RESEARCH ARTICLE

Gender Relation, Patriarchal Control, and Domestic Violence: A Qualitative Study in Mauritius

Zareen Nishaat Beebeejaun-Muslum*

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence has become a significant issue affecting women. Women's oppression has increased through living in a modern society. Mauritius is an example where domestic violence has been critically expanded, resulting in manslaughter. Therefore, the aim of the study is to investigate the link between gender relations, patriarchal control, and domestic violence. The focal point is to understand women's position in a patriarchal society like Mauritius, whether patriarchy is a dominant factor, and how gender relations play their role in contributing to domestic abuse. Furthermore, identifying the aspect of staying in an abusive relationship is an important aspect of determining the control of men over women and how they cope in this type of relationship. A qualitative approach has been used to identify these factors by using a sample of thirteen victims who were subjected to different forms of patriarchal control by their spouses and partners. Results show that domestic violence keeps increasing as a significant societal problem. There is a strong correlation between patriarchal control and domestic violence in Mauritius.

Keywords: Domestic violence, gender relations, gender violence, patriarchal society.

1. Domestic Violence as a Social Phenomenon

Violence against women is in its several aspects prevalent in cultures and across the world. It persists to be an alarming issue and to be acknowledged as conventional in communities. Domestic violence signifies violent behaviour perpetrated by a companion, spouse or family members living under the same roof. In primitive times, domestic violence is about men taking advantage of womanhood and using hostility to control females. The majority happen to be intimidated by their spouse, who employs their power as a manoeuvre. Violent act towards women weakens their aptitude. Moreover, violent behaviour can be passed through generations. For occurrence, boys who witness their mothers being harmed tend to behave in the same ways as their partners, and girls have the propensity to invest in an abusive relationship. In consequence, violence is a vicious circle in which generations are trapped, and it begins at birth and continues throughout a lifetime (Alhabib *et al.*, 2010).

Violence rules against women were enacted in 1997 in Mauritius, and changes to the law have been passed to lessen abuse. Given the alarming situation, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Development has established six centres named the Family Support Bureau in each region of Mauritius. These institutions help women to obtain protection orders against their perpetrators. It offers services like counselling to couples. They work alongside shelters that welcome victim and the family protection unit, a section that deals only with victims of domestic abuse. An operating line has been implemented, too, to assist victims. To understand women's position in Mauritius, whether they are disadvantaged because men are seen as the dominant gender causes an increase in domestic violence in the society. Fearless to report aggression, women stay in a vicious domestic violence cycle due to personal and societal reasons, but agencies are now put forward to fight against women's struggle. Womankind stands at a detrimental status since gender differences play a crucial role in a male-dominated society.

Mauritius reported that 24% of women have gone through particular types of violence (Kasturirangan *et al.*, 2004, p. 320).

1.1. Domestic Violence and the Patriarchal Ideology

Domestic violence is an issue about women in society by a patriarchal system which is embedded in the theory of power and subordination (Tracy, 2007). Unequal power relations exist due to male superiority, including socioeconomic forces, family institutions where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent power of males, and legislation and cultural sanctions that have deprived women of an independent legal and social status. According to Iverson *et al.* (2009), the majority of Mauritian women are challenged by domestic violence, especially victims of sexual harassment from their spouses. Laws have been implemented in the judicial system to reduce acts of violence, but they are constantly present in Mauritius. Protection orders have been provided to victims of abuse, and shelters do welcome them for some time; however, due to constraints to basic needs, the majority of women prefer to return to their perpetrators. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Development Unit collaborated with agencies like NGOs to emancipate women by offering programmes. However, the fact is that Mauritius is seen as a patriarchal society where the head of the household is the man. It is difficult for women to rely on themselves. They have the current attitude of depending on men, resulting in male supremacy over women (Humphreys & Thiara, 2003, p. 209).

1.2. The Concept of Domestic Violence and the Patriarchal System

For a long time, domestic abuse has been categorized as a subject matter but not as a social problem. It is mainly regarded as a family matter that should be resolved among the relatives. No laws were driven in this issue, and women faced difficulties in their relationships without being able to seek assistance from any forces of the law. Male dominance is often seen as the reason behind the violence women encounter. Battering is a natural violent behaviour perpetrated, not by psychopaths but by men who consider that supremacy is one of their lawful rights as men and as being married allows unlimited power to manipulate women and believe hostility is a normal way of keeping domination (Dutton & Painter, 1993). Considering these perspectives, there is a common belief that hostility is a way of maintaining domination. Subsequently, long ago, men were considered to have an instrumental role, while women were given the expressive role. Thus, with this notion, it is possible that men being the breadwinner gives more advantages in terms of power and control, resulting in final decision-making and using physical force towards women for them to be submissive (Dobash & Dobash, 1977, p. 58).

