
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: MEANING AND SCOPE

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a major area of concern when it comes to issues of women. Domestic violence is a form of violence by a person to hurt one's spouse or partner either physically, psychologically or sexually. Though its outcomes are primarily related to physical health, but its causes and secondary outcomes are psychological as well as sociological. This review paper focuses on psychological causes and outcomes of domestic violence underlined in previous studies. Need for power and control, low self-esteem, personality traits, gender role stereotypes, patriarchal beliefs, gap in spousal education and employment, marital maladjustment, alcohol consumption by husband, unemployment, attitudes towards women are some of the socio-psychological factors leading to domestic violence. Outcomes of domestic violence are equally harmful for women and their children. It has been noted that women who face domestic violence are at greater risk for mental health disorders. Education and higher socio-economic status of husband and wife are protective factors against domestic violence to some extent. Some recent research has also focused on domestic violence against men and domestic violence in same gender relationships, but there are a very few studies emphasizing on these two issues in India. It can be concluded that domestic violence is led by many interlinked psychological and sociological factors and its outcomes are dangerous for the victims.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is as old as recorded history which has been reported in virtually every society, every civilization. Discrimination and oppression leading to physical, mental or emotional violence have been accepted as a part of every patriarchal society. Except recent reference is found, domestic violence has been both socially and legally acceptable. Some important event, laws, codes, provide historical context, within which conceptualization of domestic violence becomes crystal clear. Two major elements combined to seal the status of women are male dominance and projecting women as 'property' an object belonging to men and secondly expectations from women as an ideal 'role model' suit each other, in such a way as to make her vulnerable and subject to discrimination, oppression and all sorts of victimization and resultantly compel their subordination.

"Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women..." Domestic violence is physical, sexual or psychological abuse directed towards one's spouse, partner or other family member within the household. Domestic violence occurs when a family member, partner or ex-partner attempts to physically or psychologically dominate or harm the other. It occurs in all cultures, people of all races ethnicities and religions can be perpetrators of domestic violence. Violence against women is particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence against women is the major public health problems and violations of women's human right. According to 2013 a global review of available data, 35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. However, some national violence studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and or sexual violence in their lifetime from an intimate partner.

MEANING OF VIOLENCE

The term violence refers to any physical force for or any damage or injury to person or property.

Oxford Dictionary defines: "Violence as behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something."

WHO defines Violence: "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual,

against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm and deprivation".

‘Domestic violence is violent victimization of women within the boundaries of family, usually by men. Domestic violence is in most of the cases violence against women by the members of house where she resides. It can be the husband, his parents, or siblings or any other resident who has the overt or covert latitude for actions that can cause physical or mental agonies to women...it happens behind closed doors and is most often denied by the very women who has been victim of violence.’

Term “Domestic Violence against women” means any act or conduct which has potential to injure or hurt women physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and also spiritually within the four walls of house, however, such an act or conduct is done usually not by strangers.

DIFFERENT FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN INDIA by UNICEF

Government of India and UNICEF says that more than 60 million women, who should have been alive today, are missing Responsible factors are from feticide to domestic violence to dowry deaths to physical assaults. Discrimination starts even before women are born and continue till; they die. It exists in the form of: -

Feticide - Some new forms of violence have appeared with technological advances as is evident in case of female feticide, reflecting in adverse sex-ratio. Social bias in favour of a male- child lead to abortions (out of 8000 cases of abortions following sex-determination tests, 7999 are female fetus, according to a Survey) Sex-ratio is continuously declining all over India except for Kerala. Inefficient and ineffective performance of political, administrative and economic structures and mechanisms failed to stop it.

Infanticide -Thousands of newly born baby-girls die with overdoses of opium. They are abandoned or thrown in rivers or Health hazards - According to official figures, there is 10% higher mortality rate for girls than boys due to mal-nutrition in dust bins to die. Out of abandoned children 90% are girls, infancy and childhood Health Statistics are equally alarming with 80% of them being anaemic. Physical assaults/Rapes/gang-rapes/molestations According to a Report, there are reported cases of one rape every 54 minutes, a molestation every 26 minutes; and an act of cruelty every 33 minutes. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)

statistic says - every 20 minutes, a woman is raped somewhere in India, not to mention the countless number of cases of molestations or rapes going unreported. Child rape cases have increased by 336% in the last 10 years. Government data shows crimes by juveniles-especially rape and abduction of women-has seen exponential rise in the past decade-from 48.7% in 2002 to 66.5 in 2012.

