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PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Abstract:

Paper discusses about consequences of domestic violence and an expected knowledge of social worker to mitigate the problem. The paper also discussed some social work interventions that can help in managing or preventing domestic violence or reducing its scourge in our societies. Such useful interventions include, crisis intervention, counseling. Psychotherapy psycho-education and provision of adequate security for the victims. The paper examined the nature and causes of violence within the family. It has also highlighted some of its effects on the individual, the family, the society and the nation. Among such consequences are physical injuries, poor health, general emotional distress, nightmares, phobia, low self esteem, poor marital relationships, broken homes and so on.

paper also discussed some social work interventions that can help in managing or preventing domestic violence or reducing its scourge in our societies. Such useful interventions. It is highly advocated in this paper that social workers and other care-givers should be more committed to solving the problems of victims of family violence. It is also suggested that the government and non-governmental organizations should help in preventing or reducing the occurrence of domestic violence.

KEYWORD:

Individual, Emotional, Problem, Prevention and Management.

INTRODUCTION:

Domestic violence is a world phenomenon. It is a fact of life in all societies and across all cultures, irrespective of economic status and training. In a developed country like America also Women are six times more likely to get violated by intimate partners than men. However reports generated by some surveys are highly controversial as they are directly related with the way queries are worded in survey forms, the way they are conducted and other such factors. It has been found that in America twenty percent of all crimes which happen with women are cases of intimate partner violence, while only three percent of men get affected by the same.

In case of dowry death in every seventy seven minutes. Cases of cruelty meted out by husbands and in laws are seen in every nine minutes. Patriarchal terrorism where one partner uses economic and social power to maintain control over another human is very common in India and other Asian countries due to the subservient status of women. On an average at least three women are found killed or murdered by their partners every year in all countries. Instances of physical abuse are also found more in women compared to men.

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CONSEQUENCES AGAINST WOMEN

Battered women have tendency to remain quiet, agonized and emotionally disturbed after the occurrence of the torment. A psychological set back and trauma because of domestic violence affects women's productivity in all forms of life. The suicide case of such victimized women is also a deadly consequence and the number of such cases is increasing. A working Indian woman may drop out from work place because of the ill-treatment at home or office, she may lose her efficiency in work. Her health may deteriorate if she is not well physically and mentally. Some women leave their home immediately after first few atrocious attacks and try to become self-dependent. Their survival becomes difficult and painful when they have to work hard for earning two meals a day. Many such women come under rescue of women welfare organizations like Women Welfare Association of India (WWAI), Affus Woman Welfare Association (AWWA) and Woman's Emancipation and Development Trust (WEDT). Some of them who leave their homes are forcefully involved in women trafficking and pornography. This results in acquiring a higher risk of becoming a drug addict and suffering from HIV/AIDS. Some of course do it by their choice.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST MEN

The consequences against violence against men in India, is largely emotional and psychological in nature. The physical harassment resulting from domestic violence, also affects their lives and productivity but it is still more inclined towards the emotional problems which men face in India. It is largely because many such cases go unreported, as compared to cases of physical assault of women. An emotionally harassed and depressed man may lose interest in the occupation he is associated with. If he is the only bread-earning person in the family, the family may find it difficult to survive. There has been a spate of farmers' suicide in recent years in Karnataka. Several farmers have committed suicide not only because of indebtedness but also because of discord in family and depression resulting out of it. According to statistics of Save India Family Foundation (an NGO), around 1.2 lakh harassed husbands have committed suicide in the country in the last four years.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST OLDS

The elderly abuse is one of the most unfortunate happening for the elderly class in their lives. They would rather like to be more at ease and calm in this phase of their life than being prone to such kind of shameful treatment by the family or society. Ironically elderly class itself also indulges in harming each other. Many of the elderly men continue to beat and harass their wives throughout their lives. Some of the olds are ousted from home by their children, some are beaten until death and some are exploited socially. A sense of insecurity dogged them all the time. They are isolated and cut off from society in some cases where son and daughter-in-law do not let them interact and move around freely in the society. The old people are not looked after properly and their health problems are neglected. Due to the abuse and mental trauma they suffer, some of them leave home and stay in old age homes like Help Age India, Senior Citizen Home Complex Welfare Society (SCHCWS) and many others.

EFFECT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON THE SOCIETY

All the different forms of violence discussed in this essay adversely affect the society. Violence against women may keep them locked in homes succumbing to the torture they face. If they come out in open and reveal the wrong done to them for help and rescue, it influences the society both positively and negatively. At one hand where it acts as an inspiration and ray of hope for other suffering women, on the other hand it also spoils the atmosphere of the society. When something of this kind happens in the society, few families may witness the evil of domestic violence knocking their door steps. Some families try to imitate what others indulge in irrespective of it being good or bad for the family.

EFFECT ON THE PRODUCTIVITY

As mentioned earlier, domestic violence affects the productivity level of the victim negatively. Men and women lose interest in household activities. If they are employed they fail to work with full capabilities in workplace. Children are found to concentrate less on studies. They drop out of school and do not get the education which otherwise they might have got if they were not tormented and thus the country loses a productive asset. Therefore, the nation's productivity altogether gets affected because of domestic violence in homes. When old people are tortured and physically abused, they separate themselves from

family members and their daily activities are restricted to themselves. The guardianship they can provide out of their experience, the moral values which they can instill in the grandchildren are all not done as they are unwanted in their own homes. People need to spend their part of income for medication when they are met with worse forms of domestic violence which again leads to loss in productive use of a family's income. The cumulative effect of the domestic violence at all levels and across all regions is the country's hindered development and slow economic growth.

