no definite structure for organising a *salish,* but it is usually organised by the village leaders that have experience. I foundthat this assumption was true since my uncle called only those that had previous experiences in conducting a *salish*. Upon my request, a female public representative was included in the *salish.* I observed little antipathy amongst the other members to include her on the board. However, they did not say anything when they came to know that I personally requested to include her. It again demonstrates the strong prevalence of male dominance in the *salish* process. Such an

attitude also is in line my previous interviews with the female public representatives that said that male arbitrators do not like to invite them to the *salish* even regarding women's problems. However, the female member played an active role during *salish* and made valuable suggestive comments for both parties. It seemed to me that the entire *salish* process was heading to some fruitful results for both the parties. The arbitrators had strong command over the process. Earlier, some arbitrators informed me that the prime objective of a *salish* is to minimise the problem, particularly the problems of women, which helps them to come to solutions easily. I also noticed a similar tendency in this *salish*. The arbitrators specifically suggested Ritu calm down with her complaints, and could easily convince Ritu to abide by their decisions. Nevertheless, it was not that easy for them to convince her father-in-law or her husband. I also came to know before that a *salish* can end in failure if any of the parties do not agree to the decisions. This happened with this *salish* as well. While everything seemed to be normal, suddenly a few haughty remarks by both parties capsized the process, so the earlier experiences of the community members with regard to the failure of a *salish* were just repeated in this case.

5.6.3 Interventions of Religious Leaders

Undoubtedly, the *salish* is the most powerful informal dispute resolution mechanism in the rural community in Bangladesh. However, I was informed that sometimes victims also seek informal recourse with the respective religious leaders. Similar to *salish* arbitrators, the religious leaders from both Muslim and Hindu communities said that they try to bring some amiable solutions to family disputes. In this regard, the means of Muslim religious leaders include apprising men and women of the messages of the *Quran* and *Hadith* regarding their responsibilities as husband or wife. However, Muslim religious leaders admitted that they have no strong power like *salish* organisers to impose any decision regarding family violence. Their solutions are often suggestive. MNI, an Islamic religious leader, commented:

> When the victims or their family members bring to our notice issue of domestic violence, we just suggest them to have patience and pray to Allah (God). We suggest their husbands to behave properly with their wives in line

> with *Quran* and *Hadith*. Swear upon Allah! Without this, we can do nothing (MNI).

On the other hand, the Islamic religious leaders also said that quite often they deliberately give messages to people regarding the rights of women in Islam and the teaching of Islam against the harmful practices against women. For example, MZ, an Imam of a mosque and a religious leader, said:

> During Friday *khutba* (sermon in Friday prayer) I sometimes deliver lecture against violence or discrimination against women. I do not know how much lessons people receive, but I try my best (MZ).

On the other hand, MMM, a Muslim marriage registrar, said that sometimes women approach him with complaints of domestic violence. In response, he only suggests that the violent husband behave normally. However, he can play a significant role when a husband and wife approach him to formally divorce each other. In some cases, he could convince them not to divorce each other. Notably, the Islamic marriage registrar has the legal right to execute divorce between a husband and a wife.

On the other hand, the role of religious leaders in the Hindu community was strong. However, if victims ever approach religious leaders they could have considerable amount of influence on the perpetrators in terms of imposing their decisions as SS, a Hindu religious leader, said:

> When a woman approaches me with complaints about her husband, I call her husband and do counselling with him. I always suggest men to practice love, trust and forgiveness since those who inflict violence lack in these three important qualities. I solved many family problems through counselling (SS).

Since the Hindu is a minority community, the social and religious grid amongst the community members is still very stout. Thus, the role of the religious leaders is also more influential in solving family problems. Moreover, as marriage is a

religious binding, if really needed, they usually prefer to go to Hindu religious community leaders to solve their problems.

In the preceding few sections, I have discussed the activism of community people regarding domestic violence along with the lived case of *salish*. In the following few sections, I develop two cases on the activism of the community NGOs of the two districts which were involved in combating violence against women in their respective jurisdictions.

5.6.4 Case[29] of *Sabalombi Unnayan Samiti* (Self-Reliance Society or SUS): A Forerunner Community NGO of Netrokona District

Sabalamby Unnayan Samity (SUS) was established in the Netrokona district in 1985 by Begum Rokeya, a woman activist, with a view to eliminating all types of violence and discrimination against women. Over the years, SUS has expanded largely. It is now the largest local NGO in Netrokona. Today, its activities are not only limited to Netrokona but they have expanded to neighbouring districts as well. It works broadly on rights and governance; gender; legal aid; environment and climate change; food security and livelihood and networking and advocacy. Since its inception, Stop Violence against Women (SVAW) has been a core action strategy of SUS.

With regard to combating violence against women, SUS established SVAW committees in six sub-districts. The first committee was formed in the Mohangaj sub-district in 1997 following a mass protest against the brutal killing of a housewife by her husband. Committee members were selected from local elites, civil society members, local government representatives, women's rights activists, and students. Moreover, each committee has a seven member emergency team in order to quickly respond to any serious incidence of violence against women. The SVAW committee works on the following process: i) receipt of complaint; ii) investigation or fact finding; iii) arrange a *salish*; and iv) cases sent to district legal aid fund, court and police station. In 2013, various sub-district SVAW committees received 252

[29] I developed the case based on a personal interview with KB, Manager, Rights & Governance *Sablamby Unnayan Samity* (SUS). Moreover, I collected information about the programme from the Annual Report 2013 of SUS and documents provided by KB.

complaints. Out of these complaints, 129 incidents were mediated through *salish*, 67 cases were lodged through government legal aid fund as mediation through the *salish* was not successful, 20 incidents were under disposal through the *salish*, 16 complainants were not communicated further, 10 incidents were not mediated and no action was taken yet, 1 event was sent to the village court, and 10 cases were filed at the police station. During the same period, the SUS head office in Netrokona district received 130 complaints. Out of these complaints, 40 incidents were mediated through the *salish* and 37 cases were not mediated through the *salish*, 13 incidents were under disposal through *salish*, 12 complainants were not communicated further, and the rest of the victims were helped to file cases through various means as the *salish* did not work for them. The SUS head office also maintains a shelter home for victims and destitute women along with rehabilitation and medical support. SUS has a thirty-five member panel of lawyers to assist its legal aid activities but has yet to file any case under the DVPPA 2010. In this regard KB, the participant from SUS, remarked:

> I admit that SUS being the largest NGO in Netrokona has not given any consideration on how to extend support to the victims of domestic violence under the DVPPA 2010. Perhaps, we think existing laws are working well to somehow fitting in domestic violence incidents, so there is no need to take further experiments. There is no coordination amongst the NGOs on how to practice this Act. If SUS does not take any initiative, others will not be interested (KB).

Nevertheless, SUS has a mass awareness programme diffused at the grassroots level against child marriage, illegal divorce, family violence, sexual harassment, acid violence, and polygamy. It includes public representatives and community leaders in its campaign against violence against women. Moreover, it arranges rallies and discussion meetings with students on violence against women in order to make them change makers to fight against violence against women. SUS observes various national and international days on women's issues and maintains a database on violence against women in the district, and publishes reports as such. It organises

seminars and workshops on violence against women. Moreover, it has provided training for local *salishkaroks* on how to conduct a *salish* and Muslim marriage registrars so that they do not register any child marriage. SUS stopped 60 early marriages in 2013.

5.6.5 Case[30] of Community Legal Services (CLS): A Community Based Programme to Combat Violence against Women in Mymensingh District

Community Legal Services (CLS) is a programme of BNWLA-a renowned legal aid organisation in the country. The main goal of BNWLA is to ensure access to justice for all women and children, particularly for the most disadvantaged women and children in Bangladesh. BNWLA launched CLS in April 2013 to achieve the goal of protecting women from different forms of violence through community legal services by December 2016. The programme covers sixteen sub-districts of twelve districts in Bangladesh, including the Gofargaon sub-district of Mymensingh district. The CLS programme works at four grassroots unions of Gofargaon sub-district.

The key services of CLS include: i) work as a union-level legal information centre; ii) deliver legal services including counselling, complaints receiving, fact findings, mediation, rescue, victim and witness preparation, case filing, client follow up, access to safe shelter homes, long-term social rehabilitation and reintegration; iii) provide telephone advice to the victims; iv) arrange video conferencing for rural clients to communicate with lawyers/prosecutors; v) organise sub-district reflection workshops to share best practices/models.

Conducting a yard meeting is one the core activities of CLS through which rural women are become aware of various forms and practices of violence, and existing legal remedies. Initially, the project team received massive resistance from the local community, particularly from the rural *salishkarks* since there is a huge vested interest in the *salish* at the local level. TFT, solicitor, CLS, Gofargaon programme, remarked:

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[30] This case was developed based on personal interviews with TFT, Solicitor, CLS, Gofargaon, Mymensingh. Information about the programme was also collected from BNWLA website available at: http://bnwlabd.org/mwlr/.

> When we first launched our programme in the union, many *salishkaroks* resisted us. They even said if CLS works here, they would have no activity. In local *salish* bribes are exchanged, and the arbitrators are benefitted out of the *salish*. Moreover, there were political pressures, pressures from the husbands and religious leaders. Religious leaders said that we are acting against Islam by bringing women to the public sphere. We are fighting against all these odds. However, women are getting more interested to come to us (TFT).

From inception to until October 2014, the four CLS centres of Gofargaon sub-district received a considerable amount of complaints from the victims of violence. Its Rasulpur centre received 166 compliants, the Barbaria centre received 162 complaints, the Duttabaria centre received 113 complaints and the Charail centres received 134 complaints. Usually, upon receipt of a complaint, the respective CLS centre organises a *salish* between the parties. However, one of the problems that the CLS faces is that often the defenders do not respond to their notices, and they do not comply with the decisions made in the *salish.* Many *salish* arrangements of the CLS ended in vain. Moreover, the policy of filing legal case at its own cost is also insignificant since there is an instruction from the top just to file one case per year from each centre. Therefore, they only send cases to the government legal aid office to file cases. However, there is also no instruction from the top to file cases under the DVPPA 2010.

5.6.6 Analysis of the Cases of Both SUS and CLS

As community NGOs, both SUS and CLS have made some significant contributions with regard to addressing domestic violence against women. The main strength of SUS is that it works on a wider span with many activities and has specific sub-district committees to combat violence against women. Apparently, it is able to provide required services to the victims, even though its principal effort, such as the *salish,* did not work in many cases because of the non-compliance of the perpetrators. This was admitted by KB, the concerned SUS official. Therefore, SUS had to refer good number of cases to formal government agencies as a last resort. If their arrangements concerning the *salish* were effective, the women might get quicker

benefits. It is assumed that the legal process is cumbersome and is often difficult for rural poor women to enter the process. On the other hand, CLS is a relatively new programme and of course, a unique one which works at the grassroots level exclusively on violence against women victims. However, the main problem of this programme is that, unlike SUS, it has no solid infrastructure support. It works on a project basis. Hence, its sustainability is also questionable. Although many victims seek recourse to this programme, it is still a very tiny organisation. It files only a single case in a year at its own cost for the victims, which is insignificant in terms of the real needs of serious victims. TFS, the concerned official of CLS, admitted that its existing policy on case filing is a major drawback of the programme. Moreover, similar to SUS, CLS's main intervention mechanism, the *salish*, also ends in failure in many cases, which was further admitted by TFT. Moreover, it faces strong resistance from various local powerful groups of the community, which is a very alarming sign and might make its interventions be of limited use for the victims. It is a demonstration of the strong prevalence of the patriarchal mindset amongst the local community not to allow the NGO to work in their traditional space as an alternative force to dispute resolution. It also indicates the weaker institutional NGO capacity and is also an indication of developing required coordination between the NGO and the local community. As SUS is a big organisation in comparison to CLS, it does not face such a problem. Nevertheless, the incidences of failure of the *salish* in the case of both CLS or SUS indicate the less effectiveness of this community intervention mechanism. It further indicates that NGOs cannot fully hold liable the perpetrators to their mechanism. Moreover, neither NGO dealt neither with the DVPPA 2010 nor has a specific programme to practice this act, which attests to the lack of the commitment of these NGOs to promoting this policy.

Up to now, I have discussed the perceptions and activism of the majority Bengali community concerning domestic violence. I have also discussed the activities of two community NGOs. In the following section, I shall shift my focus to the indigenous matriarchal Garo community. Notably, conducting research on the matriarchal Garo community was not in my original plan; it was rather an idea that emerged from the field study.

5.7 Shift from Patriarchy to Matriarchy: Perceptions and Activities of the Garo Community

There are around thirty indigenous communities that are spread in different parts of Bangladesh (Rabidas, 2002, as cited in Das & Islam, 2005). The Garo community is one of them and specifically it is a community which is assumed to be governed by a matriarchal as well as matrilineal social structure (Jalil & Oakkas, 2012). They have different languages (although all the Garo people can speak Bengali), culture, and identity. Over the years, all of them have been converted to Christianity. Today, around 99% of the Garos are Christian. In Bangladesh, the Garo are generally found in some parts of Tangail, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Jamalpur, Sherpur, and Sylthet districts (Sangma 2010, as cited in Muhamamnd, Chakma, Masum, Hossain, & Oesten, 2011). Their present population across the world is approximately half a million, and about one-fifth of the total population lives in Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2007, as cited in Ahmed, Ali, & Begum, 2010). I conducted a FGD with seven important members of the Garo community from the Dobura sub-district of Mymensingh district. Brief findings from the focus group discussions are as follows.

5.7.1 Perceptions Regarding the Forms of Domestic Violence

Most of the Garo community participants opined that despite being a matriarchal and matrilineal society, domestic violence in Garo community is not an unknown event. Women in the community also experience physical, mental, sexual, and financial violence by their husbands. However, the prevalence of violence is not so pervasive as that of the greater Bengali society. For example, none of the participants in their lifetime heard of any incident of murder of a wife by her husband.

5.7.2 Perceptions Regarding the Causes of Domestic Violence

5.7.2.1 Men's Tendency to Dominate Leads to Perpetuation of Violence

Garo women are the owners of the property, and the kinship system follows the matrilineal line, but men assume the formal roles of leadership and authority in the broader social organisation. At the same time, they also want to

dominate private spheres, which often leads to conflict between men and women. RD, an NGO activist, said:

> Although we the Garos are matrilineal, men want to make decisions in the family. They want to dominate women. On the other hand, being the head of the family, many women often do not comprise with their authority which leads to conflict between a husband and a wife (RD).

On this point, SS, a school teacher, supplemented:

> Matriarchy is often an abstract concept in Garo community. Women are only the owners of property, but all the power lies with men. Garo men not only play dominant roles in public spheres, but also want to do the same in private spheres (SS).

According to the community participants, the tendency to exercise authority in the private sphere by the Garo men is a source of conflict between Garo men and women. Men's tendency to dominate in the private sphere is due to fact that they dominate the public sphere. Hence, the Garo social structure appears to be very complicated.

5.7.2.2 Land is the Main Source of Conflict

According to the participants, Garo women are mostly the victims of financial abuse; land is the source. Women inherit land from the matrilineal line, but men want to control or manage it, which often generates a lot of conflicts. EN, a TWA leader, said:

> Quite often husbands verbally sell lands, and force their wives to legally transfer lands to the buyers. If they are not agreed to register, some husbands perpetuate violence (EN).

KD, a school teacher, stated:

> Selling and mortgaging women's lands without their consent is an alarming practice in the community. By doing so, men make women financially weaker (KD).

In fact, most of the conflicts between men and women derive from issues related to the management and ownership of land. Such practices of men often lead to many problematic incidents between a husband and a wife.

5.7.2.3 Alcohol Consumption

Consumption of alcohol is a part of the Garo culture. On this point, the participants opined that the consumption of alcohol ignites various forms of violence against women. HS, a leader of TWA, commented"

> Consumption of alcohol is like a malignant to Garo community. It often generates conflicts between men and women in the family (HS).

Traditionally, both men and women in the Garo community consume alcohol. However, Garo men consume alcohol excessively and by doing so they often perpetuate violence.

5.7.2.4 Indifference of Men

The indifference of men in performing familial responsibilities is a cause of tension between men and women. As men do not own the property and are not traditionally the head of the family, some men do not feel interested in performing familial responsibilities and they often show their indifference. BM, a TWA leader, said:

> Garo women are energetic and active. Conversely, many men are vagabonds, do not want to work. Quite often, if women ask them about their responsibilities they perpetuate violence (BM).

RD, an NGO activist, said:

> It is often seen that women are working in the field, and men are playing cards, consuming alcohol or gossiping. It is a serious type of mental abuse against women (RD).

In fact, on the matters related to men's indifference, many altercations develop between a husband and a wife. If a wife asks her husband about his responsibilities and income, he sometimes gets angry and inflicts violence against her.

5.7.2.5 Influence of the Patriarchal Bengali Community

Over the years, the Garo community has become a minority in their own territory by the deliberate infiltration of the patriarchal Bengali community. However, there has been an influence of the Bengali life style on Garo community. Rigid Bengali patriarchal ideologies and values are penetrating the ideologies and values of the Garo community. This is one of the reasons why men, being not traditionally the head of the family, want to dominate women. EB, a TWA leader, said:

> The Bengali people have migrated in our area from many parts of the country. Garo community is influenced by Bengali patriarch culture. Men want to dominate over their wives as they see men in Bengali community dominate their wives (EB).

This community is being infiltrated by the majority Bengali community, and such infiltration has a serious cultural impact. Women are the easy target for exercising infiltrated patriarchal values.

5.7.2.6 Extortion of the Bengali Men

Some participants opined that men from the Bengali community sometimes seduce Garo women and marry them. Later on, they tactfully capture their land and property, and often abandon them. Regarding such extortion, EN, a TWA leader, said:

> The hidden mission of the Bengali migrated community is to capture our land and women. The simple and modest women easily fall in their traps and lose everything (EN).

It was apparent from the opinions of the community that men from the Bengali community deliberately extort women. If the women do not deliberately transfer their lands, they inflict violence. At the same time, Bengali men forcibly take away Garo women and marry them to capture their land.

5.7.2.7 Extramarital Relations

It was as also reported by the participants that extramarital relationships are a problem in the community which also ignites domestic violence. KD, a school teacher, said:

> Many Garo men do not like to work, but like to do bad things. Sometimes they get in bad relations with other women. It creates problems in the family (KD).

Most of the participants opined that this problem was silently grasping the social fabric of the Garo community. They particularly made men responsible for being engaged in such a relationship.

5.7.3 Perceptions Regarding the Consequences of Domestic Violence

The participants also talked about the various impacts on women caused by domestic violence. The most serious impact was due to losing their property and land. When women lose their property, they become helpless and destitute. Their honour and dignity in the community also go down. To cope with the effects, they go to Dhaka or some other places and start working as domestic help/household servants, particularly in the houses of foreigners, and they also work as garment workers. Sometimes they also become sexually abused. Many Garo women are now completely dislocated from their roots, and sometimes from their children as well. BM, a TWA leader, asserted:

> Social dislocation of women is ruining our social fabric to the extreme. Once they go to Dhaka, they usually do not come back (BM).

Domestic violence is not an isolated incident; it has many impacts as well. The same proposition is true for the Garo community. Specifically, since it is a traditional and indigenous society, social dislocation might endanger its existence in the future.

5.7.4 Perceptions Regarding Coping Strategies and Help-Seeking Practices

With regard to coping strategies and help-seeking practices, the participants stated that usually Garo women try to cope with domestic violence themselves. As there is no provision of divorce amongst the Garo community, many women silently endure domestic violence. Moreover, although they are head of the family, they are very modest; they do not want to make their problems public. On the other hand, they also consider marriage as an important part of their life. They do not want to bring any trouble to their marital relationship. KD, a school teacher, opined:

> Upon marriage, a Garo man comes to his wife's house because of matrilocal residence pattern. A Garo woman knows if she brings to notice of her experiences of violence to family members or community people, they might evict her husband. Therefore, Garo women usually do not disclose their experiences violence to others. They want to live with their husbands (KD).

Moreover, Garo women consider that being abused by their husbands is a matter of shame and dishonour since they are traditionally the head of the family. Out of that shame and dishonour, they also do not want to share their experiences of domestic violence with the public. EB, a TWA leader, said:

> If a woman is abused by her husband, society will say she is unable to control her husband. It is a matter of dishonour for her. Therefore, she does not want to bring her private matters to the public (EB).

Nonetheless, in extreme cases, Garo women seek help from their family members, *mahari* (family clan), and TWA. They never go to any community NGOs and do not seek recourse with any formal institutional mechanisms.

5.7.5 Garo Community Activities against Domestic Violence

Community activites in dissolving conflicts is very strong in the Garo community. With regard to dissolving any family problem, women seek recourse with their respective *mahari.* The participants said that *mahari* is the first stair of community intervention, which is constituted by a small group of people descending from the mother's lineage. In the *mahari* the head is a male, and the maternal uncle of women holds that position. Brothers are also included in the *mahari.* Each *mahari* resolves small social and family-related problems in its own ways. On the other hand, there is a TWA and the members of the TWA are elected through direct voting by different ethnic communities. Currently, the Dobura TWA is constituted by twenty one members, and there are only six female members. The TWA chairman is a man from the Garo community. Nevertheless, if problems are not resolved through *mahari* intervention, women might seek recourse with the TWA. Upon receipt of a complaint, the TWA follows the usual process of conducting a *salish.* Notably, unlike the Bengali system of selecting members of the *salish,* only TWA members have the authority and responsibility to conduct the *salish*. However, in some cases, TWA members may also invite leaders from different *maharis* to attend a *salish.* The participants said that the TWA at any cost tries to resolve the family problems so that women do not need to go to NGOs or other formal institutional mechanisms. EN, a TWA leader, said:

> If a woman lodges any complaint to us about domestic violence, we conduct *salish*. In most cases, we are successful in solving problems. Women do not go to administration or the police. We have unwritten agreement with the administration and the police that the complaints of Garo people will not be entertained unless referred by us. Therefore, we have considerable amount influence over the community matters (EN).

In the preceding sections, I have discussed the community perceptions and activism of both the majority Bengali community, and the matriarchal and matrilineal Garo community. It is perceived by the community members that the prevalence of domestic violence is widely pervasive in the Bengali community. Nevertheless, Garo women also confront domestic violence despite the fact they are matriarchal or matrilineal.

5.8 Orientation about the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010

As I was also working on the state of the implementation of the DVPPA 2010, I was interested to know the level of orientation and perception of community people about the act since community leaders have a substantial amount of influence in helping women seek legal recourse. Unfortunately, only a few community members had ever heard about the act. For example, AK, a school teacher, indicated the following:

> I came to know about this act through a newspaper reporting when it was first enacted. Other than this, I know nothing about this act (AK).

In particular, NGO participants from both the CLS programme and SUS had clear ideas about this act. Specifically, KB, Manager of SUS, even attended a drafting committee meeting on this act as a representative of the local NGO. Nevertheless, most of the community participants were aware of other existing laws related to violence against women in Bangladesh, but not about the DVPPA 2010. The following excerpt of a UC chairman is worth-mentioning:

> Being a UC chairman for a long time, I do not know about the act. No government or NGO officials ever oriented me or other members of the UC about this act. I never saw any publicity of this act either from government or from NGO (HZK).

On the other hand, Garo community members also had no idea about this act. I observed that they did not even have any interest in acts. In fact, they did not want any Garo community woman seeking legal recourse. HS, a TWA leader, said:

> Garo women are simple. If they go to court, they will be lost. Everybody will harass them. Therefore, we the community members do not expect our women approach to NGOs, court, police or administration for their family problems. At least, we can solve their problems (HS).

TM, a female writer, shared an important opinion regarding the laws related to supporting women:

> An act cannot protect women, no matter if it is on domestic violence. Acts are partial efforts. It is like going to a doctor once someone is ill, but we must try not to become sick. We must change the social system (TM).

However, members of both the Garo and Bengali communities broadly ignored of the DVPPA 2010, and no agency ever approached to orient them about it.

5.9 Conclusion

Community members from both the majority patriarchal Bengali community and the indigenous matriarchal Garo community analysed domestic violence in different ways, and considered it as a problem for their respective community. Apparently, domestic violence is a grievous problem for the patriarchal Bengali community, but it also sometimes can be seen in the Garo community. There were many similarities between the two communities with regard to the perceptions of domestic violence, but the community intervention mechanisms were slightly different. Although it has some shortcomings, the *salish* is the most important informal community support mechanism in the Bengali rural community for mitigating domestic violence complaints. The *salish* appears not to be very effective as for as women's problems are concerned. If *salishkaroks* or arbitrators continue to

minimise the problems of women or pressure them to accept their solutions or bias towards the victims, it cannot be justified as an effective institution. On the other hand, if NGO support arrangements cannot bring significant results for women, these cannot be labelled as effective. Garo community women do not ask for NGO supports and formal support. It indicates they rely more on traditional means. Nevertheless, in rural areas, community members not only can play a big role in intervening into domestic violence issues but can also help women reach the formal institutions and legal support mechanisms. However, the dearth of knowledge amongst the community members regarding formal intervention mechanisms such as the DVPPA 2010 might act as an impediment for women in reaching the support under it. The next chapter specifically sheds light on the process of the implementation of this act.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT OF THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (PREVENTION AND PROTECTION) ACT 2010

6.1 Introduction

The enactment of the DVPPA 2010 is an important landmark in the history of law making in Bangladesh. It gave domestic violence against women recognition as a public policy issue. The core objective of this act is to ensure women's rights to live in an environment that is free from violence and oppression. In this chapter, I have exclusively brought to light the context and status of the implementation of this act in two Bangladeshi districts; namely, Mymensingh and Netrokona. Notably, the DVPPA 2010 lays the framework for a multi-agency response system to protect women and children in their domestic spheres. In order to understand the context and status of implementation of this act, my study delved into the perceptions and experiences of various frontline policy implementers that are inextricably involved in the framework of implementation of the DVPPA 2010. In addition to that, I had discussions with legal aid activists from the organisations involved in the drafting process of this act in order to know the background of the adoption of this act. Towards the end, I also had discussions with officials from MoWCA, the focal ministry of the act, in order to explore the stance and strategy of the ministry concerning the implementation of the act. The findings of my study are reflected in the following themes and sub-themes.

6.2 Background of Policy Adoption

6.2.1 Drafting Process of the Act

Despite having some interventions to protect women from violence, what was the rationale for enacting a new law on domestic violence? On this point, three participants from three organisations involved in the drafting process of the act categorically opined that that pre-2010 framework was unable to ensure a proper legal remedy to the victims of domestic violence. There was no definition of "domestic violence against women" in any of the legal instruments related to women, such as the Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961, the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act 1974, the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980, the Family Court Ordinance 1985, the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003), and the Acid Crime Prevention Act 2002, and these instruments were unable to address the various forms of domestic violence against women. Therefore, domestic violence incidents used to be haphazardly framed to fit the existing laws. Hence, a new act specifically on domestic violence was imperative. In this regard, MAH, from BNWLA, asserted:

> Not only the term domestic violence against women was absent in the existing laws, but each of them also failed in addressing various forms of abuse occurring in the domestic sphere. Therefore, we demanded a new law (MAH).

