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## **Domestic Violence in India during lockdown**

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- **Domestic Violence in India**
- **Causes of domestic violence**
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## **Abstract**

Domestic violence is a word used in many nations to refer to violence between intimate partners, but it also includes child and elder abuse, as well as abuse by any household member. While women do not confront domestic violence on their own, they are subjected to high rates of violence and abuse, particularly from perpetrators who are known to them. According to the World Health Organization, one out of every three women experiences physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives, and at least 30% of all women in partnerships have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from their partners. The rise in violence against women requires immediate action, including measures included into economic support and stimulus packages that reflect the depth and scope of the problem and the needs of women who confront many types of discrimination. For COVID-19, the Secretary-General has urged all countries to prioritise the prevention and redress of violence against women in their national response plans.

## **Introduction**

In India, the phenomenon of domestic violence against women is complex and pervasive. Women face abuse not only from their spouses, but also from family members in both their natal and marital homes. In India, girls and women are typically less affluent than boys in terms of familial and societal status, as well as access to material resources. Control over a woman's sexuality and its safe transfer into the hands of husbands who are thought to "possess" their wives continues to be considered as crucial for a girl. A falling sex ratio of 929 women to 1000 males (1991 census) reveals systematic discrimination and mistreatment toward female offspring. There are, however, regional and community differences. Women in the north have less autonomy than their southern counterparts, and have fewer opportunity to exert influence over economic resources (Karve 1965). A limited number of metropolitan upper-class women profit from education, employment, and financial freedom.[1]

Despite regional inequalities in women's status, domestic violence rates are far less variable. Domestic abuse affects people of various ages, backgrounds, and religious affiliations. Domestic violence in India is associated to spousal disparities in educational attainment or marital age, a lack of autonomy within the house, dowry pressure, childhood abuse, unemployment, alcoholism, and poverty (Jejeebhoy 1998; Ahuja 1987; Mahajan and Madhurima 1995).

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Domestic abuse helplines and shelters around the world are reporting an increase in pleas for assistance as more countries report infection and lockdown. Government authorities, women's rights activists, and civil society partners in Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom [2], and the United States [3] have noted an increase in reports of domestic violence during the crisis, as well as a

higher demand for emergency shelter [4,5,6].

Security, health, and financial issues are all increasing the anxiety and pressure that comes with confinement. It also separates women in violent situations from the people and resources who can most aid them. Behind closed doors, the environment is conducive to controlling and violent behaviour. Domestic violence shelters are also at capacity, a service gap exacerbated by the restructuring of centres to increase COVID response, and health systems are overworked.

Domestic abuse was already one of the most serious human rights breaches even before COVID-19. 243 million women and girls (aged 15-49) around the world have been sexually or physically abused by an intimate relationship in the previous 12 months. As the COVID-19 epidemic spreads, this number is anticipated to rise, posing a threat to women's health, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, and ability to participate in and lead the recovery of our societies and economies.

If not addressed, this shadow epidemic will exacerbate COVID-19's economic impact. Previously, the worldwide cost of violence against women was estimated to be at USD 1.5 trillion. As violence rises now and continues in the aftermath of the pandemic, that number can Domestic and other types of violence have historically been under-reported, making response and data collection difficult, with less than 40% of women who experience abuse seeking help or reporting the crime. Less than 10% of women seeking assistance go to the police. Limitations on women's and girls' access to phones and helplines, as well as disrupted public services such as police, judiciary, and social services, make reporting even more difficult only rise.

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Grassroots and women's groups and communities have played an important role in preventing and responding to prior crises, and they need to be vigorously supported in their current frontline position, especially with long-term funding. Helplines, psychosocial support, and online counselling should be expanded, with technology-based solutions like SMS, online tools, and networks being used to reach women who do not have access to phones or the internet. The police and court systems must mobilise to ensure that incidents of violence against women and girls are given top priority, with perpetrators facing no consequences. The commercial sector may help by sharing information, exposing employees to the facts and hazards of domestic abuse, and encouraging constructive behaviours such as sharing care responsibilities at home.

### **Domestic Violence in India**

A crime against women happens every 1.7 minutes in India, according to the National Crime Research Bureau's (NCRB) Crime in India Report 2018, while a woman is subjected to domestic violence every 4.4 minutes. It also placed #1 in the category of violence against women, according to the poll. According to the data, 89,097 incidences of crimes against women were reported in India in 2018, up from 86,001 cases the previous year.

