

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**Dr. M.P Baligar****Assistant professor of Sociology****A W University, Vijayapura****ABSTRACT**

Domestic violence is an extremely complex and vicious form of abuse, committed most often within four walls of the family house and/ or within a particular deep rooted power dynamic and socio-economic structure, which do not allow even the recognition or acknowledgement of this abuse. A woman may of any age, she may girl child, and unmarried, married or elderly women including a widow or such women with whom men have marriage like relationship. Violence can be both physical and psychological or sexual .In last many decades, there has been an alarming increase in the incidence of violence within and outside family. The worst forms of verbal, physical, psychological and sexual violence are committed in their homes. The denial of food, turning a woman out of house is confining her in house and denying access to minor children constitutes mental torture. The other form of torture is repeated physical torture. To check the domestic violence 'The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act' was passed in 2005 because the criminal law was not enough to deal with complex issues involved in domestic violence. The Act recognizes the need for relief to be granted as a basic minimum to provide women with violence free Indians from which they can negotiate their future in the position of equality that means the nature of relief is quick and permanent way out to domestic violence. Thus, the Act marks the foremost but the significant steps towards achieving a target of equality. Women, who have for decades being silent victims of oppression, will now have a better chance of fighting the injustice without the slightest of hesitation. Now days so many other groups also come in the field to help women against violence.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a complex and multidimensional problem. Domestic violence is a form of abuse, committed most often within four walls of the family house and /or within a particular deep rooted power dynamic and socio- economic structure, which do not allow even the recognition or acknowledgment of this abuse. Domestic violence¹ is defined as an act of omission or commission stressing the fact that omission can cause as much heat burn as acts of commission. Thus the section

provides protection against any act, conduct, omission, or commission that harms or injures or has the potential to harm or injure, and it will be considered as 'domestic violence'. Again the act of omission or commission may be physical, mental, sexual, emotional or economical 'Even a single act of commission or omission may constitute domestic violence. Now women do not have to suffer a prolonged period of abuse before taking recourse to the law. The legislation has widened the scope of domestic violence and can be broadly related to human rights. In a way it highlights the notion violence of silence also. The expansive interpretation of violence of violence is a critical breakthrough made by an ACT.

Even today various forms of violence against women are prevalent in our society, though many cases remain unreported due to one or other reasons. Women on many occasions are victimized by all sorts of discrimination, deprivations and obstruction in goal achieving and responses. These incidences may occur in the family, offices, industries or even public places. Inflicting and experiencing violence in many subtle forms causing and suffering mental pain in day- to- day life has become ways of our world in interpersonal relationships. The cruelty, the hate that exists in us is expressed in the exploitation of the weak by the powerful and cunning. The worst part of problem is that women today are not feeling safe and secure even in the family. The concept of home, sweet home is no more, so far many women, who suffer violence against themselves by the members of the family whom is no safe place when it comes to aggressive behavior.

In last many decades, there has been an alarming increase in the incidence of violence within and outside family .Today, we hear more about wife beating, dowry deaths, and sexual crimes. Women are ignored in house work and outside home. They are suffering innumerable tortures from their in-laws and husbands. The society, the religion, her parents and in-laws everyone expects her to become her husband's shadow. The worst thing is that all this come as a rude shock to her after marriage, because the institution of marriage in our society is highly glamourized. Hence for women, 'the union of souls' turning into a nightmare is a truly horrifying and shattering experience. The mental violence may be committed in such a subtle manner that others will never come to know of it.

MEANING

Domestic violence, also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, dating abuse, and intimate partner violence (IPV), is a pattern of behavior which involves the abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating or within the family. Domestic violence can take many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects, battery), or threats thereof; sexual abuse;

controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse (e.g., neglect); and economic deprivation.

“domestic violence” shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim”.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women classifies violence against women into three categories: that occurring in the family (DV) that occurring within the general community and that perpetrated or condoned by the State. Family violence is defined as follows:

"Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non- spousal violence and violence related to exploitation".

Terms such wife abuse, wife beating, and battering are descriptive terms that have lost popularity recently for several reasons:

- There is acknowledgment that many victims are not actually married to the abuser, but rather cohabiting or in other arrangements.
- Abuse can take other forms than physical abuse. Other forms of abuse may be constantly occurring, while physical abuse happens occasionally. These other forms of abuse, that are not physical, also have the potential to lead to mental illness, self-harm, and even attempts at suicide.
- Males as well as females may be victims of domestic violence, and females as well as males can be the perpetrators.
- All forms of domestic abuse can occur in same sex partnerships

FORMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Physical violence
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Economic abuse or financial abuse
- Spiritual abuse
- Criminal harassment/stalking

Physical Violence: In physical violence a man may punch his wife with his fists, or kick her if she has fallen to the ground. If she is pregnant, he might kick her in the abdomen. Weapons are also used in

physical abuse – sometimes he will beat her with a stick, or shoot her with a gun. Or else he might just threaten her with these weapons.

