



Domestic Violence: An Ill Wind That Blows no Good. (Assessing Domestic Violence on the Psychology of the Female Gender)

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Abstract: *This article studies domestic violence, and how it affects the lives of women in general and psychologically. Majority or greater percentage of women all over world are victims of domestic violence and abuse. According to the Oxford languages dictionary, Violence is defined as a behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something. The world health organization also defined violence as 'the intentional use of physical force, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or derivation. Women, from research conducted, are the main victims of domestic violence. Violence against women occurs mostly within the family circle and this leaves the woman handicapped to sometimes speak up and seek for justice and redress. It is worthy of note that domestic violence against the women is widely recognized now as a serious human right abuse, and an important public health problem with substantial consequences physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health. The purpose of this article therefore, is to assess and examine the extent of domestic violence against women and its attendant psychological effects.*

Key Words: *Domestic Violence, Abuse, Psychological effects.*

I. INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE?

Domestic violence can be defined as violence committed by someone in the victim's domestic circle, especially in the home, it includes physical, verbal, economic, and social abuse. In domestic violence, the offender normally uses power to control and instill fear in the victim. When the term domestic violence is used, it means that there is a close relationship between the offender and the victim, it can be a husband, son, relatives, etc that are involved in this abuse and creates fear in their victims and sometimes inflicts bodily harm. Domestic violence allows the offender to play the god in the life of his victim and this results in kicking, beating, and sometimes dictating how she lives her life. The Victims of this domestic violence are subjected to physical assault, psychological abuse, social abuse, financial abuse, or sexual assault. Domestic violence can either be intentional or unintentional. When the abuse is intentional, the superior because of his power over the inferior unleashes an attack on the inferior at will and subjects her to untold suffering and pain, it can be said to be unintentional when the abuser is under the influence of drug or alcohol. Alcohol when abused and taken in an inappropriate portion is said to have a great influence on reducing one's sense of responsibility and thus make one engage in risky behavior which includes domestic violence.

Domestic violence is used by abusers to gain, maintain power and ultimately control and intimidate a weaker partner. This pattern of forceful and terrorizing control enables one (superior) to exercise unrestricted authority over another (inferior) that is helpless and can hardly retaliate. Abusers dominate and have their way over their victims using threats. Physical and sexual violence, emotional insults, and economic deprivation. The violence also includes manipulation, humiliation, terrorizing, injury, or wounds which is inflicted during physical assaults/beatings. Domestic violence is not limited to any particular race or religion as it is universal and can occur in relationships of both married and unmarried, dating, etc. It affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. Domestic Violence leads to bodily injury, separation among married couples, illness, mental disorders, and sometimes death of the victim.

2. RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

Violence especially domestic violence is not what can be pre-empted or known, it is preeminent to recognize and know the danger signs to look out for in a relationship to know if any of the partners is abusive and prone to violence and to avoid being a victim of this deadly vice. Domestic violence is not peculiar to one sign or pattern as it takes different shapes, forms, and patterns. It is, therefore, essential that one is able to dictate the indicators of this abuse to enable one to walk away or call off any relationships that have any of these signs and symptoms.

- When your partner does not respect your views and shuts you down, even when you have a valuable idea or input concerning a matter at hand.
- When you are not given a free hand to pursue your dreams and visions
- When you must seek approval before you carry out any project of your choice
- If you are being abused before you tie the knot or walk down the aisle and you are optimistic that he will change after marriage. (NOTE: If your partner hits you before you are legally married, there is nothing that will make him change, so it's better you leave the relationship)
- When your partner chooses your friend and business partners and insists that he becomes your manager. (A case study is the late Nigerian musician, Osinachi Nwachukwu who died on April 8th, 2022 as a result of domestic violence, whom the husband was her manager and never allowed her to book musical programs and concerts without his consent, and if she does, he goes physical on her. This constant beating led to her untimely death.
- When you are unable to speak up and confide in people about what you are passing through and you are also afraid to leave the relationship after a fight
- When you are always covering him up and trying to make excuses on his behalf to people who have noticed his abusive nature.
- Again, when you are sexually pressured and you cannot enjoy sex but you are almost raped.
- Finally, when you are always scared of your partner and cannot dictate his next line of action.

If any of the above signs are noticed in your partner and is happening in your marriage, then know that he is abusive and you are also in an abusive relationship, and as a matter

of urgency, talk to somebody because, without help, the abuse will continue and may lead to untimely death.

3. THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence is not limited to an area, but there are major ways it can be identified and these are: Psychological, physical, sexual, and financial/economic abuse. Psychological: Domestic Violence/abuse may or may not involve physical beatings but it can come through deprivation of basic necessities, verbal attacks, and intimidation which affects the victim psychologically.

Physical: This abuse is the one whereby the victim suffers hurt and bodily injury through beating, hitting, kicking, etc. The Children and properties of the victim are not spared either and the victim of the abuse is not allowed to invite the law enforcement agencies.

