

# Antecedent and Psycho-Social Consequences of Domestic Violence in Family

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**Abstract:** *The present paper aims to examine nature, causes and consequences of domestic violence that happens in families irrespective of socio-economic status, caste and religion. When domestic violence takes place it is specifically targeted towards women of every age. The offenders commit different forms of violence and abuses to the victim. In this research paper, based on the secondary sources efforts are made to analyse the prevalence and antecedent factors that leads to domestic violence. It has been evidenced that the victims of the violence suffer a lot they experience physical discomfort, pain emotional disturbance and low self-esteem. The sufferer of the violence develops negative attitude towards herself and society as a whole. They experience low self-esteem, poor mental health and a variety of behavioural and social problems.*

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, Crime against women

## 1. Introduction

Women throughout the world have been accorded lower status than men. Traditionally, women were expected to be married off and settle down in life. Rights of power, position and authority over women were accorded to men. Women were given a very subordinate role and status, as the socio-economic and external conditions prevailing in ancient times were not favourable for the free movement of women. In the 21st century even though women are educated and equally participating in employment with men, still the social conventions, traditions and restrictions controlling the life of women directly or indirectly. Violence against women is a serious problem concerning human rights violation. In last two decades violence against women has emerged as the most burning issue throughout the globe. Day to day violence is taking a lift in spite of all the necessary actions taken by the government agencies. Domestic violence is an internationally recognized problem, yet it remains the most invisible crimes of our times. Women face terror in the place where they should be safest-within their families. Many of them are terrified of their homes because it is where they experience violence from those who they trust and are close to them. Violence means “rough or harmful action or treatment”. Domestic Violence means - violence between two adult partners. The term domestic violence ‘includes violence by an intimate partner and by other family members, wherever this violence takes place and in whatever form. Domestic violence occurs in all communities regardless of social class, age, race, ethnic, disability, sexuality, and lifestyle. Narayan (1996) reported that the rate of physical violence against women was 18 to 45 per cent in different communities. According to available statistics from around the world, around 33.33 percent of the women have experienced violence in one form or the other, in their intimate relationship at some point in their life. This is an average based on available national surveys across industrialised and developing countries published in the report of the World Health Organisation in 1997. Statistical evidence available about the actual prevalence of domestic violence against women in India is scant. The only large scale survey conducted by the National Crimes Record Bureau, Ministry of Home

Affairs, Government of India relating to crimes against women, reveals a record 71.5 per cent increase in cases of touchier and dowry deaths during 1991 to 1995. The studies conducted by Mahajan (1990) and Rao (1996) indicate that physical abuse of Indian Women is quite high, ranging from 22 percent to 60 per cent of women surveyed. Domestic violence is a serious social issue which is not only profound effects on the individuals and families directly involved but also have a considerable social and economic impact on the community as a whole. Violence in the home harms everyone in the family. Children are especially vulnerable. When they see violent behaviour between family members, or when they're abused themselves, they may grow up to be abusive to their partners or children. Long-term physical impacts have rarely been documented, but one study done indicated that children from violent homes are found to have significantly higher heart rates than other children even post-abuse. (Moynan, Herrenkohl, Sousa, Tajima, Herrenkohl & Russo, 2009). As parents, it's our responsibility to prevent family violence and this cycle of abuse. In a study conducted by Ranjana Kumari (1989) it was reported that about 25 per cent of dowry victims in India were driven to suicide. Thakur (2001) conducted a study on gender based violence in the city of Ajmer and reported that education and occupation of women play a very positive role against violence towards women.

### Types of Domestic Violence:

Domestic violence includes varieties of forms. The commonly known forms of domestic violence are:

1) **Physical abuse:** Physical abuse is the most recognizable form of domestic violence. It involves the use of force against the victim, causing injury (e.g. a punch or a kick, stabbing, shooting, choking, slapping, hitting, beating and forcing you to use drugs, etc.).

