Domestic Violence against Married Women in an Urban Informal Settlement

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Abstract

Domestic violence is common in every society at different levels, but it is often hidden in urban contexts. Urban informal squatter known as unmanaged settlements are home to economically disadvantage and socially underprivileged families. The daily life of women in informal settlements is influenced by patriarchal rigidity and multiple associated vulnerabilities that constrain women. The lived experiences of women under the social and cultural constraints of patriarchy in Kathmandu's Balkhu Corridor between the ages of 20 and 60 are examined in this study. This study is based on a qualitative approach. Data was collected from ten squatters, known as unmanaged settlement, women through an extensive case study discussion. Qualitative data were analyzed by organizing and collecting the codes of participants' words. Meaning of data was established from themes and patterns in qualitative information. Findings show psychological violence is reported more than repeatedly physical injury among the participants. Women also face emotional pain, mistrust, fear, control and financial dependence frequently within the family. Many effects remain silent because of social pressure, cultural expectations of respect, and fear of losing family dignity. Alcohol use, economic strain, and insecure jobs make their situation worse for violence at large. Despite the deep pain, women show internal strength by staying patient, providing family support, and looking after their children. The study shows that domestic violence is a social construct, not just an individual interferes. It shows the need to listen more closely to women's life histories. It also reminds us to observe their lives closely. Social perceptions shape their domination and economic pressure intensifies their suffering. Family expectations under patriarchy further deepen their suffering in the urban setting.

Keywords: Coercive control, emotional abuse, patriarchy, family dignity

Introduction

Violence against women remains a serious human rights concern around the world (World Health Organization, 2022; UN Women, 2024). It is rooted in society by unequal power relations, patriarchal values, and androcentric social expectations that accept control and harm within closed relationships (Walby, 1990; Hunnicutt, 2009; Heise, 1998). Conceptually, domestic violence denotes a social violence by a partner. It is a structural and gendered issue rather than a private conflict and misunderstanding. Such androcentric social practices shape women's social position, bodily freedom, mental well-being, and future life chances (Bailey et al., 2020). Around the world, many women experience distinct physical or sexual violence (WHO, 2022). This violence creates deep physical and emotional suffering, long-term health problems, economic hardship and dependency, and cycles of vulnerability that affect entire families.

Nepal shows a similar pattern of domestic violence in its own social and cultural context. Domestic violence continues across communities in diverse forms even after provisions of laws against gender-based violence. Despite legal reforms and increased awareness of gender justice and social protection, it persisted in new form like women's trafficking to cities and abroad. Patriarchal family traditions and practices reinforce unequal gender roles. Religious beliefs and social expectations placed on women further strengthen these unequal roles. These practices begin within households at an early stage. Many Nepali women experience emotional, physical, or sexual abuse during their lives (Karki, 2023). Social stigma that persists for women because of gendered perceptions, economic dependence, and pressure to continue marriage for a lifetime discourages women from seeking safety from violence and speaking out against violence. Many social expectations under patriarchy pressure women to tolerate suffering to protect the family's reputation and identity. This makes domestic violence an accepted part of married life in the family and community, which supports to repetition of violence. In Nepal, 27% of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence (MoH et al., 2023) and 17% reported intimate partner violence in the past year (Sapkota et al., 2024). These figures reflect how patriarchal norms normalize women's tolerance of suffering within marriage and family life is significant for further researcher to explore social context of women's violence.

Urbanization has further new layers of vulnerability in terms of social and economic risk (Heise, 1998). Being a capital city, Kathmandu is often seen as a place of opportunity so people are attracted. However, rapid migration, rising living costs, insecure and unstable jobs creates stress on people within households. These conditions are closely linked to the broader process of urbanization and urban development in Nepal. Among dozens of unmanaged settlements in the Kathmandu Valley, the Balkhu

Corridor is home to marginalized and vulnerable people. Gender roles are changing in the present context (Acharya, 2024). However, women still face economic insecurity and heavy domestic work with limited resources and support. This area reflects traditional cultural values combined with urban uncertainty creates clash. New urban expectations for women are emerging, but a strong patriarchal system controls to their freedom and choices. Such duality limits their capability and livelihood options.

