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**Address**

• Vikram Nagar, Boudhi Chouk, Latur.  
• Tq. Latur, Dis. Latur 413512 (MS.)  
• (+91) 9922455749, (+91) 9158387437

**Email**

• aiirjpramod@gmail.com  
• aayushijournal@gmail.com

**Website**

• www.aiirjournal.com

**CHIEF EDITOR – PRAMOD PRAKASHRAO TANDALE**

**Domestic Violence Against Women In India**

**Dr. Mehesh. M. Joshi**  
S.R.T.M. University, Nanded

**Introduction for Domestic violence:-**

"Bride tortured to death for dowry", "School going kid succumbs to his injuries after beaten by father", "A seventy year old man killed over property dispute", The World Health Organization (WHO)'s latest report on Violence against Women that was released in June 2013 indicated that income regions of the world, over 35% of women suffer from partner violence. With these staggering numbers, it is a very real possibility that every one of us knows a woman is facing (or has faced) domestic violence. All these and what not, turn to any newspaper at random and you would find the reports of such kind of violence all over the country. These are all what we come to know through different forms of media. There are more such cases which go unreported every day. In fact, include the cases which we self indulge in, or the ones which we witness in the neighborhood but are hesitant in taking even a single step to reduce their occurrences. In our society, violence is bursting. It is present almost everywhere and nowhere is this eruption more intense than right behind the doors of our homes. Behind closed doors of homes all across our country, people are being tortured, beaten and killed. It is happening in rural areas, towns, cities and in metropolitans as well. It is crossing all social classes, genders, racial lines and age groups. It is becoming a legacy being passed on from one generation to another. The term used to describe this exploding problem of violence within our homes is Domestic Violence. This violence is towards someone who we are in a relationship with, be it a wife, husband, son, daughter, mother, father, grandparent or any other family member. It can be a male's or a female's atrocities towards another male or a female. Anyone can be a victim and a victimizer. This violence has a tendency to explode in various forms such as physical, sexual or emotional. Since times immemorial, domestic violence has been an intrinsic part of the society we are living in. The contributing factors could be the desire to gain control over another family member, the desire to exploit someone for personal benefits, the flare to be in a commanding position all the time showcasing one's supremacy so on and so forth. On various occasions, psychological problems and social influence also add to the vehemence. The present essay deals with the various forms of domestic violence prevalent in India. Their causes of occurrence in households have been analyzed categorically. The variation in the intensity of the forms with change in the geographical location and culture has also been addressed. The aftereffects of different kinds of domestic violence and the possible remedies have been highlighted.

**Definition of domestic violence.**-For the purposes of this Act, any act, omission or Commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence in case it -

(A) Harms or injures or endangers the health, safety, life, limb or well-being, whether mental or physical, of the aggrieved person or tends to do so and includes causing physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal and emotional abuse and economic abuse; or

(B) harasses, harms, injures or endangers the aggrieved person with a view to coerce Her or any other person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any dowry or other

Property or valuable security; or

(C) Has the effect of threatening the aggrieved person or any person related to her by?

Any conduct mentioned in clause (a) or clause (b); or

(D) Otherwise injures or causes harm, whether physical or mental, to the aggrieved person.

*Explanation I.*-For the purposes of this section,-

(I) "Physical abuse" means any act or conducts which is of such a nature as to cause bodily pain, harm, or danger to life, limb, or health or impair the health or development of the aggrieved person and includes assault, criminal intimidation and criminal force;

(II) "Sexual abuse" includes any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of woman;

(III) "Verbal and emotional abuse" includes-

(a) Insults, ridicule, humiliation, name calling and insults or ridicule specially with regard to not having a child or a male child; and

(b) Repeated threats to cause physical pain to any person in whom the aggrieved person is interested.

(iv) "Economic abuse" includes-

(a) Deprivation of all or any economic or financial resources to which the Aggrieved person is entitled under any law or custom whether payable under an order of a court or otherwise or which the aggrieved person requires out of necessity including, but not limited to, household necessities for the aggrieved person and her children, if any, stridhan, property, jointly or separately owned by the aggrieved person, payment of rental related to the shared household and maintenance;

(b) Disposal of household effects, any alienation of assets whether movable or immovable, valuables, shares, securities, bonds and the like or other property in which the aggrieved person has an interest or is entitled to use by virtue of the domestic relationship or which may be reasonably required by the aggrieved person or her children or her stridhan or any other property jointly or separately held by the aggrieved person; and

(c) Prohibition or restriction to continued access to resources or facilities which the aggrieved person is entitled to use or enjoy by virtue of the domestic Relationship including access to the shared household.

