



# Social Learning of Intimate Partner Violence: Examining cultural barriers to disclosure in India and Sri Lanka

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## Introduction

There is a global pandemic in the form of domestic violence that is based on several intersecting sociological factors

*What is Intimate Partner Violence?*

- “Intimate partner violence (IPV) affects almost **one in three** women worldwide”(WHO, 2013).
- The term “IPV” is commonly used in the United States, while “domestic violence” is the term used in South Asia IPV is “any physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence between former or current partners” (WHO, 2013).

*Why is it important to study IPV?*

- While identifying potential causes behind IPV, there is an increase in preventative measures to stop the abuse from taking place
- Ability to improve self-disclosure rates for IPV victims to receive proper physical and mental care

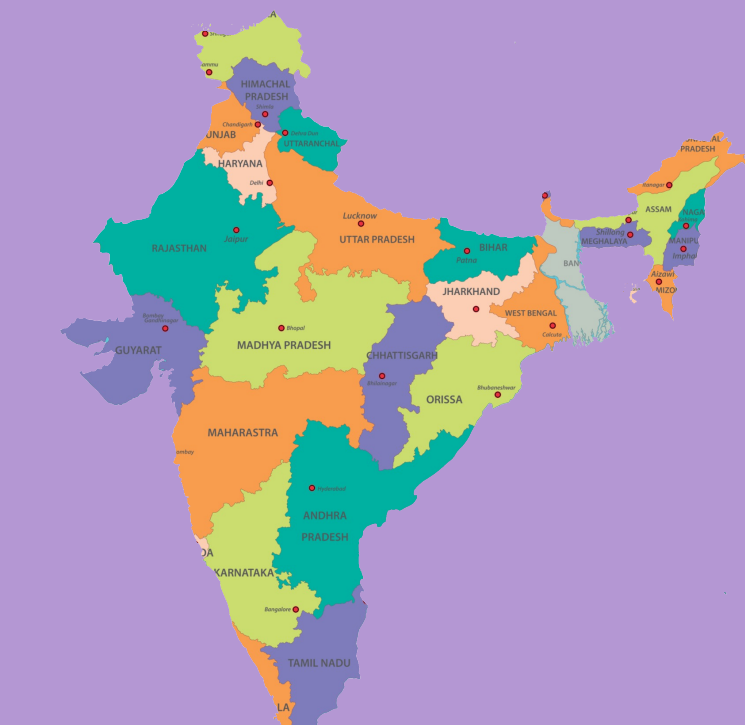
*What does my research extend to current literature?*

- My focus is on the cultural barriers in South Asia that influence the severity of domestic abuse and the portion of literature that I’m reviewing is narrowed down to **India** and **Sri Lanka**

## Methods

During the course of this research, a literature review was conducted using database extraction. The primary database used was EBSCOhost and PubMed through the interface of FSU libraries. The boundaries of the literary searches were that the articles had to be published from 2015 to 2022, highlighting only reports about “India + Sri Lanka”. As a research assistant, I narrowed down the literary searches utilizing key terms: “**IPV**”, “**Domestic Violence**”, “**Social Learning Theory**”, “**Social Norms**”, and “**Cultural Factors**”. The journal articles were peer-reviewed and reviewed by my mentor to ensure high-quality literature resources.

## Laws:



### India

According to a 2019 poll conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, **31%** of Indian women who have been married had been subjected to abuse by their spouse

#### Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)

- allows a magistrate to impose a protection order forbids the abuser from approaching or communicating with the victim and engaging in domestic violence
- Grants residence order which allows women to live in the joint household without legal title. Provides financial assistance for costs or losses incurred due to domestic abuse and enables custody decisions for children who are victims.
- Violating any protection or restraining order carries a penalty.

## Socio-ecology of cultural barriers

### Individual

#### Lack of Education

- Women with less education may find it difficult to speak clearly about their experiences with domestic abuse.
- “Respondents with higher levels of education and respondents whose partner had **higher** levels of education had **lower** odds of experiencing IPV” (Hayes, 2022, pg. 348).