The central focus of this study is to identify patterns of domestic violence against women in an urban context, particularly in marginalized communities. Structural patriarchy combines with marital hierarchy, economic dependence, religious beliefs, and community expectations that produce gendered harm and inequality between men and women (Walby, 1990; Kandiyoti, 1988). Existing studies focus mainly on economic perspectives but fail to show the emotional, social, and psychological dimensions of women's life patterns. Similarly, marginalized areas do not receive priority for study from a gender perspective in academia. The state declares unmanaged and informal settlements as illegal (Karki & Singh, 2022). The government often neglects its issues because the settlements are viewed as encroachments. Formal agencies of government are basically indifferent about squatter issues. As a result, many serious problems remain unaddressed and unattended. There is also a clear gap in understanding domestic violence in squatter settlements, where traditional gender norms are still practiced.

The exploration of domestic violence in urban so-called advanced areas are crucial for sociological research. Domestic violence, particularly under patriarchy, is multidimensional. It operates through unequal power relations between men and women. Similarly, it negatively affects women in multiple ways, including their social and economic progress. It adversely affects health, mental well-being, as well as social participation and a respectful life (Karakurt et al., 2014). It limits gender equality and livelihood options and sharply weakens women's agency, and creates long-term cycles of social poverty. Without understanding women's lived experiences, laws and programs fail to address the real needs of victims. It is therefore essential to explore how women in the Balkhu Corridor understand violence themselves, why they remain silent for long periods, how family pressure affects their decisions, and what emotional and social costs they carry because of social stigma. This study aims to strengthen feminist sociological knowledge by bringing forward women's voices and their experiences of power, suffering and control.

Guided by feminist standpoint theory, this research captures women's lived experiences (Smith, 1990). The main objective of this research is to understand the causes and consequences of domestic violence against women in the Balkhu Corridor of Kathmandu.

Literature Review

Initial feminist discourse explains that patriarchal societies build a social system where men hold authority and power and women are placed in subordinate roles with minimal social value (Walby, 1990; Hooks, 2014). Domestic violence against women is widely understood in feminist literature as a product of patriarchal power relations that have existed for a long time in society differently. These unequal power structures appear in marriage, sexuality, household division of work, and social norms and values. In many societies, cultural expectations that continue over time often make women responsible. Men are given social acceptance to control decision-making. In this unequal social setting, violence becomes a way to enforce gender hierarchy. Domestic violence in patriarchal households is a means of preserving control and restricting women's freedom and autonomy (Stark, 2007; Merry, 2006). It presents as an abusive behavior that is shaped by the androcentric social structure. It shows how social beliefs, cultural norms, and gendered power relations influence perceptions towards women (Merry, 2006). It also shows how the patriarchal system reinforces structural inequality, which supports male authority.

Domestic violence occurs through several interrelated layers and factors, including social and cultural factors within a shifting urban context. Individual characteristics, interpersonal patterns, societal norms, and social structures are key factors of perceptions of gender (Heise, 1998). Behavior for both genders is shaped by individual experiences within the patriarchy. These factors combine with relationship issues such as stress and control, all of which are shaped by gender socialization under a patriarchal society. All of these are guided by gender socialization. These interactions take place within communities that privilege to male authority and discourage women. In South Asia, marriage is often viewed as a sacred bond that continues throughout life, and divorce or separation carries social stigma. It makes women more dependent on their male partners and vulnerable (Ali et al., 2011). Structural patriarchy and androcentric social ideology work together to normalize violence against women.