2) **Psychological abuse:** Psychological abuse is basically a catchall term for intimidating, threatening, or fear-causing behaviour. This behaviour must be persistent and significant. A wide variety of behaviours fall under the umbrella of psychological abuse. Some common examples

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include: preventing the victim from talking to people unless they have been given 'permission,' preventing the victim from leaving the house, threatening the victim with violence or emotional blackmail for doing something the abusive partner doesn't agree with. It also include insulted using abusive language, threatened with objects like stone, belt, knife, threatened to send to parents , sent to parents home, frightening / angry look, proved unfaithful, neglected, denial of basic personal needs, no involvement in decision making , restriction in mobility, etc.

3) **Emotional abuse:** It involves the destruction of the victim's self-worth, and is brought about by recurring insult, humiliation, or criticism. Emotional abuse can be a difficult type of domestic violence for many people to understand, since, on the surface, it appears to be quite common in unhealthy relationships. The mental or emotional abuse of a woman may take the following forms – i)Using abusive language (ii) Insulting her in the presence of children, other member of the family and relatives (iii) Blaming her for everything that goes wrong in the family (iv) Charging her frequently on small and negligible issues (v) Making her feel guilty for no fault of her (vi) Giving her threat of divorce (vii) Treating her like a servant (viii) Keeping a strict watch on her movements (ix) Prohibiting her from meeting her friends and relatives (x) Prohibiting her from expression of her view on family matters (xi) Suspecting her for extramarital relations (xii) Using ugly and insulting language for her parents (xiv) Insulting her for house-keeping (xv) Demeaning her family background (xvi) Criticising her for lacking intelligence (xvii) Threatening her to commit suicide (xviii) Giving her verbal threats to use physical force (xix) Threats to kill or burn.

4)**Verbal abuse:** It includes name-calling, shouting , Yelling and screaming at her , putting her down ,Intentionally embarrassing her in public, Telling her what to do and wear, Damaging your property when they're angry (throwing objects, punching walls, kicking doors. for their abusive or unhealthy behaviour, Using online communities or cell phones to control intimidate or humiliate you, blaming her actions Starting rumours about her.

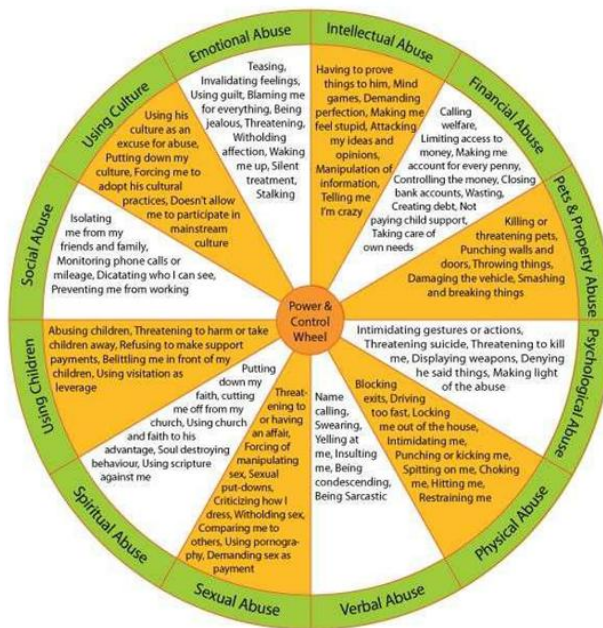
5) **Sexual abuse:** It is a common form of domestic violence. It includes not only sexual assault and rape, but also harassment, such as unwelcome touching and other demeaning behaviours. It also includes coerced sex, denial sex, causing sexual hurt / injury.

6) **Financial / Economic abuse:** Following are the most frequently used forms of economic abuse against women may take on many forms such as a: i) Husband preventing his wife from obtaining an education or a job outside the home. (ii)Forcing her to leave present job (iii) not allowing her to purchase things of her liking and choice (iv) Stopping her from access to resources or money (v) Pressurising her to bring money from her parents and so on. Financial abuse is extremely common, particularly when families have pooled their money into joint accounts (with one partner controlling) and where there's little or no family support system to help.