Conversely, domestic abuse has been acknowledged as a social phenomenon that encourages oppression towards women (Tracy, 2007). Men used their power to exert their rights as husbands or partners to prove their virility when they felt women tended to take over their decisions. Using their physical force, they preserve their power in communities and households. On the other hand, the term 'patriarchy' denotes male power in the community. It is male supremacy over women, and it is more than just an expression as the feminists claim that it is a perception and, similarly to other ideologies, it is an instrument to realize women's truth. The root of male dominance suggests that a number of indications from previous studies believe that males who grow up in a patriarchal community turn out to be more aggressive towards their partners rather than males who grow up in a democratic society. Iverson *et al.* (2009) found that men's finances and authority in the household were the deepest analysts of communities that show a rise of abuse towards females, According to a local investigation in 1978, female violence rose to 11% in relationships with an authoritarian spouse in contrast to the 3% where the partners have the same authority level (Sultana, 2012).

Domestic violence cannot be apprehended without ignoring the forms of cruelty and brutality, the offender's purposes, the spouse's surroundings, and the social surroundings in which aggression takes place (Johnson *et al.*, 1995). Domestic violence includes battering, sexual violence, and emotional exploitation. The types of domestic violence have the objective of increasing and influencing the victim. The patriarchal system denotes powerful rights for individuals, especially in a woman's life. The society's structure is in men's favour, considering that women are too sensitive and subordinate to be at their level (Dare *et al.*, 2013, p. 64). The root of male dominance suggests that a number of indications from previous studies believe that males who grow up in a patriarchal community turn out to be more aggressive towards their partners rather than males who grow up in a democratic society. Edalati and Redzuan (2010) have found that men's finances and authority in the household show a rise in abuse towards females. According to a local investigation in 1978, female violence rises to 11% in a relationship with an authoritarian spouse in contrast to the 3% where the partners have the same authority level (Sultana, 2012, p. 58).

1.3.   Forms of Patriarchal Control

Violence can engender several forms, such as physical violence, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, economic abuse, and verbal abuse. Most of the time, the violence used against women is physical force, which involves smacking, beating, and fear that causes corporal harm. Physical violence also embraces conducts such as rejecting the idea that the injured spouses seek health checks when required to prevent the partner from being asleep or depriving the person of basic needs or imposing on the victim to participate in illegal affairs, for instance, taking illicit drugs or alcohol consumption adjacent to their desire. Physical abuse signs include contusions, slashes, haemorrhage, and wounds to the head or any part of the body, which necessitate a health check urgently (Chhikara *et al*., 2013).

Similarly, sexual violence is common in an abusive relationship. The perpetrators exert their physical force to compel the victims to have sexual intercourse who may be harmed during the act (Campbell, 2002). Perpetrators who use threats against them which can result in death or severe injuries. Women who are battered are left with contusions, fissures, and long-lasting infirmities. Pregnant women are in danger because the unborn baby's life could be in danger if the mother receives a kick in the belly (Anderson & Saunders, 2003).

Emotional abuse is used to destabilise the victims. Perpetrators harass the person on a day-to-day basis by using harsh words and constantly ignoring the person in front of others; this is a technique to put the victim in isolation or to prevent the victim from meeting another person, which leads to a loss of self-respect and dignity. In this way, they become more helpless and exposed to danger. Most females experiencing psychological harm frequently go through hopelessness, which leads to suicidal tendencies and, most of the time, use of substance abuse. As mentioned, verbal abuse is common in emotional abuse. It consists of abusive words, comments, discussions, or expressions to destabilise the person's dignity (Coker *et al*., 2000).

Economic abuse is a way of mistreatment when one spouse has power over the partner's income. This involves limited access to capital; they deny giving money to their wife or partner. Nevertheless, women who are not dependent on their spouse's income may yet be victims of abuse. Men might have recourse to violent behaviour to ensure their supremacy. Hence, abuse is caused by males to counteract the loss of honour and respect they encounter when they cannot participate in the income expenses equally to their partner (Karakurt & Cumbie, 2012).