In India, there has been a lot of research on domestic violence. Domestic violence is also linked to a woman's education, employment status, caste, and religion (Garg et al. 2019), the sex of the firstborn child (Weitzman 2019), the husband's alcohol consumption (Ram et al. 2019), dowry (Pallikadavath

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According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) from 2015-16, 30 percent of Indian women aged 15 to 49 have suffered physical assault. According to the survey, an astounding 83 percent of married women who have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse blame their spouses as the primary offenders, followed by abuse from their husbands' moms (56 percent), fathers (33 percent), and brothers (33 percent) (27 percent).[8]

These figures do not include all of the data on violence against women. This is partly due to the prevalence of orthodox societal standards and the stigma that survivors of sexual or domestic abuse face, resulting in incidences of sexual or domestic violence being significantly underreported. Women also feel unsafe approaching the police because they fear that if their partners are jailed, they will be subjected to more abuse once they are released, and that they will be harassed by their in-laws or others in the meanwhile

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### **Causes of domestic violence**

Some important reasons of domestic violence is listed below

- Mental Problem

Women who have been subjected to severe physical violence are more prone to develop mental illnesses. Anxiety, sadness, alcoholism and drug addiction, antisocial personality disorder, and schizophrenia were among the disorders. It's unclear if mentally ill women are more likely to be abused, or whether mistreated women develop mental illness. Nonetheless, it appears that the two bad events are likely to occur simultaneously, resulting in one of the key causes contributing to domestic violence. This was one of the main reason of domestic violence during lockdown.

- Poverty and unemployment

Domestic violence is more likely among people who are struggling financially. 50 percent of homeless women and children are victims of domestic violence. Poor abuse victims frequently lack the financial resources to abandon the situation, which is one of the main reasons for this tendency. They might not be able to afford their own residence or legal counsel. Deception is a common tactic used by abusers to keep their victims poor. To keep a victim reliant on them, an abuser may jeopardise their work chances. Covid also break peoples financially and forcing them towards mental pressure and we can take this one of the main reason of domestic violence mostly during lockdown.

- Education

Education makes a major difference in the rates of causes of family violence all around the world. An improvement in awareness and a woman's capacity to fend off unwelcome sexual advances is linked to each additional year of education. Women who have completed secondary school have a lower risk of domestic abuse. This is because women with higher levels of education are more likely to regard themselves as equals to their abusers and to have the resources to preserve their independence and escape familial violence.

- Young Parents

Parenting a child when he or she is still learning the skills can result in aggression, rage, frustration, and depression are all symptoms of depression.

This could be linked to other issues, such as the fact that young parents are more likely to be single, have financial difficulties, and have lower educational success. [9]

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[9] <https://www.marriage.com/advice/domestic-violence-and-abuse/causes-of-domestic-violence/>

- Retention Behavior in Relationships

The belief that violence may save a marriage is one of the reasons of domestic violence. Many married couples resort to domestic violence because they believe it is the only way to keep their partner. Any threat to the partnership prompts the spouse to create such retention tactics. Although wrong, such activities are intended to maintain the link, whether overtly or implicitly. Such treatment, intimidation, or verbal abuse, on the other hand, leads to the root reasons of domestic violence. As a result, marriage separation or divorce occurs.

- Infidelity Suspicions

Faith and trust are supposed to be the foundations of a married relationship. When trust is questioned in a marriage, though, domestic violence can result. If one partner believes the other is undermining their marriage's purity by cheating on them, violence may ensue. Suspicion of adultery can make a spouse enraged, leading to crime and violence as a result of opportunity.

- Alcoholism

Domestic violence can be caused or exacerbated by the use of alcohol and drugs. Excessive drinking and drug use can both contribute to and contribute to spousal violence. This might evolve to a pattern of abusive behaviour on the side of one partner. Alcoholism can lead to the establishment of patterns, and if not treated early enough, it can lead to the affected partner's persistent urge to maintain and dominate the relationship.[10]

### **Domestic Violence during lockdown**

Domestic violence has escalated globally, fueled by forced stay-at-home restrictions, physical separation, economic uncertainty, and concerns brought on by the epidemic. Domestic violence and intimate partner violence have increased in countries around the world, including China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Tunisia, France, Australia, and others. India, a country notorious for gender-based violence (and, according to popular perception, the fourth worst country for gender equality), is experiencing similar tendencies.

