

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: ITS CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND PRECLUSIONS STRATEGIES.

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## Abstract

*Domestic violence is an offence and is one of the major causes for increase of crime index of the state. Domestic violence is destructive behavior in an intimate relationship where one person tries to dominate and control other in a dating or marital relationship or in cohabitation, which causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in that relationship. In this paper the author tries to explain the root causes of domestic violence which includes certain risk factors such as individual, relationship, community, societal, legal and political factors. These factors are responsible for domestic violence and it's consequences on the victim's psychological as well as physical health in day to day life. The paper also highlights the difference forms of domestic violence such as physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, verbal or economic. The author also makes an attempt to highlight the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships. The paper also brings in to light various strategies to prevent domestic violence.*

**Key words:** *domestic violence, forms, risk factors, consequences and prevention.*

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## Introduction

India is second largest country in population and almost half of the population is of women. As India is famous for its population in the same way India is not behind in crime rate. It is also high in our state. India tanks no. 53 in crime throughout the world with crime index and safety index of 46.59 and 53.41 respectfully and in Asia it ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in Crime (MUMBEO 2016). Present day scenario shows a number of crimes are taking place such as murder, rape, kidnaping, robbery, corruption, domestic violence, dealing drugs, trafficking, feticides, infanticides etc. In this research paper the author tries to make an attempt to understand the concept of domestic violence and its causes and consequences on physical and psychological wellbeing.

Before throwing a light on domestic violence, we should know some concepts which are related to domestic violence like what violence is, sexual violence, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. Violence is "any use of force- verbal, written, physical, psychological or sexual- against any person, by an individual or a group, with intent to directly or indirectly wrong, injure or oppress that person by attacking his or her integrity, psychological or physical well- being, rights or property" (MELS 2009). Sexual violence is "any sexual act, or other act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. It includes rape, defined as the physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus with penis, other body part or object" (WHO 2016). Sexual abuse is when a person in a position of power, authority takes advantages of other person's trust and respect to involve them in sexual activity. Sexual abuse, then, can involve two consenting parties (e.g. an 18 year old student and her/his teacher), but would not fall under the category of forced or threatening sexual assault. Sexual assault is any unwanted sexual act or behaviour which is threatening, violent, forced or coercive and to which a person has not given consent or was not able to give consent. Sexual assault can be a violent, unexpected, traumatic and sometimes life threatening event or series of events.

Domestic violence refers to interpersonal violence which takes place in domestic settings, family relationships and intimate relationships. It is also known as family violence or spousal abuse. Any one (men or women) can become a domestic violence offender or victim. Domestic violence is destructive behavior in an intimate relationship where one person tries to dominate and control the other in a dating or marital relationship or in cohabitation, which causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in that relationship. It includes acts of physical aggression like slapping, hitting, kicking or beating, psychological abuse such as intimidation, constant belittling or humiliation, forces sexual intercourse or any other controlling behavior like isolating a person from family and friends, monitoring their movements and restricting access to information or assistance (Krug E. et. al. 2002). Domestic violence is a deliberate act and is rarely an isolated event. Over time, the violence tends to increase in frequency and severity.

Violence against spouse, particularly intimate partner violence and sexual violence are major public health problems and violation of human rights. Global prevalence figures indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) of women worldwide have experienced either physical and or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime and as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by an intimate partner (WHO 2016). Around 120 million girls worldwide (slightly more than 1 in 10) have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives. By far the most common perpetrators of sexual violence against girls are current or former husbands, partners or boyfriends (UNICEF 2014).

An estimation of 246 million girls and boys experience school-related violence every year and one in four girls say that she never feel comfortable using school latrines, according to a survey on youth conducted across four regions. The extent and forms of school-related violence that girls and boys experience differ, but evidence suggests that girls are at greater risk of sexual violence, harassment and exploitation. In addition to the resulting adverse psychological, sexual and reproductive health consequences, school-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls. (UNGEI 2014)

In 2012 a study conducted in New Delhi the result indicates that 92 per cent of women reported having experienced some form of sexual violence in public spaces in their lifetime, and 88 per cent of women reported having experienced some form of verbal sexual harassment (including unwelcome comments of a sexual nature, whistling, leering or making obscene gestures) in their lifetime. (UN Women 2013).

