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VEPACHEDU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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Mana Sanskriti (Our Culture)

Chief Editor: Dr. Sreenivasarao Vepachedu, Esq.

Culture of Violence and Abuse

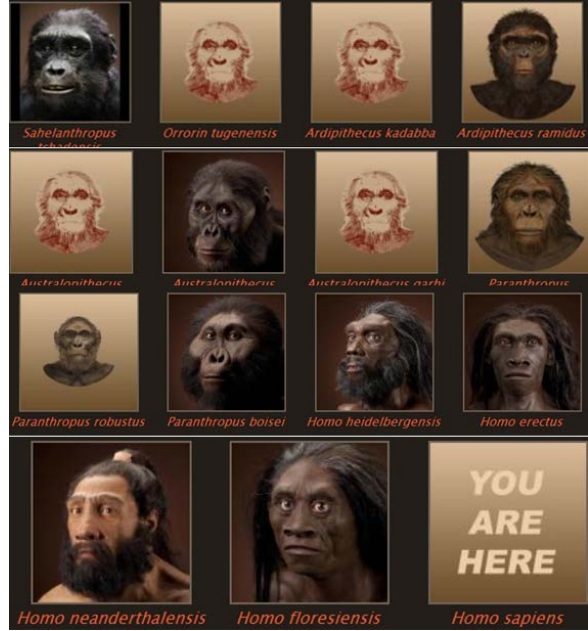
We keep learning, in the hope that the increased knowledge of the unique species Homo sapiens and deeper understanding of influences on its behavior may afford the humanity effective deterrence of oppression and crime, through effective education and behavioral training.

Through studies of fossils, genetics, behavior, and biology of modern humans, we continue to learn more about who we are¹.

In general, human behavior can be traced to underlying belief systems and upbringing.

Everyone has a right to be respected in all aspects of a relationship. However, abuse and violence can occur to anyone from any walk of life, educated or uneducated, rich or poor: men, women, children, and seniors.

One needs good relationships to be a happy, healthy and productive member of the society. However, a good relationship is not a given and automatic for many. It takes a lot of learning and hard work in developing social skills requiring an investment in time and energy.



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The root of violence, domestic or otherwise, is linked to power and control. Partners who are in healthy relationships respond to problems by talking things out together or sometimes by seeking therapy. They do not turn to controlling or abusive behavior. If one senses and feels a bad relationship, there's virtually nothing the victim can do that's more self healing and healing those around than to act to remedy the relationship and if it cannot be fixed, get out of it for good safely - change must come; otherwise the bad relationship destroys both partners and others who dependent on it.

Women have been treated as second class citizens for thousands of years, enabling men to believe that they have authority and domain over women and exercise it. In many countries, laws are based on English common law², Islamic Shariat³, or other European laws⁴, which held that women and children are man's property and women are not equal to men. Sexism makes it easier for men to cross the line of decency, as the choices of the abuser are influenced by a need for control, which may involve male dominance, privilege, entitlement and the historical oppression of women⁵.

Each country has unique gender relations based on cultural, religious, social, economic legal, ethnic and tribal factors; and it is the interaction among these and attitudes toward violence in general, violence toward women, civil conflicts and wars, and the migration within and between countries determine a victim's vulnerability to violence, in general⁶.

However, it is difficult and potentially misleading to make a culture-based argument about the problem of domestic violence that women face across the world today, because it is seen in almost all countries, both developed and under-developed. Domestic violence, in particular, is a serious threat for many women, e.g., one in every four American women and one out of every seven American men have experienced severe physical violence from an intimate partner at some point in their lifetimes⁷, and almost one in ten French women experienced situations of domestic violence during the twelve months preceding the survey, and in more than half of all cases children witness the scenes of violence, and this is even more likely to be the case when the situation is very

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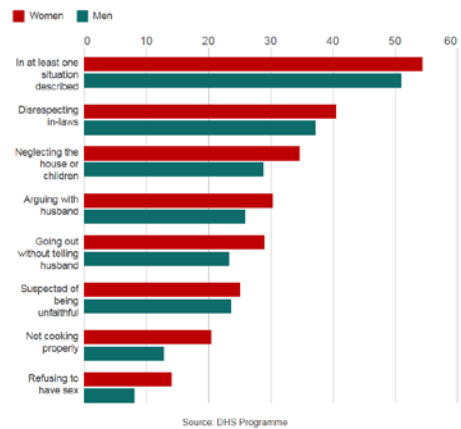
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serious and has been going on for a long time: almost two thirds of women in a very serious situation reported that their children were present when the violence took place.⁸ France is one of 13 countries where 20-29 per cent of women report physical or sexual violence by a partner, the report shows, lower than four with over 30 per cent but higher than 17 others. One European woman out of three is a victim of physical or sexual violence in her life⁹.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is a landmark piece of legislation that sought to improve criminal justice and community-based responses to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking in the United States. The passage of VAWA has changed the landscape for victims who once suffered in silence. Victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking have been able to access services, and a new generation of families and professionals has come to understand that domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking are crimes that our society will not tolerate¹⁰.