Dowry deaths - Number of dowry-deaths is quite alarming in the country - a dowry death every one hour forty two minutes. Dowry-related violence is also in increase. Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan are the states with maximum number of reported cases. Many cases remain unreported.

Victims of materialistic-culture -Consumerist culture has triggered off increased atrocities, domestic violence and physical assaults on women. Millions of girls live under threat of physical abuse.

Female literacy rate - Male-female literacy-rate is 82,14% to 65.46% according to 2011 census. Employment ratio in organized and unorganized sectors also points out discrimination against women in job-market.

Characteristics of Domestic Violence

The following are the characteristics of the domestic violence generally mention in most of the research surveys.

- Domestic Violence is an exploitation of woman inside limits of family; a woman might be a young woman child, wedded, old or like relationship.
- Violence can be of a mischief physical, mental, enthusiastic, profound, conservative and so forth it incorporates even risk or forceful conduct towards her not just her physical being and even towards her sense of pride, and fearlessness as well.
- Domestic violence against woman is a precise and auxiliary instrument of Patriarchal control of woman that is developed on male predominance and female inadequacy.
- The violence happens in private circle I. e home where she anticipates love, friendship, care, warmth and the miscreant is her own relatives.

- It is a sex-stereotyped job desire for society for men to be transcendent and women to be subordinate.
- It is a sexual orientation-based violence that mirrors the current asymmetry in power connection among people that sustains the subjection and degrading of female instead of male and exists mind him the structure of male-controlled society as an emblematic framework that denies women their rights and duplicates the lop-sidedness and disparity between the genders, it is properly depicted as sex explicit wrongdoing happening inside family between people related through intimacy, blood or law
- Domestic violence alludes to an example of rough harsh and coercive conduct by one accomplice in a relationship to pick up and keep up power and command over someone else's life.
- Domestic violence is currently everywhere throughout the world expanding worry by world network because of women's activist developments. Terms like Marital violence, matrimonial violence, are utilized to indicate the violence between companions while different terms like Inter-family violence, domestic violence are utilized to comprehensively incorporate violence in life partners, displayed against youngsters, among kin and for the most part between people who shared a common habitation and live in cosy relationship.
- Violence against woman is the most disgraceful human rights infringement. It knows no limits of topography, culture, station, riches, or something bad might happen. It is an all-inclusive marvel found in creating, created and undeveloped nations in changing structures and extent.

Consequences of Domestic Violence

The effects of domestic violence on women go beyond the immediate physical injuries they suffer at the hands of their abusers. Frequently, domestic violence survivors suffer from an array of psychosomatic illnesses, eating disorders, insomnia, gastrointestinal disturbances, generalized chronic pain, and devastating mental health problems like posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Many abused women find it difficult to function in their daily lives because of the effects of domestic violence. Absences from work, due to injuries or visits to the doctor, often cause them to lose their jobs, making them less able to leave their abusive situations. They may feel

ashamed that their partners abuse them, see themselves as unworthy of love, and suffer from a significantly diminished self-perception. Because of their feelings of low self-worth, these women become isolated from friends and family and do not participate in social activities common to others in their demographic.

In general, victims of repeated violence experience more serious consequences than victims of one-time incidents. Women with a history of intimate partner violence are more likely to display behaviour's that lead to further health risks such as substance abuse, alcoholism, and suicide attempts. Intimate partner violence is also associated with a variety of negative health behaviour's; studies show that the more severe the violence, the stronger its relationship to negative health behaviours by victims.

Some victims may engage in high-risk sexual behaviour's such as unprotected sex, early sexual initiation, choosing unhealthy or multiple sexual partners, or trading sex for food, money, or other items. There is often an increased use of harmful substances and illicit drug use, alcohol abuse, and driving while intoxicated. Victims of intimate partner violence may also engage in unhealthy diet-related behaviour's such as smoking, fasting, vomiting, overeating, and abuse of diet pills. They may also overuse health services.

