

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND THE STATE INTERVENTION

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Women are often in great danger in the place where they should be safest i.e. within their families. For many 'home' is where they face a regime of terror and violence at the hands of somebody else to them-somebody they should be able to trust. They victimized suffer physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice, and their own opinions or protect themselves and their children for fear of further repercussions. Their human rights are denied and their lives are stolen from them by the ever-present threat of violence. The global dimensions of this violence are alarming. Violence in the domestic sphere is usually perpetrated by males who are one who has been in positions of trust and intimacy and power-husband, boyfriends, fathers, father-in-law, step fathers, brothers, uncles, sons and other relatives. Domestic violence can be described as when one adult in a

relationship misuses power to control another. It is the establishment of control and fear in a relationship through a violence and other forms of abuse. Domestic violence can broadly be defined as any unethical, immoral or criminal act committed within the family by one of the members or the emotional abuse which seriously harms life, body, psychological integrity or liberty of another member of the family. Domestic violence consists of (a) physical aggression such as minor or major blows, (b) sexual abuse including rape, incest, and collective rapes (c) emotional abuse which includes verbal humiliation, continuous threat, threat of physical abuse, economic blackmail and confinement in the home and (d) homicides including dowry death. Thus, domestic violence means all offences committed within the four walls of the family and includes child abuse, sexual abuse, wife battering, ill treatment of newly married women for dowry, assault, rape, suicide and such other offences.

Domestic violence against women is often a cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout their lives. Even at the very beginning of her life, a female foetus

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may be the target of sex-selective abortion or female infanticide in cultures where son preference is prevalent. During childhood, violence against girls may include enforced malnutrition, lack of access to medical care and education, incest, female genital mutilation, early marriage etc. Some go on to suffer throughout their adult lives- battered, raped and even murdered at the hands of intimate partners.

### THE INDIAN SCENARIO

The National Family Health Survey- III carried out in 29 states in 2005-2006 showed that 37 percent of married women said they faced spousal violence. One in every three women residing in urban areas and as many as 40 percent in rural India said that they had experience of violence at their homes.

In Uttar Pradesh (India), the most violent with the abuse rate against married women being as high as 59 percent. It was followed by Madhya Pradesh (45.8%), Rajasthan (46.37%), Manipur (43.9%), Bihar (62.4%), Tamil Nadu (41.9%), West Bengal (40.3%) and Arunachal Pradesh (38.8%). Among the metro cities, the fairer sex was better off in Delhi (16.3%) and Mumbai (19.5%) recorded relatively low percentage as compared to Chennai (40.6%) and Kolkata (26.7%). Nearly (17%) women in Goa have experience of violence. The trend of violence against women was recently highlighted by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which stated that while in 2000, an average

of 125 women faced domestic violence every day, the figure stood at 160 in 2005 and 2001 in 2013. In 2005, more than 19 women were killed for dowry everyday (source: The Times of India, Kolkata, Tuesday, March 13, 2007).

### CAUSES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

There is no single factor to account for violence perpetrated against women. Several complex and interconnected institutionalized social and cultural factors have kept women particularly vulnerable to the violence directed at them, all of them manifestations of historically unequal relations between men and women. Factors contributing to these unequal power relations include socio-economic factors, the family institution power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males and social and legal legislations and cultural sanctions that have traditionally denied women and children an independent legal and social status. Lack of economic resources underpins and women's vulnerability to violence and their difficulty in extricating themselves from a violent relationship. The line between violence and lack of economic resources and dependence is circulated. Sometimes women's increasing economic activity and independence is viewed as a threat, which leads to increase male violence. Cultural ideologies- both in individualized and developing countries- provide 'legitimacy' for violence against

women in certain circumstances. Religions and historical traditions in the past have sanctioned the chastising and beating of wives. The physical punishment of wives has been particularly sanctioned under the notion of entitlement and ownership of women. Male control of family wealth inevitably places decision-making authority, leading to male dominance and proprietary rights over women and girls. The concept of ownership, in turn, legitimizes control over women's sexuality, which in many law codes has been deemed essential to ensure patrilineal inheritance. Experience during childhood, such as witnessing domestic violence and experiencing physical and sexual abuse have been identified as factors that put children at risk. Excessive consumption of alcohol and other drugs have also been noted as a factor in provoking aggressive and violent male behaviour towards women and children.

### CONSEQUENCES

The most crucial consequence of violence against women is the denial of fundamental human rights to women and girls. Domestic violence against women leads to far-reaching physical and psychological consequences, some with fatal outcomes. Children, who have witnessed domestic violence or have themselves been abused, exhibit health and behaviour problems. They may have difficulty at school and find it hard to develop a close and positive friendships.

They may try to run away or even display suicidal or mischievous type tendencies.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND STATE INTERVENTION

The civil society as well as the state machinery has been making concerted efforts to address domestic violence. The non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been successful in transforming domestic violence into a global campaign by providing a voice to the victims through various forums, counselling and pressure groups etc. Their approaches have been multi-pronged including preventive, supportive and rehabilitative type of measures.

The state as well Central Govt. are also taking serious measures through 'Domestic Violence Act 2005' to combat violence against women. It includes the police, judiciary and welfare departments of the state. Others are Legal Aid Cells, Family Courts, Lok Adalats, Welfare Department of State, which include State Social welfare Board, Family Counselling Centres, National and State for Commissions Women, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) and National Credit Fund for Women (NCFW).

### COUNSELLING - AN ENABLING PROCESS

To cope with problems related to domestic violence, hence, in recent times, a family centered approach in social work in social

perspectives viewed as significant. This is the systems perspective approach adopted by professional social workers to help an individual bring about a balance between his or her internal or external world, enabling the understanding of the dysfunctions in family and steering the adoptive process by which harmonious family relationships are preserved and promoted. The counselling services provided by the Family Counselling Centres (FCCs) have proved to be a boon for such type of families, which were in danger of break up. In several cases, the family has been greatly strengthened by being able to see problems in a new perspective.

We all need to have friends, we need people whom we can confide in. Everybody needs to have a friend, philosopher and guide. And that is why the Family Counselling Centres have had such success. They provide an answer to the rush and noise of today's world - a calm quiet and soothing atmosphere where a client can sit and tell her troubles to an empathetic listener.

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