

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL WORK****Pooja Jain**Assistant Professor (IT)  
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Ladnun**Introduction**

Domestic violence or abuse refers to a pattern of coercive behaviour used to establish power and control over a partner in an intimate relationship. The abuse may be physical, sexual, emotional, or economic. Some acts are crimes in most states (such as physical assault, sexual assault, menacing, arson, kidnapping, harassment), while other battering episodes are not illegal (such as name-calling, denying access to the family automobile, control of financial resources).

Social workers have been working with victims of domestic violence for years in the courts, the emergency rooms, and shelters. Domestic violence does not discriminate, it happens in every racial and ethnic community, as well as in every socioeconomic group. It seems incomprehensible that battered women stay in abusive relationships, however, many women are often held captive by their own sense of powerlessness and the overwhelming sole responsibility for the marriage and their children. The fear that if they leave they will have to care for themselves and their children alone creates feelings of depression and despair.

Assistance to battered women must take the form of a continuum of services to improve their economic and psychological independence. Social workers should be in the habit of screening for domestic violence and provide a plan to protect the victim's safety. Research has shown that the prevalence and the health, social and economic costs of domestic violence require the attention of early identification and intervention.

**What Are the Causes of Domestic Violence?**

Domestic violence is a learned behaviour. Historically, violence against women and children has largely been ignored or condoned by society. Common myths about the causes of domestic violence include the following:

**•Myth: Alcohol or drug problems are the cause**

Although abusers may also have drug or alcohol problems, there is no causal relationship between the two. They are separate problems and each must be addressed independently.

**•Myth: Temporary anger and loss of control are the cause**

The abuser may or may not be angry prior to the use of physical force or other coercion. Domestic violence is an established pattern of power and control exercised by the abuser to maintain dominance.

**•Myth: Problems in the relationship and/or the victim's behaviour are the cause**

The abuser may attempt to use relationship issues or behaviour of the victim as an excuse for his violence, but the issue is his behaviour. This is why couples counseling, communications workshops or marriage enrichment programs are not effective in ending abuse; they may actually increase the danger to the partner being abused.

- Stress
- Economic hardship, such as prolonged unemployment
- Depression
- Desperation
- Jealousy