**Diagram showing violence against women throughout her life cycle**

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Type of violence</i>
Pre-birth	Sex-selective abortion; effects of battering during pregnancy on birth outcomes.
Infancy	Female infanticide; physical, sexual and psychological abuse.
Girlhood	Child marriage; female genital mutilation; physical, sexual and psychological abuse; incest; child prostitution and pornography.
Adolescence and Adulthood	Dating and courtship violence (e.g. acid throwing and date rape) economically coerced sex (e.g. school girls having sex with "sugar daddies" in return for school fees); incest; sexual abuse in the workplace; rape; sexual harassment; forced prostitution and pornography; trafficking in women; partner violence; marital rape; dowry abuse and murders; partner homicide; psychological abuse; abuse of women with disabilities; forced pregnancy.
Elderly	Forced "suicide" or homicide of widows for economic reasons; sexual, physical and psychological abuse.

*(Source: "Violence Against Women", WHO., FRH/WHD/97.8)*

**Figure A**

### **Risk factors/ factors contributing to domestic violence**

Considerate the risk factors associated with domestic violence will help to frame some of our local analysis questions, determine good effectiveness measures, identifying key intervention points and select appropriate responses. Risk factors do not automatically mean that a person will become a domestic violence victim or an offender. Several studies have tried to find out the factors responsible for domestic violence at national and international level and found that gender, race, poor socioeconomic condition are the primary factors for domestic violence (Robert GL et. at, 1998; ECLAC, 1992). The author categorises risk factors under five headings.

1. **Individual risk factors** : includes low self-esteem, low income, low academic achievement, aggression or delinquent behaviour as youth, heavy alcohol & drug use, antisocial or borderline personality traits, unemployment, prior history of being physically or psychological abusive, depression, anger and hostility, bad company, emotional dependence and insecurity etc.
2. **Relationship factors**: includes economic stress, unhealthy family relationships and interactions, marital instability-divorces or separations, marital conflict-fights, dominance and control of the relationship by partner over the other etc.
3. **Community factors**: includes poverty and associated factors, weak community sanctions against IPV (intimate partner violence), lack of institutions, relationships, and norms that shape a community's social interactions.
4. **Societal factors**: are traditional gender norms (e.g. women's should stay at home, not enter at workplace, and be submissive, men support the family and make decisions).
5. **Legal and political factors**: are lesser legal status of women either by written law or by practice, laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance, low level of legal literacy among women, insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary, and political factors includes domestic violence not taken seriously, limited participation of women in organising political polices, underrepresentation of women in police, media, politics etc.

### **Consequences of Domestic Violence**

The consequences depend on type of domestic violence that has been inflicted. Perhaps the most crucial consequence of violence is the denial of humanity and fundamental human rights. The consequences of domestic violence lead to psychological trauma as well as physical problems to victims.

#### **Mental Health effects:**

Domestic violence can lead to common emotional traumas such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, substance abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder. Abuse can trigger suicide attempts, psychotic episodes, homelessness and slow recovery from mental illness. Children exposed to domestic violence are also at risk for developmental problems, psychiatric disorders, school difficulties, aggressive behaviour and low self-esteem. These factors can make it difficult for survivors to mobilize resources. Psychological health effects are more dangerous than physical health effects. Women who earn 65% or more of their households' income are more likely to be psychologically abused than women who learn less than 65% of their households' income (Kaukinen, 2004).

