

# Intimate Partner Violence in China

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## ABSTRACT

Intimate partner violence has always existed in the society. Due to the unequal gender structure, the weak social public awareness, the imperfect law, and the low punishment for the perpetrators, intimate partner violence has not been well solved. From the perspective of sociology, this paper proposes a series of measures, such as changing the public's attitude, increasing the punishment of the perpetrators, improving the multi-party cooperation mechanism, and letting social work agencies play a role. It is of great significance to promote social stability, maintain harmonious relationship between intimate partners and protect the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

**Keywords:** *Intimate partner violence, Intimate relationship, Domestic violence*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On September 30, 2020, Ram passed away after 16 days in a coma. The Ram incident has put more emphasis on the vocabulary of domestic and intimate partner violence. In addition to heartbreak, we should pay attention to intimate partner violence, so that more people, especially more women, can live a healthier and more dignified life.

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as physical, psychological and sexual violence that is or has occurred between couples in marriage or an intimate relationship. Although studies have shown that men are also exposed to intimate partner violence, women are still the main victims of intimate partner violence. According to the World Health Organization, about 30 percent of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence with their intimate partners. According to statistics from China's Women's Federation, 30 percent of married women in 270 million households have experienced domestic violence. Every year 157,000 women commit suicide in China, 60 percent of whom commit suicide because of domestic violence. The average woman is abused 35 times before reporting to the police. The number of women who are victims of domestic violence is already so large that you can imagine the number of women who are victims of violence in intimate relationships that cover a larger group of women. Intimate partner violence not only causes physical and psychological harm to the victims, but also damages the relationship between intimate partners and even affects the healthy growth of the next generation.

In the Supplementary Provisions of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law of the People's Republic of China, which came into effect on March 1, 2016, violence between people other than family members living together is mentioned in particular, and the provisions of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law are also applied with reference. The introduction of the anti-domestic violence law has greatly improved the academic and public awareness of intimate relationship violence.

From the perspective of sociology, this paper explores the reasons why women suffer from intimate partner violence and how to effectively solve intimate partner violence, which is of great significance to promoting social stability, maintaining harmonious relationship between intimate partners and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Domestic research on intimate partner violence began with research on domestic violence. In the early stages of the study, the two concepts were not strictly differentiated. In recent years scholars have begun to make detailed distinctions and use the term intimate partner violence. Domestic intimate partner violence mainly focuses on sociology, medicine and law. In terms of research methods, most of the studies use quantitative research methods. The commonly used measurement tool is the Chinese version of the Conflict Strategy Table (CTS) which is commonly used in the world and is localized according to the actual situation in China.

At present, most of the research results mainly come from scholars with medical background. They investigate domestic violence and understand the patterns and factors that influence domestic violence to improve the capacity of existing health care systems to respond to intimate partner violence. Cui Yi et al. selected 8 regions for investigation, and the results showed that the incidence rates of physical violence and mental violence were 31.6% and 52.4% respectively. Domestic violence is influenced by marital satisfaction, parental history of domestic violence, age, total family income and drinking status <sup>[2]</sup>. After the abused women went to the hospital, 42.2 percent of them were not asked about their history of domestic violence by medical staff, and 65.6 percent were not provided with psychological counseling and guidance. Therefore, hospitals and medical students should conduct training related to domestic violence, so that medical workers can correctly identify and deal with domestic violence <sup>[9]</sup>. In the field of law, scholars pay more attention to laws related to domestic violence and intimate partner violence. To find out the deficiencies of the current law and provide suggestions for the continuous improvement of the law in the next step. Scholars in the field of sociology focus on the social factors associated with intimate partner violence and how to deal with it. Tong Xin believes that "wife-beating" is caused by the gender-unequal production and reproduction mechanism between couples. Without eliminating this dual structure of unequal gender relations, violence against women and gender equality cannot be eradicated fundamentally <sup>[3]</sup>. Liu Shujuan believes that the most important thing for women suffering from domestic violence is to enhance their energy <sup>[8]</sup>. Social workers empower women through case work, the establishment of support groups for victims of violence and the establishment of social support networks <sup>[4]</sup>.

After reviewing relevant literature, the author concludes two practical meanings: First, the author finds that there is little research on intimate partner violence in China. In empirical studies, most scholars take married women or families as sampling units and ignore the situation of unmarried women suffering from intimate partner violence. Second, in the current research on intimate partner violence, most scholars focus on the victims of violence. In addition to the victims, this paper will also focus on measures against the perpetrators. Prevent violence from its source.

### **3. THE CAUSES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

#### ***3.1. Ingrained Cultural Traditions***

For a long time, the prevailing concept in Chinese society that men work outside and women work inside has had a huge impact on the formation of intimate

partner violence. Socialist feminists believe that capitalism determines inequality between men and women. A few men control the means of production, and violence against women is rooted in the patriarchal rule produced by the division of labor between the sexes. This unequal division of labor between the sexes leads to the widespread existence of patriarchal ideology in the society. The cultural ideology of society has always placed women in the private sphere, and for a long time, women have been financially dependent on their partners because of low or no income. This economic dependence can lead to inequality in family status. Men think they earn the money to support the whole family, so women should defer to men in everything. When men believe that their authority as "head of the family" is challenged, they will defend the patriarchal rule by violence. Scholar Tong Xin believes that in essence "wife-beating" has the meaning of ideographic symbol. It shows that the purpose of male patriarchy is achieved through male violence against female bodies <sup>[3]</sup>.