Global research shows that violence by intimate partners and under family pressure remains a widespread and persistent social problem. Estimates show that nearly one-third of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence. It shows women's multiple vulnerabilities associated with domestic violence (WHO, 2022; WHO, 2024). As per several studies of the World Health Organization, the effects of gender-based violence on a woman's life include depression, trauma and reproductive issues. It also affects future generations. Children who witness violence often develop emotional, social, and behavioral problems later in life (WHO, 2013). Global literature shows that violence occurs in every society in various forms. It is rooted in cultural norms and social values that support male dominance over women.

In South Asia, strong patriarchal norms, dowry pressure, fertility expectations, and androcentric expectations of women's role contribute to some of the highest rates of intimate partner violence (Ali et al., 2011). Women's economic dependence and the stigma of divorce or widowhood heighten their vulnerability. Studies across the region show that controlling behaviors against women often start before physical violence. Husbands often monitor and wives' mobility, communication, and social relationships. These actions become part of coercive control within the marriage that ultimately encourages violence (Stark, 2007). Similarly, alcohol misuse by husbands, marital tension related to economic hardship, social maladjustment, son preference, and intergenerational transmission of patriarchal values and practices appear as common contributors to violence against women.

Studies based on Nepal broaden understanding of domestic violence by showing the relationship with social structure how social and economic structures shape women's vulnerability. Research shows that emotional, physical, and sexual violence are widespread in Nepali society. Nearly one-third of married women report abuse (Karki, 2023). Under the patriarchal kinship systems, in-law authority with in household, and patrilocal residence patterns after marriage create environments of domestic violence and control women by men, especially by her partner. Women who marry early often remain dependent and restricted in their marital home (Lamichhane et al., 2011). They do not have access on education, opportunities and legal provisions. Qualitative research shows that many women have experienced violence as normal (Dahal et al., 2022). Similarly, other research emphasizes that emotional and psychological violence is common but often ignored. It has a significant impact on women's identity, agency, and different issues of mental health (Poudyal, 2007).

These results suggest that social and cultural norms mainly guided by orthodox patriarchy in Nepal contribute to domestic violence. Despite various studies, there are still gaps in our knowledge of domestic violence, mainly in urban areas. Urban women facing risks and uncertainty due to economic stress and social isolation (WHO, 2013). Women's actual experiences in rapidly expanding urban areas, mainly for underprivileged groups, may be significant for sociological study. Traditional norms are difficult to adjust to the new pressures of urban settings. Urban spaces like Kathmandu experience shifting gender roles and rising household stress. However, most Nepali studies focus on rural and formal communities, even in urban areas, with quantitative data. It neglects to emotional and sociocultural dimensions of violence in diverse urban settings. This research addresses the gap by examining women's narratives and lived experiences in an urban informal settlement. It examines how violence begins and how the victims explain it. Similarly, it examines how it is experienced through daily interactions.

Methods and Procedures

This study applied a qualitative research design. It primarily followed a qualitative dominant approach to draw out women's lived experiences. Thematic analysis was used to identify key patterns of women's experiences and their life stories related to violence against women. Researcher reflexivity was maintained properly to reduce bias and strengthen the objectivity of the qualitative analysis. The aim was to examine the causes and consequences of domestic violence against women in the Balkhu Corridor of Kathmandu. The qualitative approach helped grasp information with rich qualitative stories of the victim's side. This method was able to capture as emotional, social, and cultural meanings attached to violence. Feminist researchers are interested in using qualitative analysis to grasp women's subjectivity (Harding, 1987; Smith, 1987). Understanding gender-based harm and power dynamics requires recognizing women's voices and experiences. Their lived experiences are essential for understanding the nature of violence within families and the community's function. There is a reason this qualitative approach was adopted in this research. Emotional distress and interpersonal relationships are aspects of domestic violence that need to be explored. It is also influenced by cultural norms, values and social perceptions. Quantitative data alone cannot adequately explain these individual-level life experiences.