Both ZAH from *Amri Pari Paribarik Nirjarot Protirod Jot* (We Can), and NG from ASK opined that although recognition of domestic violence against women was already in place because of Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 1993 and other international instruments, the government of Bangladesh did not take any initiative to incorporate the term domestic violence against women in any of its legal frameworks. Due to the absence of a domestic violence act, the prevalence of domestic violence was escalating. With this backdrop, legal aid organisations working with women wanted an act in order to safeguard women in their homes. Although the need for the enactment of an act was realised properly by the legal aid organisations, there was no coordinated effort amongst them in their advocacy interventions. Each organisation was lobbying with the government in its own way,

which could not bring about any significant outcome. Nonetheless, initially it was the perception of the government that the demand for a new act was only a demand of the legal aid organisations, not the demand of the citizens. On this point, ZAH stated:

> By looking at the perception of the government, we arranged a big gathering of the citizens. From that gathering, we gave a message to the government that such act is a demand of the citizens. Then after, the caretaker government asked the legal aid organisations to come up with a comprehensive idea on a draft bill. That was a major breakthrough of our long-standing advocacy (ZAH).

Following that, in 2007, legal aid organisations initiated a national coalition under the banner of "Citizen's Initiative against Domestic Violence" (CiDV) and brought together thirty organisations and individuals to work on a single platform. A drafting committee was formed from six CiDV organisations, and it arranged many dialogues and discussions with a wide range of experts and individuals on the proposed draft. Meanwhile, a new democratic government came to power in 2008. Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, the state minister for MoWCA, was very cooperative and proactive on this issue and extended her fullest and heartiest support, which exceedingly helped in the formulation of the draft and placed it to the parliament for adoption. On the point of the minister's role, NG stated:

> She was very proactive on this issue and even brought us to the parliamentary steering committee meeting for expressing our opinions before the bill finally placed in the parliament for voting (NG).

However, CiDV finally was submitted as a joint draft bill to the government in 2009 with the title "Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill 2009." While preparing the draft, the committee members gained experiences from other countries which already had adopted similar acts. Specifically, they gained a great deal of experience from the Indians. Since enactment in 2005, some barriers have been identified in implementing the domestic violence act in the Indian context. While

drafting a bill for Bangladesh, experts were very cautious about avoiding those pitfalls in the context of Bangladesh. Moreover, a group of Indian expert lawyers also visited Bangladesh and assisted CiDV members in drafting the bill. Finally, MoWCA finalised the proposed bill following civil society discussions before placing it before the parliament. It was passed on 5 October, 2010 and came into force on 30 December 2010 as the "Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010."[31] Once the law was enacted, it was mandatory to have rules for the act and the CiDV submitted a draft of the rules to the government. At the same time, government also prepared a draft. After scrutinising proposals from both the parties, MoWCA gazetted the rules of the act with the title "Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Rules 2013"[32] on 29 April, 2013.

6.2.1 Reflections on the Act after Adoption

The above three participants from the organisations involved in drafting the act held some reservations on some aspects of the act. Once the act was gazetted they found that some of their proposals were missing. ZAH remarked:

> We found some of our proposals were finally not kept in the original act. For example, government defined sexual violence in a very short sentence which actually does not mean anything. Marital rape by husband is not defined as an offense. Moreover, many of the issues related to economic violence are not clear at all (ZAH).

The participants stated that the extent of duties and responsibilities of Enforcement Officer (EO) was also not properly reflected as per the proposals of the CiDV. The CiDV proposed a wide variety of duties and responsibilities for the EOs, but the government curtailed many of them. In order to accelerate the implementation of the DVPPA 2010, an EO must discharge many responsibilities. Therefore, CiDV proposed exclusive appointment of EOs as public servants. However, government thought that such a proposal was ambitious, and only appointed district and sub-

[31] The full details of the act are annexed in Appendix C.
[32] The full details of the rules are annexed in Appendix D.

district women affairs officers as EOs for this act by giving them additional responsibilities. Nevertheless, many features of the act were passed as the CiDV wanted. For example, this act is not restricted to violence that is only perpetrated by husbands but violence that is perpetrated by other members of the family also. ZAH mentioned:

> We wanted a "no specific target strategy" for identifying perpetrators in the family. Violence is not only perpetrated by the husbands only, it is also perpetrated by other members of the family. In fact, we wanted to target the system, not to target any specific relationship (ZAH).

Moreover, the DVPPA 2010 was deliberately made simple, flexible, and progressive with both preventive and protective measures. On the point of flexibility, NG mentioned:

> We wanted an act which would not only prevent domestic violence but also protect women. It is a flexible act which has both civil and criminal features. Remedies of this act such as interim protection order, protection order, residence order, custody order, and order for community welfare service are unique in Bangladesh (NG).

Pointing specifically to the community welfare service order as a very progressive feature of the act, MAH remarked;

> If a court passes a verdict to a perpetrator to act as a traffic controller on the road, it would demean him. If some instances as such can be demonstrated, men will be more cautious not to perpetuate violence at home (MAH).

Overall, the participants also confirmed that the DVPPA 2010 was framed in a way so that it not only brings domestic violence crime under a legal framework, but also provides a detailed guideline for all levels of implementers on how to deal with domestic violence incidents in a coordinated and integrated way. With regard to the

rules of the act, the participants said that although it took three years to pass the rules, they were finally passed in line with their suggestions.

6.3 Case Filing under the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 in Bangladesh Including Mymensingh and Netrokona Districts

In the following, I furnish statistical information about the case filings under this act. For such information, I relied on the data and reports maintained by the CiDV[33]. From 2010 to until June 2014, only 235 cases were filed under the DVPPA 2010 in ten districts (out of sixty-four) of the country by the initiatives of three legal aid organisations: BLAST, BNWLA and ASK. Amongst the cases, BLAST filed 80 cases, ASK filed 9 cases, and BNWLA filed 146 cases. The majority (99%) of aggrieved persons were women and they filed cases against their husbands. Moreover, cases were also filed against in-laws, the grandfather, mother, daughter-in-law, and brother and father. The minimum age of the aggrieved women is twenty-five and the maximum is fifty-five. Recourses were sought for physical, psychological, and economic violence, and at that time, no recourse was sought for sexual violence. The lowest time required to dispose a case was fifteen days, and in some cases, it took more than a year. Court orders were passed as protection orders, residence orders, compensation orders, and custody orders, and again at that time, no order was passed as community welfare service.

Notably, in Bangladesh, cases on violence against women are usually filed under the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003), the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980, and the Acid Crime Prevention Act 2002. According to the Department of Women Affairs' database, from January 2010 until December 2013, a total of 200754[34] cases were filed under various acts of violence. Compared to other acts, case filings under the DVPPA 2010 were seemingly very low in Bangladesh.

Similarly, the case filings under the DVPPA 2010 were also low in my study areas. As of October, 2014, only two cases were filed in Mymensingh district and not

[33] Source: BLAST, Dhaka,, and CiDV secretariat, Dhaka
[34] Source: Department of Women Affairs, Dhaka

a single case was filed in Netrokona district[35]. On the other hand, the case filings in these two districts with the *Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Tribunal* (Women and Children Repression Tribunal) were increasing each year incrementally. Notably, for a speedy trial under Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003), the government established a special tribunal called the Women and Children Repression Tribunal in district courts. From 2010 to until October 2014, a total of 3221[36] cases were filed with the Netrokona district tribunal, and a total of 4195[37] cases were filed during the same period with the Mymensingh district tribunal. However, when compared with the trend of case filing only under the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003), it provided substantial evidence of poor implementation performance of the DVPPA 2010 in these two districts. With this backdrop, I spoke to relevant frontline implementers under the DVPPA 2010 from both Netrokona and Mymensingh districts in order to explore the real scenario of the implementation process of this act from their perceptions and experiences. I framed the findings under the following themes and sub-themes.

6.4 Perceptions and Experiences of Frontline Implementers Concerning the Implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010

6.4.1 Enforcement Officer (EO)

The EO is the focal person of this act and he/she is vested with a wide spectrum of roles and responsibilities. Under the DVPPA 2010 (section 5), the government shall, by notification in the official gazette, appoint one or more EOs in each sub-district, district or in a metropolitan area. The terms and conditions of service of the EO are prescribed by the rules. On 4 April, 2011, immediately after the enactment of the act, the MoWCA notified the District Women Affairs Officer (DWAO) and Sub-district Women Affairs Officer (SWAO) as EOs. I interviewed seven EOs from Mymensingh and Netrokona districts, and amongst them, three were

[35] Source: Chief Judicial Magistrate Courts, Mymensingh and Netrokona, BLAST, Mymensingh office, and Government Legal Aid Office, Mymensingh and Netrokona
[36] Source: Women and Children Repression Tribunal, Netrokona
[37] Source: Women and Children Repression Tribunal, Mymensingh

from three sub-districts of Netrokona district and four were from four sub-districts of Mymensingh district.

6.4.1.1 EO's Orientation about the Act

Except for one EO, all of them had attended a five-day long training on the DVPPA 2010 organised by the MoWCA. As a result of this, they thought that they had a good level of orientation and conceptualisation about the act, the rules, and the duties and responsibilities described by the act and rules. FI, an EO of Mymensingh district, said:

> I have been well-oriented about the act. I think it is an excellent law. Authority gave me very good documents in the training programme with specific guidelines to apply this act (FI).

However, on the point of receiving training, SA, an EO of Mymensingh district, expressed her dissatisfaction. In fact, she did not receive any training. SA said:

> It has been more than four years the act is in place; I am yet to receive any training on it. If I do not know the act properly, how shall I apply it (SA)?

On the other hand, most of the participants that had already received training expected to attend the refresher's programme or follow-up training, and opined that from the refresher's programme they could share each other's experiences and achievements gained so far. The participants also said that neither in Mymensingh nor in Netrokona was any workshop or seminar arranged by any agency of the DVPPA 2010. Therefore, attending a training course on the DVPPA 2010 arranged by the MoWCA was their only formal orientation. Having been trained on the DVPPA 2010, do the EOs actually use it, if not, why? The following discussions will answer these questions.

6.4.1.2 Duties and Responsibilities Performed by the EOs

Although most of the EOs had had an orientation about the act, and were aware of their duties and responsibilities, in reality, except one, none of them

used this act for the victims. Only one EO of Mymensingh district forwarded two cases to an NGO for further action under this act. Despite having been trained on the act, all of the EOs were used to working in conventional ways in dealing with domestic violence complaints. EOs had not forwarded any case (except one EO) or no one had ever approached them to seek recourse under the DVPPA 2010. They, in fact, did nothing in line with the provisions of the act, or its rules. For example, they do not consult Form A or Form B of the rules. Notably, according to the rules, an EO must help the victim fill in Form A, and must register domestic violence information in Form B. With regard to maintaining a record of legal aid organisations, shelter homes, psycho-social counselling centres, and medical facilities (section 6 of the act), the EOs said that they maintained such a list not because it was a responsibility entrusted to them by the act but rather it was their routine activity. On the other hand, they spoke with the police only if there was a case of child marriage, rape, grievous injury, or a life-threatening attack on the victim. They did not forward copies to the police about all of the incidents of domestic violence (section 6 of the act). However, if needed, they referred a victim to the medical officer. In fact, whatever duties and responsibilities they discharged in the event of domestic violence incidents were part of their regular activates, and none of them specifically consulted the DVPPA 2010 act or its rules on how to discharge their duties and responsibilities.

On the other hand, all of the EOs admitted that they did not have any specific formal programme or instruction to make people aware of the act although some of them said that sometimes they tried to inform or orient people about the act informally. In this connection, BF, an EO of Netrokona district, said:

> Whenever I go to field to accomplish various government programmes, I try to inform rural people about this act. Moreover, when people come to me for any support, I also inform them about the act (BF).

However, the comment of AH, an EO of Netrokona district, is worth-mentioning in order to understand the commitment of an implementer in promoting this act;

> I cannot take a mike and announce that there is an act as such. Victims must come to me (AH).

Let me now share the experiences of MRB, so far the only EO in these two districts that had sent two cases, one in December 2013, and another one in January 2014, to BLAST, a non-government legal aid organisation for extending legal support to two victims under this act. She stated:

> I wanted to apply this act. I received two complaints having merits to have remedies under the DVPPA 2010. In order to avoid complicacies with government procedures, I had sent them to BLAST for legal support under the DVPPA 2010 (MRB).

Although the EOs are the most important implementers under this act and are assigned numbers of duties and responsibilities, they neither have any specific programme with regard to implementing this act nor do they perform activities as per the provision of the act. This clearly indicates a lack of commitment as EOs to the practice of this act. Even the EO that forwarded two cases could not make proper applications while sending them to BLAST. The applications were not forwarded by the prescribed form of the Rules of the act to be used either by BLAST or by the court. Interestingly, when I asked the EO about the status of those applications, she failed to give me any concrete information, which clearly indicated a lack of follow-up of the applications. Upon my query, she just replied:

> Maybe the cases have been dissolved since the victims did not come to me anymore (MRB).

I shall discuss the status of those applications under the theme service provider (SP). Let me now turn to the challenges that the EOs considered critical in discharging their duties and responsibilities in line with the act.

6.4.1.3 Challenges in Discharging Duties and Responsibilities as EO

The EOs talked about the numerous challenges in implementing the DVPPA 2010 in their respective jurisdictions and also dealings with domestic violence incidents. Importantly, the dealings with domestic violence incidents are part of their responsibilities as per the act. They considered an excessive workload as the most critical challenge in this regard. The EOs are not appointed on a full-time basis; they are assigned to extend services as EOs in addition to their normal activities. Therefore, it is not always possible for them to concentrate on the implementation of this act. In this connection, SA, an EO of Netrokona district, said:

> There is a common conception at the field level that women's affairs officers do not have any job, they just come and go. This is not true. After having the women and gender issues prominent in Bangladesh, our duties and responsibilities have increased incrementally. Assignment as EO is just an addition to that (SA).

KA, an EO of Mymensingh district, commented:

> When a new government comes to power, it introduces various programmes and allowances for poor women at the rural level. So, the tasks of women affairs officers just get piled-up (KA).

In this connection, I consulted the prescribed job descriptions of the DWAO and SWAO. I found thirty-six assignments for the DWAO and thirty-five for the SWAO. The duties and responsibilities of the EOs have just newly been imposed on them. Hence, I was convinced that the above assertions were right. They also talked about limited logistic and work force support. The women's affairs office in Bangladesh is poorly supported. For example, in Netrokona, there are ten sub-districts, but during my field study only five EOs were working in this district. One EO was given the charge of four sub-districts. AH, who was in charge of four sub-districts, said:

> On paper, I am everywhere, but in practice, I am nowhere. I work in one sub-district once a week. How can people expect that I would perform my duties and responsibilities properly? Honestly speaking, many victims return not finding me at my office (AH).

On the other hand, not having filed level support staff at the extreme rural level for the women's affairs office was another problem identified by most of the EOs. On this point, SA, an EO Mymensingh district, stated:

> Coming to a sub-district town is like going to the capital for many remote rural women. In that case, many incidents of domestic violence do not come to our notice. If we had local staffs like other government offices, they could have worked as a bridge-hood between the victims and us (SA).

In Bangladesh more than 90% of the DWAOs and SWAOs are women, and unfortunately, this also creates some problems in rendering support to the victims timely and rightly due to lack of logistic facilities. For example, FI, an EO of Mymensingh district, said:

> If a serious domestic violence incident brings to my notice in the evening from a remote rural area, as a woman, how could I present there physically to rescue the victim? I have no transport and living in such an unsecured environment for women in Bangladesh, I do not dare to go there (FI).

Moreover, there is no budgetary provision for EOs to implement this act by making wider publicity. Appropriate allocation of the budget to accomplish a particular task can suppress other associated problems, as was opined by some EOs. The assertion of RA, an EO from Netrokona district, was worthwhile:

> The government wants us to swim with its programmes but without teaching us how to swim. We have no resource, no facilities, and no power (RA).

Some participants felt that there was an interconnectivity or coordination problem as a serious impediment to implementing the act since the nature of the act is that its tasks have to be accomplished through teamwork. In the opinion of MRB, an EO of the Mymensingh district:

> There is no strong coordination among various agencies; each agency works at its own way. It precludes victims to receive appropriate services. For example; if a domestic violence victim fails to get proper remedy from the community or from an NGO, as a next test case she might come to us, or to police or to the court. In the meantime, a lot of energy and time wastes away. If we could have worked together, we might extend prompt services to the victims. Unfortunately, nobody thinks of this important system defect (MRB).

The state of bad interconnectivity or coordination was clearly evident when I asked the concerned sub-district EOs of Mymensingh district about the two cases that were filed under of the DVPPA 2010 from their jurisdictions. Unfortunately, none of the EOs had any information about the cases, and both of them, for the first time, heard of the cases from me. SA, a concerned sub-district EO from Mymensingh district, remarked:

> Cases under the DVPPA 2010 might be filed from different points. But as an EO, I have the right to know about the case filed in my jurisdiction. Those who are moving with the case should have informed me (SA).

The participants from both the districts identified lack of shelter homes as a serious impediment to extending support to the victims. Under the act, it is clearly stated that a victim should be transferred to a shelter home if needed. I found that there was “no shelter home” in Mymensingh district and there were only “two shelter homes” in Netrokona district. Surprisingly, most of the EOs did not have information about the existence of these shelter homes. Lack of information as such about available resources is also a problem in discharging responsibilities properly under the provision of the act.

Nonetheless, some of the participants also pointed out the unwillingness of the victims to file cases under this act. In their opinions, the act is very sophisticated, but does not fit the social context of Bangladesh. A woman is not dear enough to a file court case against her husband living in the same house. Moreover, this act is soft in nature, bailable, and does not ensure instant arrest of the perpetrator, which largely precludes the lawyers of the victims from practicing this act for their clients. However, some of the participants admitted that they could not convince concerned persons to use this act. RA, an EO from Netrokona, opined:

> For poor implementation of this act, EOs are responsible. It is our complete failure. We could not make people convinced about the act (RA).

On the role of the top management, some victims said there that there was no monitoring or reporting mechanism from the top with regard to the DVPPA 2010 implementation. Hence, it was no matter whether they applied it or not. BF, an EO from Netrokona district, made an important remark:

> It is no matter whether I apply this act or not, I do not have any watchdog over my head, and I do not feel any pressure to apply it (BF).

The above depictions present the perceptions and experiences of the EOs with regard to their roles in implementing the act. They identified a number of practical and critical problems as impediments to implementation of the act. Moreover, as they did not have any instruction from the top or any programme about promotion of the act, they practically did nothing with regard to implementing this act.

6.4.2 Police Officer (PO)

A PO is an important implementer of this act and is assigned with numbers of duties and obligations as per the act and the rules I conducted interviews with the executive-level POs stationed in each police station. The first category included POs that were in overall charge of the police station, and designated as Officer-in-Charge

(OC). The second category was designated as OC (Investigation), who looked after the overall investigation process. I interviewed six POs from six police stations of Mymensingh and Netrokona districts. Out of these seven, three were from Netrokona and three were from Mymensingh.

6.4.2.1 POs' Orientation about the Act

None of the POs had any specific formal orientation about this act. However, some of them came to know about it from different sources. For example, SCS, a PO from Netrokona district, said:

> I first came to know about this act from newspaper long before. Perhaps there was news on first case filing on this act (SCS).

None of the POs was ever invited to attend any training, seminar, or workshop on this act. No agency ever informed them about their roles and responsibilities under this act. AKA, a PO from Mymensingh district, said:

> It is really unfortunate that I have not received any formal orientation or training on this act. Police is a vital agency to deal with domestic violence. Police should not be kept blind of this act (AKA).

The POs under this study, in fact, did not have any concrete or specific ideas about the act. With such a gloomy picture about the level of orientation of the POs concerning the DVPPA 2010, I inquired about the services they render to the victims of domestic violence since their responsibilities under the act include rendering various services to the victims**.**

6.4.2.2 Duties and Responsibilities Performed by the POs

Although the police have an immense role in combating violence against women, there is a common perception that they do not take domestic violence cases seriously and consider it as a private matter to be controlled privately (BNWLA, 2013). In this context, I was interested to know the duties and responsibilities they performed while dealing with a domestic violence incident or extending support to a

victim. However, all of the POs said that they play a vital role in combating domestic violence. MMR, a PO from Netrokona district, said:

> No law can be implemented without involvement of the police. It has wider accessibility and ability to serve twenty four hours. If there is news of serious domestic violence at a far remote area at the mid of the night, no government agency other than police will rush (MMR).

With regard to dealing with domestic violence incidents, almost all of the POs confirmed that their main target was to bring an amiable settlement between a husband and wife. They usually do not want to take any drastic action unless inevitable. MKI, a PO from Mymensingh district, stated:

> When a domestic violence victim comes to police station, I listen to her, register complaints and later on, I call the guardians of both the parties and try to find an amiable solution for them. In extreme cases or if I fail to convince both the parties, a case is filed (MKI).

The foremost responsibility bestowed upon the POs by the DVPPA 2010 is to inform a victim of her rights to file a complaint under this act or any other existing law or her right to have free legal services. On these points, all of the POs said that seeking legal recourse was a choice of an applicant. By analysing the nature of violence, they only suggested about existing legal support. However, they never suggested that any victim seek recourse under the DVPPA 2010. MMR, a PO from Netrokona district, said:

> We extend consultancy services to the victim. We present which legal options she can avail for a particular incident of domestic violence. I never told them anyone about the DVPPA 2010 since I do not know much of it (MMR).

Under the above circumstances, the POs stated that for domestic violence cases, people are usually interested in filing cases under the Women and

Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003) or the Dowry Prohibition Act 1980 since those acts propose serious punishment for the perpetrators. As POs, they have not used the DVPPA 2010 in their police stations. They also said that no victim, her family, or anyone in her favour ever approached them to register a complaint under this act. Therefore, they did not find any opportunity to use it either.

With regard to the connectivity with the EO and Medical Service Provider (MSP) all of the POs confirmed that they tried to work closely with the EOs and MSPs. Working with them was a legal obligation for the POs under this act. In this regard, MKI, a PO from Mymensingh district, said:

> When women affairs officer seeks cooperation, I extend fullest supports. I always treat women's issues with extreme sensitivity. In the case of serious medical hurt, I send them to government hospitals. I request doctor to provide free medical services for poor victims of domestic violence (MKI).

I also inquired about the documentation process of domestic violence incidences since according to the rules (Appendix D) of the act, where domestic violence incidents must be documented with the police in a prescribed form**.** Moreover, it also states that the police must preserve the articles, materials, papers, and documents related to domestic violence. The participants said that they kept all of the documents received on domestic violence as a routine activity and kept all of the domestic violence information in their usual register. None of them preserved information in line with the prescribed form since they do not know about the act or the rules. Moreover, no agency supplied copies of the act, rules, or other forms.

After having a discussion with the POs about their performed duties and responsibilities, I shifted my focus to exploring the barriers they encountered in discharging their duties and responsibilities in the case of rendering services to the victims. It was evident from the above that as POs they did not have an orientation about the act, and they never consulted the act in discharging their duties and responsibilities.

6.4.2.3 Challenges in Discharging Duties and Responsibilities by the POs

The POs identified a number of impediments in the smooth discharging of their duties and responsibilities in the event of domestic violence against women. The POs are mostly involved in various types of activities such as crime investigation, public order management, traffic enforcement, and protocol and internal security management activities. Therefore, they cannot extend services as desired by the victims. AH, a PO from Mymensingh district, commented:

> I always try to pay empathetic attention to violence issues, but as I am so busy with both routine and unexpected activities, despite having my best intention, I cannot pay proper care to the victim (AH).

Most of the POs felt the need to post of a woman officer in the police stations. Although there were at least two women staff members in the police station, the level of understanding between an officer and the lowest-level staff member about the sensitive problems and needs of women varied significantly. Some of them added that if a woman officer was posted in the police station, a help desk for the victim of violence could be introduced. During my fieldwork, I found no woman police officer in any of the police stations. Notably, in Bangladesh, although the number of female police officers doubled from 1.8% to 5.24% between 2009 and 2014 (UNDP, 2015), it is still very low in comparison to the needs.

The participants also felt a lack in logistic and financial resources; there was no specific budget allocation for dealing with violence against women cases. Sometimes they have to arrange money through other means to meet different expenses related to violence against women. In this context, the experience of AHM, a PO of Netrokona district, provides a holistic picture of this problem:

> A lot of money is needed to do various medical check-ups and investigations for a victim. We need to produce victims before the court located in the district towns, sometimes we need to send them to Mymensingh Medical College or Netrokona General Hospital for age test or evidence test.

> Sometimes they also need to send to Dhaka for DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) test. Many costs are involved in the whole process. There are transport costs, and costs related to food and lodging. A poor woman cannot bear the expenses. We have to manage it by any means. Moreover, a police officer/staff also needs to accompany the victim all the way. Do we have adequate staffs assigned for violence against women cases (AHM)?

The lack of shelter home or safe home in both the districts was felt as another important problem by some of the participants. For a very short-term shelter, they kept a victim in the woman cell in the police station, which is actually built for women criminals. Notably, none of participants was aware of the two shelter homes available in these districts. Interestingly, in unavoidable situations, the POs sent the victims to the local hospitals for some days.

Although the POs earlier said that they worked in close contact with different agencies, they also admitted that the tasks related to domestic violence were not being performed in an integrated way. In this regard, the POs thought that the lack of interconnectivity was a problem in dealing with domestic violence incidents. SCS, a PO from Netrokona district, said:

> There is big coordination gap among the activities of different agencies on domestic violence issue. Usually, every agency works in its own way. For example, in the sub-district violence against committee there is no NGO representative. But NGOs are also playing a major role in this regard (SCS).

Some of the POs indicated that sometimes women directly filed cases in the courts through their lawyers. The court sends investigation orders to them. When they investigate sometimes, they find that the allegations are false or exaggerated. On this point, the POs expressed their concern that the DVPPA 2010 might not be effective if people lodge false complaints under it in the future. Moreover, they said that there was no instruction for them from the top management on how to apply this act. Therefore, they did not feel any pressure regarding the matter of implementing

this act. In their opinions, without proper instruction from the top, no policy can be implemented.

6.4.3 Service Provider (SP)

Section 7 of the act specifies the criteria of service providing organisation and the duties and responsibilities thereof. These were further detailed out in the rules. The SPs are non-government or voluntary organisations appointed by the MoWCA. While I was in the field, there was no such organisation as service provider. Nevertheless, on 01 September 2014, the MoWCA launched an application for the enlistment of service-providing organisations as per the provisions of the act. The last date of submitting such an application was on 25 November 2014. It took more than four years to launch this application. Since no service provider was appointed during my fieldwork, I had no scope to interview anyone. Fortunately, after having been informed that the Mymensingh office of BLAST lodged the first case under the DVPPA 2010 in the district, and two more applications from an EO from Mymensingh were forwarded to BLAST for filing cases under the DVPPA 2010, I considered BLAST as a proxy service provider for the purpose of my study. Considering the aforesaid situation, I interviewed HK, the head of BLAST Mymensingh office.

6.4.3.1 SP's Orientation about the Act

HK said that he had overall idea about the act and its rules. He was formally oriented concerning the act by his organisation. Moreover, he read the act in detail during first case filing in Mymensingh. HK also stated that no government agency or any other NGO in this district ever arranged any orientation programme or seminar on this act. Therefore, whatever he had learnt about the act was because of his own interest and the interest for his organisation.

6.4.3.2 Duties and Responsibilities Performed by the SP

BLAST works in a number of ways to render services to the victims. Once a victim files a complaint with BLAST, it, at the first means, tries to resolve the disputes through the *salish*. Nonetheless, BLAST does not register complaints in line with the prescribed form of the rules since it is not an enlisted service-providing organisaiton. HK stated that if the matter is not dissolved through the *salish*, they refer

it to a panel lawyer to lodge a case in the court free of cost in favour of the victim. They unit also works on building awareness among rural people about different laws, and if needed refer the victim for medical support. They cannot refer the victims to a shelter home since there is no shelter home in the district. When asked about the background for filing the first case in Mymensingh, he said:

> I forwarded the case of Jobeda in March, 2012 to one of our panel lawyers to file a case under the DVPPA 2010 following failure of number of *salish* attempts. I forwarded it before the rules was published. I did it because it had merit to be mitigated under this law, at the same time, I had pressure from the Head Office to file a case under this act (HK).

