

Domestic Violence Against Women (With Special Reference to India): A Human Rights Issue

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Abstract : Domestic violence is one of the most under-reported crimes. Problem with domestic violence is that it is not even considered as abuse in many parts of the world especially certain parts of Asia, Africa and Middle East. It is viewed as “doing the needful”. Domestic violence could be in form of emotional harassment, physical injury or psychological abuse perpetrated by one of the family members to another. It is a worldwide phenomenon mainly targeting women. The acts of violence have terrible negative impact on women. It is also an infringement of women’s rights and can be safely termed as human rights abuse. In cases pertaining to domestic violence, male adults often misuses his authority and power to control another using physical or psychological means. Violence and other forms of abuse are common in domestic violence. Sexual assaults, molestation and battering are common in these cases. Domestic violence is a human rights issue and a serious deterrent to development. Domestic violence could also take place in subtle forms like making the person feel worthless or not giving the victims any personal space or freedom. The problematic aspect is cases of domestic violence are very rarely reported. The majority of the victims are women but children are also made to suffer silently. They are abused and neglected. Their innocent minds are adversely affected with the incidents of domestic violence. According to a report by World Health Organization (WHO), sexual trafficking, female feticide, dowry death, public humiliation and physical torture are some of the most common forms of domestic violence against Indian women. Such acts belie our growth and claim as an economic superpower. It is ironic that we claim to be one of the most rapidly advancing countries in the world and yet we have done hardly anything of note against social hazards like domestic violence. Laws are not that stringent when it comes to reporting acts of domestic violence. Even if the report is filed it turns out to be a long drawn process and not every victim has that much resource to fight till the end. It is also a social taboo to make your family matters public. The big challenge in front now is to enforce it in true sense. Steps that are actually needed; tough laws against domestic violence, speedy execution and change in the mindset of society only then we can expect to have some improvement in such inhuman cases. An effective response to violence must be multi-sectoral; addressing the immediate practical needs of women experiencing abuse; providing long-term follow up and assistance; and focusing on changing those cultural norms, attitudes and legal provisions that promote the acceptance of and even encourage violence against women, and undermine women's enjoyment of their full human rights and freedoms. Hence the responses to the problem must be based on integrated approach. The effectiveness of measures and initiatives will depend on coherence and coordination associated with their design and implementation.

Keywords : domestic violence, human rights, sexual assaults, World Health Organization

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