

## **Domestic Violence: A Curse for 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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### **Abstract:**

*Domestic Violence has a significant impact on the general health and well-being of individuals by causing physical injury, anxiety and depression. It is a serious problem around the world. Domestic violence violates the fundamental human rights of women. It even results in the death of the individual it may be of any type, be it, sexual, physical, emotional, economic, or psychological. Any act which is intended to frighten, manipulate, hurt, humiliate or injure someone is considered as Violence. It can happen to couples who are married, living together or who are dating. Domestic Violence affects people of all socio-economic backgrounds and educational levels. If only the mindset of people could be changed & law enforcement could be enacted in a better way we can hope for a better world.*

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Abuse, Women Empowerment, Stigma.

As the well-known fact in 21<sup>st</sup> century is that in any nation, women are the backbone in any aspect. In past eras the conditions of women were not appreciable and the society was male dominating only. Various types of orthodox and unfair customs like “Sati Pratha”, “Child Marriage”, “Parda Pratha” etc were thoroughly spread all around limiting the women only to kitchens. But actually, women have the caliber of managing all the things along with their families and kitchens. With the revolution in time, the Government of India took various initiative steps to empower women and to make them stand equivalent to men in every field like politics, economy, educations etc. They were made financially and emotionally independent. The government released many of the policies which are concerned and aimed to the empowerment of women along with making them financially and emotionally independent. The old orthodox and unfair customs were banned and the old rituals which are beneficial for women are continued. All twelve “five-year plans” played a very crucial role in this direction and many of the policies released by the government are very beneficial. Besides, the acts and articles enshrined in the Constitution of India favored women’s independence, freedom, protection. And thus, the makers of the Indian Constitution also played a very important role. But in spite of so many policies made for the upliftment and betterment of women, women still stand aghast and vulnerable in society due to the curse of Domestic Violence prevailing all these years till date.

“Violence against Women is violent acts that are primarily or simply committed against women. Occasionally considered a hate crime, this type of violence targets a specific group with

the victim's gender as a primary motive.”(*I. Violence Against Women.Docx - Violence against Women Violence against Women (VAW), Also Known as Gender-Based Violence, Is, Collectively, Violent / Course Hero*, n.d.). ‘This type of violence is gender-based, meaning that the acts of violence are committed against women especially because they are women.’(*Alarming Statistics of Violence against Women*, n.d.)

“The UN Declaration on the Elimination of violence against women states that: “*Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unstable power relations between men and women and that violence against women is one of the pivotal social mechanisms by which women are forced into an inferior position compared with men.*”

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, declared in a report of the year 2006 posted on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) website that: “*Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, constrained into coitus, or else abused in her lifetime with the abuser generally someone known to her*”.

Violence against women can fit into several broad orders. It can be carried out by individuals as well as states. Some types of violence by individuals are rape; domestic violence; sexual harassment; use of contraceptives; female infanticide; prenatal sex; as well as harmful customary or traditional practices such as honor killings, dowry violence, womanish genital mutilation, marriage by hijacking and forced marriage. Some forms of violence condoned by the state are war rape; and sexual slavery during conflict; forced sterilization; forced abortion; violence by the police and authoritative personnel; stoning and flogging. Many forms of Violence against women, such as trafficking in women and forced prostitution are often perpetrated by organized criminal networks.”(*Violence against Women - The Art and Popular Culture Encyclopedia*, n.d.)

Typically, domestic violence is associated with physical violence. For instance, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary description, domestic violence is:

*"The inflicting of physical injury by one family or house member on another; also: a repeated / habitual pattern of similar behavior. Domestic violence is now more broadly defined, frequently but not always including all acts of physical, sexual. emotional or economic violence that may be committed by a person who is a family member or a person that has been an intimate partner or spouse, irrespective of whether they lived together".* (Desmarais et al., 2010)

In 1993, The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women linked domestic violence as one of three settings in which violence against women occurs.