#### **Physical health effects:**

Violence committed by an intimate partner has numerous and sometimes devastating consequences for the victim. In addition, children living in an abusive household are affected by violence, even if they are not directly attacked. The damage can occur insidiously; victims are only able to free themselves from abusive situations after they are able to recognize the problem. A study conducted on physical violence in American families shows that fifty percent of men who frequently assault their wives frequently assault their children (Straus et.al 1990). Domestic violence gives birth to so many physical problems i.e. injury or fracture on neck, nose, pelvis, chest, abdomen and other body parts, scratches and bleeding. Physical violence could be in the form of kicking, hitting, dragging by hair, yelling, throwing against the wall or floor, punching and most common slapping (Griso, Schwarz, Hirschinger et. al.1999) etc. Consequences could occur in term of migraine, headache, chronic body pain, backache, fainting, seizures, gastrointestinal disorders and sometime cardiac problem like hypertension and somatic chest pain (Coker et. al. 2000) etc. Others problems related to gynaecological system could be carcinoma cervix, decreased libido, genital irritation, proneness to genital tract

infections and dyspareunia (Collet et. al. 1998). 95% of men who physically abuse their intimate partners also psychologically abuse them (Henning, K., & Klesges, L.M 2003).

### **Forms of domestic violence**

When most of the people think of the word domestic violence, they visualise a situation where the abusive partner physically hurts the victim. But physical abuse is only a form of abuse. Domestic violence can be physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, verbal or economic.

#### **Physical Abuse:**

Physical abuse is the most familiar form of domestic violence. It involves the use of force against the victim, including direct assaults on the body, use of weapons, driving dangerously, destruction of property, abuse of pets in front of family members, assault of children, locking the victim out of the house, and sleep deprivation. Other examples are as grabbing, pinching, shoving, slapping, hitting, biting, arm-twisting, kicking, punching, hitting with blunt objects, stabbing, shooting.

#### **Psychological abuse**

Psychological abuse is basically an inclusive term for intimidating, threatening, or fear-causing behaviour. Psychological abuse is a very complex form of abuse, most of time physical abuse leads to psychological sequelae like phobia, guilt feeling, insecurity, poor impulse control, nightmares, impaired sleep, humiliation, shame, isolation of victim, forced weakness (Walker LEA.1984). 7 out of 10 psychologically abused women display symptoms of PTSD and/or depression. (Pico-Alfonso et. al. 2006). Psychological abuse is a stronger predictor of PTSD than physical abuse among women (Dutton et.al. 2006). Women experiencing psychological abuse are significantly more likely to report poor physical and mental health and to have more than 5 physician visits in the last year (Coker, A., 2000). Psychological abuse also instilling or attempting to instil fear e.g. intimidation, threatening physical harm to self, victim, and/or others, threatening to harm and/or kidnap children, menacing, blackmail, harassment, destruction of pets and property, mind games, stalking.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse involves the destruction or undermining victim's self-worth and is brought about by persistent insult, humiliation, or criticism. Examples of emotional abuse include constant criticism, belittling victim's abilities and competency, name-calling, insults, put-downs, silent treatment, manipulating victim's feelings and emotions to induce guilt, subverting a partner's relationship with the children, repeatedly making and breaking promises

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves the violation of an individual's bodily integrity (sexual assault). It includes various form of sexual harms like forceful sexual intercourse, mutilation of genitalia, painful sex (sadism), forced oral sex, anal mutilation, digital penetration and forced nakedness (Russel D 1982). Sexual abuse also includes behaviour which limits reproductive rights, such as preventing use of contractive methods and forcing abortion. Other examples are marital rape, acquaintance rape, forced sex after beating, attacks on the sexual parts of the body, forced prostitution, fondling, sodomy and sex with others.

#### **Verbal abuse**

Continual 'put downs' and humiliation, either privately or publicly, with attacks following clear themes that focus on intelligence, sexuality, body image and capacity as a parent and spouse it also includes screaming, shouting, put-downs, name-calling, using sarcasm, ridiculing her for her religious beliefs or ethnic background.