#### Fear of Retaliation

- Women who endure domestic violence may worry that reporting their abusers to their families or other sources may result in **ostracization**.
- “Women also did not want to be stigmatized, or face disapproval or disgrace from others including Healthcare Personnel for talking about DV” (Silva et al., 2022., pg. 7)

### Relationship

#### Social Dependence

- There is an isolating factor in a lot of traditional marriages that could lead to a reliance on marriage as their social contact.
- In a study interviewing hospital patients, the effect sizes of self-poisoning among women were diminished by **social support** (Bandara et al. 2020).

#### Economic Dependence

- Women in India and Sri Lanka frequently rely on their husbands or other male family members for financial support
- “Many in-laws also placed or enforced restrictions around food, freedom, money, access to health care, and other resources” (Ahmed-Stout, et al., 2021, pg. 11).

### Community

#### Divorce Stigma

- Divorce is still **stigmatized** in many communities in South Asia. Since they can lack alternative support networks, it may be challenging for them to escape violent situations.
- Regardless of any abuse she may have experienced, a divorced or single mother is seen as a failure because her identity as a South Asian woman is related to those roles (Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996).

### Societal

#### Patriarchy

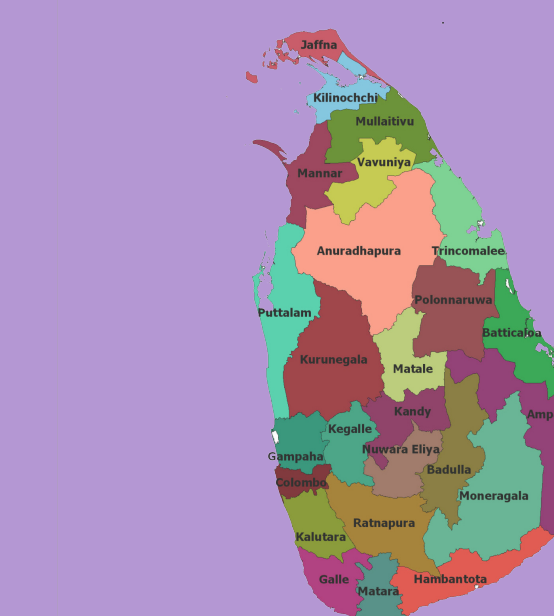
- Women who had suffered trauma were less likely patriarchal gender attitudes in their personal lives and thought there was more patriarchy in the community (Jewkes et al., 2019).
- The characteristics of the ideal South Asian woman include **purity, virtue, tradition, nurture, restraint, and obedience** (Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996).

### Sri Lanka

According to 2016 research by the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, **27.8%** of women in Sri Lanka reported being physically abused by intimate partners.

#### Sri Lanka's Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, No. 34 of 2005 act:

- recognizes that any family member can be an abuser.
- offers protection orders, and offenders may undergo therapy and rehabilitation.
- mandates appropriate police response, permits arrest and imprisonment of offenders, and establishes courts for domestic abuse cases.
- government requirement to educate the public on the issue and raise awareness to prevent domestic violence.



Districts of Sri Lanka Map. (n.d.). Mappr. Retrieved from <https://www.mappr.co/counties/sri-lanka/>.

## Conclusion

Domestic violence is a public health issue that affects both India and Sri Lanka on an individual, interpersonal, communal, and societal level. They include cultural norms, economic reliance, gender norms and inequality, and a lack of legal enforcement and protection. Using a multi-level strategy that emphasizes education, prevention, and intervention tactics aimed at people, relationships, communities, and society as a whole would be able to effectively address domestic violence in these nations. To support survivors and advance gender equality and social justice, such an approach should entail cooperation amongst various stakeholders, including as government institutions, civil society organizations, and local residents.

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## Acknowledgements

Thank you to my undergraduate research leaders: Wendy Rodriguez and Carly Mayzum. They helped answer several questions as well as motivated me to make my poster.