**Domestic Violence Against Women**

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Domestic violence has been a global issue that cuts across national boundaries and various sectors in the world. It is a widespread problem that affects millions of people globally and transcends all racial, cultural, geographic, and social divides.  It can be described as the misuse of power by an adult to control the other person in a relationship. It creates fear using violence and other forms of abuse. According to the UN, violence against women is defined as "any act of gender-based violence that causes, or is likely to cause, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (United Nations, 1994). It mostly affects women since they seem inferior in a relationship thus the male figure exercises physical power over them. According to data from the World Health Organization, the percentage of women who had ever been the victim of either physical or sexual abuse, or both, by a close relationship varied between 15% to 71%, with the vast majority falling between 29% and 62% (Kaur & Garg, 2008). Domestic abuse can start as an argument that quickly escalates to physical abuse.  The frequency, causes, effects, and countermeasures for domestic violence against women are all examined in this report.

**Prevalence of domestic abuse**

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that one in three women globally have at some point in their lives been the victim of physical or sexual abuse by an intimate partner or other person. This figure highlights the widespread occurrence of domestic violence and its importance as a public health concern. In nations with lower and moderate incomes, the prevalence rates may even be greater. Intimate partner violence, for example, is believed to be as high as 37.7% in South Asia and as low as 36.6% in Sub-Saharan Africa. Intimate partner violence affects about 29.8% of women in Latin America and the Caribbean, where high prevalence rates are also documented (Akar et al., 2010). There are different kinds of domestic abuse including Physical abuse, sexual abuse, Cyber abuse, and emotional and psychological abuse.

Physical abuse ‘is the most known and identifiable form of abuse since it involves the use of physical force on the victim. It may include hitting, slapping, choking, kicking, biting, or the use of weapons. It leaves the victim with visible bruises that may cause long-term health issues. Sexual abuse involves having non-consensual sexual activity with the victim. In most relationships, it is often disregarded since sexual intimacy is regarded as a right, which should not be the case. Sexual abuse includes rape, coercion, and sexual assault. Sexual abuse can affect the physical and psychological health of the victim. Cyber abuse involves the use of digital spaces and technology to harass and intimidate the victim, which violates their privacy. Emotional and physical abuse is when the victim is inflicted with emotional pain and distress. The main aim of the abuser is to undermine the victim and lower their self-esteem.

**Causes of domestic abuse**

Numerous elements, including interpersonal, cultural, social to cultural, and personal ones, interact intricately to generate domestic violence against women. The main causes of domestic violence are societal norms and institutions that uphold male dominance and female subjugation. Because women are often seen as property or lower creatures in certain cultures, violence against them by men is justified and accepted. Women who rely on their spouses for financial support are frequently at a higher risk of experiencing violence. A woman's capacity to walk away from an abusive relationship is hampered by her economic reliance because she might not have the money or support to do so (Australian Government, 2022).

The continuation of domestic violence is facilitated by social customs that support or allow violence against women as well as by the upbringing of boys and men to embrace and engage in abuse. Some societies avoid outside assistance because they view domestic abuse as a private problem. Abuse can also be influenced by personal psychological problems, such as drug abuse, psychological disorders, and past experiences of or exposure to violence (Australian Government, 2022).

Lastly, insufficient laws and enforcement procedures may deprive women of the essential safeguards against domestic abuse. Laws prohibiting domestic abuse are either ineffective or inadequately enforced in various areas.

**Effects of Domestic abuse in Women**

Domestic abuse victims can be susceptible to acquiring small wounds/bumps to deep wounds that are life threatening. Survivors also frequently experience long-term health difficulties, such as digestive ailments, persistent discomfort, and reproductive health issues.

The mental impacts of intimate partner abuse may be intense and persistent. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiousness, and other psychological conditions can affect women. Suicidal thoughts and actions can also result from the trauma of abuse (Huecker et al., 2023).

Social exclusion can result from domestic abuse since it tends to separate women from their friends and family. The economic ramifications encompass job loss, decreased efficiency, and heightened financial volatility. The vicious cycle of violence is prolonged when kids who observe domestic abuse are also vulnerable to behavioral and mental disorders.

Domestic abuse has long-lasting consequences that transcend the immediate victim. Children raised in violent homes are more likely to encounter abuse in relationships of their own and to use it themselves, perpetuating a lifetime cycle of abuse.

**Countermeasures for domestic violence against women**

It is essential to fortify legislative frameworks to shield women from abuse at home. This entails passing legislation that makes domestic abuse illegal, implementing protective orders, and making sure those who commit the crimes are held responsible. Related concerns including custody of kids, rights to property, and monetary access should be included in legal reforms.

Aiding victims of domestic abuse requires offering extensive and easily available counseling services. This covers medical attention, counseling, call centers, homes, and legal support. It is important to customize support services to the unique requirements of women from various backgrounds and situations (Huecker et al., 2023).

Increasing public awareness of the problem of domestic assault and opposing social norms that support abuse are essential. Campaigns for public education have the power to influence perceptions, lessen stigma, and promote bystander intervention. School-based educational initiatives can also help to advance peaceful conflict resolution and wholesome relationships. Involving communities in the battle against abuse at home is crucial to fostering a victim-supportive atmosphere and advancing cultural transformation. Training courses for neighborhood leaders, peer assistance groups, and campaigns involving men and boys in the fight against violence are a few examples of solutions that are community-based.

**Conclusion**

Action must be taken quickly and consistently to address the serious problem of assault against women. A comprehensive strategy including outreach programs, investigations, financial independence, legal and legislative reforms, and public awareness is needed to address this widespread issue. Societies may strive toward a future in which women can live without fear of violence and abuse by addressing the fundamental causes of violence against women and offering strong support for survivors. In addition to being morally just, ending domestic abuse is also a critical first step in achieving gender equity and enhancing the health and wellness of women everywhere.

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