



CURRENT PERSPECTIVES ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY

Tanya Goel

M.A.(Psychology), UGC-NET,
Research Scholar, Department of Psychology,
Panjab University, Chandigarh

ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a social problem that has considerable social and economic impacts on the community. Domestic violence remains a pervasive social and public health issue affecting individuals across all age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and cultures. It encompasses physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse perpetrated within intimate or familial relationships. Despite increasing awareness, legislative reforms, and support mechanisms, domestic violence continues to pose significant challenges worldwide. The present paper examines current perspectives on domestic violence by exploring its conceptual framework, prevalence, causes, consequences, legal responses, and emerging trends in prevention and intervention. The study emphasizes the need for a multidisciplinary approach involving legal systems, healthcare professionals, educational institutions, community organizations, and policymakers to effectively address and reduce domestic violence. Understanding domestic violence is of paramount importance due to its profound and far-reaching impact on individuals, families, and society as a whole. By comprehending the various dimensions of domestic violence, we can prevent harm, helping victims to seek help, in breaking the cycle of abuse, in shaping effective legal and social policies, promote gender equality, enhance healthy relationship and communication, safeguard the well-being of children in abusive households, and eradicating the silence that often perpetuates abuse. In essence, understanding domestic violence is vital for promoting human rights, social justice, and wellbeing for all individuals. This research paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of domestic violence against women, exploring its causes, consequences, and potential interventions.

Keywords: *Domestic violence, intimate partner violence, abuse, legal framework, prevention, intervention.*

Introduction

Domestic violence is a multifaceted phenomenon often defined as a pattern of coercion and control exercised by one person over another. It encompasses various tactics, including threats, social isolation,

intimidation, economic manipulation, and both sexual and psychological abuse, among others. Notably, some abusive tactics used by perpetrators can lead to psychological harm in addition to physical injury. Emotional abuse, though not always physically injurious, can inflict deep psychological wounds on victims (**United Nations, 2010**).

Domestic violence has emerged as a pressing global concern, especially in countries like India. Intimate partner violence and domestic violence can affect individuals of all genders within both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, perpetrated by individuals of any gender. However, research consistently indicates that women bear a disproportionately higher burden of domestic violence compared to men (**Dardis et al., 2015**). The problem of violence against women has deep historical roots, spanning back to ancient times. Records from ancient India depict instances of violence against women, as seen in the mistreatment of Dropti mentioned in the Mahabharat epic. However, contemporary societies continue to grapple with violence against women, affecting not only women but also children (**Sharma, 2015**).

According to the World Health Organization, domestic violence refers to behaviours within an intimate relationship that cause physical, psychological, or sexual harm to those involved. The consequences extend beyond immediate injuries, affecting mental health, economic productivity, family stability, and societal development. Contemporary perspectives acknowledge domestic violence as a multidimensional phenomenon requiring comprehensive strategies for prevention and response.

As Swami Vivekananda had said: “That Country and that Nation that do not respect women have never become great, nor even be in future”.

Concept and Forms of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence encompasses a range of abusive behaviors aimed at establishing power and control over another individual. The major forms include:

- 1. Physical Violence:** Physical violence involves acts such as hitting, slapping, kicking, choking, burning, or the use of weapons that result in bodily harm.
- 2. Emotional and Psychological Abuse:** This includes intimidation, humiliation, threats, isolation, verbal insults, manipulation, and behaviours intended to undermine an individual's self-esteem and emotional well-being.
- 3. Sexual Violence:** Sexual violence refers to any non-consensual sexual act, coercion, marital rape, or forced participation in degrading sexual activities.

4. **Economic Abuse:** Economic abuse occurs when perpetrators control access to financial resources, prevent employment, confiscate earnings, or create financial dependency.
5. **Digital Abuse:** Emerging technological developments have introduced new forms of abuse, including cyberstalking, online harassment, unauthorized surveillance, and misuse of digital platforms to intimidate victims.

Characteristics of Domestic Violence

Understanding the distinctive characteristics of domestic violence is paramount for comprehending its dynamics and devising effective prevention and intervention strategies. The following features illuminate the nature of domestic violence:

1. **Targeting Women within the Family Unit:** It is an exploitative phenomenon that unfolds within the familial context, often targeting women. Its impact spans across different age groups, affecting young girls, married women, elderly individuals, and women in various relationship dynamics (Sharma & Kumar, 2020).
2. **Deliberate Act of Establishing Power:** Rooted in the intent to establish dominance, domestic violence is a purposeful behavior aimed at exerting power and control over another person. Violence serves as a tool to intimidate, humiliate, or instill fear in the victim, perpetuating an environment of subjugation (United Nations, 2010).
3. **Multiple Manifestations:** It encompasses various forms, including physical, mental, emotional, and even spiritual dimensions. It goes beyond causing physical harm and extends to the erosion of a woman's self-esteem, dignity, and sense of safety (Sharma & Kumar, 2020).
4. **Patriarchal Tool:** It operates as a precise instrument of patriarchal dominance, underpinned by notions of male superiority and female inferiority. It is deeply ingrained in systems of power imbalance (Sharma & Kumar, 2020).
5. **Universal Reach:** Domestic violence knows no boundaries of age, socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, racial identity, sexual orientation, or educational attainment. Dispelling misconceptions, it is imperative to acknowledge that anyone, regardless of their background, can fall prey to domestic abuse (Sharma & Kumar, 2020).

Prevalence and Current Situation in India

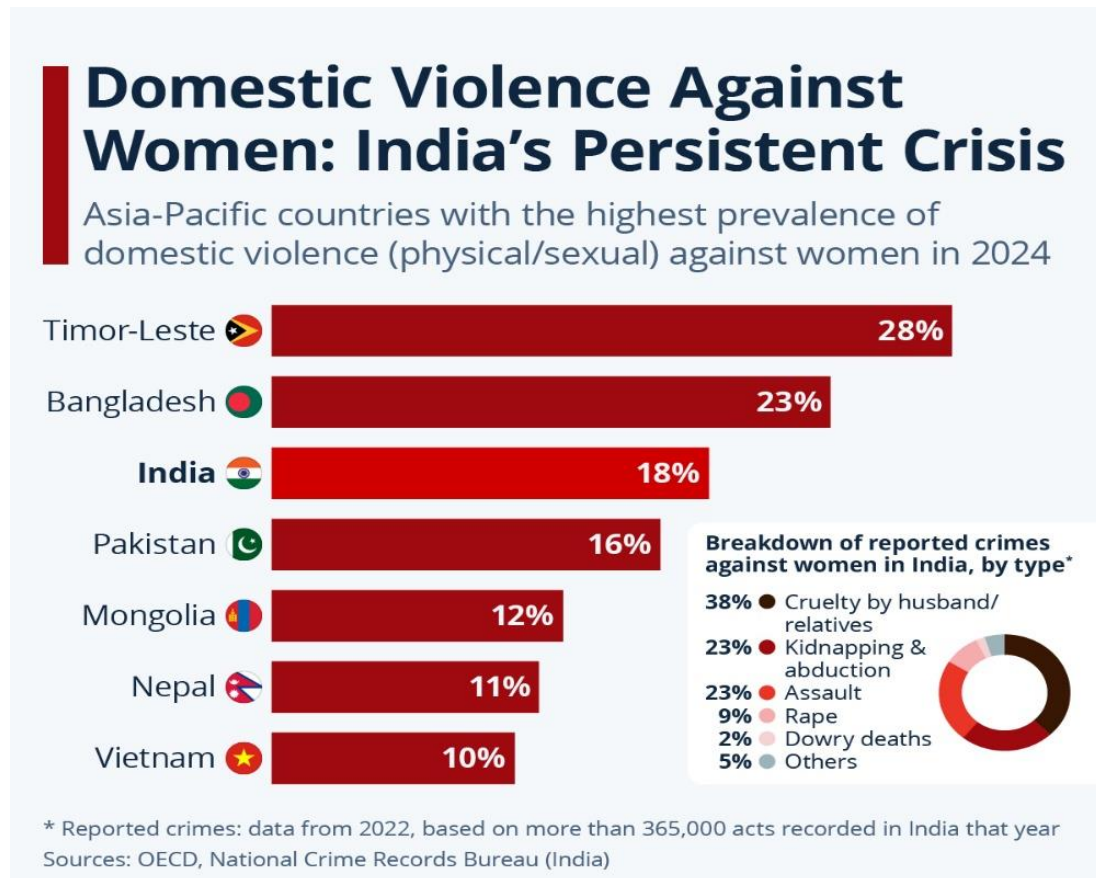
Domestic violence remains alarmingly prevalent worldwide. Increased reporting mechanisms and awareness campaigns have improved visibility; however, many cases continue to go unreported due to stigma, fear, economic dependence, and lack of institutional support.

In 2023, India recorded around 4.48 lakh crimes against women, and "cruelty by husband or relatives" remained the single largest category of offences against women, accounting for nearly three out of every ten reported cases. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), domestic violence, recorded under the category "Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives," constitutes the largest proportion of crimes against women in India. NCRB's Crime in India 2023 report documented approximately 1.33 lakh such cases, accounting for 29.8% of all crimes against women reported during the year.