According to past research, violence against women increases during and after natural catastrophes. Rao (2020), for example, looked at intimate partner violence (IPV) and its correlates among Indian women before and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. She discovered that IPV against women increased by 48% from 2005 to 2015, demonstrating how demographically sensitive elements can become IPV risk factors following a disaster (Rao 2020). Another study on Sri Lankan women done during the tsunami yielded similar results (Fisher 2010). Women in tsunami-affected areas were prone to physical and sexual violence, according to Fisher (2010).[11]

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[10] <https://idronline.org/the-link-between-lockdown-covid-19-and-domestic-violence/?gclid>

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Domestic abuse surged globally during the COVID-19, according to early evidence. The limits put in place to stop the virus from spreading resulted in an increase in violence. During COVID-19, for example, frontline practitioners in Australia committed to assisting victims of domestic abuse reported an increase in the incidence and intensity of violence against women (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2020). There was also a rise in the number of new violent occurrences. Around 42% of Australian practitioners reported a rise in women reporting family violence for the first time (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2020). In Europe, Mahase (2020) reported a 60% increase in emergency calls connected to domestic violence against women by intimate relationships. Similarly, Agüero (2020) discovered a 48 percent increase in domestic abuse helpline calls in Peru. Xue et al. (2020) found that tweets suggesting an increase in domestic violence owing to COVID-19 were common while evaluating domestic violence tweets (Xue et al. 2020).[12]

## **Domestic violence in India during COVID 19**

On March 22, 2020, India's Prime Minister announced a one-day statewide lockdown. The lockdown was prolonged for a week, then for 21 days, and finally until May 3rd, 2020, in order to stem the spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 was declared a "notified catastrophe" by India under the Disaster Management Act of 2005. (Sharma et al. 2020). As a result of the pandemic's lengthy lockdown and other social distancing techniques, women were especially vulnerable to domestic violence. Women were fighting a shadow pandemic within their homes (UN Women 2020).

The National Commission of Women (NCW) observed an increase in the number of domestic violence complaints received via email within a few days after the shutdown in India. Because the majority of complaints come from women who write their grievances by mail and may not be able to use the internet, the NCW chairperson feels the true amount is likely to be higher. The NCW received 310 reports of domestic violence and 885 complaints of other forms of violence against women between the beginning of March and April 5th, many of which are domestic in origin, such as bigamy, polygamy, dowry deaths, and dowry harassment.

The number of cases reported is unlikely to reflect the real increase in domestic violence. This is due to the fact that those who are locked up with their abusers may not have access to a phone or the space and time to call for help. The majority of options for seeking aid or physically removing themselves from their conditions are severely limited.[13]

Hines (2007) and Rao (2007) investigated the phenomenon of domestic violence in India during and after disasters (2020). However, there is a scarcity of literature on domestic violence during the lockdown. Furthermore, the lockdown situation is distinct from prior disasters. Almost all of the states were afflicted at the same time by the presence of this virus.

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Being locked in a room with aggressive or manipulative people can result in increasing threats, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, humiliation, intimidation, and dominating behaviour. A lockdown increases the capacity to isolate a person from family and friends, track their travels, and limit access to financial resources, career possibilities, education, and medical treatment. These behaviours frequently have long-term consequences for people and can have a considerable impact on their mental health and well-being.[14]

## **Conclusion**

Domestic abuse must be prioritised when governments begin putting together measures to deal to disasters like COVID-19. In India, the government appears to have ignored the requirement to formally incorporate domestic violence and its mental health consequences into public health preparedness and pandemic response plans.

We need a strong national effort to raise awareness about domestic violence and to emphasise the different ways that complaints may be lodged. To combat COVID-19, national news channels, radio stations, and social media platforms must be deliberately utilised, same to how the government has deployed campaigns calling for physical separation and hand washing.

Citizens must be made aware of the heightened risks of domestic violence, and bystanders and neighbours should be encouraged to interfere if they suspect abuse by knocking on the door or ringing the bell. If they choose to report a case, they should be given the privilege of anonymity.