1.4.   Mauritius as a Patriarchal Society

The Mauritian society is considered to be a patriarchal system even though women have gained their rights and are supposedly seen as equal to men. Culture varies from society to society, but the patriarchal society is seen as predominant in every societal context. As a multicultural island, Mauritius is intensely populated with several individuals who have strong religious beliefs which teach values to women and men but manipulate the way women behave. For instance, religious manuscripts alleged that women are impure during their menstrual period, which results in an inferiority among men and women. The workplace sector is predominantly administered to men, as women rarely endorse a career promotion. If so, they may be paid less and disadvantaged because women take maternity leave (Ramtohul, 2009, p. 72).

According to Fakun (2017), women need spare time to look after their families. They need to cope with their responsibilities at work and plan their day well, whereas men are less likely to have trouble with household chores and looking after children and elders. Their primary responsibility is to be the breadwinner. According to Mohit (2015), values and morals should be implemented at school, that is, to insert programmes on gender-based violence to teach children that men and women are equal, and that violence does not contribute to a successful and happy life. Mauritius has been subjected to several situations concerning women's violence, but not every domestic violence case has been registered, as most victims feel reluctant to disclose their personal lives. Several Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been established to cater for the well-being of women who are subjected to domestic abuse, like 'SOS femme', 'Passerelle', 'Crysalide'. These organisations provide help to women without any basic needs whose lives are threatened by their perpetrators.

These shelters collaborate with the state to ensure a living for these victims. Laws such as a free hotline have been implemented to protect Mauritian women's rights. Women can contact welfare officers at any time to seek assistance; the protection order has also been implemented, which allows the protection of women for six months, depending on the judge's decision. With this legal paper, the abuser has no right to perpetrate any act of violence; however, if the abuser did misbehave, the offender shall be imprisoned for some time. The government also provides services such as counselling and couples counselling therapy to help couples overcome the barriers in their relationship. However, despite several laws implemented by the ministry, women still face abuse and are even beaten to death (Ramtohul, 2009, p. 56).

1.5. Gender Roles and Women Subordination in Mauritius

The socialization process is different for girls and boys. For occurrence, girls are given toys like dolls, playing the role of a mother, while boys are provided with cars, and they get the chance to learn martial arts. Children are taught about each one's roles according to gender. Stereotypes are common in a society where gender is socially constructed. Women have been ascribed the status of being physically weak.

In contrast, men are ascribed to be physically powerful, which brings the misconceptions that women cannot be independent, they cannot do the same job level as a man, for instance, as a builder, because it necessitates physical capacities, they need to be in the household, taking care of children and elders to be responsible for children socialization Children grow up with the notion that men should be violent. In contrast, women should be obedient and adhere to the rules. Stereotyping gender is a factor which leads to patriarchal control because the idea that males and females are entirely different allows them to mistreat women as they consider women as objects as being more sensitive, given a lower status in the household and society (Blackstone, 2003, p. 335).

Patriarchy is omnipresent in societies and is common for women of several cultural backgrounds. However, their experience of being controlled by men varies among the forms of aggression they go through (Kasturirangan *et al.*, 2004). As a result, women might be reluctant to reveal their conditions of domestic abuse because of the terror and disgrace they might bring to their relatives and groups of people by strengthening labels of violence. In Mauritius, people who belong to wealthy families are less likely to file a complaint with the police station. Women are also categorized as less important by the code Napoleon, which was implemented in 1808 on the island. Mauritian women were considered to have low status in the family.

According to society, women's vocation was to marry a wealthy family, socialize with children, and keep having future children while being passive and acknowledging their spouse's decisions. They did not have the authorization to utter a word or to question their husband's decision. The inferiority encounter, irrespective of caste, seizes several characteristics such as verbal abuse, harassment, disrespect, manipulation, brutality, and restraint in the household, at the office and in communities. For instance, domestic tasks are only operated by females, and the overload of tasks at home gives them less liberty to care for their appearance. Depending on their cultural background, some of them are even deprived of their family legacy. Rules and customs that describe females as mediocre concerning males inflict restrictions towards them. Consequently, it is depicted through religious conviction in households and communities (Ramtohul, 2009, p. 49).

