

Impact of Prolonged Mental Torture on Housewives in Middle Class Families

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Abstract

Many individuals across the globe are affected by violence and torture, which may be detrimental to their mental health. While studies have shown that specific traumatic experiences can bring on psychiatric disorders, any traumatic event can set off a cascade of negative emotions that can strain relationships at home and lead to missed work. Stressors and an individual's basic character determine whether or not they experience mental symptoms.

From a medical or health perspective, it has been shown that the psychological effects of torture are the most debilitating for individuals who make it through the trauma. Research has shown that men and women may have distinct experiences and reactions to the same situations. Women were subjected to more psychological abuse and suffered a wider spectrum of psychosomatic and psychological disorders during their detention and after their release, according to a study of torture victims conducted in South Africa. Another research found that victims of sexual assault had trouble sleeping and had terrible dreams. They were also discovered to be permanently sad.

Keywords: prolonged, mental, torture, housewives, middle class

Introduction

The use of physical force against women has increased dramatically in recent years. Women now suffer from torture at the hands of many people, including their in-laws, husbands, employers, police, and government officials. The number of crimes committed against women in India rose by 15.3% in 2021, compared to the previous year, according to data from the country's National Crime Records Bureau. There were over 228,650 recorded crimes against women in 2011, but that number increased to 4,28,278 in 2021, an increase of 87%, according to the National Crime Records Bureau.

Crime against women accounts for 12.7% of all recorded crime in India (Crime Against Women, 2013), and 7.5% of all women in India reside in West Bengal. Andhra Pradesh has 11.5% of the recorded crimes against women in India, although having only 7.3% of the female population. Surprisingly, according to a recent study (Peters, Julie; Wolper, Andrea, eds., 2018), 65% of Indian men think women should put up with violence in the home in order to keep the family together, and that there are instances when women deserve to be beaten. Twenty-four percent of Indian males admitted to having engaged in sexual assault at some time in their life, according to the International males and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) Questionnaire conducted in January 2011. Since many of these incidents do not make it to light, accurate data on their frequency is hard to come by.

Housewives, who in almost every culture have the primary caregiving role in their families, may face significant

mental health challenges as a result. These mental health issues may originate in women's dysfunctional connections with others, especially within their families. According to the World Health Organisation, a person is said to be in a state of mental health if they are able to "maximise their potential, adapt favourably to life's normal stresses, engage in satisfying work, and make positive contributions to their community" (World Health Organisation, 2018). All of these characteristics point to the importance of social and cultural factors in addition to genetic and biological ones in determining an individual's psychological health. In this context, it is crucial to examine how social roles, as a cultural construct, influence people's emotional and psychological health. Indeed, many studies have suggested that conforming to societal norms can be harmful to one's mental health, with women faring particularly poorly.

Muscle tension, embarrassment, sleep disturbances, and PTSD are just some of the mental and physical effects of emotional abuse. Abuse may take many forms, but the first one that may spring to mind is physical abuse. Abuse, however, takes various forms. Emotional abuse is a kind of abuse that is equally as harmful as physical violence, and it typically comes first. They frequently occur simultaneously. You may list the following indications as ones that are always present:

- a) Yelling
- b) The Use of Derogatory Names
- c) Using derogatory language or other forms of ridicule
- d) (Gaslighting) Getting someone to doubt their own sanity by spreading doubts.
- e) The invasion of personal space
- f) Retaliation for resisting their demands
- g) Life-controlling attempts
- h) separating oneself socially

Dangerous in a number of respects A woman who has suffered emotional abuse must understand that it is not her fault. It's not like there's one "right" way to feel about it. The victim's emotions, however, are not abnormal, even if the abuse itself is not.

Short-Term Effects

At first, there is often denial of the abuse. Finding oneself in such a circumstance might be surprising at first. The hope that there is no abuse or that things will improve with time is just normal. Women tend to accept it as inevitable as well. They are usually pushed to the point where they have to live entirely by themselves:

- a) bewilderment
- b) terror
- c) despair
- d) embarrassment

This emotional toll can most often results in behavioral and physical side effects. Housewives tend to experience:

- a. Facing difficulty while Concentrating
- b. Mood Swings
- c. Tension in Muscles
- d. Night-mares

- e. Heartbeat (Racing)
- f. Aches and pains

The Long-term Effects

Studies show that severe emotional abuse can be as powerful as physical abuse. Over time, both can contribute to low self-esteem and depression. Most of the victims usually housewives:

- a. nervousness
- b. continual pain
- c. fault
- d. wakefulness
- e. Social removal or loneliness

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD can develop after a frightening or shocking event. The doctor may make a PTSD diagnosis if the victim experience high levels of stress or fear over a long period of time. These feelings are usually so severe that they interfere with an individual's daily functioning. Common symptoms of PTSD include:

- a. Angry outburst
- b. Being effortlessly startled
- c. unenthusiastic thoughts
- d. sleeplessness
- e. Night-mares
- b) Reliving trauma (flashbacks) & experiencing bodily symptoms like rapid heartbeat

The government has also taken significant action in response to the rising tide of violence against women. The government's Ministry for Women and Children's Development, together with a few NGOs, is working hard to end the all-too-common problem of violence against women.