7) **Spiritual abuse:** It includes using the spouse's or intimate partner's religious or spiritual beliefs to manipulate them preventing the partner from practicing their religious or spiritual beliefs, ridiculing the other person's religious or spiritual beliefs forcing the children to be reared in a faith that the partner has not agreed to.

**The Power and Control Wheel**

Developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project in Duluth, Minnesota, the power and Control Wheel illustrates the tactics an abuser uses on his victim. Constantly surrounded by threats and / or actual physical and sexual abuse, the victim is subjected to the various tactics listed in the spokes as abuser attempts to exert complete power and control over her.



**Causes of Domestic Violence**

There is no one single factor to account for violence perpetrated against women. Increasingly, research has focused on the inter-relatedness of various factors that should improve our understanding of the problem within different cultural contexts. Factors contributing to these unequal power relations include: socioeconomic forces, the family institution where power where power relations are enforced, fear of and control over female sexuality, belief in the inherent superiority of males, and legislation and cultural sanctions that have traditionally denied women and children an independent legal and social status. Lack of economic resources underpins women's vulnerability to violence and their difficulty in extricating themselves. There are a number of causes of domestic violence against women. These causes range from the trivial to bizarre and include mainly the following –Not doing house-work properly, Dressing fashionably, Jealousy of husband, Husband's alcoholism, Downy Demands, Husband's mistress, Laughing without reason, Combing hairs a number of times during day, High tone during dialogue, Free and Social nature, Close relations with friends, Boyfriends, Disrespectful behaviour with

elders in the family, Refusal to bring money from parent's house, Partial fulfilment or non-fulfilment of promises made at the time of marriage, Doubt of love affairs before marriage, Doubt of extra-marital relations, Resistance for abnormal sexual behaviour, No child bearing capability, Birth of girl child repeatedly, Husband economically dependent on parents, Husband has problems at work place, Sexual difficulties, Low job satisfaction, Single personality factor, antisocial personality disorders.

In addition to the reasons listed above there may also be a long list of reasons which are not identified or reported by the victims of domestic violence. In conclusion it can be said that anything can serve as an excuse for inflicting violence against a woman. No single factor explains the phenomenon of domestic violence against women. The main factors that perpetuates to domestic violence are:

### Cultural

- Gender-specific socialization.
- Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles.
- Expectations of roles within relationships.
- Belief in the inherent superiority of males.
- Values that give men proprietary rights over women and girls.
- .Notion of the family as the private sphere and under male control.
- Customs of marriage (bride price/dowry).
- Acceptability of violence as a means to resolve conflict.

### Economic

- Women's economic dependence on men.
- Limited access to cash and credit.
- Discriminatory laws regarding inheritance, property rights, use of communal lands, and maintenance after divorce or widowhood.
- Limited access to employment in formal and informal sectors.
- Limited access to education and training for women.

### Political

- Under-representation of women in power, politics, the media and in the legal and medical profession.
- Domestic violence not taken seriously.
- Notions of family being private and beyond control of the state.
- Risk of challenge to status quo/religious laws.
- Limited organization of women as a political force.
- Limited participation of women in organized political system.

### The Cycle of Abuse

Most abuse falls into a pattern, even if both the abusers and their victims aren't consciously aware of it.



**Abuse:** the partner assaults you, lashing out with violence, threats, verbal abuse, and other belittling or aggressive behaviours aimed at making you feel helpless and afraid. Your abuser does this to demonstrate that he/she has all the power.

**Guilt:** Once the abuse is over, guilt sets in. Your abuser is not ashamed of what he/she has done, but abuser is afraid of getting caught and being punished by an authority figure, or of having you leave (and thus lose absolute power over you).

**Excuses:** Verbally or nonverbally, your abuser rationalizes what he/she has done to you. Often, abusers will define their behaviour as reasonable and just. Many abusers will blame an outside force (such as their job, the economy, or their childhood). They will say that they were justified in what they did because of something you did/didn't do (whether real or imagined). Your abuser wants/needs you to believe that what they have done to you is the logical outcome for something you did "wrong" or some inane deficiency in your nature.