With regard to providing information to the concerned EO about the case since as per section 7 of this act a service provider must forward a copy of domestic violence incident to the jurisdiction of the EO, he said that he did not send such a copy to the concerned EO. Therefore, while the first case was lodged, the concerned EO remained in complete darkness. I also asked him about the update of that case. Surprisingly, he did not have any update. He said:

> It's been a long while back. I do not have an update. I have to ask the lawyer (HK).

I also inquired about the two applications forwarded by an EO, on 12 December, 2013 and 23 January 2014, for case filing under the DVPPA 2010. It came to my great surprise that he had no information about these two applications. However, he searched the concerned files and documents and found no application as such. He informed no victim from that sub-district or the concerned EO ever approached him to inquire about the applications. Therefore, the whereabouts of the applications remained a mystery.

6.4.3.3 Challenges in Discharging Duties and Responsibilities by the SP

Failure to motivate their panel lawyers was a matter of concern for BLAST to apply this act. He added that the act does not ensure a quick remedy; therefore, lawyers are not interested in practicing it. Moreover, BLAST cannot offer sufficient incentives to its lawyers. Moreover, when the panel lawyers take cases from BLAST office, they cannot charge any fees from the victims. Therefore, they become less interested in dealing with poor victims' cases. Due to resource constraints, BLAST cannot even forward a good number of cases to the lawyers. Therefore, they are very selective in case filing. HK said:

> After the first case filing in the DVPPA 2010, I have not been able to convince any other lawyer to take up another case. They say what is benefit of practicing such an act which cannot give quick remedy to the victims? I think, they do not understand this act properly (HK).

The interconnectivity problem was also traced as a serious impediment to practicing this act. HK said that they do not have much information on what other agencies are doing, particularly regarding this act. Due to the interconnectivity problem, proper support cannot be rendered to the victim by utilising each other's recourses.

6.4.4 Medical Service Provider (MSP)

Violence against women severely affects women's health and well-being, and they often require medical assistance from the medical service providers. Moreover, evidence and certificates from the MSPs are also needed to be presented before the court for ensuring proper justice to the victims. Section 9 the DVPPA 2010 fixes the responsibility for the medical service providers. I interviewed five MSPs from five sub-districts of the Netrokona and Mymensingh districts. Out of these five, three were from Netrokona and two were from Mymensingh.

6.4.4.1 MSP's Orientation about the Act

None of the participants I interviewed had any specific or formal orientation about this act. Some of them had heard about the act and some of them had not. For example, AB, an MSP from Mymensingh, said:

> This is for the first time I came to know that there is such an act (AB).

AR, another MSP from Netrokona said;

> I know nothing about this act. Good; if there is such an act, at least, women will get some relief (AR).

None of the MSPs mentioned that there was any meeting, workshop, or discussion on the DVPPA 2010 in their respective sub-district where they were invited to attend. Moreover, none of the agencies had ever approached them to talk about this act or about their responsibilities. From the discussions with the participants, I was convinced that the MSPs in these districts were not aware of the act.

6.4.4.2 Duties and Responsibilities Performed by the MSPs

As per the provision of the act, the MSPs must render medical services to the victims. Serious victims of domestic violence seek medical aid. In the health centres, there is no provision for treating domestic violence victims differently or with special care; they are treated in the same way as other patients. There is no formal reporting of domestic violence cases. The MSPs never informed any agency, such as the police, unless the incident was serious. For example, AMA, an MSP from Netrokona, said:

> I only inform police about death, rape victims, victims of acid violence or if the injury is life-threatening. I help police in case filing, and provide certificates. If a woman or her family asks for certificates for their domestic violence hurts or other symptoms, I give them certificates, which they might use in case filing (AMA).

The MSPs said that usually women come with a number of complaints caused by domestic violence such as serious physical hurts, fractures, pain, head trauma, gynaecological disorders, pregnancy complications, burns, etc., but rural women rarely complain about mental illness such as anxiety or depression. With regard to the availability of extending medical facilities to women, the MSPs can somehow manage most of the problems of the victims, but in the case of serious complications they usually refer the patients to the Mymensingh Medical College Hospital or the Netrokona District Hospital. In the current context, numbers of doctors and staff were enough to provide services to the patients within the sub-district health complex. Moreover, under each sub-district health complex, there are a number of community health clinics located in the rural areas. Many victims during the first step go to those clinics where they get only primary health care services and identification of emergency and complicated cases with a referral linkage with sub-district health complex.

6.4.4.3 Challenges in Discharging Duties and Responsibilities by the MSPs

With regard to the barriers in discharging their duties and responsibilities in extending services to a victim of domestic violence, all of the MSPs admitted that they were not professionally trained in dealing with domestic violence victims. However, they admitted that such patients inevitably require special treatment. Extending counselling to a victim is also very important, but at the sub-district health complex there was no specialised counsellor to render this service. In their opinions, hospitals can play an important role in addressing domestic violence against women. It can provide counselling to both the husband and victim if the facilities are extended as such. Sometimes a problem can be easily solved through counselling. MR, an MSP from Mymensingh, remarked:

> There is a gap between my understanding about domestic violence, and how to deal with the victims since domestic violence is a complicated problem. Victims have some special complaints which cannot be seen in usual patients. In this regard, trained doctors are needed (MR).

AR, an MSP from Netrokona district, commented:

> If a victim of domestic violence comes with complaints of physical injury caused by her husband, it does not mean that she only feel physical pain. She also feels psychological problems. In that case, an MSP should provide counselling in addition to general treatment. If we were trained on counselling, we could have contributed in minimising the problem (AR).

On the other hand, the participants also said that they could not extend services for serious cases due to a lack of equipment and specialisation. In those cases, they only referred the patients to modern hospitals situated in the district headquarters. In those cases, poor rural women and their families have to bear huge expenses. In this regard, MSP Barhatta said:

> Sometimes I need to refer a serious victim to modern hospital even knowing the fact the burden this poor victim and her family need to bear. I cannot solve all health related problems due to lack of specialisation and equipments (AMH).

Lack of budget and resources was also identified as impediments by most of the participants in terms of extending better services to the patients, including the victims. There was no specific budgetary allocation for specially looking into violence against cases at the sub-district level. According to most MSPs, allocation of special budget for violence against victims can help them provide better services to the victims as well as promote awareness campaigns on the negative health-related impacts of domestic violence.

Some MSPs also felt the need for a helpdesk on the hospital compound. Currently, there is no special desk in the health centres to specially take care of violence against women victims, nor is any doctor exclusively assigned to treat victims of violence. AB, an MSP from Mymensingh, commented:

> If there were a helpdesk with trained doctor at the health complex for victims of violence, victims might have been encouraged to take medical aid for various health related problems caused by domestic violence. Victims could also be made contacted with other agencies for legal support through the helpdesk. This is how the DVPPA 2010 can be used. Unfortunately, we have no such facility (AB).

Finally, some MRPs expressed their concern over the matter of issuing false certificates about injury. Although they said that they do not issue false certificates, people can easily collect such certificates from private practitioners and private clinics, and often use them in framing false cases under tougher acts related violence against women.

6.4.5 Shelter Home Service Provider (SHSP)

The provision of extending shelter support to a victim on the request of the PO or EO is reserved by the act. There were only two shelter homes in Netrokona district, but none in Mymensingh district. One of these shelter homes is run by a local NGO named SUS, and the other is run by a private philanthropic organisation named *Manab Kallyan Kami Anathaloy* (MKKA) or Human Welfare Asylum. I interviewed two persons, one from each, who supervise these shelter homes. I interviewed KB, from SUS, and NG, from MKKA. The shelter home of SUS is situated in Netrokona district. It was founded in 1997. On the other hand, the shelter home of MKKA is situated in a remote rural area of Durgapur sub-district under Netrokona. MKKA was established in 1996.

6.4.5.1 SHSP's Orientation about the Act

KB, from SUS, was acquainted with the act, but NB, from MKKA, never heard of it. KB, from the SUS shelter home, said:

> I have detailed ideas about this act. I had the opportunity to attend a meeting as a representative of local NGO while it was being drafted (KB).

On the other hand, NB, from MKKA, said:

> I never heard of this act, and I know nothing about it. Nobody ever told me about the act (NG).

No government agency had ever approached them to let them know about their roles and responsibilities as prescribed by the act, and there was no formal discussion as such in the district. With such mixed experiences about participants' orientation about the act, I delved into their activities with regard to extending shelter home support to the victims of domestic violence.

6.4.5.2 Duties and Responsibilities Performed by the SHSPs

SUS is a leading local NGO. Providing shelter support to the distressed woman is one of the important functions of SUS. It also provides medical, psychological counselling, and rehabilitative support to the victims. Since inception, seventy-eight different categories of victims received shelter under the SUS shelter home project. A victim can stay with their minor children for a maximum of one year. The SUS shelter home imparts free skill development training to the inmates, and extends legal support. It provides shelter support to its own clients, but it also accepts referrals from other agencies. However, hardly any victim was referred to a SUS shelter home by the POs or EOs.

On the other hand, MKKA is a centre for the destitute. MKKA keeps a victim for an indefinite period with her children unless she is fully self-reliant and capable of assimilating into society. It provides limited vocational training to a victim. It has a charitable homeopathic clinic for medical support for the victims. It also provides basic education and recreations facilities to the children of the victim. Since inception, it has given shelter to fifty-four distressed women. No victim has ever been referred by POs or EOs. However, it does not provide legal support to the victims. On this point, NG stated:

> I extend no legal support. I do not even any plan to seek legal recourses for the victims. These all are false. A victim is notoriously harassed in the court. There is no remedy, just waste of time and money (NG).

The types of support extended to the victims by both the shelter homes were almost similar. However, the SUS shelter provides legal support, but MKKA does not. Notably, no SUS shelter home inmate was provided legal support under the DVPPA 2010.

6.4.5.3 Challenges in Discharging Duties and Responsibilities by the SHSPs

Both shelter homes confronted some difficulties. KB, from the SUS shelter home, informed that, the main difficulty was that the home runs on donor funding, which is always uncertain. Therefore, they were unable to extend services due to financial uncertainty. She further mentioned that trade options for their vocational training were also limited. They impart training on sewing, embroidery and block printing, which are not very lucrative in the job market. Self-reliance is often impossible with these trades.

On the other hand, funding has always been a problem for MKKA since it is exclusively dependent on the generous financial support of philanthropists. There is a very limited fixed flow of financial support. Therefore, it cannot diversify its trade for the victims. NG from MKKA mentioned that sometimes the husbands of the victims threaten their wives and want to take away their children. Then again, he faced a very critical problem with regard to religious identity. As he is a member of the Hindu minority, the Muslim community does not extend fullest support to him, and often put an embargo on the Muslim destitute taken to the shelter at MKKA. He commented:

> As I am a Hindu, Muslim community leaders say those who eat and sleep in my shelter home would go to the hell. I am facing this difficulty for long (NG).

The above assertion is very significant. Perhaps, for that reason, during my field visit at MKKA, I met only two Muslim victims of violence out of eleven. Moreover, the participants said that they did not have any interconnectivity with government agencies, and were not linked with POs and EOs and never received any support from the government. In their opinions, if the government had extended support to them, they could have rendered better services to the victims.

6.4.6 Magistrates

Magistrates are important implementers of the DVPPA 2010. The act has depicted in detail in many of its sections the *modus operandi* for the magistrates. The act has bestowed the judicial magistrates and metropolitan magistrates (section 21) with the power to give judgments and orders under various provisions of this act. In a district, the District and Sessions Judge heads the district court. Under him/her, there is one Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) that looks after the criminal cases. Under the CJM, there are number of magistrates. In the district court, a senior judicial magistrate/judicial magistrate is assigned to try the criminal cases under a particular sub-district. I interviewed two magistrates form Netrokona and three magistrates from Mymensingh.

6.4.6.1 Magistrates' Orientation about the Act

I received some mixed answers with regard to the orientation of the magistrates about the act. One magistrate had attended a formal workshop about the act arranged by the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI), Bangladesh, but did not get the opportunity to apply it. One magistrate had the opportunity to apply the act in his previous place of posting in another district but did not have any formal orientation, and one magistrate was trying the two cases filed under the DVPPA 2010 in Mymensingh during my study, although she did not have any formal orientation. The rest neither received any training nor applied the act at any level but said that they had gone through the act and its rules, keeping in mind that in the future they might need to use it. With respect to formal orientation about the act, some reflections of the participants are as follows. FY, a magistrate from Mymensingh, said:

> As a magistrate I have wide responsibilities under this act. Unfortunately, I have never been imparted any training on this act by our judicial service or any other agency (FY).

MS, who was trying the two cases in Mymensingh during my field study, said:

> While trying I have encountered some difficulties. I am not clear about the points of decision-making. But if I were given prior orientation about this act I could have clarified my points of concerns with the experts of this act. This is the irony. Magistrates are yet not included in the training programmes of this act (MS).

MKH from Netrokona, stated the following:

> I attended a workshop on this act at JATI. In my opinion, it is an unconventional act in Bangladesh which ensures both civil and criminal remedy for a victim (MKH).

Most of the magistrates seriously considered the necessity of being formally oriented to this act which is a necessary precondition for proper implementation of this act. They never received any briefing from the higher authority on how to use this act in their respective judicial jurisdictions. Moreover, they were never involved in any interaction or activity organised by the District or Session Court or the Bar Council with the lawyers or other implementing agencies on this act, and to their knowledge, no such interaction was held.

6.4.6.2 Duties and Responsibilities Performed by the Magistrates

I mentioned before that until my field study only two cases were filed under this act in Mymensingh district. One of the cases was filed with the Muktagacha sub-district court and the other with Iswarganj sub-district court under the Mymenisngh district court. Both cases were under disposal of MS, who was in charge of both the sub-district courts. When I asked her about the cases, MS said:

> I found the case from Iswarganj was pending since 2012. I ordered both the parties for hearing in October 2014 but there was no show from the parties. Therefore, I have further ordered to have a hearing in December 2014. The second case was filed with Muktagacha sub-district court in August 2014. Earlier magistrate of this court had already given an interim protection order in favour of the victim and served a show cause notice to the respondent. I further ordered for local inquiry to the UC chairman. I am waiting for the report (MS).

No other magistrate had any practical experience in trying any cases excepting FS, a magistrate from Mymensingh, who in his previous duty station in another district tried three cases under the DVPPA 2010 and dismissed them because of lack of evidence to prove the allegation.

The above is the snapshot of the direct engagement of the participants in court procedures. At this milieu, I was interested to know the perspectives and the perceptions of the magistrates about the challenges in implementing this act.

6.4.6.3 Challenges in Discharging Duties and Responsibilities by the Magistrates

Magistrates had identified a number of challenges in discharging their duties and responsibilities prescribed by the act. As a magistrate, it is only possible to play some roles if cases are filed under this act. If not, as per the existing legal framework, magistrates can do nothing out of their own initiative. On this point, most of the participants said that in the existing judicial system there was very little scope to play an active role in the promotion of any act, and they could not advise lawyers about case filings. On this point, MMR, a magistrate from Netrokona, made a very important remark:

> Bangladesh judiciary follows adversarial model where the magistrates and judges constricted themselves in the courts, there is little scope to be proactive. It is opposite to inquisitorial model where judges are proactive and often play the role of mediator. Bangladesh carries on the British colonial

> legacy still today. We must minimise the gaps between judges and plaintiffs, judges and defendants, and judges and lawyers (MMR).

It was further stated by other participants that if the magistrates suggest that lawyers reframe a case under this act, they might be disappointed, and it might hurt their ego. Hence, the magistrates do not like to intervene into the activities of the lawyers. In fact, there is little scope for the magistrates to play a proactive role in practicing this act, which is major drawback for implementing this act in Bangladesh.

The magistrates also opined that people do not know about this act. They are more acquainted with the Dowry Prohibition act 1980 and the Women and Children Repression act 2000 (Amendment 2003) since these acts have been widely publicised and used. Lack of publicity of this act has restricted people from seeking legal recourse under it. On this point FY, a magistrate from Mymensingh, clearly stated:

> I think government did not enact this act keeping in mind to really help the victims of domestic violence rather enacted it being pressured by women's groups. It is eyewash only, otherwise it would have publicised it widely (FI).

A few participants blamed the court environment as a barrier to rural women to seeking legal recourse. Most of the court premises still lacked a women-friendly environment. Both magistrates and lawyers were lacking in gender sensitisation; they hardly relinquished their patriarchal attitudes. A woman is badly harassed during a hearing by the opponent lawyer.

The antipathy of the lawyers in practicing this act was identified as a major obstacle by all the participants. Lawyers are more interested in practicing other acts on violence against women since they have been practicing them for a long time. They willfully convince their clients to frame cases in according to those acts. Most rural people do not know what the legal remedies for them are-they follow what their lawyers suggest. MKH, from Netrokona, said:

> Rural people depend upon their lawyers. If lawyers do not proceed with the DVPPA 2010 for legal remedies of their clients, courts can do nothing (MKH).

Some of the participants said that many lawyers cannot frame cases with evidence and proof. Therefore, proper judgments cannot be passed on for the victims. Many cases are dismissed for not having adequate arguments or evidence to prove in favour of the victims. FS, a magistrate from Mymensingh, said:

> Using the DVPPA 2010 requires skills and expertise. I rejected application under the DVPPA 2010 in my previous station because of poor case filing (FS).

Some of the participants talked about some of the internal shortcomings of the act. In fact, the process of coming to a decision was identified as the major obstacle of this act. In their opinions, this act was framed in a way that would require a lot of time to arrive at a remedy. Naturally, people are interested in using those acts which ensure instant and tougher results. FS, further said:

> The whole process of the DVPPA 2010 is very complicated and time consuming. There are many superficial items in this act-nothing is very specific. What is the punishment for which offense is not specified at all? Coming to a particular decision is very difficult under this act (FS).

Magistrate MS, who was trying two cases in Mymensingh, expressed her deepest dismay over this act. She said:

> I thought it was an excellent act. But while I became practically engaged in trying this act, I found it is a poorly drafted act with a lot of drawbacks. It was enacted whimsically. Its definitions are not clear at all. For example; what does it mean by protection? There is a very vague explanation of protection. Then how would I ensure that protection order is carried out? Other Acts rely

> upon documentary evidences or on the statements of witnesses; there is nothing like that in this act. Investigation report is an important tool to come to a decision. But this act does not specify who would do the investigation-it says local investigation. Again local is a vague term. Moreover, to come to decision under this act, a number of phases have to be passed on and the rules of this act does not give any direction on how to come a decision. It is a very weak act (MS).

The above assertions of both FS and MS based on their practical experiences were very significant in relation to the barriers to properly executing the act. Moreover, some of the participants said that many poor women seek legal recourse through the legal aid support of various NGOs and government legal aid offices. Legal aid agencies refer these applications to their panel lawyers. These agencies usually do not pay a handsome amount to their lawyers. Therefore, panel lawyers do not take referred applications very seriously. On many occasions, lawyers do not maintain proper communication with the victims, and often they remain absent in hearings or seek permission to delay hearings. Sometimes they also fail to produce witnesses on the due date. Therefore, justice is delayed. However, such problems were evident for both the cases filed under the DVPPA 2010 in Mymensingh district, which I shall discuss later in the case studies.

On the other hand, there is no speedy tribunal for disposing cases under the DVPPA 2010. The absence of a special tribunal also restricts people from seeking recourse under this act, which was opined by most of the participants. MMR, a magistrate from Netrokona district, commented:

> If there were a special tribunal under the DVPPA 2010, it could not only ensure quick disposal of cases but also produce a group of expert magistrates and lawyers. Women and Children Repression Tribunal which disposes cases under the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003) has already made many expert judges and lawyers in Bangladesh (MMR).

On the other hand, the absence of an exclusive provision for trying domestic violence under this act was also identified as a major shortcoming of the act. Absence of supremacy for trying domestic violence under this act encouraged people to use other acts by any means, even by false case filing, and this was expressed by all of the participants. On this point, MKH, a magistrate from Netrokona, asserted:

> Since this law does not have any exclusive clause such as; whatever provisions are available in other Acts, domestic violence would be tried under the DVPPA 2010. Absence of such clause has made this act little ineffective (MKH).

In the above, all of the magistrates identified a number of important and critical points which stood as barriers to the smooth execution of the DVPPA 2010. If the judiciary finds it difficult to use this act, ultimately the victims will receive no substantial benefit from the act. So far, I have discussed the perceptions and experiences of the frontline implementers, whose duties and responsibilities are clearly stated in the act. In the following, I shall bring to light the perceptions and experiences of two groups of professionals, lawyers and district legal aid officers, whose involvement is also equally important in implementing this act, although the act does not specify their duties and responsibilities.

6.4.7 Lawyers

I interviewed five lawyers during my field study: two were from Netrokona district and three were from Mymensingh district. I purposefully selected both male and female lawyers. All of them had long experience in filing cases under the existing acts related to violence against women. Out of five lawyers, two were directly involved with the DVPPA 2010 implementation since each of them had filed a case under this act in Mymensingh.

6.4.7.1 Lawyers' Orientation and Involvement with the Act

None of the lawyers I interviewed had undergone any formal orientation of the act. All of the lawyers said that they were never invited by a government or non-government agency or by the District and Session Judge or even the Bar Council

to have any formal orientation or discussion meeting on this act. SAL, a lawyer from Mymensigh, said:

> When a new act is gazetted, District and Session Judge or the Bar Council should jointly brief the judges and lawyers about it and how to proceed with that act. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, this is hardly happened. There is a dearth in understanding about the act among the lawyers (SAL).

DB, a female lawyer from Netrokona, remarked:

> I think the government just floated the act without any preparation. It has no planning on how to implement it. Government must orient the concerned stakeholders immediately (DB).

Two lawyers applied this act as per the specific request from the agencies under which they act as panel lawyers. NI, the first lawyer in Mymensingh to file a case under the act, said:

> Back in 2012, I was requested by an NGO named BLAST to file a case under that act. I am a panel lawyer of that NGO. Although, by that time, I had no idea about that act, I studied it by myself and filed a case (NIC).

SAL, the second lawyer to file a case, said:

> A case was referred to me from government legal aid office in August, 2015. I am a panel lawyer of this organisation. I got encouraged. I read the act, and I filed a case. I am the first lawyer to file a case after the gazette notification of the rules (SAL).

Other lawyers, DB from Netrokona and SP from Mymensingh, had some ideas about the act, but never tried to apply it. However GM, from Netrokona, being the public prosecutor for "Women and Children Repression Tribunal" never

went through the act. She collected a copy of it from me and gave an interview later on.

6.4.7.2 Assessment of the Act and the Process of Implementation

I noticed a mixed reaction among the lawyers about this act. Some said that it was a modern act comparable with acts of advanced countries, and some said it was not applicable to the social context of Bangladesh. NIC from Mymensigh and GM from Netrokona opined that the act is unique in Bangladesh. In their opinions, it has both preventive and protective features. On the other hand, according to both SP from Mymenisngh and DB from Netrokona, this act is irrelevant in the social context of Bangladesh since instead of giving protection to a woman it might harm her. Seeking legal recourse against the husband living in the same residence is not possible in Bangladesh. Moreover, the provisions of soft punishment under the DVPPA 2010 restrict lawyers in practicing it over other existing acts. However, neither SAL nor NI from Mymensingh considered the soft punishment system as a serious problem. In their opinions, no act is perfect; each act has its own features. It is only through practicing that the drawbacks of an act can be traced and amended accordingly. In their opinion, lack of orientation and understanding amongst the lawyers about the act was a barrier to implementing this act. In this regard, I asked each of them why after filing a case under the DVPPA 2010 they did not file another case. Both of them said that their first experience was not good and they did not receive proper cooperation from different implementing agencies. Moreover, they noticed that the magistrates were not ready to try this act for lack of understanding. On this point, the comment of SAL is very important:

> If I have a big gun, it will be of no use unless I have bullets; and the bullets will be of no use unless the gun does not have the trigger to fire (SAL).

In his opinion, a gun is the DVPPA 2010, and the bullet means a complete understanding of the act by all levels of stakeholders, and the trigger means a very good coordination among the implementers. I also asked other participants why they did not apply this act. DB, a lawyer from Netrokona, replied:

> No victim is yet to approach me to file case under THE DVPPA 2010. If victims are not interested to file cases under it, how can I move with it (DB)?

GM, a lawyer from Netrokona, admitted:

> How could I file a case under an act of which I had no idea (GM)?

But the experiences of SP, a female lawyer from Mymensigh, were interesting:

> I was a panel lawyer of a local NGO working on domestic violence victims. They put me pressure to file cases under this act. Considering the level of knowledge about the act amongst the implementers, inapplicability of the act in our society and failure to convince some victims, I did not take any initiative. I also failed to make understood the NGO authority about these constraints. Finally, I decided to quit the NGO, and I did it (SP).

Importantly, all of the lawyers stressed the need for the establishment of a special tribulation under this act. In their opinions, if such a tribunal were established lawyers would be interested in knowing about and practicing this act. On the other hand, many lawyers in the courts were attached to different human rights and legal aid organisations as panel lawyers. All of the lawyers I interviewed had some attachments as such. Some of them honestly admitted that a case that is referred by an organisation gets less preference than a case they individually take over. The amount that is paid as fees by those organisations is negligible, which does not motivate them to take over new challenges. like practicing the DVPPA 2010. As a result, they feel comfortable practicing the conventional acts for domestic violence incidents by any means in order to save their time and energy.

6.4.8 District Legal Aid Officer

According to the DVPPA 2010, both POs and EOs are required to take the necessary steps to provide a poor victim legal aid services under the Legal Aid

Services Act, 2000**.** The government of Bangladesh passed the Legal Aid Services Act 2000 (Amendment 2006) to make legal aid accessible to the underprivileged, destitute, insolvent, helpless, and disadvantage people of the country. The government has set up permanent legal aid office in every district headquarters. A judicial service officer acts as District Legal Aid Officer (DLAO). A panel of lawyers assists the legal aid office. The role of the DLAOs is important for implementing this act. I interviewed DLOs from both districts.

6.4.8.1 DLAOs' Orientation and Involvement with the Act

None of the DLAOs was ever invited to attend any seminar, workshop or training on this act. The DLAO in Mymensingh had a personal initiative for going through the act, and had some ideas about it. On the other hand, the DLAO in Netrokona never went through the act. She collected a copy of it from me, read it, and gave me an interview. On the issue of orientation, MAH, the DLAO in Mymensingh, asserted:

> Around 80% clients of legal aid office are women. Having such an opportunity to supporting distressed women, it is unfortunate that I have never been invited to participate in any formal programme on the DVPPA 2010. In last August, the case I forwarded under the DVPPA 2010 was exclusively out my own interest (MAH).

It was evident despite being a very important government institution that the officials from this institution had had no formal orientation on the act. However, one out of two cases that were filed under the DVPPA 2010 in Mymensingh and was forwarded by the personal initiative of the DLAO in Mymensingh, but the DLAO in Netrokona never made any attempt to use this act.

6.4.8.2 Assessment of the Act and the Process of Its Implementation

Both DLAOs mentioned that some features of this act might not attract the aggrieved persons and the lawyers. For example, MAH, the DLAO in Mymensingh, said:

> There is no readily remedy for the victims in this act. Punishment under this act is a complicated and a long process. It depends on many other factors. If someone does not obey an order of a court, only then, punishment order can be passed on. A serious victim of domestic violence will never wait for that. That is why it might be difficult to convince people to use this act (MAH).