Spouse Battering Symptoms

Battered woman syndrome (BWS) Abuse of any kind may cause severe mental distress, but when it comes from a spouse, the effects can be devastating. Intimate partner violence (IPV) includes situations like these, which may cause mental and physical health issues including despair, anxiety, and PTSD. A "survival personality," characterised by irrational behaviour and an emphasis on self-preservation, has been linked to BWS. There are typically three groups of BWS symptoms:

- a) Physical
- b) Psychological
- c) Behavioral

Signs of damage or disease, such as bruising, fractured bones, or persistent weariness, may manifest physically in BWS sufferers. Depression, anxiety, poor self-esteem, feelings of helplessness, guilt, and dread may all play a role in their mental health.

Victims' reactions might span from numbness to self-isolation to suicidal ideation to drug misuse. Recognise that BWS may have different impacts on different people. Support from loved ones, as well as professional help, is an important part of treatment for BWS.

Victims of abuse may benefit from therapy if they learn to manage stressful situations, understand what sets them off, and gain confidence in themselves. Equally crucial is making sure the victim has access to services like counselling and legal representation.

Many women in the middle of the twentieth century who displayed signs of dissatisfaction with the traditional role of homemaker were diagnosed with the 'housewife syndrome,' a mental disorder characterised by episodes of supposed madness and mysterious conditions like hysteria or neurosis.

Long-term marital violence may lead to battered woman syndrome, also called battered person syndrome. Battered women syndrome may leave victims feeling hopeless. This might lead them to assume falsely that the abuse is their fault and that they have no choice but to put up with it. Because of this, many victims of abuse never tell anybody about it. This disorder is treatable, and normal functioning may be restored.

Stages of Battered Woman Syndrome

Battered woman syndrome can fail to appear in exactly the same way in every person who experiences it due to the wide variety of life situations that individuals might find themselves in.

However, the battered woman syndrome is generally thought to have four stages:

- 1 Refusing to believe that abuse is occurring or trying to rationalise each incident as "only that one" are both examples of denial.
- 2 The victim attributes the abuse to themselves and feels guilty about it.
- 3 At this point, the abused individual has come to terms with the fact that their spouse has an abusive personality and that they are not at fault for the violence.
- 4 The victim recognises that the abuse was the fault of the offender alone. They may begin considering their choices for ending the relationship at this point.

Emergence of battered woman syndrome

Domestic violence is a leading cause of Battered Woman Syndrome. The phrase "domestic abuse" encompasses not just violence between intimate partners but also abuse of children and the elderly. There is a pattern to domestic violence between partners:

- a. Using "love bombing," grand passionate gestures, and early pressure for dedication, the abuser will prevail over a new partner and move quickly into the relationship.
- b. The abuser may employ both psychological and physical methods. This usually begins with something little, like slapping their partner instead of striking them or punching the wall next to them.
- c. The abuser will be excessively amorous in an effort to win back their lover and will claim to feel bad about their actions.
- d. A "honeymoon" phase will occur during which the abuser is at their best, fooling their spouse into believing things would finally change for the better.
- e. Abuse happens, and the vicious cycle resumes.

There are a variety of factors that cause people to stay in violent partnerships.

- a. Abuse typically involves the creation of a financial reliance on the abuser.

- b. For the sake of their children, they want to form a stable family unit.
- c. Avoiding leaving out of fear
- d. Denial or scepticism that one's spouse engages in abusive behaviour
- e. Depression or poor self-esteem so severe that the victim blames themselves for the abuse
- f. They justify their abuser's actions by telling themselves that they can change if they really want to.

When an individual is subjected to repeated acts of violence, a pattern of abuse known as battered woman syndrome may emerge. People suffering from this condition often find it challenging to regain independence. A victim of domestic violence may:

- a. Consider the violence to be their own doing
- b. Keep the maltreatment a secret from loved ones.
- c. Apprehension for their own safety or the safety of their children
- d. Think their abuser knows everything about them and can track their every move.
- e. Live in constant terror, never knowing if they would encounter a caring spouse or an abusive one from day to day.