1.6. Coping Strategies of Victims Staying in an Abusive Relationship

The attempts to deal with an abusive relationship can be discerned by their purpose. In an early relation, women may not perceive violence, or they may tend to disregard the initial indication of abuse and, due to it, may get involved in a deep engagement of their relationship. Kim and Gray (2008) found that women's decision to stay and cope with this situation is mainly due to love. Most women stay because they still have feelings, and they take it as an explicit manner to cope. They also search for justification to stay by associating their abuse with other critical situations. If they see that their relationship is not life-threatening, they will tend to stay. At the same time, other women tend to leave because they are not guilty of their abuse, whereas those who feel responsible will have the propensity to stay (Dare *et al.*, 2013).

Women's motives for still living or leaving behind their partners are diverse and complicated. A woman's choice centred on four aspects: economic self-reliance, an eyewitness of paternal abuse, mental reasons and the law's reactions to domestic abuse. Investigators have understood that abused women who are financially helpless are less prone to leave their spouses or partners. Revenue is the most powerful interpreter; financial reliance on the abuser is the principal purpose of women who do not go away or come back. An uncertain sector in the law system is the police force's reactions to domestic abuse and the principal responsibility portrayed by the police department in whether women stay or leave their partners. The police force can help women escape or raise obstructions if a woman realizes that communicating with the police is useless. Notably, when the constable sides with the perpetrator, a woman is less prone to leave and witnessing the parental abuse is a possible aspect of domestic abuse and abuse. Women are more prone to experience parental abuse than other women (Kim & Gray, 2008).

Anderson and Saunders (2003) state that women who have been victims of abuse since childhood would be prone to stay in this kind of relationship as incidents of violence can be accepted and suited to be natural. In addition, other studies suggest that women in long-term relationships prefer to stay rather than leave as it will be difficult for them to start a new life. Therefore, responsibility and dependability to a coercive relation stress on the motives women choose to stay. Women appeared to sustain a feeling of confidence while being ill-treated. They employ a coping strategy to avoid leaving their relationship. It is common for women who are victims of abuse to cope with their situation because

it is difficult for them to leave a long-term relationship to cope with their lives; they tend to believe that the perpetrator's behaviour might change with time. They prefer to lie to themselves and to live in a delusional world and, with lots of patience, will try to make the relationship work, especially if the abuse did not occur in the early time of their marriage. It would be hard to imagine divorce at an advanced age. Furthermore, they support violence for the sake of their children as well (Waldrop & Resick, 2004).

1.7. Social Support Reported by Survivors of Domestic Violence

As stated by Belknap *et al.* (2009), institutions of law and order such as the police are often summoned as they fail to ensure the victim's incidents of abuse hardly end up in the imprisonment of abuser officers of the court are not aware of those situations. Likewise, medical practitioners regularly recognised or had doubts about outpatients suffering from domestic abuse, but they barely appeared concerned by this matter.

Dare *et al.* (2013, p. 96) stated in a text synopsis that the law reactions to domestic abuse are often considered partialities, insufficient and incoherent, though this similar research realised that abused women's amount of distress was the initial motivation for the law to procure authorised lawsuit. Kim and Gray (2008) testified that battered women seek help from another woman rather than from their relatives; the amount of encouragement provided by the public; one report discovered that relatives remained women's initial basis of encouragement; however, one more study showed that women's friends were considered as more helpful. Zink *et al.* (2006) concluded that battered women's mothers happened to be the second most important caregiver and second to be unhelpful, while other collaborators noticed that battered women with substance abuse troubles testified that their relatives provide collective care, stating that women must leave behind their partners otherwise resolve their matters. Finally, like parents, close relatives were not always perceived as convenient for encouragement.

The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between gender relations, patriarchal control, and domestic violence against Mauritian women within the society. To recognise the contemporary women's situation, wherein they are in a patriarchal society like Mauritius, the objective is to apprehend the motives behind domestic abuse and to figure out why some of the abused women choose to remain and suffer in silence without the braveness of leaving their perpetrators since the emancipation of ladies' has s expanded since years. For this study project, the qualitative method was used, and a sample of thirteen abused women victims of home violence underwent in-depth face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Data was analysed thematically, and the themes are presented in Table I. Table II

TABLE I: THEMES AND SUB-THEMES EMERGED FROM THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

No.	Themes	Sub-themes
1.	Domestic violence	Physical, sexual, economic, verbal, emotional
2.	Patriarchal system	Patriarchal control and domestic violence socialization and gender roles
3.	Coping strategies of victims staying in an abusive relationship	–
4.	Social support	–
5.	Mental squealed	–