When people are unable to submit complaints via SMS, mail, or phone calls, critical services such as hospitals, food stores, and medical stores must be asked to assist them in getting the aid they need and, if required, to send their messages to the authorities. In France and Spain, pharmacists are being trained to recognise persons who are being mistreated by using codewords: asking for 'mask 19' is a code for those who are unable to speak openly and who are seeking help.

The role of civil society organisations in delivering help is essential. Hundreds of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are working to give medical aid, legal guidance, counselling, and 24-hour

shelter, among other things. As a result, in order to prevent COVID-19, the government must allow civil society organisations, counsellors, mental health organisations, and other service providers to assist victims of domestic violence.

Reaching out to persons who are experiencing domestic violence and are in distress should be classified as a "essential service" by the government.

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ISSN: 2582-6433



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR LEGAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Open Access, Refereed Journal Multi Disciplinary  
Peer Reviewed 6th Edition

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 7

[www.ijlra.com](http://www.ijlra.com)

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*Megha Middha, Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmanagarh, Sikar*

*Megha Middha, is working as an Assistant Professor of Law in Mody University of Science and Technology, Lakshmanagarh, Sikar (Rajasthan). She has an experience in the teaching of almost 3 years. She has completed her graduation in BBA LL.B (H) from Amity University, Rajasthan (Gold Medalist) and did her post-graduation (LL.M in Business Laws) from NLSIU, Bengaluru. Currently, she is enrolled in a Ph.D. course in the Department of Law at Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur (Rajasthan). She wishes to excel in academics and research and contribute as much as she can to society. Through her interactions with the students, she tries to inculcate a sense of deep thinking power in her students and enlighten and guide them to the fact how they can bring a change to the society*

#### **Dr. Samrat Datta**

*Dr. Samrat Datta Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Samrat Datta is currently associated with Seedling School of Law and Governance, Jaipur National University, Jaipur. Dr. Datta has completed his graduation i.e., B.A.LL.B. from Law College Dehradun, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand. He is an alumnus of KIIT University, Bhubaneswar where he pursued his post-graduation (LL.M.) in Criminal Law and subsequently completed his Ph.D. in Police Law and Information Technology from the Pacific Academy of Higher Education and Research University, Udaipur in 2020. His area of interest and research is Criminal and Police Law. Dr. Datta has a teaching experience of 7 years in various law schools across North India and has held administrative positions like Academic Coordinator, Centre Superintendent for Examinations, Deputy Controller of Examinations, Member of the Proctorial Board*



## Dr. Namita Jain



Head & Associate Professor

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## Mrs.S.Kalpna

Assistant professor of Law

Mrs.S.Kalpna, presently Assistant professor of Law, VelTech Rangarajan Dr. Sagunthala R & D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi. Formerly Assistant professor of Law, Vels University in the year 2019 to 2020, Worked as Guest Faculty, Chennai Dr. Ambedkar Law College, Pudupakkam. Published one book. Published 8 Articles in various reputed Law Journals. Conducted 1 Moot court competition and participated in nearly 80 National and International seminars and webinars conducted on various subjects of Law. Did ML in Criminal Law and Criminal Justice Administration. 10 paper presentations in various National and International seminars. Attended more than 10 FDP programs. Ph.D. in Law pursuing.



## Avinash Kumar



Avinash Kumar has completed his Ph.D. in International Investment Law from the Dept. of Law & Governance, Central University of South Bihar. His research work is on "International Investment Agreement and State's right to regulate Foreign Investment." He qualified UGC-NET and has been selected for the prestigious ICSSR Doctoral Fellowship. He is an alumnus of the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Formerly he has been elected as Students Union President of Law Centre-1, University of Delhi. Moreover, he completed his LL.M. from the University of Delhi (2014-16), dissertation on "Cross-border Merger & Acquisition"; LL.B. from the University of Delhi (2011-14), and B.A. (Hons.) from Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. He has also obtained P.G. Diploma in IPR from the Indian Society of International Law, New Delhi. He has qualified UGC - NET examination and has been awarded ICSSR - Doctoral Fellowship. He has published six-plus articles and presented 9 plus papers in national and international seminars/conferences. He participated in several workshops on research methodology and teaching and learning.

