



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## IMPACTS OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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### Abstract

Domestic violence is not a new term to us. It's one of the hideous practices which roots from gender inequality and lack of education. It has some severe effects on both the sufferer and the one who is witnessing it. The research was conducted with an aim to evaluate the impacts of witnessing domestic violence especially on children and teenagers. For the research, data from 25 previous years studies was taken. All of these taken studies were from recent times i.e. (from year 2010-2016). These studies were thoroughly analysed and studied. The findings showed that there are some significant effects of witnessing domestic violence on physical, mental and emotional levels. Especially on children, the major impact was post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It can impact their belief systems as well and can completely corrupt it.

**Key words: Domestic violence, post-traumatic stress disorder, gender inequality, belief systems**

### Introduction

The time is changing, with it the universe is moving faster towards modernisation. Every day we see that there are new inventions or new amendments of various laws globally. The subjects could be any such as gender equality, safety of women, hygiene and many more. Over the past few decades all of us are working to make the society better and safe place. Still after all these efforts and hard work there are a number of anti-social practices which are rooted in people.

Likewise, in all these years status of women has gone through a lot of changes, it evolved but unfortunately a very little number of women are able to enjoy this change of dignity, respect and freedom. Else even in this modern era women are suffering with the curse of male dominated society. Different ways are encountered by the males to harm the women both verbally and physically hence, shattering the mental, physical, and psychological health. Domestic violence is one of the ugly truths of the society. Even after strict laws and implementation of the laws the cases have a increased over the period of time.

A united nation study showed that every year there are approximately 30,000 deaths due to this domestic violence worldwide. These are just the cases which are said to be reported there are a lot of cases which go unreported daily. Especially in the country, like India which falls under the category of male dominated society consciously or unconsciously there is a stereotype that males are superior that the females. Although, it's changing but still in one way or the other at one place or the other women have to face various challenges every day.

If we specifically talk about the major anti-social practice of domestic violence then, it is still widely practised. It is painful for the sufferer; it is very well known and it harms badly the dignity of the person. But there are some serious effects of it one the person who is witnessing it. Generally, it is children who witness this inhuman domain. We often don't pay attention to the sudden changing behaviour or any other psychological effects. Witnessing any violent act can have many serious implications of the individual's

mental, physical and spiritual state. If the witness is not a minor then it may lead to post traumatic stress disorder or depression or a number of mental health related issues. And in case of children it becomes a lot more dangerous and it is generally associated with mental trauma, feelings of isolation and fear, it may lead to adjustments in the later life and problems in internalising and externalising the behaviours. Other than that, as mentioned above it comes with the risk of being indulging into similar antisocial behaviours or activities such as substance abuse in adulthood. In many cases it may lead to depression and post-traumatic stress disorder as well even in children. So, this research is conducted to examine the effects of witnessing domestic violence. Now, this research will be followed by reviews of literature on the above-mentioned subject.

### **Sample and Data Collection**

The data was collected from 25 previous years studies out of which 11 studies were from the year 2010, 9 studies were from the year 2011, 1-1 studies from year 2012 and 2013 respectively, 2 studies were from the year 2015 and 1 study was from year 2016. All of these studies were taken to investigate the impacts of witnessing domestic violence. The studies were thoroughly studied.

### **Review of literature/ Theoretical Framework**

Kimball (2016) conducted a research to investigate the effects of exposure to domestic abuse on children. 46 articles were reviewed on the basis of 4 themes including concussion, cumulative effects of several violent acts, measures showing child's resilience and father-child relation. The outcomes showed positive associations in exposure to domestic violence and significant behaviour changes.

Erika; et.al (2015) conducted a research to investigate the linkages between an upbringing in domestically violent family and risk of indulging into violent activities with partners in adulthood. A sample of 124 studies were analysed. Results showed that there is a significant relation between the two and especially males are more indulge into it than females.

Feroz, Jami & Masood (2015) conducted a research to investigate the linkages between witnessing domestic abuse and aggressive behaviour in teenagers. A population of 310 students was taken. The tools used were socially desirable scale, childhood exposure to domestic violence scale, aggression questionnaire. The findings tell about a positive association between the two.