The Crime in India 2024 Report noted that although the total number of crimes against women declined slightly to 4.41 lakh cases, cruelty by husband or relatives continued to be the dominant offence category. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the 'Crime in India - 2024' report. While the data shows an overall 6% decline in cognisable crimes across the country, it highlights a stark 17% surge in cybercrimes, reflecting a rapid transition from traditional physical offences to sophisticated borderless digital crimes. According to NCRB (2024), Domestic violence remained the largest category of crimes against women.

Year	Total Crimes Against Women	Cases of Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives	Percentage of Total Crimes Against Women
2021	4,28,278	1,36,234	31.8%
2022	4,45,256	1,40,019	31.4%
2023	4,48,211	1,33,676	29.8%
2024	4,41,534	-----	27.0%*

*Based on preliminary reporting of the **NCRB Crime in India 2024 Report**.



Source: NCRB (Indian), [www.Statista .com](http://www.Statista.com)

George et al. (2016) conducted a study in rural Puducherry, South India, aiming to determine domestic violence prevalence and identify associated factors among married women of reproductive age. The study surveyed 310 women aged 18-49 married for at least one year and living with their husbands in the village. The results showed that 56.7% of participants experienced some form of domestic violence, with 51.3% reporting psychological violence, 40% physical violence, and 13.5% sexual violence. Illiteracy among women, love marriage, and non-registration of marriage correlated significantly with violence. The study underscored the high prevalence of domestic violence in rural settings.

Key Initiatives Implemented in FY 2024–25 for the Prevention of Domestic Violence

India significantly expanded its legal and supportive framework during FY 2024-25 to combat domestic violence. Key initiatives include the implementation of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)* (effective July 1, 2024) which introduced stringent penal provisions for crimes against women, and the launch of the centralized *SHe-Box* portal for tracking and addressing complaints securely.

1. Legal Reforms

- **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023:** Implemented on July 1, 2024, the BNS replaced the Indian Penal Code. It introduces stricter penalties for offenses against women and mandates the audio-video recording of victim statements to ensure more robust and tamper-proof legal proceedings.
- **Proposed Legislative Amendments:** In early 2025, legislative proposals were introduced in Parliament to explicitly link victims of domestic violence with financial independence programs (like Self-Help Groups), recognizing that economic dependency is a major barrier to leaving abusive environments.

2. Institutional & Support Mechanisms

- **Mission Shakti:** The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) integrated its safety and empowerment schemes under this overarching framework. Under this, the Sambal sub-scheme focuses on the safety and security of women, providing immediate, coordinated relief.
- **One Stop Centres (OSCs):** Expanded across the country to provide integrated support to women affected by violence, offering shelter, medical aid, legal counseling, and police assistance under one roof.
- **Project Stree Manoraksha:** Launched in collaboration with NIMHANS to provide crucial trauma-informed mental health care and psychological counseling to survivors of gender-based violence residing in One Stop Centres.

3. Emergency & Reporting Systems

- **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112):** A pan-India single emergency response number that allows victims of domestic violence to quickly dispatch local police and emergency services.
- **Women Helpline (181):** Operating 24x7, this helpline provides emergency responses, information on support services, and referral mechanisms to women facing both public and private abuse.
- **Women Help Desks (WHDs):** Established across police stations to create a more women-friendly and approachable environment for filing domestic incident reports and seeking immediate assistance.

4. Financial Initiatives & Outreach

- **Nirbhaya Fund:** Continues to be a primary financial driver, with over Rs 7,700 crore allocated up to FY 2024-25 to fund Safe City Projects, cyber forensic labs, and survivor compensation funds.
- **State-Specific Welfare:** Regional governments have amplified their efforts (such as the Nawabihan Scheme in localized regions) to provide necessary legal advice and shelter facilities to aggrieved women.

Some other initiatives taken during the FY 2024-25 are as follows:-

- 112 Single Emergency Response Support System is made operational in all the 36 States/UTs.
- ₹ 1577.76 Crore has been released so far as a part of Central assistance for the Safe City project by the MHA for project implementation in 8 cities. States are using the Safe City Implementation Monitoring Portal (SCIM) for monitoring the project implementation. The projects are also regularly reviewed by the MHA.
- In order to strengthen the capacities in States/UTs for timely and effective investigation, DNA analysis facilities have been established in 30 States/UTs. The approved financial outlay is 245.29 Crore.