Growing up with the idea that men are inferior to women or witnessing violence by family members during childhood may increase the tolerance of the victims, and the public's awareness of intimate partner violence is still low. A small percentage of victims do not know that intimate partner violence is illegal, and most victims do not have a deep understanding of what constitutes intimate partner violence. Even if the victim wants to seek help, it can be difficult to talk about the violence, especially if it is sexual, and the victim is left alone to suffer. A small percentage of victims do not know that intimate partner violence is illegal, and most victims do not have a deep understanding of what constitutes intimate partner violence. Even if the victim wants to seek help, it can be difficult to talk about the violence, especially if it is sexual, and the victim is left alone to suffer.

#### ***3.2. The Law Is Not Perfect***

After the government issued the anti-domestic violence law, there are some drawbacks in the implementation process, such as insufficient involvement of various departments and difficulties in obtaining relevant evidence. For the intervention of intimate partner violence at present, some formal networks, such as medical system, judicial and public security organs, are not involved enough, while some informal networks, such as local women's federations, social work institutions and social organizations, lack legal authorization and protection when they intervene in related cases <sup>[5]</sup>. Due to the imperfect multi-party cooperation mechanism, the process of obtaining evidence of intimate partner violence is complicated. Even if many victims of violence summon up the courage to seek help, the final outcome is not satisfactory.

The difficulty of obtaining evidence is also a stumbling block in China's ongoing fight against intimate partner violence. Because of inadequate knowledge, many victims do not know how to assess their injuries and what evidence to keep. A lawyer said that in the current identification of intimate partner violence, continuous harm needs to be effectively identified and indirect evidence formed into a chain of evidence before it can be recognized by law. These complicated steps are undoubtedly too complicated for the abuser and may cause secondary harm in the process of obtaining evidence.

Another major reason why intimate partner violence happens so often is that current laws punish violence less severely. It has no deterrent effect on the abuser. When an abuser acts violently, he or she makes a series of rational decisions. They think violence against their partner costs them the least. So in the face of hardship, frustration and the threat of patriarchal rule they commit violence against their partners. If the perpetrators of violence to increase the intensity of punishment, it will play a certain role of punishment.

## **4. MEASURES TO SOLVE INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE**

### **4.1. Changing Public Attitudes**

The mass media and relevant departments have intensified propaganda to change the wrong idea of "men are superior to women" and raise the awareness of gender equality among victims. The mass media should use happy the way, let the public know to intimate partner violence is a violation of morality and illegal thing, take propaganda task of correct values of equality of men and women, to shoot some related dramas, allow the public to realize the danger of intimate partner violence and how to deal with the violence. Women's federations, neighborhood committees and social work agencies should regularly educate the public about what intimate partner violence is, what kind of evidence should be retained after an experience of violence, how to conduct an injury assessment and how to apply for habeas corpus. Let the vast majority of victims of violence aware of violence, improve the tolerance of violence, dare to say no to violence.

To give full play to the advantages of social work organizations, the law should entrust social work organizations with full rights to serve the service objects, so as to change the attitude of the service objects. In dealing with intimate partner violence, social workers play two main roles, one as an advocate and the other as a direct service provider. As direct service providers, social workers work with both abusers and victims. At present, social workers focus on helping victims to vent their emotions and build a well-established support network. But services for abusers are being neglected.

For example, the treatment group of the abuser should be organized to reshape the cognition and behavior of the abuser, help the abuser learn the correct way to vent emotions and the correct way to communicate with the partner, change the idea of male superiority and female inferiority, and recognize and change their violent behavior.

### **4.2. Strengthening Enforcement of Relevant Laws**

In the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, the law stipulates that all units, organizations or civil organizations that are responsible for anti-domestic violence work should improve the mechanism of multi-party cooperation while doing their own work. The health care system should increase training to improve the ability of health care personnel to identify intimate partner violence and to provide support to victims of violence. Women's federations, residential/village committees and social work agencies should pay close attention to visiting residents suspected or confirmed to have experienced violence in the community, and provide them with shelters and assistance needed by victims of violence. Public security organs and courts should take immediate action when victims of violence ask for help, simplify evidence collection procedures, complete evidence collection within a short period of time and protect victims of violence to avoid secondary injuries. All parties should cooperate closely with each other in the process of pre-prevention and post-treatment while fulfilling their duties.

After the abuser is found to have violated the law, the punishment should be increased to make the abuser fear the cost of using violence and to deter those who are inclined to violence. Social learning theory holds that in intimate partner violence, the violent behavior of the abuser is learned. Thus, one of the major reasons for the violence may be that the parents are violent and don't get punished for the violence. Therefore, the abuser thinks that he can vent his emotions to his partner through violence, so as to achieve the purpose he wants, and will not pay a price. Therefore, the current punishment for intimate partner violence is relatively low. After the violator is found to have violated the law, he or she should not only pay a fine, but also be detained for longer and put on the list of dishonesty.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The occurrence of intimate partner violence cannot be separated from the traditional thoughts of male superiority and victim guilt, the imperfection of laws and the unreasonable social structure. In dealing with intimate partner violence, the parties responsible under the anti-domestic violence law should constantly

improve their capabilities and work closely together. In particular, in solving the problem, we should not only provide support to the victims of violence, but also ensure the safety and interests of the victims, and focus on punishing and changing the perpetrators. Went up from the source to prevent the occurrence of intimate partner violence. Li Yinhe said, the theory of feminism is a myriad of ideas, in the final analysis is to achieve equality between men and women in all mankind. We hope that through continuous efforts, all sectors of society can realize equality between men and women, respect each other, put down the weapons of violence, and solve the problem in the way of understanding and communication.

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