The study was conducted in the informal settlement of the Balkhu Corridor during September to October of 2024. It is a marginalized urban settlement in Kathmandu characterized by dense population and social diversity. Different caste, ethnic, and religious groups from different parts of Nepal are represented in this area. The study area is a result of both urban economic pressures and traditional patriarchal norms simultaneously. This makes it appropriate for researching contemporary urban domestic violence trends. Ten women participated in the case study. This study was based on a qualitative case study. Data collection was discontinued when thematic saturation was reached based on research objectives. They represented a range of diverse characteristics mainly based on ages, caste and ethnic backgrounds and durations of marriage. The number of participants was suitable for a qualitative study because of its diverse characteristics. It allowed in-depth discussion among them individually and reached thematic saturation. For sensitive issues where direct contact with the respondent is difficult. Chain-referral sampling approach was appropriate for this study. Survivors rarely share their experiences without trust. Therefore, snowball purposive sampling was chosen to reach with appropriate sample. This ensured deeper insights into their subjective experiences and understandings.

Primary data were collected through case studies entirely. One focus group discussion (FGD) and field observation were used. The FGD was conducted with

different participants beyond involved in case studies of this research from the same community to collect community perspectives. marital dynamics in their own words and describe the emotional and social meaning of violence. The focus group discussion helped identify shared norms. It made it possible to assess community attitudes. It makes able to measure community attitudes and collective beliefs about marriage. Field observation also provided a context and conditions. All interviews were held in private spaces to maintain confidentiality. Researchers avoid interference from family members during data.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Transcripts were read multiple times to identify repeated ideas. Similarly, emotional expressions and categories related to the causes, forms, and impacts of violence were organized. Codes were created manually and organized into broader themes. Ethical concerns were considered with great care due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Participants were informed about the study. They were assured of confidentiality and asked to give voluntary consent before responding. Identifying personal information was eliminated.

Results

This study shows the social and emotional realities of domestic violence in urban areas. It focuses on how violence occurs in the informal settlement of the Balkhu Corridor. Findings show that violence against women has a variety of causes and consequences. Women between the ages of 20 and 60 shared their diverse experiences in this study. Their stories and life experiences were shaped by cultural norms and the fear of social judgment. At first, many respondents were unwilling to discuss the violence and abuse they had experienced themselves in their lifetime. It shows how suffering becomes internalized as a part of gendering. As rapport with them developed during fieldwork, their statements slowly turned into emotional stories. Their accounts made it clear that violence is not only physical. It is also heavily emotional and socially embedded throughout their life course.

Patriarchal, Family Hierarchy and Gendered Loyalty

Women said they were raised and socialized from childhood to respect husbands, kin relations and accept hardship in the household in a common way. Social norms and values taught them that silence is an asset and that resistance against patriarchal norms is shameful and disrespectful. This made marriage give a space for male domination where whereas emotional pain and acute social obligation become normal for women.

Since childhood, we were told that a wife must tolerate everything. It was learned mainly by the mother. We learned that silence is often considered a duty,

particularly for women or daughters. I grew up believing that pain is a normal part of marriage. It made it easy to bear violence easily. I thought this was what every woman in every place and every age had to accept. (R-07, woman in her mid-30s, limited formal schooling, migrant from Kavre; Interview, Sept. 2025)

In this type of socialization under rigid patriarchy, violence is accepted as a moral obligation. It is not recognized as abuse. Many women said that replying to a husband is seen as disrespectful. It reinforces patriarchal discipline inside the home. This situation limits objections against women's violence, either inside the home or in public spaces.

Role of Husbands and Family Members for Violence

Different studies show that husbands were the main perpetrators (Sapkota et al., 2016; Gupta & Samuels, 2017). However, women also described emotional pressure and tortures from mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law equally. These in-laws often reinforced patriarchal norms and values through pressure and humiliation. Some even encouraged men to assert more control under androcentric social perceptions. No any loyalty is shown towards women even in their difficult condition.