AB, the DLAO in Netrokona, said:

> It appears to me as a very sophisticated act, perhaps, inappropriate in the context of Bangladesh. Severely abused women will get no substantial remedy out this act. It might only be used for small and minor forms of violence (AB).

The participants said that the aggrieved persons directly or on their behalf of NGOs, government agencies, and human rights organisations apply to legal aid offices for free legal support. Usually poorer victims do not know about acts; they are assisted or referred by others. However, no victim or any agency ever applied by specifically seeking recourse under the DVPPA 2010. The participants confirmed that the legal aid office has sufficient resources. If the victims or their representatives had applied for legal aid support under this act, it would have been applied very easily. The legal aid office is a perfect platform for applying this act. The DLAOs had both the authority and the opportunity to forward cases under this act. Despite having the authority to decide through which act a case was to be filed for a poor victim. they did not make any major contribution to the promotion of the DVPPA 2010. They also admitted that they had neither any instruction from their superior authority to apply this act, nor had the MoWCA ever requested them to proceed with the act. Moreover, no NGOs ever requested them to promote this act, so they did not feel any pressure to apply it.

6.5 Jobeda[38]: The First Case under the Act

6.5.1 Background and Experience of Abuse

Jobeda, aged around thirty-two and a mother of three daughters, hails from Iswarganj sub-district, Mymensingh district. Jobeda was first married to Mostofa in 1996, an agriculturist from Gouripur sub-district of Mymensingh district. Mostafa was often guided by his brothers. After a few months of marriage, Jobeda's in-laws put pressure on her to bring a dowry. Jobeda's husband did not say anything while they put pressure on her. However, off and on, she had to request her father and brothers to meet their demands for a dowry. They also physically abused her in many ways. She passed life in this way for some years. Sometime in 2002, following her failure to bring dowries, Jobeda's father-in-law and other in-laws forcibly sent her back to her family of origin along with her daughter. After a few days, they sent a divorce letter.

Upon being divorced by Mostafa, Jobeda started working as a day labourer. However, there was always pressure from her family members to marry again. Finally, she was forced to marry Russel in 2003. She paid Russell all her earnings as a dowry. Russell also put pressure on Jobeda to bring a dowry. He used to beat her severely and was often provoked by his mother. In the meantime, Jobeda gave birth to a baby girl. Russell blamed Jobeda for giving birth to a girl child. One day he even burnt the baby's chin. Violence against Jobeda and the child was mounting rapidly. Failing to cope with severe violence, Jobeda fled from Russell's home with her baby. Her marital relations with Russell were dissolved through community intervention. Jobeda divorced Russell in 2005.

Suddenly, in 2010, Jobeda's first husband and in-laws came to her father's home and asked to hand over their daughter (Jobeda's elder daughter). Jobeda and her family declined. The matter was placed before the community leaders. However, it was decided through the *salish* that since her first husband did not get married to anyone it was possible to remarry Jobeda. Jobeda did not agree with the decision, but due to community and family pressure, she was forced to remarry Mostafa in 2011. This time she kept her second daughter (Russell's daughter) with her mother and took

[38] I conducted the interview on 12 October, 2014.

her first daughter with her. Her in-laws again started to inflict violence against her. Her life became unbearable within a short time. Meanwhile, she became pregnant. One day following a quarrel, she was forcibly ousted from her home by her in-laws. The reason was that Jobeda and her daughter went to the field to cut rice. They did not want Jobeda to claim rights over her husband's property. She again went back to her family of origin.

6.5.2 Legal Recourse Seeking of Jobeda[39]

As she was still legally Mostafa's wife, one of her educated relatives suggested claiming her right over the husband's family and property. Her relatives also advised her to go to BLAST office in Mymensingh for free legal support. Jobeda lodged a complaint against her husband and in-laws with BLAST. It was in April 2012. BLAST served a letter to both the parties to attend a *salish* on 25 April, 2012 but Jobeda's husband and in-laws did not attend. BLAST, then, served another letter fixing another date on 8 May, 2014. Jobeda's husband and in-laws were also absent on that day. Therefore, BLAST decided to file a case under the DVPPA 2010 and forwarded the documents to one of its panel lawyers in the Mymensingh district court.

Since then, the case was being handled by NIC, a lawyer, who filed a formal petition (case no. 521/12) on 16 June, 2012 with the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court, Iswarganj sub-district, under section 13 (interim protection order and issuance of notice to the respondent to reply in seven days), section 14 (protection order), section 15 (b) (residence order for not disturbing the possession of the victim from shared household) and section 16 (5) (compensation order for the maintenance of the victim) under the DVPPA 2010. The first hearing of the case was held on 7 November, 2012, and being satisfied that domestic violence had taken place, the court ordered the PO of Gouripur sub-district to convey a protection order and a residence order in favour of the respondent. Another hearing was held on 11 November, 2012 on the compensation order. Accordingly, a compensation order for the maintenance of the victim and her children was given on 26 December 2012.

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[39] Documents and information collected from BLAST office in Mymensingh , and the concerned court.

Jobeda said that none of the orders was carried out. She was neither allowed by her in-laws to enter her husband's home, nor was any maintenance given. She also went to the PO of the Goripur police station and requested him to carry out the order of the court. The PO said that he would look into it, but, in the end, did nothing. In her opinion, the police were managed by her in-laws. Then, she contacted her lawyer. Following another application from the lawyer after a long time, the court gave a hearing date for both parties on 5 June, 2013. Unfortunately, Jobeda was not informed by the lawyer of the date. Therefore, she did not attend. Jobeda was not informed about the subsequent hearing orders either. The case was almost dead. However, the case was revived recently when a new magistrate took over the charge of the sub-district court. A hearing date was fixed on 16 October, 2014. I met Jobeda on 12 October, 2014 in her village. She informed me that she did not know anything about the date. Nobody contacted her and she did not receive any letter as such. She thought that the case was dismissed. Moreover, she was no longer interested in the case as the police did not carry out the court order and she did not get any benefits from the legal recourse. However, I requested her to contact her lawyer immediately. She also lost the cell phone number of her lawyer; I gave her the number.

6.5.3 Current Status of Jobeda's Case

Later on, I came to know from the court that neither of the parties appeared before the court on 16 October, 2014. Therefore, it again ordered them to appear on 7 December 2012. It also came to me as a surprise that even the lawyer of Jobeda did not have any information about the hearing dates. Having been informed of the next hearing date of 7 December, 2014 from me, the lawyer said he would move on that date provided that Jobeda physically contacted him by that time. The good point was that Jobeda by this time contacted her lawyer and the lawyer advised her to meet him.

I also inquired of the PO, Gouripur police station, to know what measures were taken by the police when the court order was passed on them. The current PO informed me that he did not have any information about it because he assumed office after the court order. Moreover, he did not find any such order in the police station. Therefore, what the police did following the court order remained a mystery. Even the

lawyer could not give me any substantial information about the role of the police during that time.

I also contacted MS, a magistrate under whom the case was pending for disposal. She said that she had revived an almost dead case. However, she could only do something if the victim and her lawyer attended the hearing. If there was no show again, she might dismiss it finally and added that she did not see any hope for this case.

Moreover, I contacted the EOs of Gouripur sub-district (where the violence took place) and Iswargangj (where Jobeda is currently living) sub-districts to inquire whether they had any information about Jobeda's case. Unfortunately, none of the EOs had any information about it. In fact, the concerned EOs remained in darkness when the first case was filed under the DVPPA 2010 by BLAST in Mymensingh district.

6.5.4 Analysis of Jobeda's Case

Domestic violence had multiple impacts on Jobeda. She is an unusual victim of domestic violence. She was married thrice in her life, and twice to the same husband. No marital relation could give her happiness. However, legal recourse under the DVPPA 2010 could not ensure any protection for her. If the orders of the court were carried out correctly, Jobeda would have enjoyed all protections and facilities and lived peacefully with her children. Unfortunately, it did not happen. The case is an indication of the gross violation of court orders. The attitude of the police toward Jobeda was unacceptable. It seems that the police did not take the court orders seriously. There was an information gap in the police station regarding Jobeda's case history and at that time the PO could not provide any information about the case.

Moreover, the case also suffered from massive implementation delay; it was pending in the court for long time. According to the act, an application must be disposed of within sixty working days. The court in no way could take such a long time to dispose of the case as per the provisions of the act.

There was a huge a coordination gap in the entire process. There was no coordination between the lawyer and the victim. It appeared that the lawyer was reluctant to handle the case and he did not have updated information on the case.

Earlier, I was informed by some implementers that when lawyers act as a panel lawyer for some organisation, they show less interest in dealing with cases. There was evidence of such an allegation with this case as well.

On the other hand, BLAST,[40] the concerned service-providing organisation (proxy) also did not have any updated information on the case. This again demonstrates the low level of interest of the service-providing organisation in dealing with cases under the DVPPA 2010. It did not take initiative on how to bring about results for this case and it had no coordination with the panel lawyer with regard to the case. If this case could have brought some results for the victim, other agencies and lawyers might have been interested in practicing this act. Moreover, BLAST did not inform the concerned EO[41] about the case filing. According to the act, a service-providing organisation is legally bound to do that.

In the above, I have mentioned in brief Jobeda's experiences of violence during different phases of her life and what happened after she sought recourse under the DVPPA 2010. It gives a very gloomy picture of the state of implementation of this act. There were several problems such as i) lack of information at all stages; ii) no inter-agency coordination; iii) inefficiency of legal enforcement agencies; iv) legal procedures are complicated and lengthy; v) there are no directions on how to ensure interim protection for the victim; vi) corruption; and vi) lack of support to the victim. So far, Jobeda has not received any recourse under this act.

[40] I discussed some aspects of this case under the theme "Service Providers.". Analysis of the role of BLAST was based on previous discussion.
[41] I also discussed EO's ignorance of the case filing under the theme "Enforcement Officer."

6.6 Hafiza[42]: The Second Case under the Act

6.6.1 Background and Experience of Abuse

Hafiza is a fifty-one year old widow from the Muktagacha sub-district of Mymensingh district. Her husband, Shohorab Ali, died in 2008. Hafiza is a mother of 4 daughters and two sons. Her father-in-law verbally divided his residential area and agricultural lands among his five sons. Her husband built a house on his share. After the death of her husband, Hafiza did not go anywhere with her children and was working sometimes as domestic help and sometimes as a labourer to maintain her family. Immediately after her husband's death, Hafiza's in-laws perpetuated different forms of violence against her and her children with the aim of expelling her from her husband's house. Her brothers-in-law questioned about her ensuing baby. Although they knew that she was pregnant while her husband was alive, they cast doubt about the parental identity of the baby. It was the beginning of violence. They forced her to abort the baby. Hafiza did not pay heed to the false blaming game. Meanwhile, her in-laws took control of her agricultural land. She could only maintain possession of her husband's house, although there was continuous pressure from her in-laws to leave it.

The prevalence of their violence against Hafiza was mounting day by day. They abused her both verbally and physically. They did not even have any sympathy for her autistic child. At night, they used to throw stones at the roof of her house so that she became scared. They cut the saplings planted around the house by her late husband, and destroyed the guide walls of the house. One day, her goat suddenly entered into one of her brother-in-laws land and destroyed some paddy. He caught the goat and beat her roughly. The following day, the goat died. One day her brother-in-laws battered her severely. They fractured her hand by hitting her with a bamboo cane and she became unconscious. They also had beaten up her children mercilessly. Knowing the incident from neighbours, her brothers came and took her to hospital for treatment. After some months, Hafiza again went back to her husband's home. Her in-laws were furious at her return, but she resisted more this time. She promised, if needed, she would die rather relinquish her right over her husband's property. This is

[42] I conducted the interview on 6 October, 2014.

how Hafiza was managing her life despite confronting continuous violence from her in-laws.

6.6.2 Legal Recourse Seeking of Hafiza

Initially Hafiza did not seek any help from anybody; she thought that since her father-in-law was still alive she would look into the matter. But her father-in-law was indifferent to her problems. Failing to attain recourse from her father-in-law, Hafiza informed the local community leaders of the matter, but none of them stood by her and her children. She failed to convince them to hold a *salish* for her. However, when she returned home after having treatment for her broken hand, some well-wishers suggested that she contact the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) or the local police station for legal support. She contacted the BRAC office and the BRAC officials without taking any measures suggested her to go to the district legal aid office in Mymensingh. The DLAO in Mymensingh listened to her problems and referred her to a panel lawyer for filing case under the DVPPA 2010.

Case (No. 661/14[43]) was filed in favour of Hafiza on 7 August, 2014 with the Senior Judicial Magistrate Court, Muktagacha sub-district, and remedies were sought under section 13 (Interim protection order and issuance of notice to the respondent), 14 (protection order), section 15 (residence order) and section 16 (compensation order) under the DVPPA 2010. Altogether, six persons were charged in the petition. Notably, in the petition Hafiza's lawyer requested the court order the PO at the Muktagacha police station to ensure full protection for Hafiza at her residence from the plaintiffs.

6.6.3 Current Status of Hafiza's Case[44]

On 7 August 2104, the court gave the interim protection order in favour of Hafiza and also served a show of cause notice to the plaintiffs to reply in seven days as to why the court would not issue a permanent protection order. They replied through their lawyer on 2 October, 2014. Meanwhile, the magistrate of the concerned court was transferred, and MS, another magistrate, took over the charge of the

[43] SAL, the lawyer for Hafiz, provided all of the documents related to Hafiza's case filings.
[44] I furnished information until I finished my study in November 2014.

Muktagacaha court. The court gave a hearing date for 22 October, 2014, but the lawyer of Hafiza did not attend the hearing in due time. Then the court ordered the local UC chairman to make an inquiry into the matter and thereby submitted a report to the court on 6 November, 2014.

In this regard, I talked to different persons involved in the process. The lawyer of the case, SAL, informed me that in the petition submitted on 7 August, 2014 he begged the court to order the PO in Muktagacha to take the necessary steps to ensure protection of the victim. According to the act, the court rightly ordered interim protection for her and also ordered the perpetrators to explain the reasons for causing harm to the victim, but it did not give any instructions to the concerned PO on how to ensure interim protection. The court only sent a copy to the police station. In his opinion, it was a big gap in understanding. SAL personally contacted the PO and requested him to take the necessary measures. The PO called both parties to the police station. The lawyer further mentioned that this was a contradiction in the provision of the act. The police cannot summon parties; they can only carry out court orders. This happened because of the procedural gaps in the court order, and lack of understanding of the act. The lawyer also mentioned that there was a hearing date on 22 October, 2014 regarding the explanation notice. He was late in attending the proceedings in the court because of other preoccupations. He further said that instead of passing an inquiry order, the court could have deferred the case until he arrived. Passing an inquiry order would delay the process.

Then, I talked to the concerned PO at the Muktagacha police station. He said that once he received the order of the court, he sent a subordinate officer to the victim's house and informed both parties about the order of the court. When the parties came, he told them to carry out the court orders, and to not harm Hafiza. He said that he did not know the meaning of the protection order or about the process of implementing it. Finally, he admitted that it was not fully possible for him to monitor the protection order.

I talked to Hafiza about the latest progress of the court order. She said that court order brought more harm to her. After receiving it, her in-laws called a local *salish* where everybody accused and scolded her. Her in-laws threatened to evict her from the house, and warned that no property would be given to her or her children in

the future. They said that everything would be finalised in the court. In fact, there was no protection for her.

I had also discussions with MS, the concerned magistrate of this case. She said that she is "in a fix" and not sure what to do with this case. In her opinion, this case had no merit to be disposed of by the DVPPA 2010. As the father-in-law of the victim did not divide his property among his sons in writing, the victim cannot legally claim the property or have protection over it. So, at the first instance, protection over property ownership would be dismissed. However, the victim is entitled to have other usual protections from violence. She is also entitled to have a residence order. The magistrate further mentioned that the lawyer of the victim was not proactive and even did not attend the hearing. In her opinion, the lawyer is not interested in the case since he deals with the case as a panel lawyer and has little interest in a referred case. Then she said that if she were to give a permanent protection order, how could it be confirmed that order would be carried out? In other acts, there is scope for documentary evidence and witnesses, but this act does not have those provisions. At this stage, she had nothing to do except wait for the inquiry report of the local chairman. Then, I asked if the inquiry came against the victim, what measures would be taken? She replied that it would depend upon the arguments of the lawyers and the report itself.

I inquired with the concerned UC chairman, who was ordered by the court to inquire into the matter and submit a report by 6 November. I had a discussion with him on 10 November, 2014. Still then, he had not submitted the report. Notably, he said that the plaintiffs were good persons; they were kind to Hafiza. It is Hafiza that creates trouble. He would submit a report in that way because that was the fact.

I also talked to the DLAO in Mymensingh about the case. In his opinion, it was a case with substantial merits. Hence, he recommended this case. However, he did not inform the concerned EO about the case filing.

Finally, I also talked to the concerned EO of the Muktagacha[45] sub-district about the case. The EO did not have any information about it; no agency had

[45] I also talked about the EO's ignorance of case filing under the theme "Enforcement Officer."

informed her about the case. In fact, the EO was blind about this case and the court order.

6.6.4 Analysis of Hafiza's Case

The incidents of violence that were perpetrated against Hafiza were gross violations of her rights. She was severely abused by her in-laws. It was a very complicated case. There were many ambiguities and misunderstanding among different levels of implementers. The magistrate said that this case had no merit; on the other hand, the DLAO of Mymensingh informed me that he referred the case as it had merit. There was no coordination amongst the implementers. Both the magistrate and the lawyer blamed each other about their responsibilities. The concerned EO did not have any information about this case. Police appeared to have low level of understanding about the order passed on them. The police did not know how to ensure protection for the victim. Moreover, once the order was passed, the situation of the victim in the family also became worse. The victim practically did not have any protection. Moreover, the UC chairman, who was entrusted with the responsibility to inquire into the case, seemed to be biased against the respondents-he deliberately blamed Hafiza. Such an attitude might negatively affect the justice process. Surely, this case is also going to suffer from implementation delay since it was lodged in August 2014 and until the end the November it had not been completed. According the provision of the act, a case has to be dissolved within sixty working days.

With Jobeda's and Hafiza's cases, I conclude my discussion of the state of the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 in both Mymensingh and Netrokona districts, Bangladesh. In short, the state of implementation in these two districts was exceedingly disheartening.

In the following section, I discuss the perceptions of the concerned officials of the MoWCA in order to have a glimpse of their plan and programmes with regard to implementation of this act. I talked to one official, who looks after the training issue, and another official, who looks after the policy issue.

6.7 Overall Policy Issues: Opinions of the Ministry Officials

6.7.1 Strategies Related to Training

"Most of the front-line implementers do not have any formal orientation about the act" was one of the major reflections that came out of my field study, and was a barrier for the smooth rolling of the DVPPA 2010. On the point of training, I talked to ZYZ, the concerned official of the Department of Women Affairs, MoWCA. According to the rules (section 10) this MoWCA was entrusted with the responsibility of imparting training to various implementers. ZYZ said that the MoWCA and CiDV jointly finalised a training module on the DVPPA 2010. Lawyers and experts worked as trainers on the "Training on Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010." ZYZ further indicated that so far (until October 2014) 418 EOs were imparted training on this act. In each five-day long programme, they impart training to 25 EOs. None of the implementers from other agencies had ever been invited to participate in the training programme. This programme was exclusively for the EOs and many of them were yet to be provided training on the DVPPA 2010.

On the other hand, for the moment, MoWCA has no plan to train implementers from other agencies, concerned officials or lawyers about the act. As the MoWCA has not yet completed providing training to the EOs, the consideration for including others is not an on-the-agenda item. ZYZ also said that the MoWCA has a plan to organise six refresher programmes[46] for the EOs. Moreover, there has not been any impact study on the training imparted to the EOs, and they have no such plan either.

From the discussion with the official concerned with training, I got the message that imparting training to the field-level implementers of various agencies and lawyers had not yet received any attention by the ministry despite its dire necessity.

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[46] The program began in January, 2015. Source: Department of Women Affairs, Dhaka, retrieved from http://www.dwa.gov.bd/

6.7.2 Strategies and Planning

My last interview was with MAI, the concerned official of the MoWCA that looks after the various policy issues concerning the act. He said that the ministry has taken a number of visible steps over the years to implement the act. Importantly, the rules of the act have been gazetted and the DWAOs and SWAOs have been appointed as EOs for this act. The EOs are being trained phase by phase on the act. Moreover, the ministry has invited applications as per the provision of the act for the enlistment of service-providing organisations[47].

On the other hand, he also admitted that the ministry has a number of limitations. It does not have any specific budget or workforce or logistic support required for the implementation of this act. Hence, it is not always possible to be actively involved in the promotion of this act on the part of the mMinistry. Moreover, there is no focal point, no information cell, or database for this act in the ministry. For any sort of updated information about the act, the ministry has to seek assistance from the concerned NGOs or legal aid organisations. Absence of a central focal point and database were the major drawbacks to following up and monitoring the implementation of this act. Moreover, it has not launched any inter-ministerial activities or coordinated efforts for the promotion of this act, including a proposal for establishing special courts for this act. Moreover, the ministry has yet to distribute forms and booklets as per the provision of the act to various agencies.

MAI finally admitted that there were no planned strategies on the part of the ministry with regard to the implementation of the act. He made an interesting comment which illustrates the level of commitment of the ministry regarding the acceleration of the implementation of the act:

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[47] In a telephone discussion on March 2, 2015, MAI said that the MoWCA had completed enlistment of service-providers. Around seventy service-providing organisations had been enlisted throughout the country, although such a list is not posted in the ministry's website. However, the MoWCA has not briefed the service providing orgnisations about their duties and responsibilities, and has not specified any terms of reference for them nor have they any plan as such. They have not circulated such an enlistment for bringing notice to every person or agency concerned.

> As you are pursuing Ph.D. on domestic violence, it is now the most important priority issue for you, but there are many critical issues for the ministry other than domestic violence. Therefore, we cannot pay much attention to the implementation of the DVPPA 2010.

Such discussions confirm that the implementation of the act is yet to receive significant attention at the policy level. If this is the case, the implementation of this act is bound to suffer to a great extent.

6.8 Conclusion

The enactment of the DVPPA 2010 is an important landmark in the domain of public policy making in Bangladesh. It has fundamentally recognised the gravity of domestic violence as a serious problem in Bangladesh, not a mere personal issue. The law was of historical importance for Bangladesh because for the first time, domestic violence against women was legislatively defined and prohibited. While enacting legislation on domestic violence may protect the victims of domestic violence in theory, the actual implementation of the DVPPA 2010 on the ground remains very limited. It is very paradoxical that on the one hand, the government adopted such an important policy, and on the other hand, it suffers from numerous shortcomings with regard to its implementation. As the act is performing very poorly, there is a marked difference between the expectations and realities with regard to this act. The development of policy is often seen as an endpoint to making a difference for a social problem, but simply creating a policy or changing laws will not effect change in society unless enforcement or implementation of the law is ensured. If the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 is continued in its present form, the elimination and prevention of domestic violence from the society will be gravely problematic.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the research along with reflections on the findings and recommendations. At the outset, I briefly recapitulate the research context, research questions, and its approach.

7.1 Recapitulation of Research Context, Questions, and Approach

Domestic violence committed against women by their husbands and other family members is a subtle problem for all countries, cultures, and social classes. It has multifaceted and far-reaching impacts, over long periods, and in many forms. Globally, the broader framework of violence against women, including domestic violence, is recognised as a human right, public health, and development concern. It was only since the early 1970's through the committed efforts of the second-wave feminists that domestic violence was brought into the public domain. The UN also supported the global movement towards violence against women. Therefore, it is now regarded as a matter of social and legal concern from the public policy perspective.

Bangladesh maintains bad records in violence against women, especially domestic violence. Since the 1980s, being pressured and influenced by the global and local civil society movements, the government of Bangladesh, over the years, has undertaken some policy interventions to curb violence against women. The enactment of the DVPPA 2010 is the most recent and specific intervention concerning domestic violence. Yet, domestic violence is escalating day by day, and the academic literature on domestic violence against women in Bangladesh is still very limited. Many issues are unexplored or understudied. I have identified the shortcomings of the existing literature and have attempted to fill-in some of the important research gaps. The study delved into women's varied experiences of domestic violence inflicted by their husbands, community perceptions, and activism concerning the issue, and the

perceptions and experiences of frontline policy implementers concerning implementation of the DVPPA 2010. I engaged myself in answering the following research questions thoroughly based upon the lived experiences of the participants:

1) What are the women's experiences of domestic violence with regard to forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices?

2) What are the perceptions and activities of the local community regarding domestic violence against women?

3) What are the perceptions and experiences of frontline policy implementers with regard to the implementation of the DVPPA 2010?

4) What measures can be used to combat or eliminate domestic violence and accelerate the implementation of the DVPPA 2010?

Based on an interpretive qualitative research paradigm, I predominantly conducted the study using phenomenological in-depth interviews, and developed a few cases. I also adopted observation and focus group discussions during the research. I also used a range of secondary documents in order to supplement my findings. The findings of the study were analysed through a thematic analytical framework in line with the research questions. I conducted the study in the rural settings of two Bangladeshi districts; namely, Netrokona and Mymensingh. Based on the findings, I produced two sets of recommendations. My research makes a new contribution to the body of literature in development administration by generating knowledge about domestic violence as a policy issue, and specifically looking at the implementation process of the DVPPA 2010.

7.2 Summary of the Findings

Chapter 4 of this dissertation answered research question No 1. I categorised rural women's experiences of domestic violence into five different forms: physical, sexual, economic, psychological, and emotional. Sometimes various forms of abuse occurred together, while sometimes each form of abuse occurred as an isolated incident. I found that the practices of violence under the forms of violence also differed significantly, both in terms of severity and in terms of characteristics. For example, psychical violence included from a mere slap to an attempt to murder,

emotional violence included from verbal abuse/name-calling to abandonment, psychological violence included from stop-talking to various types of intimidation, economic violence included from non-payment of a dower to control the women's resources, sexual violence included from demeaning remarks about sexuality to serious assaults on sexual organs, etc. Importantly, the violence is not only inflicted by the husbands of the victims; in some cases, it was perpetrated by the in-laws as well. Moreover, sometimes violence spilled over to the children and family members of women as well. The causes of domestic violence broadly included issues related to the demand for more dowries, polygamy, adultery, or extramarital relations by the husbands, the childless or sonless state of the women, or the in-law syndrome or involvement of in-laws, questioning husbands about their habits, responsibilities or income and failure to meet various expectations of the husbands and in-laws. On the other hand, domestic violence resulted in various impacts not only for women, but many women also shared experiences with regard to the impact on their children and members of their families. The extent of those impacts included serious implications regarding physical, sexual, reproductive, mental, behavioural health, and well-being along with financial disturbances. On the other hand, I noticed that the women had different ways of coping with violence and a few sought help from various formal and informal sources. Usually, the women tried to continue the marital relationships at any cost due to various socio-cultural factors. However, some women also fought back against their husbands and in-laws and adopted a leaving-the-scene strategy. With regard to seeking help, the usual option was seeking support from ones' own family members, and to other informal local networks such as neighbours, community leaders, and community NGOs. On the other hand, some women also sought formal support from various government agencies. The women had multiple experiences regarding support from formal and informal networks. In most cases, the existing support could not meet the expectations of the victims due to a number of factors. These interventions hardly worked for them. For example, the *salish* did not help women to any great extent, the police attitude were not positive with them, the legal process was complicated, cumbersome, and so on. Some of the women never thought of seeking formal support and some of them thought of it but were concerned about situational constraints. No woman in this study had ever heard of the DVPPA 2010,

and no agency ever attempted to orient them about that act or suggested seeking recourse under it. Unfortunately, they were ignorant of an important legal remedy made for them.