TABLE II: DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participant id	Date of interview	Place of interview	Types of domestic violence
1	03.04.2018	Camp le vieux,	Physical, economic
2	04.04.2018	Curepipe	Physical, mental
3	06.04.2018	St. Pierre	Physical, mental
4	06.04.2018	St. Pierre	Physical, sexual
5	06.04.2018	St. Pierre	Physical
6	11.04.2018	Bambous	Physical, verbal, mental
7	11.04.2018	Port-louis	Physical, economic
8	13.04.2018	Camp le Vieux	Physical, sexual
9	13.04.2018	Camp le Vieux	Physical
10	13.04.2018	Camp le Vieux	Physical, sexual
11	23.04.2018	Gros Cailloux	Physical
12	25.04.2018	Rose Belle	Physical
13	27.04.2018	Moka	Physical

demonstrates the distribution of participants in terms of their date and place of interview and the types of domestic violence of which they were victims.

2. Domestic Violence

Domestic abuse perpetrated against women is physical, sexual, economic, and verbal abuse, which is used to control women's behaviours by using intimidation and emotional blackmail in the relationship. This is mainly entertained to keep women under their domination; otherwise, they leave the relationship and lose their power to manipulate their partner (Le *et al.*, 2019). The interviewees have been subjected to types of abuse. They agree that domestic violence is a form of patriarchal control to keep them in subordination.

Domestic violence is a social factor prevalent in cultures and across the world. It persists to be an alarming issue and to be acknowledged as conventional in communities. Domestic violence signifies violent behaviour perpetrated by a companion, spouse or family members living under the same roof (Iverson *et al.*, 2009, p. 975).

While most of the participants state that in Mauritian society, they do not believe that members of the family commit domestic violence, the literature review does acknowledge that domestic violence is perpetrated by other members living under the same roof. As societies are different, communities may have different opinions about it. However, all of them agree that women are more prone to domestic abuse, whether in the family or society. In some studies, it is also shown that women with education levels similar to men can accommodate and cope with their situation and are less prone to domestic violence. However, one of the participants stated that even though she is financially independent, she opts to stay in an abusive relationship (Edalati & Redzuan, 2010, p. 168).

2.1. Physical Violence

Some participants of the study reported encountering physical abuse through physical force, which involves smacking, beating, and fear that causes corporal harm. Physical violence embraces conducts such as rejecting the idea that the injured spouse seeks a health check or prevents the partner from being asleep, depriving the person of basic needs or imposing on the victim to participate in illegal affairs, for instance, taking illicit drugs or alcohol consumption adjacent to their desire. The signs of being a victim of physical abuse include contusions, slashes, haemorrhage, and wounds to the head (Chhikara *et al.*, 2013).

Women who are battered are left with contusions, fissures, and long-lasting infirmities. Pregnant women are in danger because the unborn baby's life could be in danger if the mother receives a kick in the belly (WHO, 1998). They are even subjected to dangerous devices by their perpetrators; some participants were threatened with knives, which could lead to severe wounds. The findings are quite similar here as the participants did encounter the same treatment of violence. Though approving that physical assault counter to females is extensive, the difference in the commonness of research settings stresses that this brutality is not unavoidable and needs to be tackled (Alhabib *et al.*, 2010).

2.2. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is a way of using physical force. It occurs when a spouse compels or threatens the other partner to have sexual intercourse. The outcomes behind being a victim of sexual abuse led to dejection, trauma, apprehension, hallucinations, and recurrences (Campbell, 2002).

Three participants reported to have been sexually abused (marital rape) in this study. As they did not want to have sexual intercourse with their husband, the latter exerted their physical force to compel them to obey. According to the WHO (2012), women who are married and compelled to have sexual intercourse do not see this act as a form of molestation as they are engaged with the person, whereas in people's perception to force someone to have a sexual relationship, even if they are spouses is describe as rape. The participants who have been subjected themselves saw these acts as rape as they were not willing to have sexual intercourse with their spouse, and they do condemn it because being married does not mean that they got every right. Women learnt that rape happens between two individuals. Some women find it challenging to consider their spouses or partners as rapists and prefer to forget this incident, encouraging their husbands to sexually abuse them. Likewise, Sarah has mentioned that she let her husband abuse her because it forms part of her conjugal roles, but somewhere, she did not encourage him to continue this act.