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Authored by-Utkarsh Kumar, Eklesh Kumar,  
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Women who have been subjected to severe physical violence are more prone to develop mental illnesses. Anxiety, sadness, alcoholism and drug addiction, antisocial personality disorder, and schizophrenia were among the disorders. It's unclear if mentally ill women are more likely to be abused, or whether mistreated women develop mental illness. Nonetheless, it appears that the two bad events are likely to occur simultaneously, resulting in one of the key causes contributing to domestic violence. This was one of the main reason of domestic violence during lockdown.

- Poverty and unemployment

Domestic violence is more likely among people who are struggling financially. 50 percent of homeless women and children are victims of domestic violence. Poor abuse victims frequently lack the financial resources to abandon the situation, which is one of the main reasons for this tendency. They might not be able to afford their own residence or legal counsel. Deception is a common tactic used by abusers to keep their victims poor. To keep a victim reliant on them, an abuser may jeopardise their work chances. Covid also break peoples financially and forcing them towards mental pressure and we can take this one of the main reason of domestic violence mostly during lockdown.

- Education

Education makes a major difference in the rates of causes of family violence all around the world. An improvement in awareness and a woman's capacity to fend off unwelcome sexual advances is linked to each additional year of education. Women who have completed secondary school have a lower risk of domestic abuse. This is because women with higher levels of education are more likely to regard themselves as equals to their abusers and to have the resources to preserve their independence and escape familial violence.

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[7] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7945968/>

[8] <https://idronline.org/the-link-between-lockdown-covid-19-and-domestic-violence/?gclid>

[9] <https://www.marriage.com/advice/domestic-violence-and-abuse/causes-of-domestic-violence/>

- Young Parents

Parenting a child when he or she is still learning the skills can result in aggression, rage, frustration, and depression are all symptoms of depression.

This could be linked to other issues, such as the fact that young parents are more likely to be single, have financial difficulties, and have lower educational success. [9]

- Retention Behavior in Relationships

The belief that violence may save a marriage is one of the reasons of domestic violence. Many married couples resort to domestic violence because they believe it is the only way to keep their partner. Any threat to the partnership prompts the spouse to create such retention tactics. Although wrong, such activities are intended to maintain the link, whether overtly or implicitly. Such treatment, intimidation, or verbal abuse, on the other hand, leads to the root reasons of domestic violence. As a result, marriage separation or divorce occurs.

- Infidelity Suspicions

Faith and trust are supposed to be the foundations of a married relationship. When trust is questioned in a marriage, though, domestic violence can result. If one partner believes the other is undermining their marriage's purity by cheating on them, violence may ensue. Suspicion of adultery can make a spouse enraged, leading to crime and violence as a result of opportunity.

- Alcoholism

Domestic violence can be caused or exacerbated by the use of alcohol and drugs. Excessive drinking and drug use can both contribute to and contribute to spousal violence. This might evolve to a pattern of abusive behaviour on the side of one partner. Alcoholism can lead to the establishment of patterns, and if not treated early enough, it can lead to the affected partner's persistent urge to maintain and dominate the relationship.[10]

## **Domestic Violence During Lockdown**

Domestic violence has escalated globally, fueled by forced stay-at-home restrictions, physical separation, economic uncertainty, and concerns brought on by the epidemic. Domestic violence and intimate partner violence have increased in countries around the world, including China, the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Tunisia, France, Australia, and others. India, a country notorious for gender-based violence (and, according to popular perception, the fourth worst country for gender equality), is experiencing similar tendencies.

According to past research, violence against women increases during and after natural catastrophes. Rao (2020), for example, looked at intimate partner violence (IPV) and its correlates among Indian women before and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. She discovered that IPV against women increased by 48% from 2005 to 2015, demonstrating how demographically sensitive elements can become IPV risk factors following a disaster (Rao 2020). Another study on Sri Lankan women done during the tsunami yielded similar results (Fisher 2010). Women in tsunami-affected areas were prone to physical and sexual violence, according to Fisher (2010).[11]