If my husband scolds me without reason then his mother always says he is right. She supports his son's beating activities frequently. She keeps telling me that a wife must listen and observe only. No way to object. Sometimes she even encourages him to control me more without reason. It feels as if they both husband and mother-in-law support each other in keeping me powerless. (R-9, early-30s, limited schooling, migrant from Dolakha; Interview, Sept 2025)

This shows how older women sometimes repeat the same patterns they once suffered. It is because of patriarchal perceptions. It creating a chain of control across generations because patriarchal system has not yet broken down. Less education probably played a crucial role in violence in this case.

Economic Dependency and Material Power

Economic dependence limited women's choices and increased their feelings of being trapped. Women with no income, no employment and no family support felt especially vulnerable and unable to break down marriage relations. "I stay quiet because I have no job and nowhere to go safely. I have no knowledge and ideas for work in the market. I feel trapped. I want to accept this life because I do not see any other option. Without my own income, I cannot leave, and I fear becoming a burden to others, even to my family members. So I remain silent and powerless, even when the pain feels too heavy in my life." (R-03, early-30s, primary schooling, migrant from Dhading; Interview, Octo 2025)

Women who earn small amounts through informal work also frequently face suspicion and control from their family members. Interestingly, their efforts to support the household bring new tensions rather than support and freedom. Even simple interactions at work with other male colleagues become sources of conflict. The man thought that her wife is his property like a commodity.

> If I talk to a male customer, my husband gets angry and controls. He thinks I might do something wrong, which is out of family morality. Instead of support and empowerment, I get more strict rules and more questions about my work, working time and people whom I met. (R-10, late-20s, informal worker, migrant from Rolpa; Interview, Sept 2025)

Emotional Abuse, Control and Suspicion

Psychological violence, as a form of harassment, was one of the strongest themes. Women described control by their husbands and family members over mobility, speech and clothing style. Emotional humiliation was common. Women were often hurt because of criticism about their education, work style, attitudes, or physical appearance. Silent treatment, charges of disloyalty, and claims of disrespect were also frequent in the study area.

> My husband doesn't hit often, but his words hurt more than beating which is repeated and the hurt is associated to my parents' home, including family members. The pain from his insults stays with me much longer in my mind. Sometimes a single sentence or even words break my confidence for days and weeks. Because nothing is my fault for those insulting words. I try to stay strong but his targeted words to my parents and me make me feel sad and hopeless. (R-1, mid-30s, secondary incomplete, Kathmandu resident; Interview, Sept 2024)

> Even laughing loudly makes my husband suspect me many times. He questioned and imagined who I was talking to and why I seemed happy. It was only suspected with me. I feel watched all the time, even inside my own home, by my husband and his family members. It is like my emotions are checked and controlled without any reason. (R-8, early-40s, basic literacy, migrant from Sindhuli; Interview, Sept 2024).

It shows that many women accepted this control as part of marital duty without extended objections.

Alcohol and Domestic Violence

Alcohol was frequently mentioned as a major component of conflict inside the family. It created fear, insecure and unpredictable situations inside the home.

> When he drinks, anything can happen. His mood changes frequently, and the

whole house becomes tense and creating fear among family members. I stay quiet for my children because I do not want them to see or hear painful things like before. I thought keeping silent felt like the only way to keep them safe. (R-02, early-30s, no formal schooling, migrant from Makwanpur; Interview, Octo 2024)

Many women reported alcohol as a turning point of violence and creating moments of fear in the family. They said they stayed silent not because they accepted the violence as they thought, but because they wanted to protect their children from conflict and harm further. Research shows that their silence became a survival strategy.

Community Judgment and Family Pressure

Women feared criticism from parents and their own family members even more than their husbands' beatings. Community judgment and obligation and moral comments pressured them to endure violence quietly. Even natal families sometimes discouraged them from speaking out or returning home cause of the social stigma of family-based violence.