Warning Signs of BWS

There are a number of warning signs that someone is in an abusive relationship and needs assistance. Among these signs are:

- a. Avoiding social contact and making up reasons not to pursue hobbies or interests (which the abuser may exploit).
- b. Behaviour indicative of worry or fear while near one's spouse
- c. Getting bruises easily and not being able to explain it
- d. Being short on resources, whether it be cash, credit, or wheels
- e. Displaying a striking contrast in character
- f. Being called often by a significant other, particularly if it's to check in or show signs of anxiety
- g. Being in a relationship with someone who quickly becomes angry, jealous, or possessive
- h. Putting on long-sleeved shirts in the summer in order to conceal any bruising.

Domestic violence and the resulting battered woman syndrome have been linked to health problems that may linger for decades. Possible long-term consequences include:

- a. Symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), such as nightmares, dissociation states, and rage attacks directed against the abuser
- b. Stress-related health concerns including hypertension and other heart troubles
- c. Problems with one's health as a result of the physical abuse, such as arthritic joints or broken bones
- d. Recurrent pain in the back or head

Diseases like diabetes, asthma, depression, and immune system breakdown are all made more likely by chronic stress. The Biological Consequences of Torture and Trauma

Key brain regions can be permanently altered by traumatic experiences like post-traumatic stress disorder. The stress hormones cortisol and norepinephrine tend to rise in those who have experienced trauma. Many people have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of exposure to traumatic events such as assaults or sexual assaults. Most persons who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) have to deal with it for the rest of their lives.

Recent research indicates that both the brain and the body may be negatively impacted by emotional trauma and PTSD. The consequences of both physical and psychological stress on the brain have been seen by neuropathologists. Because of this similarity, it is clear that the Amygdala, the Hippocampus, and the Prefrontal Cortex are all negatively impacted by each of these traumas. Which means that a person can sustain brain damage from experiencing emotional trauma, such as PTSD. The amygdala is a region of the brain that controls emotional responses, basic instincts, and long-term memory. The amygdala's main job is to identify instances of fear. It is able to identify and collect data about potential dangers in the environment. When the amygdala detects danger via sensory input like sight or hearing, it triggers the emotional response of fear. This takes place below our awareness, in the subconscious.

The amygdala is overactive in those with post-traumatic stress disorder. Those who have experienced severe emotional trauma to the brain are more likely to react negatively to potentially distressing situations. When a person has experienced a traumatic incident, the amygdala may become overactive in response to inputs that are associated with that event.

Brain damage from emotional trauma may cause long-term stress, heightened apprehension, and irritability. This might make it more challenging for the afflicted person to relax or even sleep. The hippocampus is located inside the brain's limbic system. Its primary function is memory storage and recall, and it also helps you tell the difference between the past and the present. Physical harm to the hippocampus is a possibility. The hippocampus may be reduced in size in persons with post-traumatic stress disorder, according to research. For trauma survivors, changes in the hippocampus may impair memory recall.

Survivors may also be haunted by other memories that are very clear and present. The smallest environmental triggers may send a trauma victim spiralling into anxiety and terror. This is because the sufferer is unable to separate the present from the traumatic event that caused it. The brain's sense of danger triggers the body's fight-or-flight reaction.

Healing the Brain after Emotional Trauma

Scientists have discovered that the brain is unable to repair the damage produced by emotional stress and PTSD. While brain function cannot be restored to normal. Medical science has developed trauma medicine and therapies that may help alleviate symptoms of emotional stress and promote recovery. Patients will be able to overcome their traumatic experiences by working with the specialists that Highland Springs has to offer.

Medication for PTSD and other forms of emotional trauma is one approach to recovery. Medications that modify the neurotransmitters serotonin and norepinephrine are often prescribed by medical professionals. This will aid in maintaining a healthy level of these naturally occurring brain chemicals.

It is common practise to provide antidepressants, monoamine oxidase (MAO) inhibitors, anti-psychotics beta-blockers, or benzodiazepine to those who have survived traumatic experiences. The doctor will propose trauma medicine and prescribe the optimum prescription for you based on the severity of your emotional trauma.

Therapy is another typical treatment for those who have survived emotional trauma and are trying to heal. The primary objective of the various forms of treatment is to alter the victim's way of thinking. Talk therapy, physical activity, and other forms of treatment may be used. In order to heal emotional trauma, the therapist and client must work together to identify emotional triggers and replace them with more reasonable, neutral feelings. Desensitisation therapy works by having the client talk about the traumatic experiences that have happened in the past. This helps individuals work through their feelings about the incident, which in turn reduces flashbacks and other problems. Acceptance and continuing on are at the heart of desensitisation.

The therapist's job is to make the patient that they are not to blame and to provide them the tools they need to go on.

Conclusion

Since many housewives in patriarchal societies only have a primary or secondary education, it is crucial that these women have access to and are guaranteed funding for educational support services. Literacy programmes (with consideration for family dynamics) need to be made available to illiterate housewives, and it's up to us to find them. The course material should also emphasise the development of abilities like information literacy.

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