

Psychological Effects of Domestic Violence on Women and its Solution in Islamic Perspective



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Abstract

In recent years, domestic violence against women is becoming a widespread. It is seen in various situations and even in different forms or manifestations. Domestic violence or the domestic abuse involves physical, emotional as well as sexual abuse in couple relationships. Women are the most common victims of this domestic violence because their intimate partners are inclined to control and rule over them. Domestic violence s at a greater risk of certain mental health or psychological problems including depression, anxiety, suicidal attempts, lack of confidence, stress and psychotic symptoms. The study has figured out the solutions to the problem as to curb the violent behavior. The Holy Qur'an and the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (saw) has stressed the importance of sympathy towards women. Abusive behavior is also forbidden as it challenges the goals of Islamic jurisprudence – more specifically the preservation of life, and Qur'anic injunctions of justice and caring treatment. It is highlighted that with the teachings of Islam, our nation can reduce the effects of violent behavior and can even get rid of it.

1. Domestic Violence

According to Advice-giver¹, the violence against women is a widespread. This phenomenon is appearing in various situations and even in different forms or manifestations. The most prevalent form is domestic violence or intimate partner violence throughout the world. During last three decades, this general concern of growing domestic violence is noticed to be increasing. According to WHO, 30% of all women in a relationship are experiencing domestic violence by their partners, and almost 38% of the women are abused.

1.1 What is Domestic Violence?

A researcher² has defined domestic violence as:

“Domestic violence is physical, sexual, and psychological abuse between people who live together or are in a relationship, usually done by a man against his sex partner (called intimate partner violence)”. More specifically:

1. The victim is a woman mostly
2. The outcomes include injuries, psychological issues or problems, social/communal isolation, lack of job, financial problems, and even death
3. Domestic violence is usually based on injuries, inconsistent symptoms, as well as the abrupt behavior of the victim
4. The victim has a plan of escape which is the most important factor

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The domestic violence has variety of occurrences i.e. between parents and the children, children and the grandparents, between siblings, and between intimate partners.

It is occurring among people of all races, cultures, orientations, income levels, occupations, educational systems, religions and ages. It is notified in research that³ the domestic violence is labeled with various other names like wife abuse, woman battery, marital assault, spouse abuse, wife beating, marital violence, battering, intimate violence, and partner abuse. Violence at domestic level causes death, serious injuries, and medical as well as mental health problems for the victims, their children, perpetrators, and various others. Domestic violence⁴ is commonly committed by males against female partner. This violence is occurring in all fragments of society. It has devastating effects on the families, their children, and in fact the whole community.

1.2 Types of Domestic Violence

It is stated⁵ that domestic violence has become a very serious and influential social problem. It has been divided into various forms.

1. **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse is an obvious form of violence. It includes hitting, kicking, slapping, breaking bones, punching, pushing, pulling hair, twisting arms, slamming, choking, beating, suffocating as well as burning. These types of victim are deprived of food and sleep. Weapons like knife is used to threaten and to cause injury.
2. **Sexual Assault:** Sexual assault is too common: 33 to 50% of females physically assaulted by their intimate partner. Sexual assault comprises of use of threats or forcing to pressurize sexual contact. It also involves unwanted touching, kissing, grabbing and rape.
3. **Psychological Abuse:** Psychological abuse is also a common form and it usually accompanies a physical or a sexual abuse. It involves any type of non-physical behavior that may undermine and belittles the victims and that empowers the perpetrator in controlling the victim. Psychological abuse further includes:
 - a. Abusive language
 - b. Social isolation
 - c. Financial control

1.3 The Perpetrator

The perpetrator is seen to use the language which demeans, degrades, humiliates, intimidates as well as threatens the victim either in private or in public. Perpetrator causes victim to think that her concept of reality is wrong, and she should feel guilty for herself, in fact blaming her for this abusive relationship with his partner. Perpetrator also humiliates in terms of sexual performance, and physical appearance, or both.

The perpetrator tries to isolate the victim by controlling her access to family, friends, relatives, and all other people in her life. This prevalent control includes forbidding contact with people, directly and through any piece of writing, use of telephone, texting, or through the social media. The perpetrator also uses jealousy in order to justify his actions. Perpetrator might isolate her by convincing that her family members and her friends should not help her. Perpetrator suppresses money in controlling the victim. She may depend on perpetrator for money that is the usual case

in Pakistan. He may also control by preventing her from doing job, by keeping important information about finances secret, as well as by taking money from her. Weiss (2004)⁶ tells that although in some cases the women are well-educated, and few have been to high schools and they belong to wealthy families but still these women witness terrifying family violence exerted by their partners. Dutton (2011)⁷ describe that personality disorder is the major cause behind the violent behavior of perpetrator. This disorder is defined as “self-reproducing dysfunctional patterns of interaction”. Abusive personality is another reason which is defined as the tendency to blame, attach anxiety and sustain regretful outburst.