Chapter 5 of this dissertation answered research question No 2. My interviews excavated the perceptions and activities of the majority the patriarchal Bengali community and indigenous Garo community concerning various issues related to domestic violence. The community people perceived domestic violence in many different ways. They categorised domestic violence as not only physical, but also psychological/emotional, sexual, and economic. The participants opined that domestic violence was instigated by many factors, such as the strong prevalence of patriarchy, early marriage, dowry demand, involvement and conflict with mothers-in-law, polygamy, the extra-marital relations of both men and women, the women's inability to give birth a child or male-child, and poverty and low-income. I noticed that the participants viewed that domestic violence has many negative impacts not only on women but also on the children, family members of women, and on the overall society. With regard to help-seeking and coping strategies, the participants opined that women usually do not want to disclose their experiences of domestic violence due to various socio-cultural factors and realties but rather cope with it. They also opined that women from poorer and low-income classes broadly opt to seek various formal and informal recourses. "No provision of divorce" particularly restricts Hindu women from seeking recourse in the event of domestic violence. However, according to them, recourse seeking is always an extreme level decision since women from all levels try to cope with domestic violence due to many socio-economic factors and realties.

The *salish* is the most important informal community form of intervention for mitigating domestic violence complaints. Nevertheless, the victims often do not receive justice form *salsih* since the process is exclusively male dominated and corrupt, and women's problems are deliberately subsumed. Moreover, if any party does not accept the decisions of the *salish*, it might end in failure. Religious leaders also play some roles in family disputes, which are mostly suggestive. Community NGOs also extend various forms of support to the victims, including legal recourse. The case studies on the two NGOs, SUS and CLS, confirmed that the *salish* was the prime intervention for resolving disputes. However, the NGO *salish* also fails to bring

about results for women because of the non-compliance of the perpetrators. Overall, NGO activities had some built-in limitations and drawbacks.

On the other hand, domestic violence is not an unknown event in the Garo community. Despite being matriarchal, women confront various forms violence at home. According to community leaders, land is the main source of conflict between men and women. Other factors include men's usual tendency to dominate women, and their indifference, alcohol consumption, the influence of the patriarchal Bengali community, and extramarital relations. Dislocation of the victims from the community is a serious impact of domestic violence. However, the women in the Garo community usually do not want to share experiences with others. If needed, they seek recourse with the *mahari,* and in some cases, they seek recourse with the TWA. Similar to the Bengali informal intervention process, the TWA also arranges *salish* to mitigate disputes. Garo women do not approach any NGO or government support mechanism. In fact, they are stricter in adhering to their traditional social practices for their problems than to the existing institutional support system or legal remedies.

Excepting NGO officials, none of the participants of either community had any concrete information about the DVPPA 2010. On the other hand, despite the NGOs having programmes to extend legal support to the victims, they did not take any initiative to practice this act for the victims. This also casts doubt on their commitment to promoting the act.

Chapter 6 answered research question No. 3. The enactment of the DVPPA 2010 is a commendable attempt to protect women from violence inside the four walls of the home. Despite having a number of legal interventions for women, domestic violence was not properly being addressed by those instruments due to a lack of recognition of it. With this backdrop, various legal aid organisations in Bangladesh felt the necessity to have a separate act on domestic violence, and to advocate in their own ways with the government. Finally, the government suggested them to come up with a combined draft. Therefore, the CiDV was formed in 2007 with a view to working as a platform to prepare a draft act. After a few years of effort by the CiDV, the DVPPA was passed in parliament in 2010.

However, the implementation of the act is not taking place as expected by the CiDV organisations. After around five years, the recourse seeking under this act is

still very low in Bangladesh. My field study in the two Bangladeshi painted a dismal picture with regard to the implementation of this act. Formal knowledge and orientation about the act were alarmingly low among the frontline implementers other than the EOs. Many implementers were in complete darkness about the act. There is virtually no publicity of this act from any agency. Predominantly, lack or limited knowledge about the act amongst all levels of implementers has been a major barrier to assisting the victims of domestic violence in terms of obtaining legal recourse under the act. Even the implementers, who have ideas about the act, do not consider it as a means to assisting the victims. It is mostly because of that fact that they sometimes consider the act soft in nature, and the provisions under the act as inapplicable in the social context of Bangladesh; sometimes they also put forward excuses, saying that no victim has approached to them to seek recourse or interested to seek recourse under the act and so on. Moreover, the absence of clear-cut obligations from the top on the frontline implementers concerning the implementation this act has made the act a less important matter for them to deal with. In some cases, there was evidence of lack of commitment on the part of some of the frontline implementers with regard to practicing this act. For example, there was a lack of coordination and cooperation amongst the implementers in dealing with the domestic violence issue or using each other's resources. The DVPPA 2010 implementation framework requires teamwork. The absence of teamwork and coordination as prevalent in both the districts was a reflection of the low level of commitment amongst the frontline implementers to practice this act. Even the EOs trained in this act did not take any committed steps to genuinely practice it, or act in accordance with the prescriptions of the act. Each agency dealt with domestic violence in its conventional way, which also reflected less commitment to embracing a new challenge. Additionally, implementers not only identified some of the shortcomings of this act but also faced many problems in their respective jurisdictions and institutional patterns concerning the issues related to budgetary, administrative, and logistic issues, which also restricted them from becoming fully involved in promoting and practicing this act and extending support to the victims. Specifically, since the enactment of the act in 2010 only two cases have been filed under it in Mymensingh. However, the merits of these cases were seemingly disappointing and justice appeared to be difficult

to come by. There were many problems with regard to understanding, commitment, compliance, and teamwork among the implementers that were involved with the two cases. In short, the act is performing very poorly and defectively in the study areas for various reasons.

This chapter also explored the absence of top-down support and appropriate instructions required for the implementation of this act. On the top, the guardian of this act is the MoCWA, and it does not have any strategic stance regarding its implementation-it has no plan to orient implementers from all agencies other than EOs about the act. It has taken neither any significant effort to widely publicise the act, nor has any formal monitoring, coordinating, recording, or reporting mechanism with regard to its implementation at the field level. It seems that the ministry has not yet taken the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 as a priority issue, which is virtually a clear indication of the lack of commitment of the top management. The poor number of case filings under the act at the national level (235 until June 2014) also indicates that the ministry has not been able to widely promote the act or is not prepared or committed to dealing with the act in full swing and capacity. Moreover, having no specific budgetary provision for this act can further cast doubt at the commitment of the ministry in promoting the act at the national level. Overall, the poor performance of the act in the study areas and the reactive efforts of the ministry provide some clear indications about the lack of top-down and bottom-up integration and cooperation concerning the implementation of the act. Therefore, the whole implementation process appeared to be exceedingly weak and almost invisible.

7.3 Reflections on the Findings: The Structure and the System

Domestic violence is a significant problem for the whole of Bangladesh. Although I conducted the study in some specific rural areas, it does not mean that domestic violence against women is only limited to those areas. Women from both rural and urban areas in Bangladesh are equally susceptible to various forms of domestic violence (Naved & Persson, 2005; Naved et al., 2006). The findings derived from the review of the literature in this study provided some confirmatory evidences of the high prevalence of domestic violence in both rural and urban areas. For

example, both rural and urban studies revealed that the lifetime prevalence of physical violence varies from 40% to 76% (Bhuyia et al., 2003; Naved et al., 2006; Salam et al., 2006, Silverman et al., 2007). Domestic violence, in fact, is a general problem in Bangladesh, not merely a rural problem. Nevertheless, my endeavour to conduct the study in rural areas had many advantages over the existing literature. It provided a unique structure of three-dimensional results: the lived experiences of the victims of domestic violence, the perceptions and activities of the community concerning domestic violence, and the status of the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 from the perspective of the frontline implementers. Adopting a qualitative approach exceedingly helped with access to the inside world of the participants, and facilitated to wholly tap their subjective experiences and viewpoints in order to frame the structure of the results. It should also be noted that there were many striking similarities concerning the women's lived experiences of domestic violence as well as the perceptions and activities of the community with regard to domestic violence. This indicated that people from rural community pay close attention to social problems such as domestic violence and are also actively involved in them. Exploring the findings from the community validated the idea that women's experiences of domestic violence were not isolated, or private problems; rather, the community was also attached to the problem in many different ways. Many studies confirmed that domestic violence has become transformed from a mere personal or private issue to a social, political or public issue. Increasing focus has been paid as such (Buchbinder & Eisikovits; Hydén, 1994, as cited in Boonzaier, 2008). However, although a few community members demonstrated a "victim-blaming" patriarchal attitude (Naved & Persson, 2010) by making women responsible for inviting trouble in their marital lives, the general perception of the community members strongly represented the idea that they were concerned about this social problem. It has been argued that if the community does consider domestic violence as a problem, efforts to eliminate this problem would be problematic as the community's involvement and perceptions can shape the issues associated with domestic violence (Abeya et al., 2012). As such, it is my firm conviction that the community perception might have valuable implications in curbing this problem in the society, if properly mobilised.

My research confirmed the notion that domestic violence against women is an insidious and multifaceted phenomenon. Although not all women experienced

violence in the same degree or scale, there were many similarities amongst their experiences. Specifically, the structure of domestic violence as experienced by the participants encompassed five forms: physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and economic. Similar to my findings, some international reports such as that of UNICEF (2000), WHO (2005), UN (2006), the Advocates for Human Rights (2010) also categorised domestic violence against women in four or five different forms. However, in Bangladesh, this study for the first time subjectively explored that domestic violence is triggered against women in five different forms. Under each major form, there were numerous practices of domestic violence. In this connection, my study revealed many features of domestic violence that are unique to Bangladesh. At the same time, some features were similar to the existing research findings, both in the context of Bangladesh and elsewhere. For example, my study confirmed that violence is not always an isolated incident; some forms are combined, which is a unique exploration as far as the Bangladeshi literature is concerned, but a recent study conducted by Harrelson (2013) explored the combination of various forms in the western context. In terms of the intensity of violence, physical violence appeared to be the most commonly-occurring form of violence, including the attempt to murder. In contrast, western-context studies found that psychological and emotional abuse such as name-calling, isolation, surveillance were more frequent (Ferraro, 2006). At the same time, it was also noted that many women considered the emotional and psychological violence inflicted on them more than physical violence. Such a perception of women was consistent with studies where the victims shared the idea that physical abuse was better than being ignored or humiliated by their partners (Fitzpatrick & Halliday, 1992), and psychological/emotional violence was reported as having a similar or even greater impact than physical violence (Dutton, Goodman, & Bennett, 2001). In this study, I traced some of the unique or distinct features of violence under each structure of violence. At the same time, my findings also confirmed that violence not only included women; at times, it also spilled over onto children and family members. As such, my argument is that domestic violence is not a specific phenomenon inflicted only on women but is a pervasive phenomenon that is also inflicted on other members of the family. The emerging nature of qualitative approach helped to identify such a broader periphery and diversification of domestic

violence infliction. Exploring the features of violence such as battering behind closed doors, hitting the victim seriously targeting some specific parts of body and with some specific manifestations, using specific tools, crisis of identify as a source of emotional abuse, marginalising means, sexual violence by in-laws, non-payment of a dower, detaching or isolating children and many other are exclusively distinct in the context of Bangladesh.

In terms of theoretical explanations with regard to the analysing the causes of the phenomenon, I strongly reckon that the patriarchal structure and system of the society are broadly and dominantly interwoven in every aspect of this problem, although many features of this phenomenon were also linked up with other theoretical explanations discussed in the literature review of this dissertation. For example, according to sociological line of thought, poverty, insufficient and low-income are strongly correlated with domestic violence. My study also found that when women asked their husbands to increase their income or provide money for family expenses, their husbands became violent. According to a psychological line of thought, the women that were critical of their husbands' performance confronted more violence. Nevertheless, specifically, within patriarchy, various forms of abuse are the tools that perpetrators use to gain control and dominate women (R.E. Dobash & R.P. Dobash, 1992), and often use them interchangeably for establishing dominance and control (Monson, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Taft, 2009). I assumed that the system of patriarchy promoted the structure of violence in a number of ways by subordinating women. Many community members categorically identified patriarchy as the root cause of violence. Based on the community perception and women's experiences, my assumption was that the perpetrators used violence as a potential mechanism to establish patriarchal rules, norms, and expectations. It was out of strong Bangladeshi patriarchal ideology that the perpetrators expected that women produce a child/preferably a male child, bring a dowry for them, meet all of their expectations, and never ask questions about their activities and responsibilities. One of the most common reasons for domestic violence is the demand of a dowry (Khan, 2001). With regard to the dowry demand, my assumptions went in line with an observation made by Naved and Persson (2005), which indicated that the demand for a dowry represented the true subordinate status of women in marital relations. The practice of

a dowry demand in Bangladesh, particularly among the Muslims, dates back only some decades. Previously, the malice of a dowry demand existed only in the urban and affluent classes. Over the years it has rapidly spread to rural areas and has become deeply ingrained in the poorer section of the community (Huda, 2006). Two factors are closely associated with the demand for a dowry: increased greed and the commercialisation of marriage (Farouk, 2005). A dowry is an evil customary practice in Bangladesh, although an offense under the laws of Bangladesh. However, in most cases it is even demanded after marriage by the husband and his family (Khan, 2001). The positive association between dowry demand and violence against women has been traced by many studies in Bangladesh as well as in India (Rao, 1997; Banarjee, 1999; Bates et al., 2004; Naved & Persson, 2005; Naved & Persson, 2010). Out of a similar patriarchal ideology, some perpetrators restricted women's mobility, mariginalised them, took control of women's economic, social, sexual and reproductive lives and decisions, and so on. I think that poverty is also behind a lot of these bad actions related to dowry demand, and of course a lack of a meaningful life. On the other hand, although my study explored the violence that is perpetrated against women by their husbands, the findings of it found that the in-laws of the victims, particularly the mother-in-law, were equally liable for both the perpetuation and provocation of violence. The mother-in-law traditionally holds power over the daughter-in-law through her position as the husband's mother (Abraham, 2000). In my opinion, such a tendency greatly promotes patriarchal interest. By doing so, women become just the enemies of women (Ganguli & Rew, 2011) and unknowingly act in favour of the structure and system of patriarchy. However, such findings are consistent with the Nepalese context where it was found that in-laws, particularly, mothers-in-law, instigate domestic violence (Malla, Shrestha, Shrestha, Khadka, & Singh, 1999), and in the Indian context where other family members encourage or support violence (Dave & Solanki, 2000). In Bangladesh, the patrilocal residential pattern is the patriarchal norm which undermines women's autonomy (Mannan, 2002). Living in such a residential pattern, women easily become susceptible to various forms of violence by their in-laws. In my study, I found that the in-laws not only physically abused women; some male in-laws even sexually harassed them. In fact, when a married woman enters her husband's household, she assumes a weaker

structural position as the daughter-in-law, subordinate to all men and senior women in the household (Kandiyoti, 1988). At the same time, my research identified much evidence, both from the women's experiences and community perceptions, of extramarital relations and practices of polygamy (permitted in Islam) as a source of different forms of violence. Such findings are consistent with the Thai findings, which state that due to the existence of "other women" in the husbands' life, many Thai women go through great troubles (Juree Vichit-Vadakan, 2000), and with the Chinese findings, which indicate that violence against women due to extramarital relations is an undisguised and unrestrained phenomenon in rural families (Wang, 1999). Predominantly, both of these are a symbol of the "women against women" game, which invariably promotes patriarchal interests. Specifically, in my opinion, as spouses are expected to be faithful to each other in Bangladeshi culture, men that have extramarital relations are displaying a kind of serious deviant behaviour (Johnson & Das, 2009). With regard to polygamy, I assume that if polygamy is not legally stamped out completely, this system will continue to pierce the solemn structure of marital relations, and men will continue to take it for granted based on religious sanctions (Khan, 2001). However, specifically with regard to polygamy, some women's desire to stay as a co-wife is simply a clear reflection of women's subordination, lower status, dependency, and the overall acceptance of patriarchal domination.

Specifically, with regard to sexual violence, my research explored women's varied experiences of sexual violence, which has a grim impact on the sexual and reproductive life of women. Various forms of sexual violence are a patriarchal mechanism to control women's body and sexuality. The key concern with this sort of violence is that given the socio-cultural context in Bangladesh, such violence is not a matter to be openly discussed, and formal and informal recourse seeking for the sexual violence of husbands is still not an issue to be considered by women. My findings on the DVPPA 2010 implementation found that nowhere in Bangladesh was any case filed by seeking recourse under sexual violence. Specifically, the non-recognition of "marital rape" by this act in Bangladesh might continue to socially accept forced or coerced sex, forced pregnancy, and other forms of sexual violence by the husband as normative practices, as sexual duties of wives (Yllö, 1999).

My study for the first time explored the dynamics of economic violence in a holistic manner, beginning from the non-payment of a dower as the gateway to economic violence. By not paying the dower, stopping education or obstructing employment, destructing property or even by controlling women's resources, men demonstrate their advantageous position and disregard women's status, and grossly violate their rights. Each form of economic violence had some serious impacts on the victims in the study. Similarly, an Australian study confirmed that it is the victims that had to bear the economic burden related to property damage or replacement, and violence also had a negative impact upon their work and employment (Douglas & Starck, 2010). On the other hand, previously some studies in Bangladesh specifically examined the relationship between domestic violence and micro-financing by the NGO. On this specific issue, my research explored micro-credit acts as a source of economic violence against women, which pushed women into various economic difficulties. Such a finding specifically adds fuel to the on-going debate on the reduction of the risk of domestic violence against women through their participation in income-generating activities led by NGO credit financing. Some previous studies such as those of Schular et al. (1996) found that women participating in the Grameen Bank and BRAC credit programme were less likely to be abused by their husbands for their economic contribution to the families. In another study, Schular et al. (1998) found the micro-credit has an influence on both the reduction and generation of violence. Specifically, Hadi (2000) found that risk of sexual violence was less among women that participated in credit programme for their financial contribution to the families, and in another study conducted by Hadi (2005), the same researcher found that women's productive roles through NGO financing not only improved their position in the household but also significantly reduced both the mental torture and physical assault against them. In another study, Ahmed (2005) found that when women first joined the BRAC as micro-credit recipients, violence increased since men were concerned about the breaking of traditional patriarchal norms, but subsequently reduced when women were exposed to the programme which helped them to gain power and autonomy in the family. A recent study conducted Bajracharya and Amin (2013) found no significant relation between women's participation in credit programmes and the reduction of domestic violence. The study found that poorer

women were already exposed to domestic violence, and that micro-credit made no significant difference in reducing domestic violence. My findings are consistent with these recent findings. By creating an obstruction on how to use women's credit money or capturing it, men deliberately strengthen their patriarchal domination over women and weaken women's independent ability to self-reliance and curtail their autonomy. Nevertheless, exclusive research on this issue can explore the gamut of this problem and its impact, and can also reexamine the propositions made by earlier studies. In this regard, with my finding there are, at least, some grounds to cast doubt on the effectiveness of "micro-credit revolution" (Bajracharya & Amin, 2013) in Bangladesh. Moreover, the probable bias of the researchers that are propagating the "reduction of violence through micro-credit" can also be critically examined. For example, it appeared that Hadi (2000, 2005) and Ahmed (2005) had had institutional affiliation with the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC while conducting their studies.

With regard to effects of domestic violence, many past studies in Bangladesh and elsewhere provide evidence of various grievous impacts on women and children due to violence, exploring the impacts on the family members of women is unique to my study. Therefore, it is now possible to argue that the consequences of domestic violence are far broader than the apparent impact on women (Crowell & Burgess, 1996). I mentioned before that I had an opportunity to talk to a victim's child to know his perception about his father. Although it is not my intention to make inferences about the future behavioural consequences by mere expressing of anger against the father, studies found that there was a strong relationship between the childhood experience of domestic violence and that of being potential perpetrators (E.S. Buzawa & C.S. Buzawa, 2003; Naved & Persson, 2005), and between witnessing abuse and the risk of developing various problems including depression, anxiety, fear, academic problems, behavioural, and psychological disorders (UNICEF, 2000; Wolfe, Crooks, Lee, & Jaffe, 2003; Kelly, 2003).

On the other hand, some community members specifically viewed social dislocation as an impact of violence. The idea was that many women in the community failing to cope with domestic violence go to the capital city and other cities to work as garment workers. In doing so, they became dislocated and detached from their villages and children. Such a feature was also unique to this study. It is

viewed that employment in the export-oriented garment industry has enabled women to resist poverty, has empowered them, and has increased their mobility and expanded their individual choice (Zohir, 2007). My study surely casts doubt on this much-agreed assumption. Another important community perception is that they viewed early marriage as a problem with regard to domestic since it makes younger people susceptible to violence very quickly and forces them to bear various complications. There was strong evidence in this study in support of such perception of the community. If the profiles (Appendix B) of the victims are consulted, particularly by considering their year of marriage and current age, it is clearly evident that most of participants in the study were the victims of early marriage. The findings also suggested that many participants that were young in age were already separated from their husbands due to domestic violence. Early marriage as both a cause and consequence of domestic violence has been strongly supported by many studies in the South Asian context. In Bangladesh, approximately 75% of girls in Bangladesh are married before the age of 16 and only 5% are married after 18 years (Barakat & Majid, 2003). In my opinion, this represents a dual formation of domestic violence: by having a daughter married early in order to get rid of the social and economic burden, her parents and family members commit violence against her; and once in the husband's home, she becomes an easy target of violence like many of the participants in the study since she is not fully physically or mentally capable of coping with the complexities of marital relations. It again reflects women's subordination in the typical patriarchal culture.

The structure of women's coping strategy, based on their experiences and community perceptions, predominantly reflects the acceptance of men's violence since maintaining marital relationships for them was more valuable than leaving abusive relations or seeking help using informal and formal support mechanisms. The stigma associated with divorce and separation, family honour, concern about the children and their own future prevented many women from speaking about their experiences of violence but tolerated it or bore it. The stereotypical ideas and beliefs with regard to coping truly reflect the social norms and culture of the society, and are a vivid indication of the lower status and helplessness of women in society. The findings in the South Asian context suggest that as marriage in this culture is viewed

as a symbol of the social status for women, as such, they strive to preserve their marriage and to make the marriage work (Abraham, 2000). I perceived a similar idea in the context of Bangladesh-that they were mostly concerned about the "social cost" associated with marriage (Agnew, 1998) such as the stigma, shame and embarrassment of divorce and separation (Ayyub, 2000; Tonsing, 2014). Undoubtedly, such a context surely influenced women's help-seeking decision-making in the event of domestic violence. Nonetheless, there was some evidence of seeking informal and formal support, which were particularly practiced in extreme cases. The findings with regard to seeking support in extreme cases were found to be consistent with an Indian research conducted by Rao, Indhu, Chopra, Nagamani, and Padaki (2000), and a Bangladeshi research conducted by Naved and Persson (2005). Commonly women sought informal support from parents and relatives, community members and community NGOs. Similarly, some studies confirmed that reaching out to various types of informal networks was one of the most common and immediate means with which women seek help (Lempert, 1997; Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee & Sullivan, 2003; Moe, 2007, as cited in Harrelson, 2013; Meyer, 2010). On the other hand, my study revealed that the system of both formal and informal support could not ensure significant remedies for the victims. In most cases, the parents and relatives advised the victims to cope with the situation. Neighbours were less interested in being involved in dispute matters. Such findings were broadly consistent with the findings of Tonsing's (2014) research on South Asian women in Hong Kong. Community intervention through the *salish* did not work as expected for the women in this study. It is interesting to note that on the one hand, the community perceived patriarchy as the root cause of domestic violence, and on the other hand, the structure and process of the *salish* was male-dominated, corrupt, male-biased and often acted in favour of the perpetrators. Women's problems were deliberately minimised or undermined in the *salish* process, and there was no participation of women on such a critical women's issue. The non-inclusion of women UP commissioners in the *salish* is in contrast with the findings of Siddiqee (2008), who stated that most of the women leaders participate in *salsih* on regular basis, and consistent with the findings of Schular et al. (2008), who stated that it is extremely rare for a woman to serve as a member of the *salish.* However, minimising or undermining women's problems in the

salish or the demonstration of bias toward the perpetrators is a serious issue in terms of establishing social justice. I think that due to the pariarchal system of marriage, women are simply the outsiders in the village of *salishkaroks* and perpetrators. In fact, women come from other villages by being married to the perpetrators. Hence, the *salishkaroks* suppress they pains and voices of the so called outsiders, and act in favour of the perpetrators, who are the insiders of the community. Since the perpetrators and *salishkaroks* are from the same neighbourhood, the *salishkaroks* can be easily managed and they show their bias toward the perpetrators. Previous findings also indicated that money or bribery and male power play a role in influencing the decisions of the *salish* and are a barrier to ensuring rural justice in an equitable and unbiased manner (Khan, 2001; Schular et al., 2008). Moreover, this mechanism becomes useless if any party does not comply with the decisions. In short, this powerful patriarchal system of rural dispute resolution does not always have absolute authority to bring about solutions for domestic violence incidents. Therefore, there was a dichotomy between the community's perception of domestic violence as a problem for the community and promoting their activism against it. The results achieved through community NGO interventions were also not worth-mentioning. Their main strategy for reconciliation of the problem through the *salish* is not very effective due to situational and institutional constraints, and they have limited resources to reach the real needs of the victims. Such findings were consistent with an Indian finding, which also indicated that NGOs mainly opt for informal reconciliation between a husband and wife due to the weaker position of women in the society outside of marriage, and NGOs do not have viable alternatives to ensure pragmatic support for women (Mitra, 1999). The findings were inconsistent however with a Bangladeshi finding on NGO role in and support of women acid victims, which found that the NGOs were more effective than the state in providing support to these victims (Chowdhury, 2007). My main concern is that an intervention might be less effective if there is a sense of impunity amongst the perpetrators about the intervention. Simply not responding to NGO notices and non-compliance with NGO *salish* arrangements are a reflection of the prevalence of sense of impunity, which is an alarming indicator of the limited effectiveness of NGO intervention. It also indicates the stronghold of patriarchy amongst men and a means of disregarding women's support mechanism.

On the other hand, the abused women in the study used the formal help-seeking structure least frequently. However, the victims that used a formal support mechanism only did so when informal support or community intervention failed to bring about a solution to their problems. These findings were consistent with the findings of previous studies on Bangladeshi women which explored the idea that women tended to seek help with immediate social networks rather than formal service providers (Bhuiya et al., 2003; Naved et al., 2006), and with western findings, which indicated that formal service is sought if informal support fails (Dutton, 1996; Baker, 1997). However, the women that sought help with a formal support structure experienced more helplessness and hopelessness. The system of formal support appeared to be cumbersome and lengthy, and agency responses were not proactive in terms of internalising the problems and needs of the victims. For example, the police attitude toward the victims that sought help of them was nothing but a true demonstration of patriarchal ideology. Moreover, there was evidence of non-compliance with court orders, and some women were not sure how to seek legal recourse, and some did not seek recourse due to situational factors. Such findings were consistent with observations made by Davies, Lyon, and Monti-Catania (1998), which showed that although there are many more services and legal protections available to victims, most women face substantial constraints in accessing services and using protective strategies, and also with Douglas and Starck (2010), who stated that the application and effectiveness of the legal system in extending support in the event of domestic violence was associated with many complexities. I am afraid that if women cannot attain appropriate support from and access to both formal and informal structures, the perpetrators will continue to have a sense of impunity and disregard the system, and be encouraged to inflict more violence on women.