Financial or Economic Abuse: This abuse is evident when the victim is financially dependent on the abuser and she is not allowed to establish businesses, or learn a vocation that will fetch her money. She is also denied access to money and education

Sexual abuse: This abuse can be seen when sex is forced by the partner and it can be called rape. Sexual abuse also makes your partner always accuse you of cheating and infidelity and your feelings about sex are disregarded.

The extent and nature of this ugly monster and its effects cannot be overemphasized, as domestic violence threatens the well-being and health of the victim. Although some women are not guilty of being initiators of this abuse it is prevalent in the menfolk, this is because the violence enforced by women is less frequent and has less severe consequences compared to male offenders. The discovery by Straus and Gelles using the National Family Violence Survey shows that the injury rate for women is 6 times higher than for men.¹⁰ 50 percent of women worldwide have been reported to have been physically assaulted by an intimate partner at some time in their lives. Some estimates suggest that as many as one-third of all women are victims of domestic violence during their lifetime. Four million women each year are assaulted by a domestic partner. For those aged from 18 to 59 around one in four women and one in eight men reported experiencing partner abuse in the year 2008 to 2009. Because of this domestic violence, women are always in a high-risk period, especially during pregnancy as the abuse comes from an intimate partner, and this abuse and violence is the leading cause of maternal mortality in the UK, USA, and Australia. Another research by Jasinski and Kantor also shows that there is a risk period for the outbreak of violence against women in intimate partner relationships. Another period that is especially dangerous for women is at the end of the relationship because their partners become threatened by a clear indication of a change or loss in the relationship. A common pattern of domestic abuse, especially this between intimate partners, is that the perpetrator alternates between violent, abusive, and apologetic behavior with apparently heartfelt promises to change and that the abuser could be very pleasant most of the time.

4. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL WOUNDS

The obvious signs of domestic abuse are that the abused is broken, bruised, battered, and dead. This is the case of Late Nigerian popular gospel artist, Sister Osinachi Nwachukwu who is reported to have died from internal wounds from domestic violence. According to reports, she has suffered untold suffering, battering, and humiliation from her husband, sources also report she cannot do anything on her own and will always tell people to 'please beg my husband' to enable her to feature in musical projects and studio recordings. She suffered this for years without opening up until she met her untimely death at the age of 42 on April 8th, 2022. No one deserves to be abused and it has been observed that mostly the person abused is always innocent, kind-hearted, and most times helpless. It is imperative, however, that just as physical injuries demand our care and attention, that psychological and emotional wounds suffered from these traumatic events also get addressed and handled properly.

The American Psychological Association (APA) explains that psychological trauma is "an emotional response to a terrible event ..." which interferes with an individual's ability to function as he or she would under normal circumstances. While the psychological impact of a particular incident varies from person to person, most individuals experience increased levels of emotional distress after going through traumatic events. These feelings of distress, humiliation, and abuse are said to subside if adequate support is received from family members, friends, mental health professionals, and other social networks.

Victims of domestic violence are always withdrawn, depressed, stressed, and prone to a posttraumatic stress disorder, drug abuse, and suicide. For women who are celebrities and hold appointments, they tend to hide the abuse meted on them by their partners to avoid being stigmatized or considered a failure in a relationship or marriage, however, the situation is not always so clear-cut. Fear of retaliation from the abusive partner might prevent victims from seeking needed assistance. Feelings of shame and embarrassment can also be a major hindrance to seeking out services or aid. This lack of emotional support can lead to heightened fear, anxiety, depression, anger, posttraumatic stress, anger, social withdrawal, the use of illicit drugs, alcohol dependence, and even suicidal ideation.

Emotional and Psychological abuse can also have severe short- and long-term effects. This type can affect both physical and mental health, and you may experience feelings of confusion, anxiety, shame, guilt, frequent crying, and powerlessness.

It is clear that the psychological and emotional wounds of domestic violence are devastating. They can potentially haunt victims for many years and rob them of the ability to live a rich, full life. These wounds are completely undetectable by x-rays and too often go untreated.

5. CONCLUSION

Domestic violence against women is a global issue and more than half of women experience domestic violence from their husbands or intimate partner in their homes. If you are a victim of domestic violence/abuse, don't be hesitant to seek help, tell your friends and family. don't be ashamed or feel that you will be labeled a failure in your relationship. The problem has a direct relationship with different sociodemographic characteristics of the victim as well as the perpetrator. There is no justifiable reason for wife-beating or domestic violence. Therefore, it is recommended that the government policymakers, program planners, and other concerned bodies (non-governmental organizations) establish an appropriate strategy to prevent and control violence against women. Prevent wife-beating in the community by integrating

programs on domestic violence with health extension programs. It is better to come out alive in a relationship and be labeled a failure than to die and your family starts demanding justice

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