The Declaration defines domestic violence as:

*“Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the menage, dowry-related violence, conjugal rape, womanish genital mutilation and other traditional practices dangerous to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. In 2013, the UK government released a new description regarding domestic violence”*

They defined it as

*"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour or conduct, violence or abuse between those aged 16 and over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, without considering gender or sexuality".(Circular 003/2013, n.d.)*

### **Types of Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence can be classified into the several types: physical, psychological and sexual violence, Additional type of domestic violence defined in the scientific literature is economical violence. Every case of violence is exceptional. The most common violence witnessed in the family are mentioned in short here.

**1- Family Violence** is a broader term, frequently used to include child abuse, elder abuse, and other violent acts between family members. Child abuse is defined by the WHO as: Child maltreatment, occasionally referred to as child abuse and neglect, includes all forms of physical and emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and exploitation that results in factual or potential damage to the child's health, development or dignity. Within this broad description, five subtypes can be distinguished - physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect and careless treatment; emotional abuse; and exploitation. Elder abuse is, according to the WHO: a single, or repeated act, or lack of suitable action, occurring within any relationship where there is an anticipation of trust which causes damage or distress to an older person"(Women and Domestic Violence, n.d.).

**2- Psychological Violence** is veritably dangerous and deliberate, affect to humans mind. There are many forms of psychological violence/emotional abuse prevailing in the country. Criticism and scolding does not seem much as a violence but nonstop nagging has huge impact on the psychological well-being of the person it is imposed upon. Again the mockery of the person's conduct, manipulating her to on desires, refusing to give her company in the public places, demeaning her etc are numerous so seemed negligible but veritably serious below to a person's integrity.

**3- Physical Violence** includes the harming physical contact inflicting pain to the victim. It may be by hitting, punching, slighting, burning, throwing acid, choking, throwing things etc. The intention here is physical injury to the victim. The person may be tied down or locked in a room or box or

any other form of fleshy damage. This results in physical injury outwards but a lot injury is caused to the emotional psyche too. Damage and danger derived from violence may differ.

“Acid attacks, as observed in domestic violence, occur when acid is thrown in anger or revenge at the victims, generally at their faces, burning them, and damaging skin tissue, frequently exposing and sometimes dissolving the bones. This can result in long-term blindness and permanent scarring of the face and body. Denying the victims need of medical care, depriving them of sleep or other necessary functions, forcing the victim to engage in drug or alcohol use against their will, or creating any physical damage are all types of physical abuse. It can also include inflicting physical injury onto other targets, such as children or pets, in order to cause emotional detriment to the victim”(*Women and Domestic Violence*, n.d.).

**4- Sexual Violence** is first of all violation of freedom of sexual self-determination. Usually sexual violence is followed by physical or psychological violence. Sexual violence in the family is comminuted through: enforcement to undress, sexual intercourse against woman's will, particularly brutal sexual intercourse against woman's will, force to watch and repeat pornographic actions.

**5- Economical Violence** is veritably much prevalent in our society. The women of the family is not allowed to work out side so that she cannot become economically independent. And indeed if they are allowed to work, they have to give the earnings to the family. She is deprived of taking any decisions about spending her earned money. In the case of divorce too, women are deprived of the money they are ought to be given. They have to be strong enough to fight for the alumni.

**6- Marital Rape** is one of the worst forms of violence between spouses and even then it does not receive its fair share of public and academic attention. Victims of intimate violence face long term physical, psychological and emotional trauma. This can be attributed to a variety of factors such as discord, dissatisfaction with in marriage etc. From a policy perspective, the need of the hour is to have a serious converse on this so that the lawmakers take cognizance of the severity of the problem and make provisions in the law to prevent the occurrence of this intimate violence.

Therefore, it may be concluded that Domestic violence is not simply an argument it is a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another it is evident that it is a major contributor to physical and mental ill health of women in our society, and to some degree, every society in the world. So it is high time that serious action is taken in this regard and also this should not be tolerated by any women at any cost. The combined efforts of law enforcement, social welfare and health care services is need of the hour also such steps taken by NCW in conducting seminars on this burning topic throughout the country should be the eye opener among the academicians too to wake up and stand against this stigma to our society.

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