**Damage Control:** Your abuser acts "normally" in order to keep you from informing on them to an authority figure that could make them face the consequences of their actions. This grace period could last for months or just moments. Some abusers act as though the abuse never happened. Others overcompensate with extra thoughtful behaviour or with gifts. This shift in behaviour, combined with the rationalization the abuser offers for their conduct, often leaves victims hopeful that the abuse will never happen again, or that the abuser has changed his/her ways.

**Fantasy:** Abusers need to feel powerful and in control all the time. After a period (long or short) of acting "normally," the abuser starts fantasizing about abusing you again. Hurting you in the past made him/her feel powerful. They often spend a great deal of time imagining how you have defied them or committed some other wrong and how they will make you pay for it.

**Set-up:** Your abuser stops fantasizing about hurting you and creates a plan to realize the fantasy. Your abuser will then create a situation where he/she can justify abusing you again.

### Consequences of Domestic violence

Domestic violence has a significant impact on the health and well-being of women both in the immediate and longer term, continuing even after the relationship has ended. As well as, indirectly impact the whole family, society and community. The psychological consequences of violence can be as serious as the physical effects. Exposure to violence leads to poorer physical health overall compared with women who have not experienced violence, and it increases the risk of women developing a range of health problems (*World Health Organisation 2000*). One Australian study found intimate partner violence was the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged

15- 44 (*VicHealth 2004*).

### Violence Erodes Women's (victim) Mental Health

Many women consider the psychological consequences of abuse to be even more serious than its physical effects. The experience of abuse often erodes women's self-esteem and puts them at greater risk of a variety of mental health problems, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide, and alcohol and drug abuse.

#### Some immediate health impacts may include:

Physical injuries - such as cuts, scrapes and bruises, fractures, dislocated bones, Hearing loss, Vision loss, Miscarriage or early delivery, Sexually transmitted diseases, Knife wounds, Gunshot wounds, Homicide etc.

#### Longer term health (physical and psychological) impacts may include:

Gastro-intestinal disorders associated with stress, Headaches, Back pain, Fainting, Seizures, Gynaecological problems, Diminished mental and physical health, Inability to work, Poor relationships with their children and other loved ones , Physical abuse may result in death, if the victim does not leave the relationship, Alcohol and substance misuse as a way of coping, Smoking throughout pregnancy, Homelessness, Suicide, Homicide, low self-confidence ,Stress, Fear, Anxiety, Anger, Depression, low self-esteem , lack of trust in others, Sensitivity to rejection ,feeling of hopelessness and helplessness. As well as, the long term exposure to anxiety and panic leads to disorders post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorder, and sleep disorder etc.

### Impact of Domestic Violence on the Life of the Children

The maltreatment meted to the mother affected the life of the children in one form or the other. The serious impact of verbal and physical violence inflicted on mother is the loss of respect for parents. Secondly, the children are also likely to be abusers in their life. Moreover, the abused mother does not look after the children in a proper manner as a result, their personality development is blocked. They remain under tension and are not able to concentrate on

studies. The children also neglect their studies and are always worried about their future. Children who witness domestic violence may also develop serious emotional, behavioural and developmental problems. They may become violent or withdraw. Children from violent homes may become depressed, Aggressive, disobedient, poor performance on academic front, had disturbed sleep, nightmares, showing no emotion ('spaced out'), Fantasise about normal home life, withdrawal and have low self-esteem. Children and teens that grow up with domestic violence in the household are more likely to become drug abuser, commit crimes, especially sexual assault, abusers in their own relationships later in life.

### Impact of Violence on Sex-Life of the Victims

Sex in Indian Society is a matter of private life and as such not to be discussed publicly. It was, therefore, very difficult to ask sex related questions to the women victim. It is a fact that violence by the husband in one form or the other affects the conjugal relations. Sometimes, husband may not be a perpetrator but is indirectly responsible for instigating violence against the wife. The irritation created out of violence is carried to bed-room and as a result the sex life of a victim is affected. The victim lost interest and love for husband, Developed irritation for the husband, Do not get satisfied during and after sex, Surrender against will and thus, sex life of both partner get affected.

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