Sexual Abuse: Abusers who are physically violent toward their intimate partners are often sexually violent as well. So we can say that sexual abuse is related to physical sexual assault violence. Sexual assault, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation come in sexual abuse.

Emotional abuse: The abuser tells the victim that they are worthless on their own. Making the victim feel that there is no way out of the relationship. Isolation from friends and family also comes in emotional abuse.

Financial abuse: The abuser makes insult of his partner if his financial condition is being good then the other one, and he feels jealous in its opposite case. In India there are many cases where you will see that the wife is beat by her husband if her financial condition is being not too good and if she is not able to fulfill his demands?

Spiritual abuse: This type of situation comes when the intimate partners are become from the different religions. Using her religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate, and control her.

Criminal harassment/stalking: Following her or watching her in a persistent, malicious, and unwanted manner. Invading her privacy in a way that threatens her personal safety.

SOME FACTS

- Violence against women is a serious problem in India. Overall, one-third of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence and about 1 in 10 has experienced sexual violence. In total, 35 percent have experienced physical or sexual violence.
- Married women are more likely to experience physical or sexual violence by husbands than by anyone else.
- Nearly two in five (37 percent) married women have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence by their husband¹.
- One in four married women has experienced physical or sexual violence.
- Slapping is the most common act of physical violence by husbands. Thirty four percent of married women say their husband has slapped them; 15 percent say their husband has pulled their hair or twisted their arms; and 14 percent have been pushed, shaken, or had something thrown at them
- One in 10 married women has experienced sexual violence at the hands of their husband, i.e., they have been physically forced against their will by their husband to have sex or perform other sexual acts they did not want to perform.

- Often, this physical and sexual violence causes injuries. Almost two in five women who have experienced physical or sexual violence report having injuries, including 36 percent who had cuts, bruises or aches; 9 percent who had eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns; and 7 percent who had deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or other serious injuries.
- The prevalence of spousal physical or sexual violence is much higher among women in the poorest households (49 percent) than among women in the wealthier households (18 percent).
- Nearly half (46 percent) of married women with no education have experienced spousal violence; similarly, nearly half of women whose husbands have no education (47 percent) have experienced spousal violence.
- Twelve percent of married women with 12 or more years of education have experienced spousal violence, compared with 21 percent of married women whose husbands have 12 or more years of education. This suggests that women's own education reduces their likelihood of experiencing spousal violence more than their husband's education.
- Spousal violence is lower among couples in which husbands and wives have both been to school and are equally educated (23 percent) than among couples where the husband has more education than the wife (36 percent).
- The cycle of domestic violence is repeated across generations. Women whose mothers were beaten by their fathers are twice as likely to experience violence as women whose mothers were not beaten by their fathers: 60 percent, compared with 30 percent.
- Women married to men who get drunk frequently are more than twice as likely to experience violence as women whose husbands do not drink alcohol at all.
- However, even though alcohol is important, it is not the only factor accounting for the high prevalence of violence against women, as 30 percent of even women whose husbands do not drink have experienced spousal violence.

NEVER MARRIED WOMEN ALSO EXPERIENCE PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

- Sixteen percent of never married women have experienced physical violence since they were 15 years of age, generally by a parent, a sibling, or a teacher.
- One percent of never married women report having ever been sexually abused by anyone. Among never married women who have experienced sexual violence, 27 percent say that the perpetrator of the violence was a relative.
- Most Women Do Not Seek Help When They Are Abused

- Only one in four abused women have ever sought help to try to end the violence they have experienced.
- Two out of three women have not only ever sought help, but have also never told anyone about the violence.
- Abused women most often seek help from their families.
- Few abused women seek help from any institutional source such as police, medical institutions, or social service organizations. Only 2 percent of abused women have ever sought help from the police.

MAJORITY OF WOMEN AND MEN SAY THAT A HUSBAND IS JUSTIFIED IN BEATING HIS WIFE

- More than half of women (54 percent) and men (51 percent) agree that it is justifiable for a husband to beat his wife under some circumstances.
- Women and men most often agree that wife beating is justified when the wife disrespects her in-laws.
- Neglect of the house or children is the second most commonly agreed to justification for wife beating for both women and men.