If I complain, they say wives don't respect their husbands. They blame us frequently instead of asking what is happening at home. I stay silent without any queries. So, we keep quiet, even when it hurts and causes pain. Speaking out only brings more judgment against them and shame for the house. (R-06, late-30s, basic literacy, Ramechhap origin; Interview, Sept 2024)

When I tried returning to my parents' home for a while and sharing with them about the family clash, they told me to tolerate everything. It was for our betterment and social prestige. They said a married woman must adjust to any difficult situations. In that moment, really, I felt alone from both families. I had no place to go and no one who truly understood my pain which I encountered since my married life. (R-4, early-40s, no formal schooling, migrant from Chitwan; Interview, Sept 2024).

These lived experiences show how community norms and family expectations collectively normalize women's suffering and limit their options and freedom.

Emotional Burden and Masked Pain

Women spoke about long-term emotional distress during the interview period. Chronic stress, headaches, sleeplessness, and exhaustion have become common problems for them due to the cause of psychological violence. However, they felt compelled to hide these signs to maintain family dignity.

I smile outside without pain, but inside I am dying slowly every day without support from family and hope of the future. I presented myself as fine, always

even with my parents. So, others do not worry or judge me. But the pain has stayed with me for a long time. No one sees and calculates how much I struggle inside. (R-05, late-20s, lower-secondary schooling, migrant from Nuwakot; Interview, Sept 2024).

This discussion shows that women carry pain inside that others cannot see and assume easily. It also shows that domestic violence harms them deeply in their minds and hearts psychologically.

Sacrifice and Maternal Duty

Most women said they stayed in violent nature of marriages for their children. They felt marriage breakdown is unsafe to their children cause of the unsafe future of children. Many had no steady income, no secure place to go, and no support from the community and natal families. Their decision to stay was shaped by fear of further uncertainty, responsibility towards children, and limited options of livelihood. It makes them accept violence. Even in hardship, they continued their marital life and daily duties to keep life stable for their children.

A mother does not run away without children. I stay for my children under family pressure and my husband's unsupported situation. They need me and I cannot leave them behind without any responsibility. Even when the situation feels unbearable to me, I tell myself to tolerate for their future. My children give me the strength to stay at home, where I have experienced violence for decades. (R-4, early-40s, no formal schooling, Kathmandu born; Interview, Octo 2024)

This diverse and experienced statement reflects what many women feel that motherhood demands survival even in painful situations. They carried heavy burdens within the household under social pressure. Yet, they continued to protect their children and manage their homes within a life filled with uncertainty and fear. These types of courage show the strength of women bring to their everyday survival under persistent violence.

Discussion

The findings show that domestic violence against women in the informal settlement of the Balkhu Corridor is a structural, relational, and emotionally ongoing process in society. Mainly, it is shaped by gendered socialization under structural patriarchy. Domestic violence occurs because of three main factors. These are women's survival strategies, family control and economic dependence. The varied causal factors of violence against women showed that violence was more social and cultural than

physical. It included persistent control within the patriarchal social structure and gender socialization. These findings are related to feminist claims that violence against women by patriarchal power is reproduced through patriarchal power in the home and society (Walby, 1990; Hooks, 2014).

Patriarchy and Gender Socialization

From childhood, women learned obedience to males and the social system, silence and sacrifice as signs of good womanhood in the process of socialization. This reflects patriarchal conditioning and androcentric perceptions at the household level in which emotional and moral discipline shapes women's behavior constantly. Walby (1990) notes that patriarchy works through family, culture, and male control of resources, and ultimately creates gender imbalance. This appeared clearly in society through women's limited autonomy, restricted freedom, and normalized suffering under social pressure and control from social restrictions. Hooks (2014) also argues that patriarchy sustains through everyday emotional conformity and expectations of female sacrifice. In this study, women treated patients as a moral duty and a social obligation. It shows how power operates under patriarchy through androcentric values and practices.