Covey, Menard & Franzese (2013) conducted a research to investigate the linkage between exposure to domestic violence and economic status in adults. Longitudinal self-report data from national youth survey family study was analysed. Three factors were studied- marital statuses, knowledge, financial status. The results showed that these two are linked.

Tomoda; et.al (2012) conducted a research to examine the effect of between being a witness of domestic abuse in childhood on gray matter volume. A sample of 52 young adults (22 in experimental group and 30 in control group) was taken. The tool used was voxel-based morphometry and free surfer. The findings showed a positive result between the two.

Winkle & Safer (2011) conducted a research to examine the effects of exposure to trauma on levels of post-traumatic stress disorder. A sample of 376 soldiers was taken. The method was interviewing. The outcome showed even after many years of exposure to trauma still there is a significant increase in the level of stress after each violent act exposure.

Lepistö, Luukkaala, & Paavilainen (2011) conducted a research to examine the linkage between exposure of domestic abuse and family associations. A sample of 1393 students was taken. The method used was survey. The results showed that there is a positive relation between exposure to domestic violence and family associations including self-perception of health and life satisfaction.

Choi; et.al (2011) conducted a research to investigate the associations between exposure to domestic violence and WMT dysfunction. A sample of 49 subjects (22 experimental group and 27 control group) was taken. The method used was diffusion tensor imaging and the tool used was 3T Siemens trio. The outcomes showed a positive relation between the two.

Kulkarni; et.al (2011) conducted a research to investigate whether witnessing of domestic violence is linked with PTSD while controlling for additional trauma experience. A sample of pregnant women was taken. The results showed that both experience of child abuse and exposure to domestic violence can lead to lifetime PTSD, but not alone witnessing.

Richards (2011) conducted a research to investigate the association between exposure to domestic violence and being indulge in violent activities. Psychological and behavioural implications Were assessed of the selected subjects. The findings showed significant relation between the two.

Howell (2011) conducted a research to investigate the association between exposure to domestic violence and risks of being a misfit. This research tests the psychological functioning and hiding or expressing emotions and PTSD. The sample was taken from pre-school children. Both positive and negative impacts were seen positive were that these children were discovered the capacity to recover quickly and dysfunctional emotional regulation.

Bayarri, Ezpeleta & Granero (2011) conducted a research to investigate the linkages between experiencing an act of home violence and children functional impairment, compared on the basis of gender and age. A sample of 166 children was taken. The method of assessment was interviewing. The findings showed that there was significant relation between the two in boys in terms of mood disorders.

Flach; et.al (2011) conducted a research to examine the effects of domestic violence on Pregnant mother's mental health and behavioural changes in children. A sample of 617 children with mother's was taken. The method of systematic analysis via observation was done for 33 months. The results showed significant behaviour changes in children.

Anderson & Bang (2011) conducted a research to examine the linkages between witnessing domestic violence during childhood and potential risk of PTSD in later life. The study was conducted on women. The method of calculation of data used was t-test. The outcomes pointed out a significant relation between the two, however the intensity may differ.

Russell, springer & Greenfield (2010) conducted a research to investigate the linkage between being a witness of domestic violence during childhood and depression. A sample of 1,175 young adults was taken. The method used was interview. The findings indicate that there a positive relation between the two.

Moylan; et.al (2010) conducted a research to investigate the effects of witnessing domestic abuse during early life stages on internalising and externalising behaviours. A sample of 457 young adults was taken. The method used was prospective study. The outcome showed a positive relation between the two, although intensity differs in males and females.

Sousa; et.al (2010) conducted a research to investigate the associations between witnessing domestic violence during childhood and antisocial behaviour in teenagers also levels of attachments with family. The method used was significant analysis of selected individuals. The results showed that the children exposed to both domestic abuse and child abuse showed lesser attachment with family whereas children exposed to one of them are normally attached to family hence, weakening risk of antisocial behaviour.