According to one research⁸, perpetrator has three categories:

1. *Typical batterer*: He commits less severe abuse. The violence is confined within the house having significant impact mentally.
 2. *Antisocial batterer*: He is violent and abusive within his intimate relationship. He can be violent outside his home.
 3. *Sociopathic batterer*: He is the one who commits high level of violence within or outside the house. He is involved in crimes as well having no feelings of remorse.
2. Psychological Effects:

If a woman experiences assault, she might feel various emotions i.e. fear, anger, confusion, or even being emotionless and not feeling anything. Long-term psychological violent effects include:

2.1 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This may be caused by experiencing trauma or through any shocking and scary experience like sexual assault or abuse. Females can be startled, feel tensed, may feel difficulty in sleeping, and having angry outbursts. They might have trouble in remembering certain things and having negative thoughts about themselves.

2.2 Depression

Depression is another very serious illness. The symptoms vary from slight to severe and include:

1. Feeling sad or to have depressed mood
2. Lack of interest
3. Change in appetite, weight loss and gain in weight
4. Lack of sleeping and also may cause too much sleeping
5. Continuous fatigue
6. Increase in irrational physical activity, slowed movements as well as speech
7. Feeling valueless
8. Difficulty in thinking positive, loss of concentrating and unable to take decisions
9. Focus on death or suicide

2.3 Anxiety

It can be general form of worry about anything or everything, but it can also be a sudden attack of strong fear. It can get worse as the time passes and may also interfere with daily lives.

1. Other important outcomes can include shutting people out, not wanting to do things that women once enjoyed, lack of trust, and low esteem.

2. Most of the women have experienced violence relating to trauma by the help of drugs, alcohol, smoking, as well as overeating. These elements may make them feel better for a while, but it ends up with making them feel even worse in long-term. World Health Organization⁹ has reported different psychological effects on women.

2.4 Suicide

For those women who are sexually assaulted or beaten, their emotional, mental and physical strain may lead to attempt suicide. These types of deaths are dramatic testimony to lack of options in escaping from forceful relationships.

2.5 Mental Health Problems

Abused women bear psychological suffering due to violence. Many of the victims are harshly depressed and anxious, while other victims show various symptoms of the post-traumatic stress disorder. They may also be frequently fatigued, but they are unable to sleep. The victims may have nightmares and eating disorders. They may also turn to the use of alcohol and may take drugs to cope with their pain. The victims become isolated as well as withdrawn.

2.6 Abusive Relationship

The abusive relationship¹⁰ includes an imbalance of control and power. An abuser practices threatening, unkind words and actions in order to control his partner. One might experience violence with someone who:

1. Calls names, insults or puts her down
2. Discourages from doing job and meeting friends and family
3. Controls how to spend money, where to go and what to wear
4. Feels jealous and possessive
5. Gets annoyed if drinks alcohol or takes drugs
6. Threatens with weapon
7. Forces for sexual acts against the will
8. Blames all the time

2.7 Isolation

The abuser isolates the victim as to enforce control. Isolation can result from going to a new country where victim might not speak a dominant language, may also dress in a different way, and should live far from supportive friends and family. This isolation enables women vulnerable to companionship, loss of self-esteem, and having no support in need¹¹.

2.8 Some Long Term and Short-Term Effects

The immediate impacts include:

1. Physical injuries like cuts, bruises, fractures and dislocated bones
2. Loss of Hearing
3. Loss of Vision
4. Miscarriage and immature delivery
5. Sexually transmitted diseases
6. Wounds using weapons
7. Homicide

Some of the long-term impacts include:

1. Gastro-intestinal sicknesses linked with stress

2. Headache or Migraine
3. Backache
4. Fainting and Seizures
5. Eating disorders
6. Sleep instabilities
7. Homelessness
8. Suicide
3. Islam's Perspective on Domestic Violence

What Islam says about domestic violence is drawn from Qur'an, Sunnah and the historical legal verdicts (fatwas). Qur'an and Sunnah clearly illustrate relationship among spouses. It is written in Qur'an that this relationship is totally based on tranquility, love, sympathy, protection, praise, peace, kind-heartedness, ease, justice and mercy. The Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SAWW) has set examples of great marital relationship in his own life. It is clearer prophetic saying about the responsibility of a husband towards his wife than his response when asked:

عن حكيم بن معاوية القشيري عن أبيه قال : (قُلْتُ : يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ! مَا حَقُّ
زَوْجَةِ أَحَدِنَا عَلَيْهِ ؟ قَالَ : أَنْ تُطْعِمَهَا إِذَا طَعِمْتَ ، وَتَكْسُوَهَا إِذَا اكْتَسَيْتَ ، أَوْ
اِكْتَسَيْتَ ، وَلَا تَضْرِبَ الْوَجْهَ ، وَلَا تُقَبِّحَ ، وَلَا تَهْجُرُ إِلَّا فِي الْبَيْتِ)⁽¹²⁾

Mu'awiyah asked: Messenger of Allah, what is the right of the wife of one of us over him? He replied: That you should give her food when you eat, clothe her when you clothe yourself, do not strike her on the face, do not revile her or separate yourself from her except in the house.

The Prophet (saw) has stressed the importance of sympathy towards women. Abusive behavior is also forbidden as it challenges the goals of Islamic jurisprudence – more specifically the preservation of life, and Qur'anic injunctions of justice and caring treatment. In Islam, the domestic violence is viewed under the idea of harm as prescribed in Islamic law. It embraces the husband's failure in providing financial support (nafaqa), longer absence of husband from his home, husband's incapability in fulfilling sexual needs of his wife, and mistreatment of her family members.

3.1 Qiwamah

Qiwamah of men over women¹³ states that actually means the responsibility of men in supporting and protecting her financially. This has been defined in 2:228 which translates to:

﴿ وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ ﴾⁽¹⁴⁾

And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them, according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them.”

This beating, mentioned in above verse, was proposed to transform harsh treatment of women resulted in numerous cases to the physical injury as well as to murder in process of rehabilitating the males' behavior toward the specific women. Else, beating is forbidden, harmful and always wrong.

3.2 Zawjiya (Pairing)

Zawjiya establishes equality and cooperation:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ (15)

O mankind! Reverence your guardian-Lord, who created you from a single soul. Created, of like nature, its mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women—fear God, through whom you demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (that bore you), for God ever watches over you”

3.3 Wilayah (Protectors of each other)

The Holy Qur'an explains relationship among men and women as partners (awliya') of one another for establishing a strong family and fair society. The idea of wilayah has been defined in Surat Al-Tawbah and also practiced by Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (P.B.U.H)¹⁶.

The Qur'an speaks in chapter 9, verse 71:

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾ (17)

"Men and women are protectors of one another: They enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil, they observe regular prayers, practice regular charity and obey Allah and his messenger on them will Allah pour his mercy for Allah is exalted in power, wise."

3.4 Beating is forbidden

The Prophet (P.B.U.H) addressed:

﴿بِمَ يَضْرِبُ أَحَدُكُمْ امْرَأَتَهُ ضَرْبَ الْفَحْلِ أَوْ الْعَبْدِ ثُمَّ لَعَلَّه يُعَانِقُهَا﴾ (18)

How does one of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then embrace her?"

When women informed the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) that they were beaten by their husbands, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) addressed:

" لَا تَضْرِبُوا إِمَاءَ اللَّهِ . فَجَاءَ عُمَرُ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ . فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ قَدْ ذَرَى النِّسَاءَ عَلَى أَرْوَاجِهِنَّ فَأُمِرَ بِضَرْبِهِنَّ . فَضْرِبْنَ فَطَافَ بِآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ ﷺ . طَانِفُ نِسَاءٍ كَثِيرٍ فَلَمَّا أَصْبَحَ قَالَ " لَقَدْ طَافَ اللَّيْلَةَ بِآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ سَبْعُونَ امْرَأَةً كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ تَشْتَكِي زَوْجَهَا فَلَا تَحْدُونَ أَوْلِيكَ خِيَارِكُمْ " (19)

Do not beat the female slaves of Allah.' Then 'Umar came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, the woman has become bold towards their husbands? So, order the beating of them,' and they were beaten. Then many women went around

to the family of Muhammad, the next day he said: 'Last night seventy women came to the family of Muhammad, each woman complaining about her husband. You will not find that those are the best of you.

In Qur'an Allah says

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ﴾⁽²⁰⁾

“Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition”

After serving the Holy Prophet (saw) for ten years, Anas ibn Malik (RA) described that the Holy Prophet (SAWW) had never beaten any woman and never slaved with his hand.

3.5 Men are the Protectors

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ
أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ
فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاصْرَبُوهُنَّ فَإِن أَطَعْنَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا⁽²¹⁾

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah gave them more to the one than the other, and because they support them from their means. So devout women are extremely careful and attentive in guarding what cannot be seen in that which Allah is extremely careful and attentive in guarding. Concerning women who's rebellious (nushooz) you fear, admonish them, then refuse to share their beds, then hit them; but if they become obedient, do not seem means of annoyance against them. For Allah is Most High, Great.”