Interestingly, the community members in this study viewed that women from lower and poor socio-economic strata seek recourse, either formal or informal. This perception is opposite the findings which suggest that women with higher education (Kaukinen, 2004; Sen, 1999, as cited in Schular et al., 2008) and higher socio-economic status have a greater tendency to seek (Kantor & Straus, 1990b). The community also viewed that Muslim women seek more support than Hindu women. Similar to the community perception, I also found that amongst the victims, mostly

poorer and Muslim women had a tendency to seek recourse to community or institutional mechanisms. In my opinion, it is an interesting attempt to break the typical patriarchal ideology of *purdah* (seclusion), which is largely associated with Muslim women. Usually *purdah* is a patriarchal practice assumed to protect women from men, and considerable value is placed on separating women from men by practicing *purdah*. A woman in *purdah* cannot attend the social aspects of rural life, and remains ignored in the her life around her and she becomes dependent on men for information and decisions (Khan, 2001). However, by seeking recourses outside home, Muslim women are clearly challenging the institution "patriarchy," which is deeply ingrained in Bangladesh.

In addition to that, I also did not find any significant differences between the matriarchal Garo community's perceptions and those of the patriarchal Bengali community's perceptions regarding domestic violence. Although domestic violence was not as severe a problem in the Garo community as in the Bengali community, the community members specifically stated that the infiltration of the Bengali patriarchal culture was a root cause of domestic violence, even in the Garo community. However, due to prevalence of patriarchy with relation to domestic violence, I term this community as "pseudo matriarchal." This assumption is consistent with the observation of Bal (2007), who stated that "Garos are often mistakenly called matriarchal." Since male dominance and control are prevalent in the Garo social system, such observations have some definite validity. Although it should not be generalised, the lived experiences of the two Garo women hold some elements to support my understanding that women from the Garo community are somehow vulnerable to their Bengali sisters. Such an assumption is also consistent with the observation which suggests that women of all ethnic groups are equally susceptible to domestic violence (Gonzalez, 2010). Notably, Garo women's coping strategies are similar to those found in the Bengali community, but with regard to help-seeking, Garo women never seek support with formal institutional mechanism, which is unlike the Bengali community since they have their own support system. Similar to my findings, previous studies on ethnic minority women in the USA confirmed that ethnic minority women seek support only from specific ethnic support services (Abraham, 2000). Here another point to note is that the Garo community support

structure, such as the *mahari* and TWA, are also male dominated or patriarchal. In the case of seeking recourse for domestic violence, women need to approach men who hold outside power. This is similar to the Bengali patriarchal culture. For example, my research found that the Bengali *salish* system was absolutely male dominated, and worldwide scholarly evidence suggests that in matriarchal culture women literally have power in the domestic spheres whereas men control the public spheres (ADB, 2009, as cited in Lyngdoh & Pati, 2013), and with reference to the specific Garo community, it was stated that women certainly do not control all spheres of the society. Men dominantly control the public spheres (Bal, 2007), and there is hardly any reason to accept that Garo women can independently enjoy their rights and make decisions even in family matters (Sarker, 2002, as cited in Das & Islam, 2005). In many ways the distinction between patriarchy and matriarchy is blurring for this community. The whole system of domestic violence in this community is a true reflection of the prevalence of the patriarchy in this community, and patriarchy easily invites violence in the home.

The DVPPA 2010 is one of the formal support seeking mechanisms available to the victims of domestic violence. With regard to its implementation, my study recognised that the policy was performing very poorly. The low case filing does not mean that domestic violence is absent in these two districts however; the findings of chapter 4 vividly confirmed that the rural women in these two districts were the serious victims of domestic violence and that most of them did not seek legal remedy. The number of cases filed under this act represents seemingly a very negligible fraction of the domestic violence that is occurring in these two districts. Moreover, the documentary evidence of this study further confirmed that many cases were filed in these two districts solely under the Women and Children Repression Act 2000 (Amendment 2003). Specifically, when compared with this act, the DVPPA 2010 implementation provides another disheartening picture. Broadly, I found that there were two major problems with its implementation: first, there was a lack of wider policy dissemination, and secondly, the policy implementation support system was poor. The dearth of knowledge and clarity about the policy amongst the key stakeholders, community people and policy implementers was evident. For example, none of victims in this study had had any information or knowledge about this policy

intervention. If the key stakeholders remained ignorant about a policy that is enacted for them and their legal rights, use of the policy would simply be impossible. Community participants that can be major role players in developing a bridge between key stakeholders (victims) and formal institutional support mechanisms (policy implementers) were also not aware of the policy or its remedies. Finally, the frontline implementers, excepting a very few, had also a dearth of knowledge and clarity about this policy and their roles and responsibilities. Hence, absence of a dissemination mechanism for this policy stood as a barrier for its successful implementation. Secondly, by anlysing the two case filings and the experiences and perceptions of the implementers, I found that the policy support system was severely undermined due to a lack of formal orientation and understanding, budgetary allocation, professional and technical resources, inter-agency coordination, logistic and institutional support, clear instructions from the top, a monitoring and reporting system, disposition and motivation of the implementers, inherent shortcomings of the act, and so on. Most of the above shortcomings were consistent with the understanding of implementation scholars with regard to implementation failure or performance described in the literature review. In practice, some of the findings about the policy, such as lack of awareness and understanding, interagency coordination and cooperation, resources, logistic support, training, monitoring, reporting and so on were also consistent with all of the monitoring and evaluation reports[48] on the "Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005" or PWDVA 2005 in India, even though the increasing volume of orders indicates that women are increasingly relying upon the PWDVA 2005 for protection, which is very unlike Bangladesh.

The effectiveness of a policy depends on its implementation. It is my firm conviction that if this policy is not widely disseminated and appropriate support is not rendered from the top to minimise or eliminate the existing shortcomings, there will be hardly any possibility of creating successful implementation. Until my field study, there were no policy decisions from the ministry on how to orient or train the implementers of various agencies other than EOs, which made this policy alarmingly

[48] Since inception in 2005, the PWDVA in India has undergone monitoring and evaluation annually by the Lawyers' Collective Women's Rights Initiatives. Until 2013, six monitoring and evaluation reports had been produced by this organistion. Notably, the DVPPA 2010 has many similarities with the PWDVA 2005.

a “one-shot game,” but the structure of policy is designed in a manner that exceedingly requires teamwork. Even the EOs trained in this act were not found to be very interested in practicing it. Moreover, if an appropriate social and institutional environment cannot be created for the use of this act, implementation failure might be the consequence. With all of these drawbacks, and the ambiguities and constraints associated with these policy interventions, I conclude my implementation assessment by suggesting that the DVPPA 2010 is not being implemented as expected at the local level in the two Bangladeshi districts; rather, it is a policy that suffers from poor performance. However, it would be naïve to conclude that the policy has failed completely; rather, it has opened up avenues for improvement. Similar to the policy evaluation of scholars such as Rossi et al. (2004) and Vogt (2007), the “implementation assessment” of my study had the purpose of helping to improve the performance of an on-going policy. As such, my endeavour can be taken as a frame of reference in the context of improving the performance of the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 by appropriate authority in Bangladesh, and to become more proactive in this regard.

7.4 Academic Implications

Globally research on violence against women is relatively young, often fragmented, and many issues remain unknown (Crowell & Burges, 1996). The same assumption is true regarding Bangladesh as well. In particular, qualitative studies on domestic violence against women in the context of Bangladesh are seemingly very limited. In academia, the constraints and pains associated with conducting qualitative study on domestic violence encourage most researchers to conduct quantitative study (Gonzalez, 2010). Perhaps, this has been the case with Bangladeshi researchers. Under this backdrop, my study makes significant academic contributions to the field of qualitative research through exploration of rich and natural descriptions of the subjective experience of the participants. It can be referred to as a frame of guidance for future researchers that intend to conduct qualitative study on domestic violence. At the same time, my study has added immense worth to the field of development administration. Domestic violence is inevitably a public policy issue. Various findings

of my research will be extremely useful for academics of development administration in terms of how to study the malice of domestic violence. At the same time, it provides some specific guidelines for policy makers and policy implementers. As such, my research is a strong bridge between theory and practice, which can increase our understanding of the various issues associated with domestic violence from the perspective of development administration. Nonetheless, some of the specific contributions are as follows.

As it is strongly suggested by many scholars to conduct comprehensive and integrated study of domestic violence (Coker et al., 2011), it was my endeavour to explore women's experiences of domestic violence in almost all major ways, such as its forms, factors, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices. Thus, it added a great deal of input to the academic realm of domestic violence. It is also the first effort to explore community perceptions and experiences, and to make an in-depth assessment of the DVPPA 2010 based on the perceptions and experiences of the frontline implementers. Community and service providers/implementers are often overlooked in studying violence against women, but their perceptions and experiences may have a great deal of influence in understanding the problem, designing programmers, and polices for the victims. In short, my research has explored the interesting dynamics of a three-fold relationship-women's experiences (victims), community activism and perceptions (informal support), and the experiences and perceptions of the implementers (formal support or policy support). For example, my research revealed that an abused woman might approach informal support if informal support fails, she might approach formal support, and there are many internal interplays among the phases. From a development administration perspective, the support mechanism for each of the phases has valuable academic implications for further analysis and discussion. Moreover, the study found that husbands are not the sole perpetrators of domestic violence; in-laws are also often involved in the provocation an perpetuation of violence. The impact of violence is not only limited to women but also spills over onto family members and children; children and family members of women are also the victims of abuse. Exploration of the above context specifies the complexity and dynamism of the problem. In all respects, my study has a salient advantage over previous studies, particularly in the context of Bangladesh, which investigated only some aspects of domestic violence.

On the other hand, it was my persistence, commitment, and extensive efforts that helped to delve deeper into women's experiences of their personal lives with regard to domestic violence quite confidently. After my study, I strongly uphold the assumption that "the gender of the interviewer is not an insurmountable barrier" (Williams & Heikes, 1993, as cited in Berliner & Falen, 2008), and "sharing the same gender does not guarantee access to the respondents. Getting in always requires negation, rapport and persistence" (Schilt & Willams, 2008). I conclude that men can study the personal and sensitive issues of women if they adopt empathetic and appropriate attitudes. Therefore, male students from development administration can confidently take more women's issues for study and contribute to the discipline.

This study has some other academic implications as well. It confirms firmly that as a problem, domestic violence has many facets, and it is an ever-changing issue. What is treated as violence today was not treated as violence in earlier days. Such findings must offer important ingredients for further academic analysis. On their other hand, the distinction between emotional and psychological abuse is unique to my study and is an important frame of reference for distinct analysis and study. At the same time, my study confirms that male dominance or patriarchy is the most influential theoretical notion in understanding the issues related to domestic violence. In fact, patriarchy is a powerful institution in Bangladesh, and is inextricably associated with many problems of women. My study reconfirmed this reality. Although limited in scale, it for the first time in Bangladesh explored some of the dimensions concerning the dynamics of domestic violence in the indigenous Garo community, which adds a valuable contribution to the literature. Moreover, it showed how patriarchy engulfs the Garo matriarchal structure and creates avenues for domestic violence. The findings as such, along with the male-dominated community support system, cast doubt on the real existence of matriarchy in the community. Through such findings, my study opens up a gateway for future research to explore the relationship between "matriarchy and patriarchy" in a more critical manner.

Moreover, my study argues against the stereotype notion that domestic violence is a "private problem." After my study, it is now possible to argue that domestic violence is not a private problem but is rather a public problem since the community is involved with the problem and public policy targets the problem as

well. For example, community, including community NGOs, engage in such activities as the *salish* in dealing with domestic violence, which acts as a gateway to turn private issues into public issues. Moreover, the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in a rigidly patriarchal country like Bangladesh means that the once private hell, at least from the perspective of development administration, can be labeled as a "public policy problem." Through this study, I have every reason to confirm that domestic violence is not a private problem, it is a public problem, and should be viewed and analysed in that line. The discipline development administration has a lot to contribute to expanding such a level of understanding through further research and activism.

7.5 Policy Implications

The study has several implications in terms of the public policy perspective. The intensity of domestic violence in the study areas of Bangladesh confirmed that it is an explicit public policy issue. Despite the institutional recognition of domestic violence as a "public policy problem" through the enactment of an act, it widely prevails in Bangladesh. My findings can be taken as a frame of reference for further policy implications. Based on my research findings, there are two major areas with policy implications that stemmed from this study, which include: preventing or eliminating this problem socially, and accelerating the use and implementation of the DVPPA 2010. Both of the issues are closely intermingled and interwoven. From the findings it can be inferred that if we want to eliminate or prevent this problem, as a source of support, we must implement this act precisely and with utmost priority. Unfortunately, many implementation problems were identified in of this study at the local level. Poor policy performance might ignite more violence against women because its inability to protect women. Therefore, in the following, I provide some broad recommendations, particularly concerning these two important policy issues, based on my intuition as a researcher and suggestions made by my participants at various phases of their discussions.

7.6 Recommendations for the Prevention/Elimination of Domestic Violence

The following recommendations are made concerning how to eliminate or prevent domestic violence in the context of rural Bangladesh.

1) A greater deal of focus needs to be placed on eliminating the negative and stereotypical attitudes toward women and girls since violence is primarily due to the superior patriarchal mindset. For example, in Bangladesh, a boy is socialised in a completely different way to a girl. From childhood, he grows up with a different stereotypical notion, which undermines women and girls and fosters the breeding of a patriarchal mindset. I, therefore, recommend acting to change the attitude of boys. The government, women's organisations and NGOs should launch a mass social awareness programme beginning within the family. Schools are a very important place for socialising boys appropriately. Topics such as gender relations, gender parity, the role of women in the development of society and history, the consequences of gender-based violence and discrimination in society must be incorporated in the school curricula, and the curricula must eliminate all of the subordinate images and discouragements with regard to women and girls.

2) As an extension of the forgoing recommendation, the government should work to engage boys and men to protect women and girls. Barker (2006) has particularly focused on this strategy and has shown how boys and men have become involved in this way in many parts of the world. Some of the international initiatives to engage men and boys, such as critical dialogues on men's use of violence against women, the promotion of different campaign slogans, partnership activities and community campaigns, might be introduced in Bangladesh to help the appropriate agencies work with men and boys against violence. In addition to that, the White Ribbon Campaign, which is the world's largest movement of men and boys working to end violence against women and girls, should extensively be spread in Bangladesh.

3) Not only do we need to engage men and boys against domestic violence, at the same time, we need to specifically target developing a creative spirit to change the self-image of women. Most of the rural women I interviewed had a negative image about themselves that was reflected in their thoughts, desires, activities, and attitudes. According to that negative image, and their beliefs and

feelings, they were nothing more than passive recipients of domestic violence Therefore, massive awareness programmes should be launched by the state, women's organisations, and civil society movements so that women's self-image can be changed and self-esteem developed. On this point, I am particularly interested in developing and activating a "sisterhood" (collective struggle and activism of women against oppression) amongst all levels of women so that they can demonstrate "zero tolerance" of domestic violence. Before doing so, it is also important to assist women in inculcating naming and framing domestic violence in their minds. It would be impossible to infuse into them the concept of "sisterhood" or "zero tolerance" if they do not consider domestic violence as violence. Moreover, programmes should be arranged for women so that in no case will they act as "women against women," which is also a barrier to developing a "sisterhood" or "zero tolerance."

4) The family is the most influential institution in Bangladesh. Interventions to combat violence must target the family members on how to make them aware and sensitised about domestic violence, and its causes and consequences. For example, there should be massive campaigns against child marriage and dowry demand amongst the family members as these forms of malice often trigger violence. Family counselling, videos, and documentaries against domestic violence issues should be conducted regularly with women, children, husbands, and in-laws. Such preventive measures will be more useful than curative measures with regard to domestic violence. Special programmes should be arranged jointly with mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law on developing healthy relationships.

5) Many of the problems of domestic violence against women are due to the provocation and participation of in-laws. Since, according to patriarchal social norms, married women in Bangladesh have to live in a patriarchal residence, they become easily susceptible to violence by their in-laws, particularly by their mothers-in-law. In the cultural context of Bangladesh, it is too early to recommend not to follow such a residential pattern; rather, the government should encourage and promote the formation of a neo-local residential pattern (when a new couple takes their own residence separate from family members) so that unwanted interference of in-laws is minimised. At least, this provision can be experimented for the families where parents are not dependent on their sons for their livelihood.

6) Engaging the community in combating domestic violence is critically important. I observed that the community broadly viewed it as a problem for society. Such a positive attitude has significant implications in applying strategies to combat violence at the rural level. Moreover, in Bangladesh there is a strong sense of community cohesion, and such strength must be utilised in combating domestic violence. All government and non-government intervention programmes to combat domestic violence against women must target how to engage and mobilise the community. I specifically suggest developing a volunteer community support group in each community involving men, women, and community NGOs so that it works as a watchdog to oversee what is happening against women in the community. Such groups must take immediate measures to prevent any unwanted incidents and extend the necessary support to the victims, and must be equipped with information regarding all types of formal and informal support. Moreover, it must help women reach and avail themselves of these supports. They must monitor how particular informal and formal orders are being carried out for women. In short, the members of these groups will be change makers for domestic violence.

7) The *salish* is the most important traditional community intervention mechanism with regard to community problems such as domestic violence. Although the community identified domestic violence as a problem, there was an indication of a lack of sensitivity amongst community members in dealing with domestic violence incidents during the *salish*. Money and male domination play a role in influencing the decisions of the *sailsh* and community members are biased towards the perpetrators. Women public representative are not invited to take part in the *salish* on women's issues. I therefore suggest a major overhauling of this traditional structure and its system. The members of a *salish* on women's issues must not be from the same community, but from other communities or other villages so that bias towards the perpetrators is not demonstrated at any stage. Representation of women by public representatives and local NGOs must be ensured. The MoWCA must work other agencies in order to institutionally frame a *salish* structure for women's issues in rural areas with appropriate terms of reference so that women receive proper remedies for their problems through this system. Such a structure must determine that if women are aggrieved with a decision, they should be able to appeal somewhere-they must not

simply be the abiders of the decisions of the *salishkaros.* In this regard, the EOs of the DVPPA 2010 can be entrusted with the responsibility for hearing the appeal. If an EO finds that a woman needs legal recourse, he/she then can proceed with the DVPPA 2010. This is how an effective bridge can be developed between informal and formal structures. At the same time, I strongly suggest sensitising and educating community leaders on how to conduct a *salish* on women's issues. The government, legal aid organisations and NGOs must organise training on a continuous basis for conducting *salish* on women's problems.

8) All of the NGOs working in the local areas on the issue of violence against women should revisit their plans and programmes since my findings did not reveal strong community NGO activism on this issue. NGOs working with violence issues must be properly informed of the needs of the victims. They must at any cost engage the local community in their activities so that the community put pressure on the perpetrators. If they work together, the local community and community NGOs can make a significant contribution to addressing the problem.

9) There is much evidence of the failure of agency responses to the problems of women. These agencies have not been very proactive. Moreover, there is evidence of non-compliance with court orders, and legal processes are cumbersome in many respects. If this is the case, eliminating violence would be difficult. Therefore, I suggest massive sensitisation for the frontline officials of government agencies on domestic violence issues, and also infusing them with the required skills in dealing with domestic violence cases. I also suggest introducing a reward and punishment system for those agency officials for their dealings with domestic violence issues, and monitoring the orders. If they are responsive, sensitised and pro-active, appropriate support for women might be ensured and violence might be eliminated/prevented quickly.

7.7 Recommendations for the Implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010

In the following, I offer some recommendations on how to accelerate the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 at the local level in Bangladesh.

1) Lack of publicity is the major barrier with regard to the implementation of this act. I noted that there was a dearth of information and understanding about this act amongst all categories of participants. People must know about the act. The government and NGOs must launch massive campaigns at the local level. They must engage the media and community in the process of publicising this act. Special programmes can be organised through the media on the DVPPA 2010, special features can be circulated in the newspapers, and dissemination campaigns can be organised at the local level targeting the community people. Many government agencies such as local the government, land, health and sanitation, education and agriculture have extensive grassroots-level functionalities. The resources and networks of these agencies can also be used to quickly publicise this act through minimum efforts and financial involvement. In this regard, only some coordination is needed with these agencies to develop a publicity mechanism. NGOs, on the other hand, have also a very big network at the rural level. The government can use this NGO network in publicising this act. Importantly, most of the NGOs at the rural level are engaged in micro-financing and 90% of the clients of these NGOs are women. Hence, these NGOs can easily be made as catalysts to publicise this act amongst rural women within the shortest possible time.

2) Allocation of budgets is a precondition for successful policy implementation. The government must allocate a budget for all the concerned agencies for the enforcement of this act. At the same time, effective utilisation of budgets is also of paramount importance for implementation success. Therefore, proper instructions and guidelines should be developed to guard against misuse, underutilisation, and overutilsation of budgetary allocation. The best practices of allocation and utilisation of budgets can be taken from the neighbouring country India, where many Indian states have already allocated the budget required for enforcement of the PWDVA 2005.

3) Developing the capacity of the implementers is an important requirement for implementation success since incompetency and ignorance of the frontline implementers might end in implementation failure. Hence, training must be imparted jointly with all agency implementers. When the implementers of various agencies train together, they can interact with each other, share best practices, discuss issues, and find solutions in carrying out their duties under the act.

4) Since the frontline implementers across the country are numerous, it might be difficult to train the untrained quickly by organising training centrally, as done currently for the EOs by the MoWCA. Conversely, trainers should go to the district or sub-district level regularly and may arrange one-day workshops or orientation programmes on this act for various implementers. It would help to orient more implementers on this act in the quickest time. In this regard, the government can act in partnership with non-government legal aid or women's rights organisations for conducting such orientation programmes for the frontline implementers.

5) Absence of coordination amongst various implementing agencies was seen in the study to be highly prevalent. Therefore, coordination mechanism must be developed at the local level for addressing domestic violence and extending support to the victims under the DVPPA 2010. Since the MoWCA is the focal ministry for this act, efforts must be initiated from this ministry in this regard. I suggest that officials from the ministry go to the local level, sit with the frontline implementers, and help develop a bottom-up coordination mechanism among various concerned agencies.

6) Appropriate institutional support would help the victims receive appropriate services from implementers. In this regard, a number of strategies can be adopted. A violence against women help-seek can be established in every police station and sub-district health complex headed by a woman police officer and a lady doctor respectively so that a victim can be rendered/refereed to various services, including legal remedies under the DVPPA 2010. Doctors and police officers should also be trained in dealing with domestic violence, including counselling. Under this act, the district/sub-district women affairs officer has been assigned as EOs for this act, as noted in the findings, and EOs are overburdened with implementing many other government programmes and are thereby unable to pay sufficient attention to promoting this act. I suggest the exclusive appointment of EOs as public servants for dealing with DVPPA 2010. Examples of such an appointment are available in India under the PWDVA 2005 in the name of protection officers that work exclusively to implement this act. It was seen that there is very limited shelter-home support for the victims of violence, and I suggest that the government establish a full-fledged shelter home with improved rehabilitation support at least in each district. Although the

MoWCA at this time (March 2015) has completed the appointment of service-providing organisations as per the provision of the DVPPA 2010, the terms of reference of their duties and responsibilities must be specified as soon as possible. Moreover, a list of such organisations and their duties and responsibilities must be widely publicised. If these organisations work properly, implementation activism will gain momentum.

7) A national monitoring and surveillance system must be immediately set up centrally at the MoWCA for DVPPA 2010 implementation. One of the major drawbacks of this act is that it does not have any monitoring or reporting system. Hence, there is no liability for the implementers to use or not to use this act. Without such a system, policy intervention becomes directionless. Implementers must be made responsible for practising this act, and a reward system can be introduced to motivate implementers to do so. On the other hand, if they show negligence toward the act as per the provision of the act, punishment must be introduced. Under the central monitoring and surveillance system, a central database should be maintained concerning domestic violence incidents and case filing under the DVPPA 2010.

8) With regard to the legal purview of this act, I suggest establishing a special or speedy domestic violence court or tribunal in every district court. I observed that the traditional justice procedure severely suffers from procrastination. If such a court is established, a group of expert lawyers and judges on the DVPPA 2010 can be developed. On the other hand, an all-out women-friendly environment must be ensured in the court so that the dignity of the victims is preserved. Even today, the court is a place for harassment of women. Therefore, gender sensitisation training must be offered for the lawyers, police, and judges that deal with women's issues. On the other hand, contradictions, overlapping, and inconsistencies with other acts and internal shortcomings and definitional clarifications of this act must be critically examined and necessary measures must be taken based on expert opinions. It is advisable to have a detailed definition of the act that captures women's experiences of violence in all of its manifestations (UNIFEM, 2009). Most importantly, exclusive provision of the act for dealing with all sorts domestic violence-related practices such as dowry demand, child marriage, and polygamy must be included in this act. This will give supremacy to this act, and the aggrieved persons will be more encouraged to

seek recourse under it. This can also help to overcome the contradictions amongst various acts. For example, the Vietnamese act on domestic violence includes forced child marriage as a manifestation of domestic violence and addressed this issue in the definition (UNIFEM, 2009). On the other hand, proper clarifications must be given on how to carry out court orders, and how to make inquiry into an offense. If needed, the DVPPA 2010 might be amended. It would help to protect false case filing of domestic violence incidents under other acts and promote using the DVPPA 2010. In this regard, a massive motivational programme has to be carried out for the lawyers. The government must guard against the issuing of false medical certificates used for framing false cases. Moreover, incentives for panel lawyers of various government and non-government agencies should also be increased so that they feel interested in proceeding with poorer victims' cases. On the other hand, the hierarchal gaps between lawyers and magistrates have to be removed from the court environment. There should be continuous dialogues between lawyers and magistrates on how to extend services to the victims of domestic violence. The district judge, as guardian of the judicial system in a district, must organise such dialogues and discussions on a regular basis. Moreover, the availability of government legal aid support for the poor people must be publicised through massive campaigning. The district legal aid office must be actively involved in the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 since women are entitled to free legal aid under this act.

9) Earlier, I suggested establishing a volunteer community support group to prevent or eliminate domestic violence. Such a support group might be entrusted with the responsibility of publicising and using this act. This group can motivate and help women to file cases under this act. If the community responds to this act positively, it would be easier to practice it.

10) Similar to the Indian act, a continuous monitoring and evaluation of this act has to be carried out across the country. Since its enactment in 2005, the Indian act has been evaluated six times on an on-going basis. It is unfortunate that the MoWCA does not have any plan as such. Most importantly, monitoring and evaluation of the domestic violence act is essential to ensure effective implementation. Malaysia and Thailand have included provisions in their acts as such, and have entrusted specific responsibilities to various agencies (UNIFEM, 2009).

Similarly, in Bangladesh, an expert organisation can be entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out such evaluation at least once a year. Moreover, women's rights or legal aid organisations should also carry out evaluation of this act on a continuous basis, and every evaluation report has to be published and disseminated.

11) As an extension of the foregoing recommendation, I strongly suggest making a country-wide study on all the cases that so far have been lodged under the act. If such a wider study can be carried out through a quantitative approach, more information can be gathered about the whole gamut of the DVPPA 2010 implementation on some key variables such as; victims' profiles, location of case filings, the *modus operandi* of the implementers, the nature of case filings, the time required to dispose of cases, financial involvements, the involvement of the policy makers, and so on. Once such information is available, it would be easier for other researchers, particularly qualitative researchers, to touch upon some specific areas in greater depth. Such efforts would be extremely useful for putting in place recommendations for the policy makers for accelerating the implementation of the DVPPA 2010, and necessary modifications.