Salami (2010) conducted a research to investigate the association of witnessing of violence and PTSD and resilience, self-esteem and social support. A sample of 280 teenagers was taken. The method of data analysis was hierarchical multiple regression. The outcome showed a positive correlation between the two.

Mrug & Windle (2010) conducted a research to investigate the consequences of exposure to any violence including domestic and opening up issues in adolescence. A sample of 630 adolescents was taken. A longitudinal study was conducted (2 assessments). The results showed a significant relation between the two. It does effect on internalising and externalising outcomes.

Black, Sussman & Unger (2010) conducted a research to investigate the relationship between exposure to domestic violence during childhood and violent behaviour in adulthood. A sample 223 students was taken. The method used was multivariate linear regression analysis. The results showed positive relation between the two.

Graham-Bermann & Perkins (2010) conducted a research to examine the effects of being exposed to domestic violence on later life adjustments. A sample of 190 students was taken. They were witnessing violence for approximately 10 years. They were observed. The results showed a positive relation between the two. Moreover, it was seen that the children were facing problems in opening up.

Roberts; et.al (2010) conducted a research to investigate the linkages between being a witness of domestic abuse during childhood and risk of indulging into criminal activities in later phases of life. A sample of 14,564 adults was taken. The method used was survey. The findings showed that there is a positive correlation between the two.

Kennedy; et.al (2010) conducted a research to investigate the association between exposure to domestic violence (social support) and depression. A sample of 100 student was taken. A longitudinal study was conducted for 2 years. The findings showed that there was a significant relation between the two.

Huang, wang & Warrener (2010) conducted a research to investigate the consequences of witnessing a domestic violence on child's mental health and expressing emotions. Structural equation modelings. The outcomes show that witnessing domestic violence had significant implications on child's mental health and expression of emotions in specific ages.

Becker, Stuewig & Laura (2010) conducted a study to check the links between experienced to home violence in past and it's after effects in later life in the form of PTSD. A sample of 373 women (193-experimental group and 170-control group) was taken. The method used was interview. The results showed a significant relation between the two.

## Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the effects of witnessing abuse in family or domestic violence. For this specific study as such no specific population was taken but instead the effects were studied considering all the generations, gender, race and categories.

To examine the effects of domestic violence 25 literature reviews were analysed. The findings showed that there can be several significant effects of witnessing family or domestic violence on each member of the family but majorly it effects the one who is sufferer. Although, the one who is witnessing such kind of inhuman behaviour can have major issues of anxiety, fear, behavioural changes, depression even. But the most significant is post-traumatic stress disorder.

The study confirms that generally children are the sufferers, when it comes to witnessing a domestic violence. And all these above literature reviews proves that children during their early stages of life if witness these kind of antisocial practices then it leads to certain physical, mental, and emotional changes including depression in later life, change in gray matter volume, difficulties in internalising and externalising of behaviour especially during adolescence and early adulthood, dysfunctional family associations, post-traumatic stress disorder in later life or in adolescence as well, white matter tract integrity dysfunction, antisocial behaviour among teenagers, detachment from family, raise in levels of aggression in later life, toughness in father-child relations, self-esteem, personality issues, difficulties in later life adjustments which may lead to economic implications as well, increasing risk of indulging in criminal and violent activities, functional impairment, mental health issues and also this increases the major risk of indulging into same antisocial behaviour with their partners as well.

So, all these are the impacts of witnessing domestic violence, these are to name a few but there may be other potential implications as well. Hence, the study concludes that this is a curse to mankind and leads to serious damage at both personal and professional level for both the sufferer and the witness. This needs to targeted from roots so that we will be able to make the society a better place.

## Conclusion

In a nutshell, we can say that not even just the physical victims of domestic violence suffer but the ones who are witnessing such an abuse also suffers knowingly or unknowingly. This kind of ill practices leaves a dark and painful stain on the soul of individuals which may haunt them forever and torcher them mentally and emotionally. So, these practices need to be stop and people should think and take actions to make life an enjoyable experience.

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