Criminologist and Social workers should be aware of the following points:

1. Domestic violence is a common crime.
2. Domestic violence is usually gender based.
3. It's about power and control, not just conflict or anger.
4. Domestic violence harms children.
5. Not all battered women are helpless and weak, and they are not crazy.
6. Battered women are often blamed for the violence.
7. People with disabilities may be at very high risk for domestic violence.
8. Economics matter leads domestic violence.
9. Batterers are not all alcoholic, they can usually control their anger, and they are often charming and manipulative.
10. Social change must be a key component in ending domestic violence.

Assessment of Victim's Case: If the evidence indicates domestic violence, the caseworker analyzes the situation in an attempt to prevent further abuse---necessary to protect the victim's life and well-being. The caseworker assesses the victim's situation: pattern and frequency of abuse, exigent needs, the effect of abuse on emotional and physical health, future endangerment to life, access to support organizations for the abused. The social worker does not resolve the issues, but rather provides support, counseling and therapy for the victim.

Intervention for the Victim: The social worker initiates a prevention and safety plan for the abused victim. The caseworker educates the victim about emergency shelters, domestic violence hotlines, protection orders and financial independence. The safety plan includes the following: finding a safe exit in the home in case of immediate danger, coordinating coded messages with trusted friends or relatives to call 911, preparing ahead and taking along identification documents in urgent situations, relocating with the children to an emergency refuge.

TREATMENT AND CONSEQUENCE FOR ABUSERS

The social worker can assign the abusive partner to a rehabilitation program either through court mandated orders or voluntary participation. The program attempts to rehabilitate the perpetrator's attitude and behavior, eradicating violent reactions. Facilitators teach social problem-solving skills and communication techniques. At other times, the consequence for the abuser is incarceration. Assault, harassment, coercion, rape are criminal acts, and each state warrants punishment according to its laws.

Intervention for Children who Witness Domestic Violence

Children who witness violence in the home may suffer emotional, social and psychological setbacks. Social workers screen children who enter emergency shelters with their mothers for trauma. Identifying the child, assessing the situation and providing therapy are actions for intervention. Social workers attempt to make children understand that the violence is not their fault. They work with the children to achieve effective social and coping skills and to maintain a healthy, stable relationship with the non-abusive parent.

PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The injuries, trauma, stigma, and psychological frustration associated with domestic violence (e.g. spousal sexual abuse, child sexual abuse, wife battering, rape, etc.) call for social work interventions. These interventions also help in reducing the incidence or future occurrence of domestic violence. They include: (. MOJOYINOLAJ. Soc. Sci., 13(2): 97-99 (2006)).

Crisis Intervention: Battered, raped, or sexually abused women or girls need urgent attention or immediate care. Therefore, the social workers have the responsibility of assisting such women get over their shock as quickly as possible. They should assist such victims to get prompt medical treatments in the

hospitals for their trauma or injuries sustained during the violence.

Counseling: The social workers have the responsibility of working with both the abuser and the victim (spouse or child). Through counseling, the social worker could determine the cause of the abuse. They should help in counseling the victim and the abuser and try to work through their problems. They should assist in building up the victims' self-esteem and allow them to decide what measures they want to take. Legal redress should be the last option.

Safety and Protection of the Victims: Victims of domestic violence undergo emotional turmoil and fear as a result of violence inflicted upon them. Hence, their feelings and potential for further harm should always be of utmost consideration. Since they may not be able to protect themselves, the social workers must give extra attention to their safety and protection. To this end, they should help in making alternative arrangement for their living. As the victims may be constantly afraid of where the violence takes place, such individuals may be helped to get a new house or location where they will experience less tensions.

Psychotherapy: This is a form of psychological means for treating emotional problems associated with domestic violence. As victims of domestic violence (e.g. sexually abused or raped women/girl) may be stigmatized or feel ashamed, their wounded ego needs to be boosted. To this end, the social workers have the responsibilities of reducing their emotional problems (e.g. anxiety, fear, worry, depression, guilt, shame etc) through psychological means such as reassurance, words of encouragement, advice and emotional support.

Role of Non-Government Organization (NGOs) in controlling the domestic violence

The role of non-governmental organizations in controlling the domestic violence and curbing its worse consequences is crucial. Sakshi – a violence intervention agency for women and children in Delhi works on cases of sexual assault, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse and domestic abuse and focuses on equality education for judges and implementation of the 1997 Supreme Court's sexual harassment guidelines. Women's Rights Initiative – another organization in the same city runs a legal aid cell for cases of domestic abuse and works in collaboration with law enforcers in the area of domestic violence. In Mumbai, bodies like Majlis and Swaadhar are doing meaningful works in this field. Sneha in Chennai and Vimochana in Bangalore are working on many women's issues arising from domestic abuse. They are also doing active work in issues related to labour. Services ranging from counseling, education and outreach, giving provisions, and mobilizing them for gaining self-confidence are provided to them. Anweshi is a women's counseling centre in Kozhikode providing meditation, resource and counseling for battered women. All the above bodies have their own registered offices, contact numbers and websites for those who want to seek help. There are at present only few NGOs for welfare of men like Social Welfare Association for Men (SWAM) in Chennai. Few more such organizations need to be opened for the help of abused men. These NGOs continue to spread awareness amongst people regarding the legal rights they have in hand for fighting against the atrocities they are subjected to. They are encouraging more and more people to report any case of domestic violence so that proper action may be taken against the culprits.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence may occur at the micro level, affecting one family at a time, but it is also a macro problem, calling for interventions at all levels of social work practice. Yes, social workers are involved in providing services to those directly involved in violent families, but we also must be working at the community level and on policies that will create a society that is less tolerant of domestic violence. The prevalence of domestic violence mandates that social workers must develop adequate knowledge and skills to respond to domestic violence, regardless of practice setting, in order to respond appropriately to situations related to domestic violence.

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