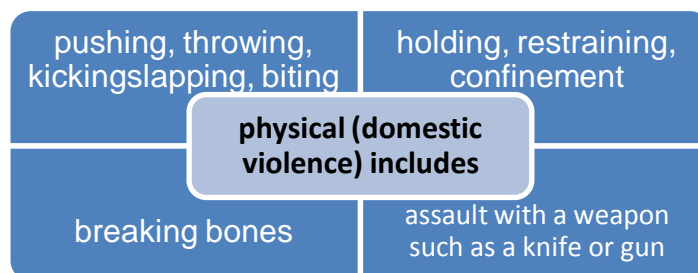
#### **Types of Domestic Violence:-**

- physical (domestic violence)
- verbal or nonverbal (psychological, mental, emotional)
- sexual
- stalking or cyber stalking
- economic abuse or financial abuse
- spiritual abuse

- **Physical (domestic violence):-**The divisions between these types of domestic abuse are somewhat fluid, but there is a strong differentiation between the various forms of physical abuse and the various types of verbal or nonverbal abuse Physical abuse is the use of physical force against another person in a way that ends up injuring the person, or puts the person at risk of being injured. Physical abuse ranges from physical restraint to murder.

When someone talks of domestic violence, they are often referring to physical abuse of a spouse or intimate partner. Physical assault or physical battering is a crime, whether it occurs inside a family or outside the family. The police are empowered to protect you from physical attack.

- **Physical (domestic violence) includes:-**



- **Verbal or nonverbal (psychological, mental, emotional):-**

- threatening or intimidating to gain compliance
- destruction of the victim's personal property and possessions, or threats to do so
- violence to an object (such as a wall or piece of furniture) or pet, in the presence of the intended victim, as
- a way of instilling fear of further violence
- yelling or screaming
- name-calling
- constant harassment
- embarrassing, making fun of, or mocking the victim, either alone within the household, in public, or in front of family or friends
- criticizing or diminishing the victim's accomplishments or goals
- not trusting the victim's decision making
- telling the victim that they are worthless on their own, without the abuser
- excessive possessiveness, isolation from friends and family
- excessive checking up on the victim to make sure they are at home or where they said they would be saying hurtful things while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and using the substance as an excuse to
- say the hurtful things blaming the victim for how the abuser acts or feels making the victim remain on the premises after a fight, or leaving them somewhere else after a fight, just to
- "teach them a lesson" making the victim feel that there is no way out of the relationship

- **Sexual :-**

- sexual assault: forcing someone to participate in unwanted, unsafe, or degrading sexual activity
- sexual harassment: ridiculing another person to try to limit their sexuality or reproductive choices
- sexual exploitation (such as forcing someone to look at pornography, or forcing someone to participate in pornographic filmmaking)

Sexual abuse often is linked to physical abuse; They may occur together, or the sexual abuse may occur after a bout of physical abuse

- **Stalking or cyber stalking**

**Stalkers employ a number of threatening tactics:**

- repeated phone calls, sometimes with hang-ups
- following, tracking (possibly even with a global positioning device)
- finding the person through public records, online searching, or paid investigators
- watching with hidden cameras
- suddenly showing up where the victim is, at home, school, or work
- Sending emails; communicating in chat rooms or with instant messaging (cyber stalking: see below)
- sending unwanted packages, cards, gifts, or letters
- monitoring the victim's phone calls or computer use
- contacting the victim's friends, family, coworkers, or neighbors to find out about the victim
- going through the victim's garbage
- threatening to hurt the victim or their family, friends, or pets
- damaging the victim's home, car, or other property

Stalking is unpredictable and should always be considered dangerous. If someone is tracking you, contacting you when you do not wish to have contact, attempting to control you, or frightening you, then seek help immediately.