Women who experience severe aggression by men, such as not being allowed to go to work or school or having their lives or their children's lives threatened, are more likely to have been unemployed in the past and be receiving public assistance. They may have restricted access to services, strained relationships with healthcare providers and employers, and be isolated from social networks.

Other consequences of domestic violence are:

- Divorce and separation often bring about socio-economic problems such as homelessness because the victim-survivor has to flee her home with her children.
- Loss of employment and earnings: The victim-survivor often either loses her job following frequent absenteeism because of injuries sustained or she has to quit her job as a safety measure or because she has moved to a place of safety, far away from her employment.
- Denial of basic human rights to physical, sexual and mental integrity and to safety and

security.

- Negative impact on parenting behaviours which effects on the development of children.

Psychological Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence

1. Inability to trust others
2. Fear of intimacy
3. Emotional detachment
4. Sleep disturbances
5. Flashbacks
6. Replaying assault in mind
7. Anxiety
8. Depression
9. Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder
10. Antisocial behaviour
11. Suicidal behaviour in females
12. Low self-esteem

Types of Domestic Violence against women

The types of domestic violence against women range from physical, sexual, verbal and emotional abuse to economic abuse.

- **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse is the most prominently visible form of domestic violence against women. It has been defined in the Domestic Violence Act to include any act that causes

bodily pain or danger to life, limb or health or development of the victim. Assault, criminal force, and criminal intimidation are forms of physical abuse.

- **Sexual abuse:** Sexual abuse against women is in the nature of sexual/reproductive coercion. Generally, marital rape should come within the ambit of sexual abuse. However, marital rape is not outlawed unless the wife is below 15 years of age. According to the Domestic Violence Act, sexual abuse is any abuse of a sexual nature that 'abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of a woman.'

- **Verbal and emotional abuse:** Verbal abuse includes remarks/threats made by the domestic relations during domestic violence against women. Verbal abuse further leads to emotional abuse and is an incredibly common form of domestic violence from the human rights perspective. The combination of verbal and emotional abuse leads to psychological abuse and erodes a woman's sense of self-worth.

- **Economic abuse:** Introducing economic abuse in the categories of abuses under the Domestic Violence Act has been a remarkable step by the government. Economic abuse is generally characterised as a method of depriving or threatening to deprive the victim and her children from the use of financial resources/assets.
- **Isolation:** Preventing you from seeing family, friends, or attending social events.
- **Control:** Eliminating freedom by controlling you from making your own choices, checking up on you obsessively, dictating your clothing or style choices, or using your children as leverage.
- **Male privilege:** Adhering to cultural beliefs that men must be dominant over women.

Causes of Domestic Violence in India

There is no uniform or single reason that leads to domestic violence. It is a combination of various sociological/behavioural, historical, religious, and cultural factors that lead to the perpetration of domestic violence against women.

- **Patriarchal social structure -:** In Indian culture since days of yore man centric society is predominant in social structure where the entire structure is male overwhelmed. The leader of

the family has comprehensive forces.

He is the head of all the property and persons living in family, spouse after marriage need to leave her folks and move for all time at her marital home. The kids are known by the name of group of fathers. The male prevalence, abundances of power and power structure itself makes female helpless. She has no different character yet 'first the little girl, next spouse and finally the mother of MAN. In this manner man involves unrivalled status and women simply his extremity.

- **Family system family disorganization** -H. M. Johnson has characterized family as "a gathering of at least two persons related by blood, marriage, or appropriation and are dwelling together." Anderson and Parker have characterized it as "it is a socially perceived unit of individuals identified with one another by connection, conjugal, and legitimate ties." In India where we pursue Patriarchal type of family the male job that of "a predominant Patriarch" who principles and a female job "a loyal assistance mate" decides the power control. Family confusion brought about by conjugal mal modifications and the changing components of qualities conflicts with and brings about the vicious assault on helpless class.