2.3. Economic Abuse

Restoring a companion from earning capital reduces the victim's capability to care for her safety and happiness. This propels the victim to be contingent on the committer revenue, which prevents the

injured party from gaining knowledge, acquiring a profession, preserving their vocations and attaining power (Karakurt & Cumbie, 2012).

The perpetrators stop women from learning and the capability of getting a decent job. However, economic abuse occurs in distinct methods, and it includes preventing the victim of employment, denial to an income or pocket money, taking money without the permission of the person, preventing a personal savings account, or compelling the woman from obtaining money from families. In this situation, one participant reported that she was compelled to give her son's disability allowance to her husband for him to pay off his debt and continue to play.

2.4. Emotional Abuse

Emotional ill-treatment, disgracing the partner behind closed doors or openly in front of people or belittling the victims by preventing them from meeting friends, acquaintances and relatives are the methods employed by the abusers. Perpetrators use intimidation to hurt when the latter experiences gladness or serenity. Psychological abuse, known as emotional abuse, consists of verbal abuse that harasses or terrifies the person by making use of threats against the person's life. These actions are meant to give rise to anxiety and self-doubt, which engender uncertainty in the individual, who considers themselves at fault for their current situation. Most females experiencing psychological harm frequently go through hopelessness, which leads to suicide tendency most of the time, use of substance abuse and consume alcohol (Coker *et al.*, 2000). However, here, Neha did not ever think of committing suicide. On the contrary, even if she was helpless, she had hoped her husband would change, but not everyone would think of suicide, as seen by other studies.

2.5. Patriarchal System

The patriarchal system consists of a society dominated by men. Women are disadvantaged in this type of society as gender inequality between men and women tends to develop. An aspect of the patriarchal system is due to gender differences. For decades, men have been seen as superior to women mainly because of their physical force. This idea of being physically strong indicates that women are weak, and it has been inculcated through the process of socialization. Gender differences have indicated that women need to be submissive and caring and to play an expressive role in the family, while men were categorized as playing an instrumental role. Gender differences are said to be biological; it is a feature which is true as men and women do not have the same gender, but they take this excuse to label women as subordinate and through it, gender roles have been established because, for society, women and men were compelled to have different characters in the household. Gender roles have been deliberately constructed and seen as society's product to control women (Dutton & Painter, 1993).

Patriarchy is seen as predominant over females, where they are persecuted and manipulated. It is created upon power relations and the unequal position of women. Society has created stereotypes which reinforce and weaken women's status, as stated by the participants in this study. Women are considered puppets in society. They are not able to come to the head of society. However, a patriarchal society differs from societies and norms because women's subservience can be different in countries. Women that are considered as housewives are devalued because it is not a paid work. Women are employed in low-salary textile factories, as most men are given the highest positions. Men use their power to exert their rights as husbands or partners to prove their virility when they feel that women tend to take over or challenge their decisions. Using their physical force, they preserve their power in communities and households. The patriarchal system denotes powerful rights for individuals, especially in women's lives, because the society structure is in men's favour, bearing in mind that women are too sensitive and subordinate to be at their level.

2.6. Patriarchal Control and Domestic Violence

Certain women accept that they ought to be punished by their spouse as they have been at fault or are too terrified to voice out their problems. Male hostility against women generates long-term physical and psychological outcomes (Tracy, 2007). The participants in this study agree on the term that patriarchal control contributes to domestic violence.

Society should create laws that make women feel secure about a change in their plight. They use their position to control women. If they know the woman depends on the man, eventually, they will use violence to control them. Male dominance exists, as their situation proves it because they allow themselves to do what seems right. The perpetrators believe that women need to be submissive, which gives them the power to control women. Domestic abuse stems from the patriarchal system. It is an instrument to defeat male's place of gain and to preserve the patriarchal system. Males employ brutality to preserve their advantage in the most detrimental situations. The more marginalized males are justifiable from positions of power, the more they take abuse as a way to increase the position of domination presented to them.