Coercive Control and Emotional Abuse

Most participants reported that emotional violence occurred first and it takes a huge form for physical violence. It consists of insults, blame, isolation, and unnecessary monitoring of women's personal lives. This is a match of Stark's (2007) concept of coercive control, which describes violence as ongoing regulation of women's actions, emotions, and identity under a patriarchal social system. Chaudhary et al. (2023) also identify emotional abuse as a dominant and often hidden part of husband violence in South Asia. Respondents from the study claim emotional suffering was a fundamental problem under domestic violence. This supports Stark's (2007) argument that control functions as a form of modern domestic abuse.

Economic Dependence and Material Power

Economic dependence was a major factor that sustained violence, especially in the underprivileged group. Women without income had few options for resources and even those who were working informally faced deep suspicion by their husbands and family members. Sen's (1999) idea is significant to this study for analyzing intra-household deprivation. It explains how unequal access to resources limits women's agency and is associated with the condition of women in the study area. Research from Nepal also shows that financially dependent women in abusive relationships (Lamichhane et al., 2011). In this study, the findings show that economic control by

men over women is a form of material power. In this regard, the results show that emotional control over women is strengthened by material power gained by men because of the patriarchal social structure.

Family Dynamics and Inter-Generational Patriarchy

Data from the victimized women suggests that husbands were not the only perpetrators of violence. Mothers-in-law and other in-laws also encouraged or supported the abuse in the household. This finding is consistent with Kandiyoti's (1988) theory of patriarchal bargaining. The theory explains how older women uphold the same standards they were subjected to in the past because of patriarchal values. Respondents claim that in-laws justify aggression by citing family discipline and dignity. This is relevant to studies conducted in Nepal that show in-law involvement in domestic violence (Lamichhane et al., 2011). These synthesize show that social violence is not just an individual act or perception but becomes a common family practice. It is therefore a structural phenomenon.

In urban areas, the forms of patriarchy are changing rather than decreasing. Family confrontation is started by androcentric behavior, economic crisis, and alcohol consumption in the study area. Research from Bangladesh and India shows similar trends in urban low-income families. It indicates how new demands on women coexist with patriarchal control and neglect (Clark, 2018). In Balkhu informal settlement, husbands and family members are suspicious of women who earn even modest wages from outside the home because of androcentric male dominance.

Conclusion

Domestic violence is still practiced as a form of social and emotional reality, even in urban settlements. In informal settlements, structural inequality and economic crises are significant issues for violence against women. Women's everyday lives are shaped by patriarchal norms and values which is historically practiced. It also continues abuse cycles among them. The stories of women from marginal areas show that they have faced multidimensional and multilayer violence they have faced. It includes a variety of suspicions against women. These suspicions emerge from androcentric thinking. They are reinforced by gendered socialization and cultural practices. Together, these processes produce male supremacy. Women face psychological trauma and emotional control reinforced by androcentric perceptions in the study area. Their experiences show how social and cultural norms, values and social practices normalize women's suffering. These findings are associated with feminist standpoint theory. Different cases have experienced domestic violence differently based on economic status caste and ethnicity. It emphasizes that women's lived experiences come from marginalized

positions. These experiences help to explore structural domination. They also disclose the everyday forms of gender-based oppression. These norms of women's subordination present women's survival as a shared responsibility. These circumstances contribute to the repeated victimization of women. Their options for escaping violence rooted in structural domination are extremely limited. Women from the study area feel forced by traditional social values to tolerate physical harm and psychological impact. They still try to protect their children from violence in their home despite difficult family situations. They do not resist gender inequality directly because family dignity controls them. They use survival strategies to manage daily life under social pressure and family control. The study shows that domestic violence continues as a structural issue linked to social and cultural contexts. It is closely related to household poverty, gender inequality, and urban vulnerability equally. Further research should consider women's subjective and emotional experiences through an intersectional approach. It is important to address the social and economic barriers deeply rooted in caste and ethnic groups that affect gender relations. These practices put women at risk for exploitation because of gender inequality. The recommendations associate women's experiences of violence with intersecting poverty, caste, and ethnicity. These intersections are particularly evident from this research in the Balkhu Corridor. It provides a theoretical basis for an intersectional approach to understand women's lived realities.

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