Domestic abuse surged globally during the COVID-19, according to early evidence. The limits put in place to stop the virus from spreading resulted in an increase in violence. During COVID-19, for example, frontline practitioners in Australia committed to assisting victims of domestic abuse reported an increase in the incidence and intensity of violence against women (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2020). There was also a rise in the number of new violent occurrences. Around 42% of Australian practitioners reported a rise in women reporting family violence for the first time (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2020). In Europe, Mahase (2020) reported a 60% increase in emergency calls connected to domestic violence against women by intimate relationships. Similarly, Agüero (2020) discovered a 48 percent increase in domestic abuse helpline calls in Peru. Xue et al. (2020) found that tweets suggesting an increase in domestic violence owing to COVID-19 were common while evaluating domestic violence tweets (Xue et al. 2020).[12]

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[10] <https://idronline.org/the-link-between-lockdown-covid-19-and-domestic-violence/?gclid>

[11] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7945968/>

## **Domestic Violence In India During COVID 19**

On March 22, 2020, India's Prime Minister announced a one-day statewide lockdown. The lockdown was prolonged for a week, then for 21 days, and finally until May 3rd, 2020, in order to stem the spread of COVID-19. COVID-19 was declared a "notified catastrophe" by India under the Disaster Management Act of 2005. (Sharma et al. 2020). As a result of the pandemic's lengthy lockdown and other social distancing techniques, women were especially vulnerable to domestic violence. Women were fighting a shadow pandemic within their homes (UN Women 2020).

The National Commission of Women (NCW) observed an increase in the number of domestic violence complaints received via email within a few days after the shutdown in India. Because the majority of complaints come from women who write their grievances by mail and may not be able to use the internet, the NCW chairperson feels the true amount is likely to be higher. The NCW received 310 reports of domestic violence and 885 complaints of other forms of violence against women between the beginning of March and April 5th, many of which are domestic in origin, such as bigamy, polygamy, dowry deaths, and dowry harassment.

The number of cases reported is unlikely to reflect the real increase in domestic violence. This is due to the fact that those who are locked up with their abusers may not have access to a phone or the space and time to call for help. The majority of options for seeking aid or physically removing themselves from their conditions are severely limited.[13]

Hines (2007) and Rao (2007) investigated the phenomenon of domestic violence in India during and after disasters (2020). However, there is a scarcity of literature on domestic violence during the lockdown. Furthermore, the lockdown situation is distinct from prior disasters. Almost all of the states were afflicted at the same time by the presence of this virus.

Being locked in a room with aggressive or manipulative people can result in increasing threats, physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, humiliation, intimidation, and dominating behaviour. A lockdown increases the capacity to isolate a person from family and friends, track their travels, and limit access to financial resources, career possibilities, education, and medical treatment. These behaviours frequently have long-term consequences for people and can have a considerable impact on their mental health and well-being.[14]

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[12] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7945968/>

[13] <https://idronline.org/the-link-between-lockdown-covid-19-and-domestic-violence/?gclid>

## **Conclusion**

Domestic abuse must be prioritised when governments begin putting together measures to deal to disasters like COVID-19. In India, the government appears to have ignored the requirement to formally incorporate domestic violence and its mental health consequences into public health preparedness and pandemic response plans.

We need a strong national effort to raise awareness about domestic violence and to emphasise the different ways that complaints may be lodged. To combat COVID-19, national news channels, radio stations, and social media platforms must be deliberately utilised, same to how the government has deployed campaigns calling for physical separation and hand washing.

Citizens must be made aware of the heightened risks of domestic violence, and bystanders and neighbours should be encouraged to interfere if they suspect abuse by knocking on the door or ringing the bell. If they choose to report a case, they should be given the privilege of anonymity.

When people are unable to submit complaints via SMS, mail, or phone calls, critical services such as hospitals, food stores, and medical stores must be asked to assist them in getting the aid they need and, if required, to send their messages to the authorities. In France and Spain, pharmacists are being trained to recognise persons who are being mistreated by using codewords: asking for 'mask 19' is a code for those who are unable to speak openly and who are seeking help.

The role of civil society organisations in delivering help is essential. Hundreds of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are working to give medical aid, legal guidance, counselling, and 24-hour shelter, among other things. As a result, in order to prevent COVID-19, the government must allow civil society organisations, counsellors, mental health organisations, and other service providers to assist victims of domestic violence.

Reaching out to persons who are experiencing domestic violence and are in distress should be classified as a "essential service" by the government.

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[14] <https://idronline.org/the-link-between-lockdown-covid-19-and-domestic-violence/?gclid>