CAUSES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- In our society, gender inequality is visible in many areas, including politics, religion, media, cultural norms, and the workplace. Both men and women receive many messages—both blatant and covert—that men are more important than women. This fundamental inequality creates a rationale for humiliation, intimidation, control, abuse, and even murder.
- In this context, it becomes easier for a man to believe that he has the right to be in charge and to control a woman, even if it requires violence. This is not only wrong, it's against the law.
- Violence against women is rooted in the belief that women deserve less social power and it is therefore acceptable – maybe even necessary – to exert power over them. This mindset also drives many other forms of violence, such as racism, homophobia, classism, ageism, and religious persecution.
- There is no evidence that alcohol or mental illness causes men to be violent against women. Men who assault their partners rarely assault their friends, neighbours, bosses, or strangers. In fact, when it comes to alcohol, there is a clear double standard: while alcohol consumption by an offender is often used to excuse their behaviour, victims who have been drinking are often blamed for their own victimization.

BARRIERS TO LEAVING AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

The most commonly asked question about victims of domestic violence is "Why do they stay?" Family, friends, coworkers, and community professionals who try to understand the reasons why a victim of domestic violence has not left the abusive partner often feel perplexed and frustrated. Some victims of domestic violence do leave their violent partners while others may leave and return at different points throughout the abusive relationship. Leaving a violent relationship is a process, not an event, for many victims, who cannot simply "pick up and go" because they have many factors to consider. To understand the complex nature of terminating a violent relationship, it is essential to look at the barriers and risks faced by victims when they consider or attempt to leave. Individual, systemic, and societal barriers faced by victims of domestic violence include:

- **Fear.** Perpetrators commonly make threats to find victims, inflict harm, or kill them if they end the relationship. This fear becomes a reality for many victims who are stalked by their partner after leaving. It also is common for abusers to seek or threaten to seek sole custody, make child abuse allegations, or kidnap the children. Historically, there has been a lack of protection and assistance from law enforcement, the judicial system, and social service agencies charged with responding to domestic violence. Inadequacies in the system and the failure of past efforts by victims of domestic violence seeking help have led many to believe that they will not be protected from the abuser and are safer at home. While much remains to be done, there is a growing trend of increased legal protection and community support for these victims.
- **Isolation.** One effective tactic abusers use to establish control over victims is to isolate them from any support system other than the primary intimate relationship. As a result, some victims are unaware of services or people that can help. Many believe they are alone in dealing with the abuse. This isolation deepens when society labels them as "masochistic" or "weak" for enduring the abuse. Victims often separate themselves from friends and family because they are ashamed of the abuse or want to protect others from the abuser's violence.
- **Financial dependence.** Some victims do not have access to any income and have been prevented from obtaining an education or employment. Victims who lack viable job skills or education, transportation, affordable daycare, safe housing, and health benefits face very limited options. Poverty and marginal economic support services can present enormous challenges to victims who seek safety and stability. Often, victims find themselves choosing between homelessness, living in impoverished and unsafe communities, or returning to their abusive partner.

- **Guilt and shame.** Many victims believe the abuse is their fault. The perpetrator, family, friends, and society sometimes deepen this belief by accusing the victim of provoking the violence and casting blame for not preventing it. Victims of violence rarely want their family and friends to know they are abused by their partner and are fearful that people will criticize them for not leaving the relationship. Victims often feel responsible for changing their partner's abusive behavior or changing themselves in order for the abuse to stop. Guilt and shame may be felt especially by those who are not commonly recognized as victims of domestic violence. This may include men, gays, lesbians, and partners of individuals in visible or respected professions, such as the clergy and law enforcement.
 - **Emotional and physical impairment.** Abusers often use a series of psychological strategies to break down the victim's self-esteem and emotional strength. In order to survive, some victims begin to perceive reality through the abuser's paradigm, become emotionally dependent, and believe they are unable to function without their partner. The psychological and physical effects of domestic violence also can affect a victim's daily functioning and mental stability. This can make the process of leaving and planning for safety challenging for victims who may be depressed, physically injured, or suicidal. Victims who have a physical or developmental disability are extremely vulnerable because the disability can compound their emotional, financial, and physical dependence on their abusive partner.
 - **Individual belief system.** The personal, familial, religious, and cultural values of victims of domestic violence are frequently interwoven in their decisions to leave or remain in abusive relationships. For example, victims who hold strong convictions regarding the sanctity of marriage may not view divorce or separation as an option. Their religious beliefs may tell them divorce is "wrong." Some victims of domestic violence believe that their children still need to be with the offender and that divorce will be emotionally damaging to them.
 - **Hope.** Like most people, victims of domestic violence are invested in their intimate relationships and frequently strive to make them healthy and loving. Some victims hope the violence will end if they become the person their partner wants them to be. Others believe and have faith in their partner's promises to change. Perpetrators are not "all bad" and have positive, as well as, negative qualities. The abuser's "good side" can give victims reason to think their partner is capable of being nurturing, kind, and nonviolent.
 - **Community services and societal values.** For victims who are prepared to leave and want protection, there are a variety of institutional barriers that make escaping abuse difficult and frustrating. Communities that have inadequate resources and limited victim advocacy services and
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whose response to domestic abuse is fragmented, punitive, or ineffective can not provide realistic or safe solutions for victims and their children.