- **Male Dominance and Greed for money** - Among various reasons for expanding occurrence of domestic violence essential and the most noticeable reason lies with the disposition of Indian male, to be moderate, totalitarian, possessive with commanding nature, accordingly domestic violence kept on being the serious issue in Indian culture. In Indian setting, it is seen that two essential realities are the roots for frame of mind towards women bringing about violence. First it is a place where there is differentiate incredibly traditional and very modern esteems exist next to each other and then again it remains solidly established in the Patriarchal belief system which is prefaced upon male matchless quality and legitimization of women's oppression. As a result of this essential belief system a similar circumstance remains to a great extent unchallenged and unaltered; violence against her is sustained in old structure and now and then in various and fresher pretence

- **Sociological/Behavioural Factors:** The sociological, behavioural, and cultural factors include factors like anger issues/aggressive attitude, poverty/economic hardship, difference in status, controlling/dominating nature, drug addiction, upbringing, and psychological instability (bipolarism, depression, stress, etc.) among others. Neglect of conjugal responsibilities due to extra-marital affairs or lack of trust also contributes to domestic violence.

- **Historical Factors:** Historical factors can be traced back to the inherent evil of patriarchy and superiority complex that has prevailed for centuries among men.

- **Religious Factors:** A subtle form of domination on women, if not direct and glaring, reflects in the religious sanctifications. This also contributes to perpetration of domestic violence against women.

Cultural Factors: Cultural Factors leading to domestic violence include the desire for a male child. This obsession resulting from the lack of awareness and inherent male superiority leads to perpetration of domestic violence against women. This is not an exhaustive list of factors and the motivations or triggers behind domestic violence may vary.

- **Dowry:** Dowry is a form of socio-cultural factor. But it becomes important to separately mention it because of the rampant domestic violence cases resulting from illegal demand of dowry. This was realised by the Parliament also because dowry-related domestic violence has been made a separate head in the scope of abuse resulting in domestic violence under the Domestic Violence Act.

Tips to prevent domestic violence

Domestic violence always has a negative effect on the victim. They undergo emotional, psychological, and physical changes. Domestic violence has major impacts on the victims, families, society, and its functioning. In order to put a stop to all these, there are various things which should be followed;

- **Awareness:** One of the major steps to stop domestic violence is to make the apartment owners association aware about the negative drawbacks and harms of domestic violence. Set the rules against the practice of domestic violence and impose stringent punishments on the attacker. Gather more information and educate people about the detrimental effects of domestic violence. It is not advisable that we ignore such things and instead raise a voice against it.
- **Need for stringent laws:** It is very important that the law against domestic violence must be imposed stringently. Domestic violence was recognized as a grave criminal offense in 1983 by introducing the section 498-A in the Indian penal code. This act helps in the elimination of domestic violence among family members.

- **Empowered Non-government organizations:** In order to curb domestic violence among people in apartments, individuals can also seek the help of non-government organizations. These organizations will make people aware about the consequences and get justice to the victim.
- **Seek police help:** In case of severe violence, individuals can seek legal help from the police and put an end to domestic violence. The police play an important role in curbing domestic violence issues. Special courses on how to handle domestic violence issues are provided to the police. It is very important for them to take domestic violence as a serious health issue which can cause serious damage to families.
- **Encourage and not threaten:** Maximum number of individuals back off when they witness any kind of domestic violence. This happens due to the fear of being harmed or assets being damaged. People mostly turn a blind eye towards it and keep mum about such incidents. In such cases it is very important to organize a meeting and encourage people to come up with the solutions.
- **Counselling:** It is very important for every apartment to have a counsellor who can council the individuals in terms of danger. Doing this will further make people courageous and come forward if they are a victim or if they witness any such incident.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is not a small problem it is a big issue to think. Monetary problems, alcoholism, illiteracy, extramarital affairs, bad childhood, and dowry are the major reasons of domestic violence. The victims most commonly face physical violence by their partners; there is an urgent need of more and more domestic violence counselling centres throughout the country. History is evidence that no legislation has succeeded in eliminating crime from the globe. Though not all people are victims to domestic violence but there are suffering from violence. There are many laws to help people but it is only possible when people are aware of their rights and duties. The legal system is lacking where it comes to protect men from domestic violence, they are the victims too, and we should investigate the broader perspective and start accepting that women are no weaker and only sufferers in some cases men also face violence and they also need legal help as well as psychological help. If these factors can be controlled

then more than one form of violence can be prevented from harming an individual or our society and India would be a much better place to live in.