12) Finally and most importantly, top management must understand the necessity of the implementation of the DVPPA 2010 in the context of Bangladesh. It is really unfortunate that the government has just launched the act and has made no substantial effort to properly implement it. Based on the current frame of efforts as evidenced from the study, extending formal support to the victims will continue to be seriously undermined. Policy makers must realise that implementation of the act will not be possible only by the Eos; it must be made through coordinated efforts, including all levels of agencies, and they must specifically extend proper support to the frontline implementers. Therefore, I strongly suggest that civil society, women's organisations, media, scholars, and concerned individuals have dialogues on the policy makers at the top on a continuous basis in order to make pragmatic and substantial efforts in accelerating the implementation of the act. If the top management is not proactive, it is very likely that the frontline implementers will not be motivated to practice this act. From the perspective of development administration, I strongly believe that a policy can be effective if there is commitment both at the top and the bottom.

7.8 Constraints and Future Research Direction

My current study adds to the body of knowledge on domestic violence and the implementation of the DVPPA 2010, which can be useful to the academic community, policy makers, policy implementers, and interested practitioners. However, I have realised some of the constraints that are invariably linked with the study. In the following, I detail some of those constraints.

1) Since it is a qualitative study, carried out with a limited number of participants under each category and in some specific areas, the findings of this study may not be necessarily generalisable to a larger audience, even though my findings can be linked and elaborated in further studies in many ways with the broader context of Bangladesh concerning domestic violence and policy implementation.

2) On the other hand, despite my best efforts to make the study as comprehensive as possible, due to time and resource constraints it was not possible for me to include many important and pertinent aspects. For example, I limited the study to only rural areas; however, domestic violence is not limited to these areas. As far as the scope of the study is concerned, it was not possible for me to include urban women, and community members from urban areas. As such, I could not explore various aspects related to urban violence. I strongly believe that a comparative assessment between rural and urban violence is a very important area for research. At the same time, in this study, I could not include the perpetrators' account of inflicting violence against women. Hence, there was no scope in this study for a comparative analysis between the victims' perspective of the experience violence and the perpetrators' account of inflicting violence, which is also another important area for research.

3) As seen earlier in the study, the in-laws were in many ways involved in the perpetuation or provocation of violence. Such an important aspect could be explored if direct interviews could be arranged with them. Again, including in-laws as direct participants was not possible in my study.

4) It was also not possible for me to make exclusive assessment with regard to various programmes or polices of the government concerning violence against women. Hence, I could not make any comparative judgment on how other

polices are working in relation to the DVPPA 2010. Such an aspect is very important for providing valuable information to policy makers and policy implementers.

5) Many NGOs in Bangladesh work on domestic violence issues, and obviously they have different programmes and activities which are important areas for investigation. I could not include a good number of NGOs to assess their activities; rather, I assessed the activities of only two NGOs. Exclusive assessment of NGO activities regarding domestic violence is an important area for research.

6) Again, due to time constraints, I could not broadly study the dynamics of the domestic violence and community perceptions and activities of the Garo community. Nevertheless, studying the nature of domestic violence amongst the indigenous communities has a lot to offer to enhance the body of knowledge. In doing so, future researchers can provide significant guidance to public administrators or policy makers in order to frame policy and programmes for them.

Based on the constraints mentioned above, I believe that future researchers have a lot of areas to work on, which can substantiate the literature of domestic violence in Bangladesh. Finally, research efforts on domestic violence should be a continuous activity since research is always the best way to understand a social problem, and no policy should be framed by the policy makers without consulting the suggestions of research findings.

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APPENDICS

APPENDIX A

Table A1 Matrix on Empirical Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Bangladesh

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
Khan et al. (2000)	Factors of domestic violence and impacts on women's lives	*199 married women of reproductive age (15-44) * Indefinite no. of men	*Interview (both qualitative and quantitative) *Focus group discussion *Explanation and analysis of opinions/experiences of the respondents	*72% women experience violence from intimate partners *Violence at home has a profound impact on women's reproductive lives *31% women reported to have experienced violence when they refused sex	Eight villages of Gazipur district, which is located in the middle of the country.
Mannan (2002)	Aspects and issues of marital violence	600 married women (below 50 years)	* Interview (both qualitative and quantitative) * Focus Group Discussion (FGD) *Analysis of opinions/experiences of the respondents *Development of cases	*Nearly 50% women are victims of husbands' violent acts *Years of marriage do not have any significant impact upon reducing violence *Violence is also perpetrated due to minor causes	*Two villages of Laxipur district and two from Khustia district * The districts are located in the south and the west
Bhuiya et al. (2003)	Domestic violence and preventive interventions	190 women (wives) and 178 me (husbands)	Questionnaire	*Wife-beating is a common phenomenon *Participation in micro-credit creates tension in the family *Education does not have any significant relation in reducing violence *Legal provisions have little impact to reduce violence	Six unions of a remote area (location of the setting has not been mentioned)

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
Naved & Persson (2005)	Factors, effects and help-seeking behaviour of domestic violence	3130 women age between 15-49	*Survey *In-depth interviews	*Violence is learnt from history of abuse * Exchange of dowry is a factor for violence *Women's age has no association with violence in rural area but in urban area younger women are more likely to be abused	*Both rural and urban area (locations of the research fields have not been mentioned)
Khan & Aeron (2006)	Prevalence, factors of violence against wives	*4136 married women (3900 survey and 136 in-depth interview) *600 men including husbands of the victims	*In-depth interview *Questionnaire	*80% women in the survey and 72% women in the interview admitted to have been abused by their husbands * Dowry demand, poverty, not meeting husband expectations, instigation of in-laws, husband's bad habits cause domestic violence	Four districts in Bangladesh
Naved et al. (2006)	Husbands' violence and its magnitude, disclosure and help-seeking behaviour of women	*4051 households and 2702 married women for survey *28 women of reproductive age (15-44) for qualitative interview	*Cross sectional survey *In-depth interview (qualitative)	*40% urban and 42%rural women experience physical violence perpetrated by their husbands *66% women do not share their experiences of violence with others *Abused women do not seek help or remain silent from the fear of further violence and harm.	One city and one rural area (locations have not been mentioned)
Schuler & Islam (2008)	Women's belief about acceptance of husbands' use of violence	*1212 women for survey *239 married sons of female respondents *3 men and 107 women for qualitative interview *13 small group discussions with married	*Structured survey * In-depth interviews * Group discussions	*84% men and 92% men approved acceptance of violence * Violence is accepted on ground of wife wastes money, disobeys husband, wife refuses sex or husband	*Three villages from Rangpur, Faridpur and Magura districts (survey) *Two villages from Rangpur and Magura districts

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
		women aged 19-57 *1 group discussion with 5 women aged 18-57 and three men aged 30-52.		suspects wife as unfaithful *Women have no control over situation of violence *Women suggest extreme measures for punishment	
Schuler et al. (2008)	Recourse seeking of rural abused women against domestic violence	*3 men and 107 women * 16 small discussion with married women, school girls and men	*Qualitative interview *Group discussions	*Women do respond to violence only by taking actions to avoid further violence *common belief is that husband has the right to discipline wife * Informal justice system is not supportive to abused women *Women are either unable or unsuccessful in using formal or informal justice system	Three villages from Rangpur and Magura districts
Naved & Persson (2010)	Association between dowry and wife abuse	2702 married women	*Cross-sectional population survey	*Physical abuse is perceived to be justified in patriarchal ideology *Women physically abused for family problems (59%), for disobedience (25%) but for dowry (3%) *Women are more likely to be abused if dowry is demanded but payment is not made	One urban and one rural area (locations of the research fields have not been mentioned
Sambisa et al. (2011)	Prevalence and correlates of physical spousal violence	9122 married women aged between 15 and 59	Survey Questionnaire	* Prevalence of reported past-year physical spousal violence is 31% * Prevalence of past-year physical spousal violence is higher in slums	Slum and non-slum areas of Dhaka, Chittagong, Kulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, and Sylhet divisional cities

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
				(35%) than in non-slums (20%) * Slapping/arm-twisting and pushing/shaking/ Throwing * The risk of physical spousal abuse is lower among older women	
Sayeem & Khan (2012)	Women's strategic response to intimate partner violence	20 married women	In-depth Interview	*Majority of the women can anticipate potential violence *Leaving the scene is a common means *Seeking help from formal service is rare *Women tend to seek help from immediate social networks	A rural community in Narshingdi district
Sayeem et. al (2015)	women's attitudes towards informal, formal social and formal legal support-seeking strategies	308 married women aged between 15 and 49	Survey questionnaire	* Women's attitudes significantly varied by women's age, women's working status, experience of violence, receipt of micro-credit, women's decision-making authority, husband's age, husband's education, family economic status and family type * Women experiencing violence during the past 12 months were less likely to seek help from parents-in-law and community leaders (informal agents) instead asking social/legal services (formal agents).	Five (5) slums in Dhaka city

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
Ahmed. et al (2004)	Deaths of women of reproductive age due to violence against women	1297 men and 1625 women	*Content analysis *Case control study	*46% suicide deaths of women were due to quarrels with husbands and other relatives *10% women were killed by the husbands *Violence has serious impact on morbidity and physical and mental well-being	Matlab sub-district located in the middle of the country
World Health Organisation (WHO) (2005)	Women's health and domestic violence	3130 married and unmarried women aged 15-49	Survey Questionnaire	*53% married women in the capital city and 62% in the rural area experience physical or sexual violence *Abused pregnant women are more likely to have had induced abortions * Abused women are more likely to have had committed suicide *Many women's first sex experience is forced	Capital city and Matlab sub-district located in the middle of the country
Salam et al. (2006)	Association between spousal abuse and women's reproductive health	496 women	Interviewer-administered questionnaire	*Spousal violence is higher among less educated women *Spousal sexual violence adversely affects women's reproductive health and well-being *12% women have reported for unintended pregnancy due to forced intercourse	Eight slums from four metropolitan areas
Åsling-Monemi et al. (2007)	Violence against women and its association with children's mortality rate	1048 married women and 2061live-born children	Survey Questionnaire	*67% women experience violence immediately after marriage *Under-five mortality risks are higher among daughters of abused women	Rural area from south east of Dhaka

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
Naved & Akhter (2008)	Relationship between intimate partner violence and suicidal behaviour	2702 women	Survey Questionnaire	* Younger women have more suicidal ideation *Severe physical and emotional violence by husbands provoke suicidal ideation	One rural and one urban area (locations are not mentioned)
Silverman et. al (2009)	Violence against women and its impact on children's health	1592 married women having one child 5 years or younger	Demographic health survey	*42.5% women experience violence from their children *Women experience violence report of ARI and diarrhoea among their young children *Abuse of men has strong association with childhood mortality	Urban and rural areas of Bangladesh (locations are not mentioned)
Silverman et. al (2007)	Intimate partner violence, unwanted pregnancy, miscarriage, stillbirth and induced abortion	2677 married women	Cross-sectional survey	* Three out of four (75.6%) Bangladeshi women experienced violence from husbands * Women experiencing violence from husbands were more likely to report both unwanted pregnancy and a pregnancy loss in the form of miscarriage, induced abortion, or stillbirth * Less educated, poorer and Muslim women were more exposed to violence	Across Bangladesh, but specific locations are not mentioned
Rahman et al. (2012)	Relationship between intimate partner violence and unwanted pregnancy	11178 women aged between 15-49 years	Survey Questionnaire	*Women who were sexually abused are 64% more likely to report their pregnancy as unintended than who were physically abused *Women who experienced severe physical IPV were	Throughout the country

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
				60% more likely to classify their pregnancy as unintended * Abused women in Bangladesh have less control over their reproductive choices, family planning, or other fertility control resources	
Schuler et al. (1996)	Marital violence and microcredit programme	1305 married women for survey (below 50 years)	*Structured survey *Ethnography	*Micro credit reduces violence *Men's perceived legitimacy leads to violence	Six villages of two regions (names of the regions/villages are not been mentioned)
Schuler et al. (1998)	Marital violence and microcredit programme	Indefinite no. of men and women	*Participant observation *In-depth interview	*Almost two thirds women are beaten by their husbands *Credit programmes both reduce and provoke violence	Six villages of two regions (names of the regions/villages are not mentioned)
Hadi (2000)	Prevalence of marital sexual violence	500 married women (below 50 years)	Questionnaire survey	*Forced sex by husbands is not regarded as violence *8.2%, 21.4% and 13.2% women respectively are the victims of forced sexual violence during menstruation, pregnancy and neonatal period *Women's participation in NGO programmes helps to reduce violence at home|. *Everyday common situations generate violence	Seventy villages of ten districts (names and locations of the districts are not mentioned)
Hadi (2005)	Marital violence and its relation with women's productive roles	500 married women	*Interview *Demographic and health surveillance system	*Women's productive role can reduce marital violence *Everyday common situations generate violence	Seventy villages of ten districts (names and locations of the districts have not been mentioned)

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
Rahman et al. (2011)	Intimate partner violence and empowerment	4,181 married women	*Cross sectional survey *Questionnaire	*About one-fourth (24%) of currently married Bangladeshi women experienced both physical and/or sexual IPV *Younger generation (age 15–24), illiterate, rural, and the poorest household wealth categorized women were much victimized *Likelihood of all forms of IPV increases with increase of number of participation in household decision-making	Both rural and urban areas
Bajracharya & Amin (2013)	Domestic violence and microcredit	4,195 married women	*Cross sectional survey *Propensity score matching (PSM)	*Members of microcredit programme are more exposed to domestic violence *Causal attribution of violence to membership is misleading	361 rural and urban areas
Naved (2013)	Magnitude and nature of marital sexual violence	2702 married women	*Cross sectional survey *Questionnaire	*37% of urban and 50%of rural ever-married reproductive aged women reported ever being sexual abused by the husband *About 75% of the sexually abused women experienced other forms of violence (83% in urban; 69%in rural) *history of physical abuse of husband's mother by his	Both rural and urban areas. Locations are not mentioned

Researcher (s)	Theme	Sample	Research Methods/Tools	Key Findings	Field
				father; controlling behaviour of the husband, dowry demand are the causes of violence	
Bates et al. (2004)	Factors and processes of domestic violence	*76 women for qualitative component *1212 women as respondents for quantitative component	*Interview *Group discussion *Survey	*Education might reduce risk of domestic violence *Payment of dowry increases women's status * Marriage registration does not help to reduce violence *67% women have experienced domestic violence	*Six villages in Rangpur, Magura and Faridpur districts * The districts are located in north, west and middle of the country respectively
Ahmed (2005)	Intimate partner violence and micro-credit	2044 married women	*Cross sectional survey *Questionnaire	*Poverty is the leading cause of violence * Women's education helps to reduce violence *Receiving skill development training, membership in a credit programme help women to reduce risk of domestic violence	A rural sub district (Matlab) located in the middle of the country

APPENDIX B

Table A2 Profiles (Socio-demographic) of the Victims

No	Names[1]	Age[2]	Marital Status	Year of Marriage	Children	Education[3]	Prime Mode of Livelihood	Ethnic Identity
1	Soma	25	Deserted	2005	2 (1 son+1 daughter	Primary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
2	Johrna	20	Deserted	2005	2 (1 son+1 daughter	Not completed Primary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
3	Rosy	24	Living with husband	2007	3 (2 sons+1 daughter	Illiterate	Dependent on husband	Bengali Muslim
4	Urmy	38	Living with husband	1995	1 son (died)	Literate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
5	Bobita	17	Separated on own wish	2013	Nil	Not completed Secondary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
6	Champa	20	Deserted	2011	1 son	Literate	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
7	Shoheli	24	Deserted	2006	2 sons	Not completed Primary	Dependent on brother	Bengali Muslim
8	Hena[4]	40	Divorced & Deserted	1992 & 2008	Nil	Literate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
9	Jinat	25	Separated on own wish	2000	3 (2 sons & 1 daughter)	Illiterate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
10	Chameli	26	Deserted	2004	1 daughter	Not completed Primary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
11	Rokeya	33	Living with husband	2000	2 sons	Literate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
12	Amena	46	Separated on own wish	1984	3 daughters	Higher secondary	Salaried employment	Bengali Muslim
13	Kabita	25	Living with husband	2003	1 son & 1 daughter	Literate	Dependent on husband	Bengali Muslim
14	Nahar	18	Deserted	2009	Nil	Primary	Depending on uncle	Bengali Muslim
15	Tonima	21	Separated on own wish	2009	3 (2 sons & 1 daughter)	Illiterate	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
16	Bokul[5]	23	Divorced & Separated on own wish	2008 & 2012	2 (1 son & 1 daughter) & Nil	Not completed Primary	Salaried employment	Bengali Muslim

[1] Pseudonyms of the participants.
[2] Most of the participants could say their actual age, they only assumed.
[3] Primary means education up to grade five, secondary means education up to grade ten, higher secondary is up to grade twelve.
[4] Married twice, the first husband divorced her & the second husband deserted her.
[5] Married twice, she divorced her first husband and got separated on her own wish from the second husband.

No	Names[1]	Age[2]	Marital Status	Year of Marriage	Children	Education[3]	Prime Mode of Livelihood	Ethnic Identity
17	Renu	25	Deserted	2004	2 sons	Literate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
18	Rasu	23	Divorced	2010	1 son	Bachelor	Salaried employment	Bengali Muslim
19	Momina	21	Divorced	2011	1 daughter	Illiterate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
20	Joita	23	Divorced	2006	1 son	Primary	Salaried employment	Bengali Muslim
21	Khodeja	30	Living with husband	2000	3 (1 son & 2 daughters)	Illiterate	Dependent on husband	Bengali Muslim
22	Helen	22	Husband stays abroad	2013	Nil	Higher Secondary	Salaried employment	Bengali Muslim
23	Seuti	21	Deserted	2012	Nil	Higher Secondary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
24	Tanni	17	Deserted	2013	Nil	Not completed Secondary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
25	Nova	32	Separated on own wish	1998	3 (1 son & 2 daughters)	Illiterate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
26	Sara	29	Deserted	1999	2 (1 son & 2 daughter)	Illiterate	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
27	Benu	22	Deserted	2009	2 twin daughters	Illiterate	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
28	Bristi	22	Separated on own wish	2010	Nil	Secondary	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
29	Kariman	17	Separated on own wish	2013	Nil	Literate	Dependent on father	Bengali Muslim
30	Sriti	27	Living with husband	2010	2 (1 son & 1 daughter)	Postgraduate	Salaried employment	Bengali Muslim
31	Shirin	23	Separated on own wish	2009	1 son	Not completed Primary	Dependent on mother	Bengali Muslim
32	Rahiman	30	Deserted	2009	2 daughters	Literate	Self-employed	Bengali Muslim
33	Sharifa[6]	40	Widowed & Divorced	1990 & 2003	2 (1 son & 1 daughter) 2 (1 son & 1 daughter)	Literate	Dependent on brothers	Bengali Muslim
34	Sulekha[7]	26	Widowed & Deserted	2004 & 2012	1 son	Illiterate	Dependent on mother	Bengali Hindu
35	Suchanda	36	Deserted	1996	1 son & 1 daughter	Not completed Primary	Self-employed	Bengali Hindu
36	Pallabi	45	Living with husband	1985	1 son & 2 daughters	Illiterate	Self-employed	Bengali Hindu
37	Kankan	25	Living with husband	2004	1 son & 1 daughter	Literate	Self-employed	Bengali Hindu

[6] Married twice, first husband died & the second husband divorced her. She gave birth to two children to her first husband and two to her second husband.

[7] Married twice, first husband died & the second husband deserted her. She gave birth to a son to her second husband.

No	Names[1]	Age[2]	Marital Status	Year of Marriage	Children	Education[3]	Prime Mode of Livelihood	Ethnic Identity
38	Molly	50	Deserted	1983	3 sons	Not completed Secondary	Dependent on sons	Garo Christian
39	Bobby	26	Separated on own wish	2005	2 daughters	Secondary	Self-employed	Garo Christian

APPENDIX C

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Domestic Violence
(Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010
(Act 58 of 2010)

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
August 2011

Domestic Violence
(Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010
[Act 58 of 2010]

An Act to provide as a signatory state of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 and the Convention on the Children's Right, 1989 and to establish equal rights for women and children guaranteed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh prevention of domestic violence, protection of women and children from domestic violence and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS it is expedient and necessary as a signatory state of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 and Convention on the Children's Right, 1989 and to establish equal rights for women and children guaranteed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh prevention of domestic violence, protection of women and children from domestic violence and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto:-

THEREFORE it is hereby enacted as follows:-

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Short Title, Extent and Commencement:

(1) This Act may be called the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions: In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context:

(1) "Application" means a petition submitted to the court for any sort of remedy under this Act either by a victim or any other person on behalf of a victim;

(2) "Code" means The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898);

(3) "Compensation order" means an order given under section 16 of this Act;

(4) "Child" means a person below the age of eighteen years;

(5) "Custody order" means an order granted under section 17 of this Act;

(6) "Domestic violence" means any act as defined in section 3 of this Act;

(7) "Enforcement Officer" means the Upazila (sub-district) Women Affairs officer under the control of the Department of Women Affairs or any officer appointed by the government on this behalf under section 5;

(8) "Family" comprises of those persons who live or have, at any point of time, lived together in a shared residence, when they are related by consanguinity or marriage or adoption or member of joint family;

(9) "Family relationship" means a relationship between two persons who are related by consanguinity or marriage or adoption or member of joint family;

(**10) "Interim Protection order"** means an order passed under section 13 of this Act;

(11) "Protection order" means an order given under section 14 of this Act;

(12) "Residence order" means an order granted under section 15 of this Act;

(13) "Respondent" means any person, against whom any sort of remedy under this Act has been sought for;

(14) "Rules" means rules framed under this Act;

(15) "Safe place" means any home or institution maintained or managed by any person or agency or organization approved by the government or which is considered as safe place for victim by the court;

(16) "Shared residence" means a residence where:

(a) the victim lives;

(b) at any stage has lived singly or along with the respondent in a family relationship;

(c) which owned or tenanted either jointly by the victim and the respondent, or owned or tenanted by either of them;

(d) which either the victim or the respondent or both jointly or singly have any right, title, interest or equity;

(e) which may belong to the family of which the respondent is or was a member, irrespective of whether the respondent or the victim has any right, title or interest;

(17) "Shelter home" means any home or institution with residential facilities maintained or managed by the government or by private organization, where victim can stay safely on temporary basis;

(18) "Victim" means a child or woman who is or has been or is at risk of being subjected to domestic violence by any other member of the family to whom a family relationship exists;

(19) "Women" means any woman irrespective of age.

CHAPTER TWO

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

3. Domestic violence: For the purpose of this Act, domestic violence means physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse or economic abuse against a woman or a child of a family by any other person of that family with whom victim is, or has been, in family relationship.

Explanation: For the purpose of this section:

(a) "Physical Abuse"- that is, any act or conduct which is of such a nature as to cause bodily pain, harm, or danger to life, limb, or health or impair the health or development of the victim and includes assault, criminal intimidation and criminal force;

(b) "Psychological Abuse"- that includes but is not limited to:

(i) verbal abuse including insults, ridicule, humiliation, insults or threats of any nature;

(ii) harassment; or

(iii) controlling behaviour, such as restrictions on mobility, communication or self expression;

(c) "Sexual Abuse"- that is, any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of the victim;

(**d) "Economic Abuse"** that includes but is not limited to:

(i) deprivation of all or any economic or financial resources or property to which the victim is entitled under any law or custom whether payable under any law or custom or an order of a court or any other competent authority;

(ii) not allow to use the articles of daily necessities to the victim;

(iii) deprivation or prohibiting the victim from applying legal rights to her stridhan or dower or alimony or any consideration for marriage or any property owned by the victim;

(iv) transferring without consent of the victim or prohibiting the victim from applying legal rights to any assets whether movable or immovable owned by her;

(v) deprivation or prohibiting the victim from applying legal rights to continued access to resources or facilities which the victim is entitled to use or enjoy by virtue of the family relationship.

CHAPTER THREE

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF POLICE OFFICER, ENFORCEMENT OFFICER AND SERVICE PROVIDER, ETC.

4. Duties and Responsibilities of Police Officer: A Police Officer, who has received a complaint of domestic violence or is otherwise present at the place of an incident of domestic violence or when the incident of domestic violence is reported to him or her, shall inform the victim;

(a) of her right to make an application for obtaining a relief by way of any orders under this Act;

(b) of the availability of medical services;

(c) of the availability of services of the Enforcement Officers;

(d) where applicable, of her right to free legal services under the Legal Aid Act, 2000 (Act 6 of 2000);

(e) of her right to file a complaint under any other existing law; and

(f) other duties and responsibilities prescribed by the government in this behalf.

5. Appointment of Enforcement Officer

(1) For the purpose of this Act, the Government shall, by notification in the official gazette, appoint one or more Enforcement Officers in each upazila (sub-district), thana (police station), district or in a metropolitan area and shall also notify the area or areas within which an Enforcement Officer shall exercise the powers and functions conferred on him or her by or under this Act.

(2) The terms and conditions of service of the Enforcement Officer shall be such as may be prescribed rule.

6. Duties and Responsibilities of Enforcement Officer

(l) The Duties and Responsibilities of Enforcement Officer shall be as follows:

(a) to assist the court in discharge of its functions under this Act;

(b) to provide report to the court regarding domestic violence;

(c) to forward copies thereof to the police officer in charge of the police station within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the domestic violence is alleged to have been committed;

(d) to make an application to the Court, if the victim so desires, claiming relief for issuance of a protection order;

(e) to take necessary steps so that the victim is provided legal aid under the Legal Aid Act 2000 (Act 6 of 2000), and make available the application form along with other facilities free of cost;

(f) to maintain a list of all legal aid and human rights organization or psycho-social counselling services, shelter homes and medical facilities within the jurisdiction of the Court;

(g) to refer the victim to a safe shelter home if the victim so requires and forward a copy of a report of having lodged the victim in a shelter home to the police station and the Court having jurisdiction in the area where the shelter home is situated;

(h) to refer the victim for medical examination if required and forward a copy of the medical report to the police station and the Court having jurisdiction in the area where the domestic violence is alleged to have taken place; (i) to ensure that the order for compensation is executed; and (j) to perform such other duties as may be prescribed by rules.

(2) The Enforcement Officer shall be under the supervision of the Court, and shall perform the duties and responsibilities imposed on him/her by the Government or by the Court under this Act.

7. Service Provider and Their Duties and Responsibilities

(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act and rules framed under it, any voluntary association registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (Act XXI of 1860), or the Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961(Ordinance XLVI of 1961) or a nonprofit company or organization registered under the Companies Act, 1994 (Act 18 of 1994), or any non- profit organization or institution registered at NGO Affairs Bureau under Foreign Donations (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance,1978 (Ordinance XLVI of 1978),any other organization approved by the Government under any other law for the time being in force with the objective of inter alia protecting the human rights especially the rights and interests of women and children by any lawful means including providing of legal aid, medical, financial or other assistance shall be treated as a service provider for the purposes of this Act.

(2) Duties and responsibilities of a service provider shall be as follows:

(a) record the domestic incident report in the prescribed form if the victim so desires and forward a copy thereof to the Court and the Enforcement Officer having jurisdiction in the area where the domestic violence took place;

(b) refer the victim for medical examination and forward a copy of the medical report to the Enforcement Officer and the police station within the local limits of which the domestic violence took place;

(c) refer the victim to a shelter home, if she so requires and forward a report of the lodging of the victim in the shelter home to the police station within the local limits of which the domestic violence took place;

(d) perform such other duties and responsibilities as may be prescribed by rules.

8. Duties of Shelter Homes: On request by a victim or on her behalf, a police officer, an Enforcement Officer or any other person, the authority responsible for a shelter home shall provide shelter to the victim therein.

9. Duties of Medical Service Provider: On request by a victim or on her behalf, a police officer, an Enforcement Officer, a service provider or any other person, the person incharge of the medical facility in the hospital, clinic or medical centre shall provide medical aid to the victim.