Intervention Strategies for Domestic Violence Against Women in India

The interventions strategies are a beacon of hope in the midst of the darkness of domestic violence, representing a collective effort to break the cycle of abuse, provide support to survivors, and foster a climate of change. The interventions encompass a wide spectrum of approaches, ranging from immediate crisis response to long-term empowerment initiatives. It is a declaration that no one should live in fear within their own homes, and that every woman deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

1. **Strengthening the Legal Framework and Its Implementation:** India has enacted several laws to protect women from domestic violence, including the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005**, and relevant provisions under criminal law. However, effective implementation remains a challenge. Ensuring timely access to justice, strengthening the role of Protection Officers, establishing fast-track courts, and improving monitoring mechanisms are essential for enhancing the effectiveness of these legal provisions.
2. **Enhancing Access to Support Services:** Women experiencing domestic violence require immediate and comprehensive support. Expanding the network of **One Stop Centres (OSCs)**,

women's helplines, shelter homes, and legal aid services can provide victims with medical assistance, psychological counseling, temporary accommodation, and legal guidance under one roof.

3. **Capacity Building of Law Enforcement Agencies:** Police personnel are often the first point of contact for survivors. Regular training programs on gender sensitivity, victim-centered approaches, and legal procedures related to domestic violence should be conducted to ensure empathetic and effective responses. The establishment of **Women Help Desks** in police stations can further improve accessibility and trust.
4. **Promoting Community Awareness and Social Mobilization:** Community-based interventions can help challenge social norms that perpetuate violence against women. Awareness campaigns, community dialogues, engagement with religious and local leaders, and educational initiatives can foster attitudes that promote gender equality and non-violence.
5. **Economic Empowerment of Women:** Economic dependence often prevents women from leaving abusive relationships. Skill development programs, vocational training, entrepreneurship support, access to credit facilities, and employment opportunities can enhance women's financial independence and decision-making power.
6. **Educational Interventions:** Schools and higher educational institutions should integrate gender sensitization, life skills education, and conflict resolution training into their curricula. Early education can help reshape attitudes and prevent the intergenerational transmission of violence.
7. **Leveraging Technology for Prevention and Support:** Digital platforms can facilitate access to information, emergency assistance, and counselling services. Mobile applications, online reporting mechanisms, tele-counselling services, and awareness campaigns through social media can improve outreach and support for survivors.
8. **Multi-Sectoral Collaboration:** Sustainable change requires coordination among government departments, non-governmental organizations, healthcare providers, educational institutions, judicial bodies, and community organizations. A collaborative framework can ensure comprehensive prevention strategies, efficient service delivery, and effective rehabilitation of survivors.

Conclusion

Addressing violence against women and girls requires moving beyond reactive, scheme-based interventions toward a coordinated and survivor-centred institutional ecosystem. Strengthening accountability mechanisms, improving inter-departmental coordination, and investing in long-term

rehabilitation and reintegration are essential to ensuring that legal protections translate into tangible safety and justice for women and girls across India. Addressing domestic violence demands not only punitive measures against perpetrators but also preventive strategies that challenge harmful social norms and empower survivors. Sustained commitment from governments, institutions, and communities is essential to create safer environments and uphold the fundamental rights and dignity of all individuals.

References

- **Dardis, C. M., Dixon, K. J., Edwards, K. M., & Turchik, J. A. (2015).** An examination of the factors related to dating violence perpetration among young men and women and associated theoretical explanations: A review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 16(2), 136-152.
- **Mahadevaswamy, M., & Nathawat, S. (2023).** Understanding domestic violence against women: causes, consequences, and interventions: a comprehensive study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(4).
- **Sharma, I. (2015).** Violence against women: Where are the solutions?. *Indian journal of psychiatry*, 57(2), 131-139.
- **Mahapatro, M., Gupta, R. N., & Gupta, V. (2012).** The risk factor of domestic violence in India. *Indian journal of community medicine*, 37(3), 153-157.
- **Sharma, P., & Kumar, A. (2020).** A study of cause and effects of domestic violence. *International journal of advance research and innovative ideas in education*, 6 (2), 1807-1816.
- **George, J., Nair, D., Premkumar, N. R., Saravanan, N., Chinnakali, P., & Roy, G. (2016).** The prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors among married women in a rural area of Puducherry, South India. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, 5(3), 672-676.
- **Babu, B. V., & Kar, S. K. (2009).** Domestic violence against women in eastern India: a population-based study on prevalence and related issues. *BMC public health*, 9(1), 129.
- **Garg, S., Singh, M. M., Rustagi, R., Engtipi, K., & Bala, I. (2019).** Magnitude of domestic violence and its socio-demographic correlates among pregnant women in Delhi. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, 8(11), 3634-3639.
- **NCRB. Crime in India 2024.** Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India