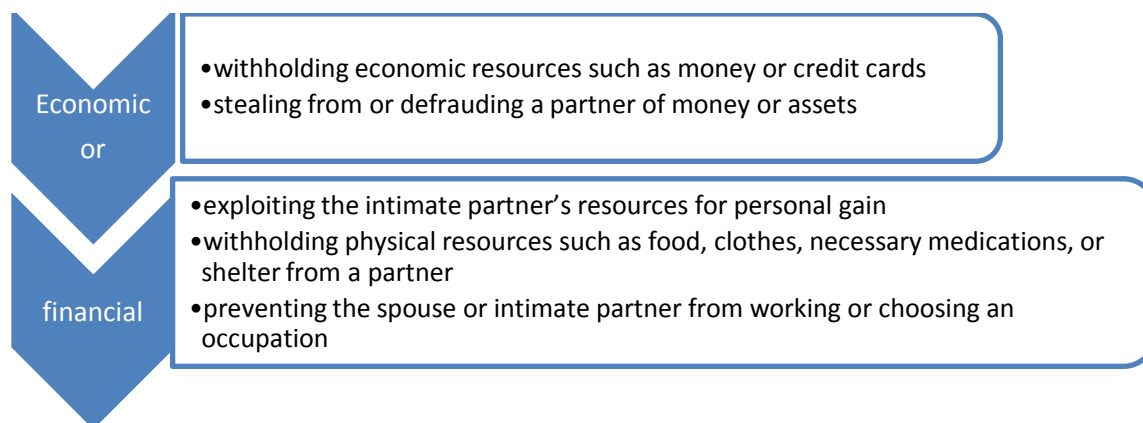
- **Stalking or cyber stalking**

Cyber stalking is the use of telecommunication technologies such as the Internet or email to stalk another person. Cyber stalking may be an additional form of stalking, or it may be the only method the abuser employs. Cyber stalking is deliberate, persistent, and personal. Spamming with unsolicited email is different from cyber stalking. Spam does not focus on the individual, as does cyber stalking. The cyber stalker methodically finds and contacts the victim. Much like spam of a sexual nature, a cyber stalker's message may be disturbing and inappropriate. Also like spam, you cannot stop the contact with a request. In fact, the more you protest or respond, the more rewarded the cyber stalker feels. The best response to cyber stalking is not to respond to the contact. Cyber stalking falls in a grey area of law enforcement. Enforcement of most state and federal stalking laws requires that the victim be directly threatened with an act of violence. Very few law enforcement agencies can act if the threat is only implied. Regardless of whether you can get stalking laws enforced against cyber stalking, you must treat cyber stalking seriously and protect yourself. Cyber stalking sometimes advances to real stalking and to physical violence.

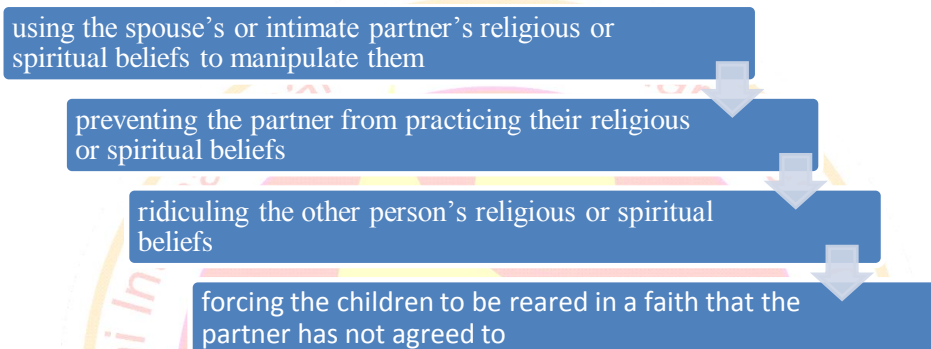
**Stalking:-**

Stalking can end in violence whether or not the stalker threatens violence. And stalking can turn into violence even if the stalker has no history of violence. Women stalkers are just as likely to become violent as are male stalkers. Those around the stalking victim are also in danger of being hurt. For instance, a parent, spouse, or bodyguard who makes the stalking victim unattainable may be hurt or killed as the stalker pursues the stalking victim.

- **Economic or financial abuse includes**



- **Spiritual abuse includes:**



☒ **Other Factors That Perpetuate Domestic Violence:-**

➤ **Cultural:-**

- Gender-specific socialization
- 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

➤ **Legal:-**

- Lesser legal status of women either by written law and/or by practice
- Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance
- Legal definitions of rape and domestic abuse\_ Low levels of legal literacy among women

- Insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary
- **Political:-**
  - Under-representation of women in power, politics, the media and in the legal and medical professions, 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

**Causes of violence:-** There are 4 main reasons for domestic violence to persist in India.

1. **Male dominated society:** Even though women had risen to top positions, India was & still remains as a male dominated country.
2. **Lack of awareness of Laws:** Victims of domestic violence are afraid to protest as there is lack of awareness or rather lack of initiative to make her aware of her rights.
3. **Laxity in implementation of the existing Acts:** No or less efforts are made to increase awareness amongst the women by the authorities posted to implement the Act.
4. **Bureaucracy & Fear:** If a domestic violence is reported by a third party then he/she is scrutinized as an intruder and problem maker by the community. The bureaucracy associated with reporting of domestic violence, lack of funds for support group adds up to the continued domestic violence in India.