CHAPTER FOUR

RIGHTS OF VICTIM, REMEDIES, ETC.

10. Right to Reside in the Shared Home: The victim shall have every right to reside in the shared residence due to family relationship.

11. Application to Court

(1) A victim or on her behalf, a police officer, an Enforcement Officer, a service provider or any other person, can apply to get remedy according to the provisions of this Act.

(2) Every application under sub-section (1) shall be submitted in such form as may be prescribed by the rule.

(3) The Court, shall fix up the date of hearing the victim within 7 (seven) working days after receiving the application under sub-section (1).

12. Place of filing Application: A petition under this Act may be filed in any court under whose local jurisdiction the following places are situated;

(a) the applicant resides;

(b) the respondent resides;

(c) the place where the domestic violence occur; or

(d) the place where the victim temporarily resides.

13. Interim Protection Order and Issuance of Notice

(1) The Court, upon receipt of an application under section 11, if satisfied by examining the documents submitted thereto that there is prima facie that the respondent has committed or possibility of committing or abetting to commit domestic violence, then an ex parte interim protection order may be issued against the respondent and simultaneously a show cause notice to the respondent to reply within 7 (seven) working days why permanent protection order shall not be issued against him.

(2) The notice may be issued by registered post, process server, law enforcing agencies or by any other ways prescribed by the rules.

14. Protection Order

The Court may, after giving the parties an opportunity of being heard, satisfied that domestic violence has taken place or is likely to take place, issue a protection order in favour of the victim and issue order restraining the respondent from committing following acts, namely;

(a) from committing any act of domestic violence;

(b) aiding or abetting in the commission of any acts of domestic violence;

(c) prohibiting or restraining from entering any protected person's place of employment, business, or educational institution or other institution which the protected person ordinarily visits;

(d) prohibiting or restraining from making any personal, written, telephone, mobile phone, email or any other form of communication with the protected person;

(e) prohibiting from causing violence to the dependants of the victim or any relatives or any person who gives assistance to the victim from domestic violence;

(f) any other act that may be cited in the protection order.

15. Residence Orders

(1) The court, on the basis of application may issue the following residence orders, namely;

(a) restraining the respondent from residing or visiting the shared residence or specified part thereof where the victim resides;

(b) restraining the respondent from dispossessing or in any other manner disturbing the possession of the victim from the shared household;

(c) directing the Enforcement Officer to make arrangement for a safe shelter or safe place for the victim and her child/children, if the victim so consents to her placement in such alternative arrangement, during the existence of the protection order and if the continuous stay of the protected person at the shared residence is considered by the Court to be not safe for the protected person;

(d) directing the respondent to secure the same level of alternate accommodation for the victim as enjoyed by her in the shared residence or to pay rent for the same, if the circumstances so require;

(e) requiring the respondent against whom the order is made to permit any protected person, accompanied by the Enforcement Officer, to enter the offender's residence, shared or not, for the purpose of collecting the protected person's personal belongings including her medical, educational and professional records, documents and certificates, passport, bank account documents, savings certificate and other investment papers and documents, personal income tax documents, jeweller, cash money, mobile phone, household goods and valuables of any description;

(f) Order against the respondent to permit any protected person to have the continued use and expenses of a vehicle which has previously been ordinarily used by the protected person.

(2) if a right to exclusive occupation of a shared residence or any part thereof is granted to the protected person, such order shall not affect any title or interest that the respondent against whom the order is made;

(3) the Court, shall make an order evicting the person against whom the order is made from the whole of a shared residence that is solely owned by him or her, it is satisfied that there is no other way to secure the personal safety of the protected person for the time being:

Provided that such order shall revoked, if

(a) a suitable safe shelter or safe place or alternative residence is found for the protected person; or

(b) the Court being otherwise satisfied that it is no longer necessary to continue the order for securing the personal safety of the protected person.

(4) The Court may impose any additional conditions or pass any other direction which it may deem reasonably necessary or incidental to protect or to provide for the safety of the victim or her child/children or any member of her family.

(5) The Court may require the respondent to execute a bond, with or without sureties, that neither he/she nor any of his/her family members will commit any further acts of domestic violence.

(6) While passing an order under sub-section (1), sub-section (2) or sub-section (3) the Court may also pass a written order directing the officer in charge of the nearest police station to give protection to the victim or her child/children.

(7) The Court may direct the respondent to return to the possession of the victim any immovable property, her stridhan or dower or alimony or any other marital property and moveable assets, valuables, documents, certificates and any other property or valuable security to which she is entitled.

16. Compensation Order

(1) If there is any personal injury or financial loss or trauma or psychological damage or damage to movable or immovable property or any possibility of such damage or loss as a result of domestic violence, she may file a claim for compensation either along with the application under section 11 or separately later on.

(2) The Court shall disposed of the application submitted under sub-section (1) within 6 (six) months of it’s receive.

(3) The Court, in the process of disposal of the application submitted under sub-section (1), after giving the parties opportunity of being heard, subject to the provisions of subsection (4), award such monetary compensation as it deems reasonable.

(4) Before disposal of the application submitted under sub-section (1), the Court may give responsibility on a person or any organization to find out the

actual loss or damage and during the hearing of the claim for such compensation may take into consideration the following facts:

(a) the pain and suffering of the victim and the nature and extent of the physical or mental injury suffered;

(b) the cost of medical treatment for such injury;

(c) temporary or permanent effect of such injury;

(d) any loss of earnings, present and prospective, arising there from;

(e) the amount and value of the movable or immovable property taken or transferred or destroyed or damaged;

(f) reasonable expenses already incurred by or on behalf of the victim in securing protection from violence.

(5) The Court may pass an order against the respondent for the maintenance of the victim as well as her children, if any, which is adequate, reasonable and consistent with the standard of living of the victim.

(6) The Court may an order of lump sum payment or monthly payments of maintenance, if it deems fit.

(7) The Court shall send a copy of the compensation order made under this section to the concern parties and to the Officer in Charge of the police station within the local limits of whose jurisdiction the respondent ordinarily resides or stay.

(8) If the respondent is an employee of government, non-government, semi-government or an autonomous organization, then a copy of the compensation order shall be sent to the higher authority of the respondent.

(9) If the respondent fails to pay the compensation according to the order made under subsection (3), the Court may direct the employer or a debtor of the respondent, to directly pay to the victim or to deposit in her bank account a portion of the wages or salaries or debt due to or accrued to the credit of the respondent.

(10) The compensation imposed under this section may be realized according to the provisions of the Public Demands Recovery Act, 1913(Bengal Act III of 1913).

17. Custody Orders

Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the Court may, at any stage of hearing of the application for a protection order

or for any other relief under this Act grant order for temporary custody of any child or children of the victim to the victim or to any applicant in favour of the victim and if necessary, the arrangements for any visit to such child or children by the respondent.

18. Court to Give Copies of Order Free of Cost: The Court shall, in all cases where it has passed any order under this Act, order that a copy of such order shall be given free of cost to the parties to the application, the officer in-charge of the concern police station, the Enforcement Officer and if applicable, any service provider.

19. Duration and Alteration of Orders

(l) A protection order made under the section 14 shall be in force till the application for discharge submitted by the victim and accepted the same by the Court.

(2) If the Court, on receipt of an application from the victim or the respondent, is satisfied that there is a change in circumstances requiring alteration, modification, amendment or revocation of any order made under this Act, it may, for reasons to be recorded in writing pass such order, as it deems appropriate.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISPOSAL OF APPLICATION, TRIAL, APPEAL, ETC.

20. Disposal of Cases

(1) The Court shall, dispose of every application made under this Act within a period of 60 (sixty) working days from the date of issuance of notice.

(2) Where the concerned Court fails to dispose of the application within the stipulated time under sub-section (1) on unavoidable reasons, reasons to be recorded in writing it shall disposed of the case within another 15 (fifteen) working days and shall inform the matter in writing to the appellate court.

(3) Where the concerned Court again fails to dispose of the case within the extended time under sub-section (2), reasons to be recorded in writing it shall disposed of the case within another 7 (seven) working days and shall inform the matter of such time extension in writing to the appellate court.

(4) Where the concerned Court again fails to dispose of the case within the extended time under sub-section (3), it shall dispose of the case as soon as possible and shall send a written report in every 7 (seven) days to the appellate court, but the appellate court either by the application of any party or its own motion may transfer the case to any other appropriate court.

(5) When any case is transferred under sub-section (4), it shall be disposed of on priority basis and action shall be taken from the stage where it was pending, as if it was pending in this court on that stage and it was never transferred.

21. Trial

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure or in any other law for the time being in force, any application or trial of an offence or any proceeding under this Act shall be tried of by a First Class Magistrate or where applicable, by a Metropolitan Magistrate.

(2) In granting the compensation order the Judicial Magistrate or Metropolitan Magistrate shall have no pecuniary jurisdiction.

22. Procedure of Trial

(1) Save as otherwise provided in this Act, for disposal of any application or trial of an offence or any proceeding under this Act the provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure shall be applicable.

(2) For disposal of any application or trial of an offence or any proceeding under this Act the provisions of summary trial laid down in chapter XXII of the Code of Criminal Procedure shall be applicable.

23. Proceedings to be Held in Camera

The Court, either on the consent of the concern parties or its own motion deem necessary, it may conduct the proceedings under this Act in camera.

24. Local Inquiry

In the process of disposal of any application or proceeding the court may direct, after due notice to the parties, to make local inquiry to ascertain the truth of the incidence and such inquiry shall be completed within the stipulated time given by the court.

25. Service of Order

(1) Any order issued by the court under this Act shall be served to the parties according to the procedure laid down in the Code of Criminal Procedure.

(2) Any order issued by the court under this Act shall be served by the process server of the court or by the police officer or by the Enforcement Officer: Provided that the warrant of arrest shall be served by the police officer.

(3) The process server or the police officer or the Enforcement Officer shall serve the copy of the order within 3 (three) working days and submit the service return to the court along with a certificate that such order was duly served.

(4) If necessary, in addition to the above methods order or notice may be served by registered post or by courier service or by any other ways prescribed by the rules, and for these additional ways the cost of service shall be borne by the applicant.

26. Trial in Absentia of the Respondent

(1) Where the notice for appearance of the respondent was served properly and the respondent does not appear before the court or after appearing once remains absent at the subsequent date, the court recording its decision so to do, try the case in absence of the respondent and disposed of the case ex parte.

(2) Where the notice for appearance of the respondent was served properly and the respondent does not appear before the court or after appearing once remains absent at the subsequent date, the court may, issue warrant of arrest against the respondent.

27. Rejection of Complaint

When any complaint is being rejected by a court due to the absence of the complainant, the court by whom the complaint was rejected, on the basis of application made by the complainant and also on satisfactory ground, may revive the case from the stage where it was rejected:

Provided that the application must be submitted within 30 (thirty) working days of rejection and such application must not be submitted more than once.

28. Appeal

(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code of Criminal Procedure or any other law for the time being in force, for the purpose of this Act the

Chief Judicial Magistrate or where applicable, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court shall be deemed the appellate court.

(2) The appeal against any order under this Act shall be filed by any aggrieved party within 30 (thirty) working days from the date of passing of the order to the Chief Judicial Magistrate or where applicable, to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court. (3) The appeal shall be disposed of within 60 (sixty) working days from its filing and it must not be transferred more than once without any valid reason.

CHAPTER SIX

OFFENCE, PUNISHMENT, ETC.

29. Cognisance, Bailablity and Compoundablity

The offence committed under this Act shall be cognizable, bailable and compoundable.

30. Penalty for Breach of Protection Order

A breach of protection order by the respondent shall be an offence under this Act and shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to 6 (six) months, or with fine which may extend to ten thousand taka, or with both and repetition of any offence shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to 2 (two) years, or with fine which may extend to one (1) lakh Taka, or with both.

31. Community Welfare Service

(1) The Court, if it deems fit, instead of passing an order of sentence against the respondent under section 30, may pass an order to perform various community welfare services by the respondent and responsibility may be vested upon any institution or organization to supervise such services.

(2) From the income gained by the respondent due to the community welfare services under sub-section (1), the Court may pass an order to pay such portion of the income to the victim and where applicable, to her child/children or any dependants as it deems appropriate.

(3) For the purpose of the sub-section (1) and (2) rules may be framed.

32. Punishment for False Complaint

If any person with the motive of causing loss to any other person knowing that there is no cause of complaint under this Act, nevertheless makes a complaint, shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to 1(one) year, or with fine which may extend to 50(fifty) thousand taka, or with both.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MISCELLANEOUS

33. Public Servants: The Enforcement Officers, while acting or purporting to act in pursuance of any of the provisions of this Act shall be deemed to the public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Penal Code,1860.

34. Accountability of Enforcement Officer: If any Enforcement Officer fails or refuses to discharge his or her duties as directed by the Court without any sufficient reason, he or she shall be liable for departmental proceeding.

35. Act not in Derogation of Any Other Law: The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law, for the time being in force.

36. Power to Make Rules: The Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of this Act.

37. Authentic English Text: The Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, published an authentic text of the original Bengali Act in English: Provided that in the event of conflict between the Bengali and the English text, the Bengali text shall prevail.

APPENDIX D

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Domestic Violence
(Prevention and Protection) Rules, 2013

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
May 2013

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

NOTIFICATION

Date: 29 April, 2013 AD. S.R.O No. 116/Law/2013. In response of the powers conferred by section 36 of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010 (Act 58 of 2010), the Government is make the following Rules namely:

1. Short title and Commencement: These rules may be called the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Rules, 2013.

2. Definitions: In this Rules, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context:

(a) "Act" means Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010 (Act 58 of 2010);

(b) "Booklet" means any booklet published by the Ministry relating to prevention and protection of domestic violence);

(c) "Domestic Violence" means any act as defined in section 3 of the Act;

(d) "Enforcement Officer" means the Upazila (sub-district) Women Affairs officer under the control of the Department of Women Affairs or any officer appointed by the government on this behalf under section 5 of the Act;

(e) "Form" means any form prescribed by the Rules;

(f) "Ministry" means Ministry of Women and Children Affairs;

(g) "Victim" means a child or woman who is or has been or is at risk of being subjected to domestic violence by any other member of the family to whom a family relationship exists;

3. Information to be Provided to the Enforcement Officer etc.

(a) Any victim or any other person on her/his behalf, reasonable believe that domestic violence has taken place or is likely to take place, then he/she will inform the matter according to Form A either by writing or orally or by telephone or mobile phone or by e-mail to the enforcement officer having jurisdiction in the area.

(b) Any information received under sub-rule (1) the enforcement officer shall enter it into register maintained under Form B and supply a copy of it to the victim of the informant free of cost.

5. Responsibilities of the Enforcement Officer: For the purpose of the clause (j) of subsection (1) of section 6 of the Act and not derogating the generality of that section, the enforcement officer shall perform the following duties and responsibilities, namely:

a) Inform the victim about her rights and remedies given in the law and supply booklets free of cost;

b) If necessary, assist the victim or any other person on her behalf to fill-up the Form-A;

c) Extend necessary cooperation to the disabled women and children victim considering their disability;

d) Assist the Court according to its demand and direction;

e) Follow-up progress of the domestic violence cases either with the assistance of service providing organisation or by his/her own initiative.

6. List of the Service Provider:

(1) According to sub-section (1) of section 7 of the Act, any service provider organisation can apply to the Ministry according to Form C for enlistment as service providing organisation.

(2) After receiving any application according to subsection (1) the Ministry, after satisfaction on the basi of performance can enlist the organisation as service provider and can reject the application and shall inform the acceptance or rejection:

Provided that no application shall be rejected without giving an opportunity of being heard.

(3) Ministry will prepare division or district wise list of the service providing organisations and send it to all enforcement officer and als publish the list in the newspaper and web-site of ministry.

(4) After receiving the service provider’s list according to subsection (3), the enforcement officer will display it in his office notice board or any open place so that it can be easily visible

7. Responsibilities of the service providing organisation: For the purpose of the clause (d) of subsection (2) of section 7 of the Act and not derogating the generality of that section, the service providing organisation shall perform the following duties and responsibilities, namely:

(a) Inform the victim about her rights and remedies according to the Act;

(b) Distribute booklets supplied by the ministry free of cost;

(c) Assist the victim to fill-up the Form A and record and preserve the information according to Form D and supply its copy to the victim free of cost;

(d) Take necessary action to provide desired service according to the Act and inform the matter to the nearest police station and enforcement officer;

(e) Provide necessary cooperation to the disabled women and children victim;

(f) Extend full cooperation and assistance to the enforcement officer to implement the provision of clause (d) of the rule 4.

8. Responsibilities of the Police Officer: For the purpose of the clause (f) of section 4 of the Act and not derogating the generality of that section, the police officer shall perform the following duties and responsibilities, namely;

(a) Filling up the Form E after receiving the information of domestic violence and supply a it's copy to the victim or where applicable, to the informant and inrom the matter to the enforcement officer;

(b) Preserve the article, materials, papers and documents related to domestic violence;

(c) Assist the enforcement officer according to his/her needs to collect information regarding domestic violence and other related issues.

9. Procedure to Apply to the Court: According to section 11 of the Act, the victim or on behalf of her informant, enforcement officer or service providing organisation can apply to the court by fulfilling the Form F through an advocate.

10. Application against breach of protection order: A breach of protection order or any terms and condition of it by the respondent, the victim or on behalf of her any person can apply directly to the court who passed the protection order or can apply to the enforcement officer in written and he will sent it to the concerned court.

11. Responsibility of the Ministry: Ministry will provide training to the enforcement officer, police officer, service providing organisation and related persons by terns.

Form A [Vide Rules 3 (1), 4 (1) (b) and 6 (c)]

Domestic Violence Information

Date of Submitting Information/Complain:

1. Description of the victim

Name & Age	Occupation	Educational Qualification	Father/ Husband's Name	Mother's Name	Permanent Address	Shared Residence/ Present Address	Mobile No.	Relationship with Respondent	Number of Family Members

N.B Nature of disability, if the victim is disable:

2. Description of the informant on behalf of victim (if available)

Name & Age	Occupation	Educational Qualification	Father/ Husband's Name	Mother's Name	Permanent Address	Present Address	Mobile No.	Relationship with Victim

3. Description of the respondent:

Name & Age	Occupation	Educational qualification	Father/ Husband's Name	Mother's Name	Permanent Address	Present Address	Mobile No.	Relationship with Victim

4. Description of victim's children (if available)

(a) Number of children:

(b) Description of children:

Sl. No	Name	Age	Sex	Custodian at present (Name & Address)

5. Incidence of domestic violence:

Date, time and place	Nature of violence: physical/mental/sexual or financial loss and summery of the incidence and relevant papers/documents	Comments

6. Whether remedy was sought in any other law?

Nature of the case and section	Name and address of the parties	G.D no, case no, date of submission, name of police station and court	Present status and next date of the case

7. Nature of assistance or service required:

1. ----------

2. ----------

8. Attachments (where applicable)

1. ----------

2. ----------

Signature/thumb impression
with
name of the victim/informant
and date

Witness

1. ----------

2. ----------

Form B [Vide Rule 3 (2)]

Register

Name and Address of the Office

Sl. No	Date and time of receiving information	Name, address and mobile no. of the victim/informant	Name, address and mobile no. of the respondent	Brief of the domestic violence	Information of the other service providing organisation where victim has been sent	Information regarding sending to the court (case no. date and present status of the case	Description of the steps taken

Name and address of the enforcement officer

Form C [Vide Rule 5 (1)]

Application form for the enlistment as service providing organisation

To

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

1. Name of the organisation:
2. Address, phone no and email of the head office:
3. Name, designation and address (with phone no.) of the designated person:
4. Registration no. and name of the law under which it was registered:
5. Tax index no:
6. Main activities of the organisation:
7. Districts where the activities of the organisation are going on:
8. Number of branch offices of the organisation:
9. Nature of service provided:
10. Nature and detailed description of the services:
11. Any other information regarding the organisation who are interested to be enlisted as service providing organisation:

Signature of the applicant:

Date:

Seal:

*Necessary documents must be attached in favour of the information

Form D [Vide Rule 6 (c)]

Register to be kept in the service providing organization

Name and address of the office

Sl. No.	Date and time of receiving information	Name, address and mobile no. of the victim/informant	Name, address of the respondent	Brief of the domestic violence	Date of sending to the enforcement officer	Description of the steps taken

Name, designation and signature of the designated person

Form E [Vide Rule 7 (a)]

Register to be kept in the police station

Sl. No.	Date and time of receiving information	Name, address and mobile no. of the victim	Name, address of the respondent	Brief of the domestic violence	Date of sending to the enforcement officer	Description of the steps taken

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Name, designation and signature of the designated person

Form F [Vide Rule 8 & Section 11 of the Act]

Application form

Court of learned----------

---------Domestic violence case no----------

----------/201--------

Name:

Father/Husband:

Mother:

Address:

Applicant

Versus

Name:

Father/Husband:

Mother:

Address:

Respondent

Humble submission from the applicant is that,

1. Detailed information on domestic violence according to section 11 of the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 submitted by victim/on behalf of victim informant/enforcement officer/service providing organisation.
2. Seeking remedy for (according to the nature of violence)
3. If applicable, any other remedies according to section 15, 16, or 17 of the Act:

So, considering the above circumstances and causes, domestic violence information and attached documents the learned court may kindly grant the aforesaid remedy, protection order in favour of victim against domestic violence and any other remedy according to law and for ends of justice.

Place:----------

Date:----------

Affidavit

By believing the above information correct and true according to my knowledge, today----------AD, I am putting my signature at the chamber of my engaged lawyer.

Signature of the person making affidavit

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW GUIDELIES

The following were the central guiding questions for the participants in the study. I also used various supportive questions depending on the situation and context.

Guidelines for Victims of Domestic Violence

Research Question: What are the women's experiences of domestic violence with regard to forms, causes, consequences, coping strategies, and help-seeking practices?

Date and Location of Interview:

Time:

Age:

Religion

No. of Children:

Level of Education:

Duration of Marital Life:

Present Marital Status:

Livelihood Status:

1. What is your idea about domestic violence against women in marital life?
2. Have you ever seen domestic violence happening to other people?
3. Have you ever experienced domestic violence by your husband?
4. What, when, and how did the violence happen (clues with regard to various forms and practices)?
5. Why was the violence perpetrated against you?
6. Was anyone involved other than your husband? Who? What did they do and why?
7. What problems did you encounter (major/minor) with regard to violence?
8. Was the problem with violence only limited to you or extended to others?

9. Has violence ever been perpetrated against your children or in front of your children, or other family members? If yes, what happened to them?

10. What did you do during the violence or why (clues regarding coping)?

11. Did you ever seek help from others? If yes, to whom and what were your experiences in this regard (clues regarding help-seeking)?

12. What is your assessment of help-seeking?

13. Do you have any idea about the Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act 2010? If yes, what do you know about the act?

14. In your opinion how can domestic violence be eliminated from society?

15. Do you have anything to add with regard to your whole experience of violence?

Guidelines for Community People

Research Question: What are the perceptions and activities of the local community regarding domestic violence against women?

Date and Location of Interview:

Time:

Religion:

Gender:

Position in the Community:

1. What do you understand about domestic violence against women?
2. Do the men in your community perpetrate violence against their wives?
3. What do they do? What is your experience in this regard?
4. What is the nature of domestic violence in this community?
5. Why does domestic violence happen in the community? What are the major reasons for that?
6. What are the consequences of domestic violence?
7. Who suffers from domestic violence, and how?
8. How do women cope with domestic violence, and why?
9. What types of help-seeking strategies do women seek help for in the event of domestic violence, and why? Who seeks help and who does not?

10. How does the community extend support to the victims, and what are the community activities in this regard?

11. What is your perception of community activities regarding domestic violence?

12. Do the victims receive adequate support from the community? If no/yes, how?

13. In what capacity have you been involved in community activities against domestic violence, and what role did you play in this regard?

14. What is your experience in this regard?

15. Do you have any idea about the Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act 2010? If yes, what do you know about the act?

16. Have you ever been involved with this act? If yes, how?

17. How can domestic violence be eliminated from the community?

18. Do you have anything to add?

Guidelines for Frontline Implementers

Research Question: What are the perceptions and experiences of frontline policy implementers with regard to the implementation of the Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act 2010?

Date and Location of Interview:

Time:

Name of Organisation:

Official Designation/Profession:

1. What is your orientation of the DVPPA 2010 Act?
2. Have you received any formal or informal training and by whom? If not, why?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the act?
4. Do you know about your roles and responsibilities under this act?
5. If yes, how do you discharge those roles and responsibilities?
6. If no, how do you extend services to the victims?
7. Have you ever made any attempt to use the act. If yes, how? If no, why?

8. If you practiced this act, what were your experiences?
9. In your opinion, how is the act being implemented, and why?
10. What measures have you undertaken for the implementation of this act?
11. What are the barriers to implementing the act in your existing capacity?
12. How can these barriers be eliminated?
13. What do you suggest to improve the performance of the act?
14. What changes and measures should be adopted in this regard?

Guidelines for Legal Aid Activists from Organisations Involved in Drafting the Act

Date and Location of Interview:

Time:

Name of the Organisaton:

Official Designation:

1. Why was the Act needed in the context of Bangladesh?
2. How was it enacted? Who was involved?
3. What was the role of your organisation in the process?
4. What was the reaction of the government in enacting the act?
5. What is your reflection of about the act?

Guidelines for Concerned Ministry Official Looking After Training

Date of Interview:

Time:

Interview Location:

Official Designation:

1. How is the training of the implementers managed (clues regarding selection of participants, duration, resource persons, content and financial resources)?
2. What achievement has been made so far?
3. What has not been done so far?
4. What is the future training plan for the act? Will implementers other than EOs be trained on the act? If yes, when and if no, why?
5. What are the constraints in imparting training to all levels of implementers?

Guidelines for Concerned Ministry Official Looking after Policy Issues

Date and Location of Interview:

Time:

Official Designation:

1. What are the roles being played by the ministry at the top with regard to the implementation of the act?
2. What is the overall management of the ministry concerning the act?
6. What are the barriers and constraints to the implementation of the act?
7. How does the ministry address the barriers?
8. How does the ministry maintain coordination with other agencies about the act?
9. What are the future plans of the ministry with regard to implementing the act?

Guidelines for Victims That Have Sought Recourse under DVPPA 2010

Date and Location of Interview:

Time:

Age:

Religion

No of Children:

Level of Education:

Duration of Marital Life:

Present Marital Status:

Livelihood status:

1. Please share your experiences of domestic violence?
2. Why and how did you seek recourse under the act?
3. What happened after you sought legal recourse?
4. Did you face any problems?
5. Did you receive adequate support from implementers? If not why?
6. What benefits did you receive after seeking help under this act?
7. How would you assess your present position after seeking legal support?

BIOGRAPHY

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ACADEMIC BACKGROUND	Master of Arts in Women's Studies, University of York, UK (2007) Master of Social Science in Sociology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (1995) Bachelor of Social Science in Sociology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (1994)
PRESENT POSITION	Faculty Member, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC), Dhaka
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS	A Chronicle of the Global Movement to Combat Violence against Women: The Role of the Second-Wave Feminist Movement and the United Nations: The Perspective of Bangladesh. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 16 (2), 213-244, 2015. Community Perceptions and Activisms Regarding Doemstic Violence against Women: Perceptions from Rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Community Positive Practice***,** XIV (3), 79-98, 2014

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AWARD/SCHOLARSHIP

Japan Debt Cancellation Fund Scholarship of the Government of Bangladesh (2006-2007).

The Women's Studies Palgrave Prize for Outstanding Work at the University of York, UK, 2007.

Ph.D. scholarship of National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Bangkok, Thailand (2012-2015).

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