#### **Economic abuse**

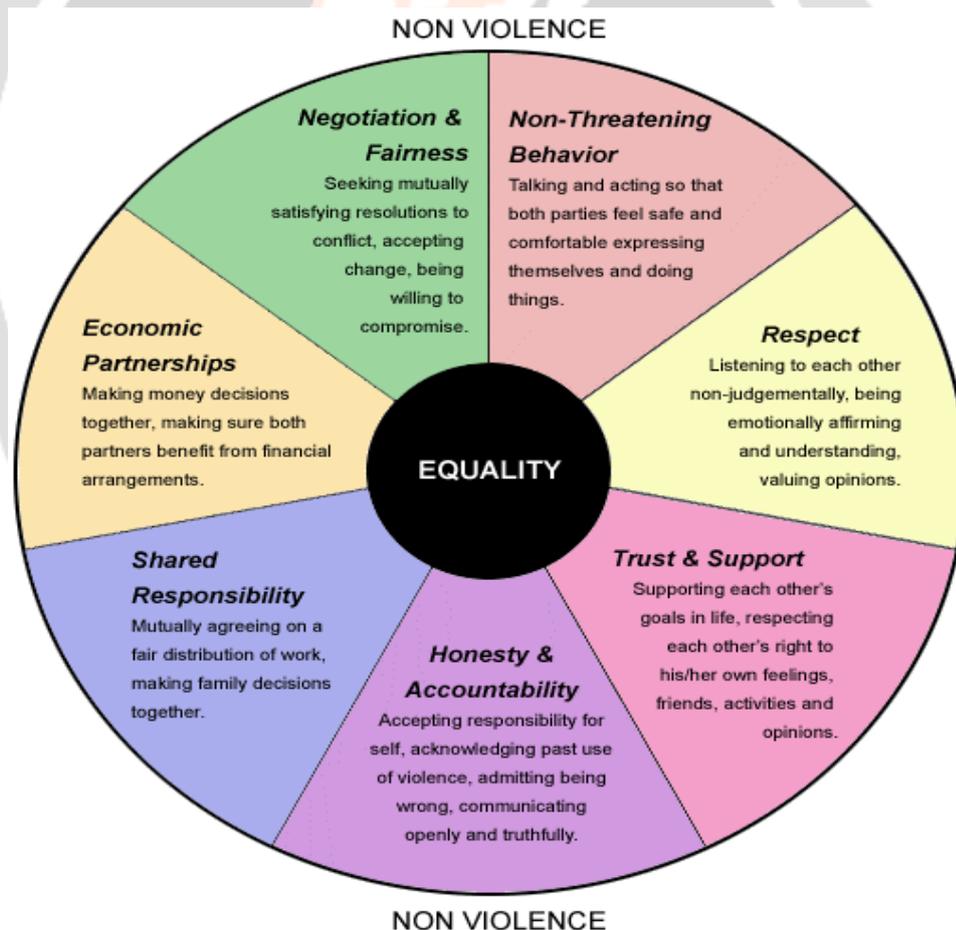
Economic abuse results in the victim being financially dependent on their partner. Victim may be denied access to money, including their own, demanding that she and her children live on inadequate resources. These can be contributing factors for women becoming 'trapped' in violent relationships. In other words maintaining total control over financial resources including victim's earned income or resources received through public assistance or social security, withholding money and/or access to money, forbidding attendance

at school, forbidding employment, on-the-job harassment, requiring accountability and justification for all money spent, forced welfare fraud, withholding information about family running up bills for which the victim is responsible for payment.

Being victimized by a situation of domestic violence can create a feeling of helplessness, hopelessness and even self-doubt, so it is important that we understand the difference signs of abuse so that we can identify the problem and get help. Many victims try to excuse their abuser’s action and convince themselves that the situation will improve. However, domestic violence situations frequently deteriorate. Which may begin as occasional intimidation, threats of violence or aggressive sexual advances, and can escalate into rape, physical assault, murder etc. it is also seen that when children witness domestic violence situation, it can lead to them developing violent behaviours later in life as they feel that violence is normal way of life. There are ways to protect oneself and other victims like legal prosecution of the abuser, civil protection orders and restraining orders, police help, and intuitional support. A diagram which is shown below (fig B) known as “power and control wheel” developed by the Domestic abuse Intervention project in Duluth, identifies the various behaviours that are used by batterers to gain power and control over victims. The wheel demonstrates the relationship between physical and sexual violence and the tactics of intimidation, coercion, and manipulation that are often used by batterers.

**Healthy and abusive or unhealthy relationships:**

In order to have a healthy relationship, both spouse must treat other as equal and independent human being. The husband must respect his wife more than his need to control her. The difference between healthy or abuse relation are explained by the pictures given below.