#### **12 Ways to Stop Domestic Violence in Your Community:-**

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 1:** Know the signs. The first step to action is to familiarize individuals and the community with the possible signs and indicators of domestic violence. These signs can vary and do not always come with physical symptoms because domestic violence is not just limited to physical attacks such as beatings. It includes many forms of abusive behavior enacted to control the victim in a myriad of ways including emotional abuse, verbal abuse and economic abuse. Domestic violence also affects every level and demographic in society, so there is no typical victim despite the stereotypes. Someone who may not appear to be a victim of domestic violence may well be suffering in silence and it is important to recognize the signs if this is the case.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 2:** Get your community educated! A good start to eradicating Domestic Violence from your community or neighborhood is to start educating as many people as possible about Domestic Violence, its impact and how to intervene safely. This can be done in collaboration with your local Domestic Violence shelter or women's organization or police community outreach officers who can work with the community, local schools and local companies to organize and implement talks, town hall meetings and other group sessions to talk about this issue.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 3:** Get your community organized! There is safety and influence in numbers when intervening to stop an abuser or making your community a place where Domestic Violence will not be tolerated. So just as many neighborhoods' have neighborhood watch to stop crime, start organizing a network of folks who will commit to intervene in Domestic Violence situations, help victims leave their abusers safely and provide a communal support structure for survivors.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 4:** Boost your community support network with technology! If you have a smart phone and the victim has a smart phone, consider downloading a safety app for women, many of which have been designed to automatically alert your support network if you are in danger. If the victim does not have a smart phone, consider pooling money with a few friends and neighbors' to get her one and preload it with a safety app that is connected to all your phones so you can become a de facto support net for her.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 6:** Ring the bell. If you are the neighbor of a family experiencing Domestic Violence, please take the time to ring their bell when you hear a violent situation happening. You could use the old neighbourly approach of asking to borrow a cup of sugar or some milk as an excuse. If you feel that it could get dangerous, bring another person with you so there will be more than one witness. Check out what this guy did in a PSA by our Partner, **Bell Bajao**.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 7:** Bring a backup. Intervening with Domestic Violence situations can be dangerous especially if the abuser has a weapon (e.g. a gun) and is intoxicated by drink or drugs. If you are unable to get help from the local shelter or police, make sure to bring another friend or family member along with you when you respond to the victim/survivor's call in person

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 8:** BE the backup. If your neighbor, friend, coworker, classmate, mother, sister, daughter, daughter-in-law, niece or cousin is facing Domestic Violence at home, let them know that you will be willing to be a witness or to intervene on their behalf while you are around. Also let them know that they are welcome to take refuge in your home should they need somewhere to go

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 9:** Make the call, NOW. If the situation is beyond simple neighborly intervention (e.g. the abuser has a gun and uses it during the abuse), call the police or your local emergency services (such as 1091 in the India.) IMMEDIATELY. Provide critical information, such as location, names, contact number, and whether or not you wish they remain anonymous. Do NOT intervene personally in this scenario as it will be too dangerous to do so

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 10:** Listen to empower. If a victim of domestic violence reaches out to you, listen. Let her know that you *believe* her and do not judge her choices. Victims often feel completely isolated and are often belittled by their partner; It is important to enable her to feel safe when confiding in you because eventually, she may well be able to gather enough courage to tell you exactly what is happening and to ask for help. This intervention tip may be particularly useful for hairdressers, nurses, human resource department personnel and anyone working in professions that involve having to listen to clients, customers and coworkers as part of the job

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 11:** Be on standby If you suspect your friend, coworker, Staff, or family member of suffering from Domestic Violence, offer to be on standby for her text or call for emergencies. Have your phone on and fully charged at all times and keep it on you. If you have a car and need to intervene immediately, make sure that the gas/petrol tank is full so you can get in and drive to get the victim/survivor immediately if need be.

**Domestic Violence Intervention Tip 12:** Have an intervention plan. Work out a plan to get an intervention operation in action – have the following numbers on standby for your use

**Criteria for Evaluating Effectiveness of Responses:-**

**Quality of Responses**

- Range and choice of options

- Culturally- and regionally-specific approaches
- Women's participation in design
- Attention to batterers
- Accessibility
- Technical competence of service providers
- Adequate remuneration of practitioners
- Ongoing training
- Infrastructure and facilities
- Follow-up and monitoring
- Involvement of community
- Collaborative nature of intervention

#### **Impact of Responses**

- Decrease in violence
- Women's greater access to and control over resources
- Shift in underlying dynamic of subordination
- Policy changes
- Influence on community norms
- Inclusiveness and scope of reach to women and families in need
- Integration of responses into legal, social, educational, health, and cultural institution

#### **Sustainability of Responses**

- Financial autonomy and sustainability
- Level of community support
- Reliability
- Transparency and flexibility in organization structure
- Leadership style, staff morale, and overall accountability

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