2.7. Socialization and Gender Roles

Socialization occurs in the family; children are brought up according to the family and society's norms, beliefs, and values. Socialization and determining gender roles are significant in a community where males typically head. To teach girls about being compliant, inert, and sensitive is the role of the mother, whereas the father will teach his son how to be brave and handle situations. Men and women pictures are portrayed differently, resulting in gender differences and divergence between males and females, which support women's subordination. Stereotyping gender is a factor which leads to patriarchal control because the idea that males and females are entirely different allows them to mistreat women (Mugenda, 2003).

3. Coping Strategies of Staying in an Abusive Relationship

Women stay in an abusive relationship not by choice but because they are compelled to do so, mainly because of diverse reasons, and they try to cope with it by different means (Kim & Gray, 2008). Most of the participants are still with their abuser because they are economically dependent or because they still have feelings for them.

Abused victims stay in abusive relationships as they are preoccupied with their children's security and their protection. They are less prone to leave their relationship as the abuse might continue even if they get separated from their abuser. Their choice to remain in this situation may vary. However, women acknowledged employing a surviving stratagem. They keep in mind that it is only a crisis the couple is going through, or they tend to excuse the perpetrator's behaviour if the latter asks for forgiveness. However, giving such importance increases the chances of another violent behaviour from the abuser. This faith leads them to ignore violence, and their false class consciousness holds them in subordination.

3.1. Social Support

One of the participants, Zina, reported that:

-mo bizin rode refuge dans shelter mo fami reject moi dan shelter zot in bien occupe moi encourage moi fer moi fer ban thérapie counselling mais ena kitchoz ki shelter pa kav donner.

(She needed to seek help in a shelter as her family rejected her. I went to a shelter there and they encouraged me and gave me love. However, what they gave me cannot replace my man, because there are things they can offer me but the love of my husband).

When victims seek assistance, they think of their family first; however, some victims are rejected by their own families because it is believed to bring disgrace to the family name, and especially what people would say about their daughter; they are eventually seen as a family burden. This is why the respondents reported that they preferred to go to shelters. Shelters help women in distress without basic needs for the short or long term until they find a solution.

Hunnicutt (2009) denotes that battered women come across as helpful and caring mothers, although some face uncooperative mothers. Belknap *et al.* (2009) concluded that battered women's mothers happened to be the second most crucial caregiver, while other collaborators noticed that battered women with substance abuse troubles testified that their relatives provide collective care, stating that women have to leave behind their partners; otherwise resolve their matters. Finally, like parents, close relatives were not always perceived as convenient for encouragement. Concerning the results of the findings of the present study, the victims needed to seek refuge in a centre because the family was not supportive enough.

3.2. Mental Squealed

Violence perpetrated against women is at the origin of severe mental disorders. Nevertheless, sure, victims cope and develop less squeal from their previous relationship in contrast to other women. Victims explained how they undergo depression and anxiety after abandoning their partners. Occasionally, they were not certain what was lacking in them. Only a few victims have been affected mentally, where they were required to follow counselling therapy, but participants were reluctant to disclose this matter.

The wounds, anxiety and trauma related to domestic abuse can develop unceasing mental or physical health conditions. However, the participants in this study did not suffer from any physical trauma but most likely suffered from psychological illness. The principal psychological reaction of abused women is depression. Kim and Gray (2008) have discovered the mental state of depression in victims. Analysts involve the regularity rather than the gravity of existing physical violence and anxiety (Campbell & Lewandowski, 1997).

Charlotte, one of the respondents, claimed that:

Mon rever li p touye moi ek mo peur so ban reaction Kan demane li kitchoz sois dir li un zafair tension. Mo rest maziner Cuma lin bat moi.

(The choice of staying in this relationship was hers. She asked herself why she was going through this situation and even think she was to be blame. While sleeping she used to wake up due to the nightmare of being murdered by her spouse. She was afraid of his reaction, and she hesitated to ask for something. She used to think how she was suffering).

Facts from previous studies indicate that there is a connection between females' incidents of domestic abuse as well as an increase in downheartedness and commotion warning signs. A study confirms females' occurrences of serious emotive trouble (Humphreys & Thiara, 2003). Women who stay with their abuser account for a rise of terror, apprehension, and pressure. Dejection is frequent as victims believe they are responsible for causing the violent behaviour of their partners as they are exposed to severe denigration (Spangler & Brandl, 2007).