*Figures B shows non violence*

*Source: [www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org).*

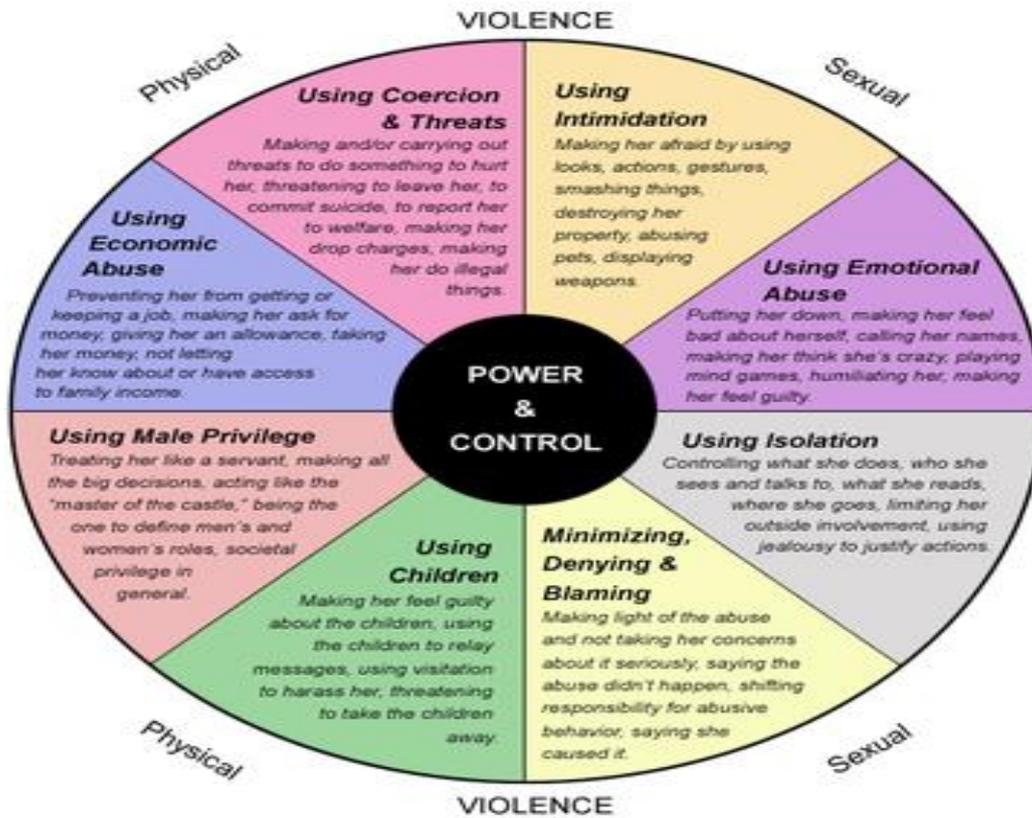


Figure C shows violence

Source: [www.duluth-model.org](http://www.duluth-model.org).

Figure D and E shows healthy and unhealthy relationship

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP		UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP			
Cell phone he uses to tell her he loves her	Eyes that her boyfriend looks into lovingly	Fat lip from when he smacked her for smiling at someone else	Eye he punched her in for smiling at a friend		
His favorite place to kiss	Smile that he loves to see	The cell phone he got her so he can check up on her constantly	Bruise where her boyfriend choked her		
The clothing he buys her because he is so generous	The hand her boyfriend holds when they go for a walk	Clothing he allows her to wear	The wrist he grabbed when she tried to walk away from him		
<b>Teen Violence Can Be...</b>	<b>PHYSICAL:</b> hitting, slapping, punching, kicking	<b>SEXUAL:</b> any unwanted touching or forces you to have sex	<b>FINANCIAL:</b> controlling most or all of the money	<b>SOCIAL:</b> spreading rumors using religion or culture to control	<b>VERBAL/MENTAL:</b> threats, name calling, put downs