- **Cultural hurdles.** The lack of culturally sensitive and appropriate services for victims of color and those who are non-English speaking pose additional barriers to leaving violent relationships. Minority populations include African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and other ethnic groups whose cultural values and customs can influence their beliefs about the role of men and women, interpersonal relationships, and intimate partner violence. For example, the Hispanic cultural value of "machismo" supports some Latino men's belief that they are superior to women and the "head of their household" in determining familial decisions. "Machismo" may cause some Hispanic men to believe that they have the right to use violent or abusive behavior to control their partners or children. In turn, Latina women and other family or community members may excuse violent or controlling behavior because they believe that husbands have ultimate authority over them and their children.

Examples of culturally competent services include offering written translation of domestic violence materials, providing translators in domestic violence programs, and implementing intervention strategies that incorporate cultural values, norms, and practices to effectively address the needs of victims and abusers. The lack of culturally competent services that fail to incorporate issues of culture and language can present obstacles for victims who want to escape abuse and for effective interventions with domestic violence perpetrators. Well-intended family, friends, and community members also can create additional pressures for the victim to "make things work."

EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Domestic violence physically, psychologically and socially affects women, men and their families.
- Victims of domestic violence may be isolated from friends, family and neighbors and lose their network of social support
- Individuals who are abused live in fear and isolation in the one place they should always feel safe, their home.
- Child abuse and domestic violence often occur in the same family. Researchers have found that 50 percent to 70 percent of the men who frequently assaulted their wives also frequently abused their children.
- Around five to six million children witnesses the acts of violence against their mother every year.
- Domestic violence may result in physical injury, psychological harm or neglect of children

- Those persons who involves in the domestic violence have a six times greater chance of committing suicide. 25% of attempted suicides by women are contributed by women who are in domestic relationships.

Today, community-based domestic violence programs throughout the country provide an array of services, including:

- Shelter and safe houses;
- National, State, and local emergency hotlines;
- Crisis counseling and intervention;
- Support groups;
- Medical and mental health referrals;
- Legal advocacy;
- Vocational counseling, job training, and economic support referrals;
- Housing and relocation services;
- Transportation;
- Safety planning;
- Children's services.

CONCLUSION

Violence against women is a complex and multidimensional problem. The promotion of a society free of this form of violence, and the full recovery of the women who have suffered it and their children, requires the intervention of the different professionals specialised in this field, who help provide a concerted and global response to his problem in a coordinated manner. The problem of domestic violence is as old as the institution of family. The worst forms of verbal, physical, psychological and sexual violence are committed in their homes. The denial of food, turning a woman out of house, confining her in house and denying access to minor children constitutes mental torture. The other form of torture is repeated physical violence. To check the domestic violence, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act was passed in 2005 because the criminal law was not enough to deal with complex issues involved in domestic violence .The Act recognizes the need for relief to be granted as a basic minimum to provide women with violence free India from which they can negotiate their future in the position of equality that means he nature of relief is quick, temporary and permanent way out to domestic violence still remains in the realm of personal laws under which a woman would have to decide on whether or not to continue the relationship . Thus, the Act marks the foremost but significant step towards achieving a target of equality.

There is no doubt that given in hypocritical, patriarchal and insensitive nature of the society, the measures would definitely be helpful in putting an end to all the degradation meted out to women. Women, who have for decades being silent victims of oppression, will now have a better chance of fighting the injustice without the slightest of hesitation. The role of different groups and judiciary as law enforcement instrument, towards protecting women involves the identification of rights in a beneficial manner wherever possible.

The eradication of violence against women is a challenge which all fully democratic societies, respectful of the fundamental rights, should assume. Achieving a society free of this form of violence is the ultimate aim of human being.

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