4. Conclusion

Domestic abuse keeps increasing as a significant societal problem. Through the years, women's position was disadvantaged, while today, it is similar to women's emancipation, which was only on paperwork but was not put into practice. Women face forms of violence which may be detrimental to their lives. Gender relations, patriarchal control and domestic violence play a significant role in women's lives. The fact that patriarchal control contributes to domestic abuse is an essential aspect of this study, as minor factors like poverty, alcohol, and unemployment are only trivial. Women's subordination is present whether in society or family; women's silence encourages abuse.

Society determines what is right and what is wrong. In the community, types of conduct for women are not acceptable. For instance, to be submissive is one of their conjugal roles: the denial to be submissive and control results in domestic abuse. Women's abuse is the representation of patriarchal gender relations. Male dominance is categorized as unequal power relations. This a method to keep domination by labelling women as inferior to men, keeping women in a false class consciousness. Patriarchy preserves how things stand, resulting in gender differences and disadvantaging women in families and communities. Women have always been in a detrimental state; males have always been seen as the leading role in the family unit, and they were assigned the instrumental role.

Domestic abuse has become a typical situation for victims, and they learn to cope with it. Even though laws have been implemented, it remains an alarming issue. The community mindset protects the abuser's behaviours. Women should voice out their rights as lots of women are still victims of abuse in the world. They all have one thing in common: they share the status of being preyed on by domestic abuse by their spouses. Some women stand up and fight back to survive, but many face social, psychological, and financial obstacles that force them to stay in their abusive relationships. It is the law's commitment and society's commitment to implement and improve the required sources and organizations that encourage and secure women's rights.

Male dominance has encouraged the notion in the community amidst women that they are better, consequently inciting gender inequality among females and males. Patriarchal society has been acknowledged by the continuation of whose discerning and opinion are prompted by their social rules. The society structure is obviously under patriarchal influence; men are put forward for their aptitude of being able to manage things while women are put aside. It is pertinent that patriarchal control has influenced women's subordination, leading to domestic abuse. Abuse is deep-rooted in the resilience of patriarchal systems of power, destabilization, and oppression of females. The number of struggles to challenge this has predominantly been carried out at a personal echelon. As an outcome, patriarchy and domestic abuse persist to increase. These ideas form parts of indoctrination. The relation between these attributes and sexual characteristics was created and preserved.

Domestic abuse is increasing, and measures should be taken into consideration as the Mauritian law is not severe. They take domestic violence for granted, and sanctions against abusers are too compassionate. They quickly get out by paying a fine. The introduction of death by hanging as capital punishment should be implemented for manslaughter. The government need to revise the law because a protection order obtained from the court is not practical, especially if the perpetrators are living under the same roof; the chances of domestic abuse will eventually occur, and the probability that the police force will come in time to help the victims may be too late. If capital punishment is implemented, it may impact the perpetrator's behaviours. They may think twice before committing a murder; it would serve as an example for abusers. Domestic violence may decrease with this amendment. Women's status should be put forward in the household, workplace, or society. Women should denounce abuse; remaining silent will encourage more men to do so.

A follow-up should be done every week; the welfare officers do make a follow-up with the victims once per month by telephone or site visits. However, follow-up by phone should be prohibited because the victims may lie to the officers. In contrast, a face-to-face follow-up would be better for the victims, where officers could detect whether the situation of the victim is ameliorating or worsening due to their facial expressions and gestures, which are significant. Domestic violence is a sensitive issue. Surprise site visits should be done at night at reasonable hours by officers to ensure that victims are acceptable; by the way, have a meeting with the perpetrators. Special monitoring should be done with the perpetrators daily to understand their behaviours, their actual past, and childhood experiences; with a preventive program, perpetrators should be able to agree to a violence-free pattern of conduct; this may help the abuser to understand their deeds and realize their mistakes. Training courses must be established among relatives and people to stress the importance of women's status and encourage them in society; specific NGOs should be set up to enhance this training. Thus, it could contribute to the obliteration of patriarchal mentalities and conventional thinking that confine women.

More movements should cover the patriarchal control of males on women. Men should respect and treat women properly. Seminars and sensitization campaigns on violence should be held in the workplace both for men and women to underline the inequality that exists and to persuade men to be brave enough to accept their deeds. At school, sex education should be seen as a priority to make boys understand that we are biologically different only. However, the female gender does not assert that women and girls are weak. The mindset of inferiority should change, and the socialization of children should be done differently than in the past to prevent discrimination and labelling. They must learn that equality between men and women exists in society and that no one is inferior to the other.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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