This means that men have the responsibility of financially as well as physically protecting their wives because Allah has made men stronger than women physically. Women should also be careful in defending their loyalty and morality when no one could see them in obedience to Allah Almighty²².

3.6 Pleasing your wife

A sincere Muslim must always understand that pleasing wife is a notion of faith and he earns the pleasures of ALLAH whereas dealing with his wife unjustly would earn ALLAH's anger.

﴿وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا
كَثِيرًا﴾⁽²³⁾

“Live with them in kindness; even if you dislike them, perhaps you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good”.

It is dictated through research²⁴ that men are the protectors, guardians and the

maintainers of women. ALLAH has made each other to excel the other because they spend their means.

3.7 The Holy Prophet's methodology for ending abuse of women

The Holy Prophet (SAWW) had taken following measures in order to end violence against women:

1. **Holy Prophet (SAWW) fought against the abusive behavior using words and deeds:** Holy Prophet (SAWW) used sermons repeatedly to direct men in stopping abusive and violent behaviors towards women.
 - a. Holy Prophet (SAWW) called an emergency meeting of community, once, as to address the prevalent issue of husbands beating their wives.
 - b. Holy Prophet (SAWW) banned sexual exploitation as well as harassment of women, and also stalking of women.
 - c. Women could pursue justice and apply for divorce against her violent husband.
 - d. Instituted punishment based on law.
 - e. Holy Prophet (SAWW) also prohibited husbands from stopping their wives from attending masjid.
2. **Holy Prophet (SAWW) empowered women:** The Quran acknowledged that women have their own rights that are similar to men.
 - a. Holy Prophet (SAWW) established rights of women to inheritance while stating that they were not indebted to utilize their wealth in assisting their husbands as to cover expenses.
 - b. Holy Qur'an ordered that women should also be consulted in affairs, either personal or home based.
3. **Marriage reform:** The Holy Prophet (SAWW) banned abusive forms of marriage in the pre-Islamic Arabia.
 - a. Holy Prophet (SAWW) forbade pre-Islamic trends of men having too many wives. Hence, the number was reduced to four and the condition was applied it should only be practiced when the male could ensure equality in treating his wives. Else, the male could marry only one female.
 - b. Holy Prophet (SAWW) addressed that marriage without bride's consent is invalid.
4. **Preaching good behavior:** The Holy Prophet (SAWW) elevated status of motherhood by asserting that the "Paradise is under the feet of mothers". He instructed to serve mothers merits three times more reward than fathers.
 - a. Holy Prophet (SAWW) instructed that a man who does not prefer sons over daughters would be with him in Paradise.
 - b. Holy Prophet (SAWW) last sermon also reminded to fear ALLAH by being just and fair towards women²⁵.

3.8 What Muslim families and communities should do to prevent violence?

Following actions must be taken to avoid domestic violence:

1. Educate the community members from religious and the psychological perspectives regarding the importance and advantages of safe homes
2. Stop justifying domestic violence which is called injustice "zulm' in Islam
3. Educate as well as train the partners in having proper communication among them. They should have an attitude towards dealing with disagreements, problems and harms

4. Provide thoughtful and intimate counseling services to all those who are violent, similarly to the victims of domestic violence, as permitted in Islamic law
5. Give resources in order to establish alternative homes for victims instead of allowing them to go on streets and to the non-Muslim agencies²⁶.
6. In order to remain appropriate to human experience²⁷, the legal rulings should adapt to the varying social norms while keeping in view core Qur'anic principles of mercy as well as justice. To eliminate domestic violence, the time has come religious scholars for prohibiting following the literalist explanations of the Islamic texts. They should endeavor novel interpretations that must be based on conventional methodologies.
7. The words of Holy Qur'an imply movement: religious life. It informs us that it is important to make our lives, society as well as the entire world a better place to live for everyone. It is important to read and understand Qur'an from variety of perspectives, and to conduct a cultural analysis. As a result Muslims should drawing contemporary lessons from Holy Text²⁸.

4. Conclusion

The Muslim leaders and community must take key steps that Islam and Holy Prophet (SAWW) took in order to end domestic violence. Best notable among these are as follows:

1. Acknowledging the presence of this violent problem whenever an abused woman brings it forward.
2. Ending silence on this issue through discussions in systematic Khutbas and Halaqas.
3. Calling an emergency meeting as our Holy Prophet (SAWW) did.
4. Making sure that women have access to the services of Imams and Masjid.
5. Making a faithful connection. Launching that a male who is inclined to beat his wife is clearly violating Islamic teachings.

Endnotes

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