Figure D

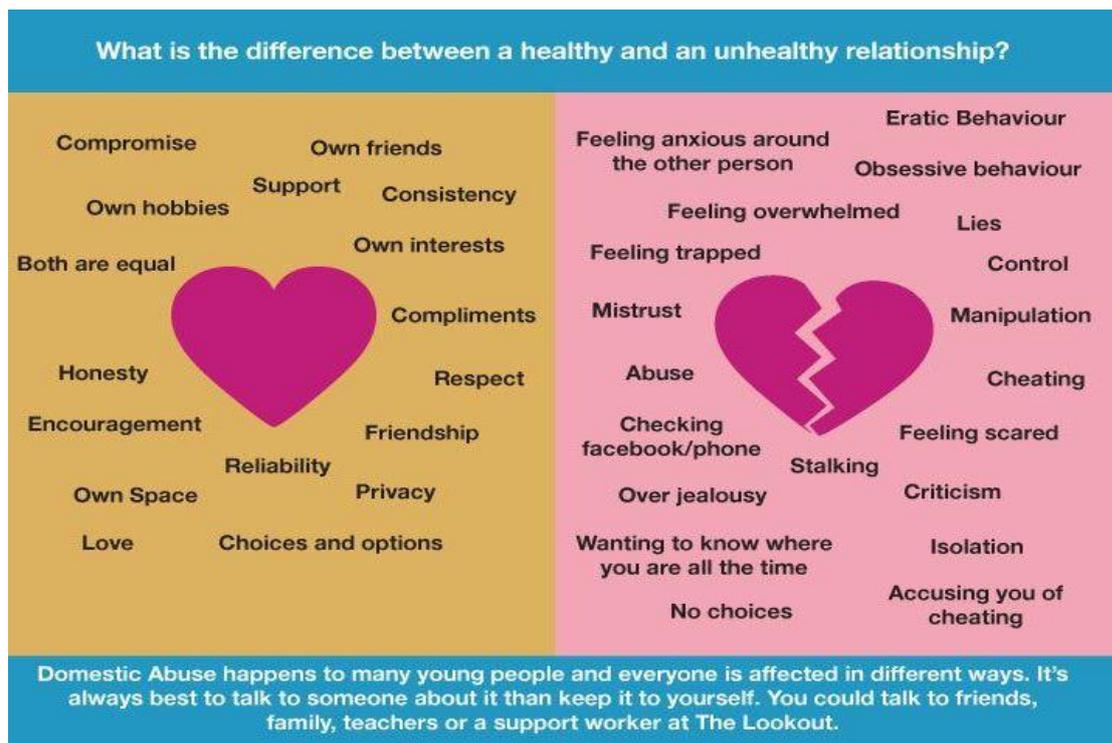


Fig E

### Preclusions for domestic violence:

Domestic violence is spreading like communicable disease. It is a global problem and affects victim's life. Domestic violence is a major problem as it is violating victims as well as social rights/ norms. It can be prevented at local as well as national and international level. At the primary level education should be provided about the current problems and school-based programmes should be organised. Certain strategies have been formulated by WHO like periodical survey conduction, development protocol and guidelines and information material on domestic violence among others (Turman, 1998).

In view of this global problem, we can use following preclusions to overcome from this burning problem, such as

- We should support domestic violence counselling programs and enhance programs that address discrimination against women and promote gender equality and try to stop domestic violence from happening in the first place.
- Awareness should be developed in community regarding this unacceptable act as every body has right to live a pain free life.
- Social norms should be strict to give punishment for such people who break the rules, norms and who take up this inhuman activity.
- Health care professionals like gynaecologist, obstetrician, counsellor, psychologist, psychiatrist and social worker should be active and available to identify the problems as early as possible.
- Women empowerment should be emphasized. Women should be respected and should get equal rights.
- Gender sensitization programs should be enhanced and legal literacy should be provided to women.
- NGO's should be involved in fighting against violence.

### Conclusion

Domestic violence is an emerging crime now-a-days in our society like a communicable disease. It is just a way of showing one's dominant status on other. Government had made laws against violence but implication of that laws are not happening properly mainly because most of the people does not know how to approach law and do not have knowledge about the existing laws. Work is going on in that respect but it needs to get improved by training, education, research, education to people regarding different agencies and

organizations. People should also be made aware about the different consequences domestic violence has on, not just the victim, but also on the family and the society as well.

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