Similarly, India introduced laws to protect women from domestic violence, which helped more women to report domestic violence. Due to its sheer continental nature, population size, and the Internet age of 24 hour news streaming, the number of incidents in any given crime are staggering and mind numbing; while the national and international media blast the stories of harassment, the rape of women and governmental incompetence or apathy on a regular basis, across the world, blaming the Indian culture, conveniently forgetting the continental nature and immense diversity and tribal distinctions that exist in the Indian continent. It is reported that about once every five minutes an incident of domestic violence occurs in India today.

Percentage of survey respondents who said domestic violence would be justified in a range of scenarios put to them by researchers.



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The city of Vijayawada in the State of Andhra Pradesh, reported the highest rate of domestic violence cases in the country in 2013. Apparently, more than 54% of men and 51% of women said it was okay for a man to beat his wife if she disrespected her in-laws, neglected her home or children, or even over something as trivial as putting less or more salt in the food¹¹. Spousal violence varies greatly by state and by province. The prevalence of physical or sexual violence ranges from 6 percent in Himachal Pradesh and 13 percent in Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya to 46 percent in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and 59 percent in Bihar. Other states with 40 percent or higher prevalence of spousal physical or sexual violence include Tripura, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Assam¹².

The term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life, according to EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them¹³.

Domestic violence includes verbal and physical violence causing traumatic experiences trapping majority of the abused in relationships that are mentally and physically unhealthy. Victim needs to recognize abuse when it happens, respond to the abuser safely and appropriately, to lead a happier, healthier life. In this problem, victims are the only ones that can help themselves¹⁴, no one else can really help the trapped. There is no rescuer looking for the victim, unless the victim reaches out for help¹⁵.

It may seem inconceivable, but violence and abuse of spouse and children are universal. The monstrosity of it renders it unimaginable, even to the perpetrators. Typical abusers appear friendly, generous, kind and good-natured people, until victim is a subordinate at work, helpless child, or a spouse, when they suddenly transform into monsters and show their teeth¹⁶. The beloved partner may be a person with borderline personality disorder or a strange case of Jekyll and Hyde, who lost control over his transformations¹⁷.

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Therefore, it is easy to overlook or not recognize, especially when the abuse is psychological, rather than physical. Recognizing the signs of an abusive relationship is the first step to ending it. No one should live in fear of the person they love.

Common signs of an abusive relationship¹⁸ are if one or both partners: Prevents contact and communication with friends and family; Controls money and important identification, such as driver's licenses and passports; Causes embarrassment with bad names and put-downs; Critical about survivors appearance and/or behavior; Attempts to control what partner wears; Has unrealistic expectations, like partner being available at all times; Threatens to take away or hurt the children; Acts like abuse is not a big deal, or denies it's happening; Places blame on the victim; Destroys property or threatens to kill pets or self; Intimidates with guns, knives or other weapons; Shoves, slaps, chokes, hits or forces sexual acts; Acts jealous, possessive or accuses unfaithful behavior; and so on¹⁹. It doesn't matter how long a couple has been together, how successful one or both of the partners is or how loving the relationship used to be, domestic violence can happen to anyone and any time. It can span age, sexual orientation, religion and gender, and affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels²⁰. Domestic violence also has a substantial effect on family members, especially children²¹.

Four types of individual partner violence are identified based on the control context of the violence between a pair of individuals: In *intimate terrorism*, the individual is violent and controlling, the partner is not. In *violent resistance*, the individual is violent but not controlling; the partner is the violent and controlling one. In *situational couple violence*, although the individual is violent, neither the individual nor the partner is violent and controlling. In *mutual violent control*, both are violent and controlling²².

National research highlights the importance of overcoming denial of violent behavior and engaging in new ways of thinking and acting. Abusers who had successfully changed their abusive behavior as a result of an intervention program identified the following four processes as critical to their success: recognizing and taking responsibility for past

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abusive behavior; developing empathy for others; accepting full responsibility for changing abusive behavior; and improving communication²³.

The solutions to end domestic violence should include provisions for education and opportunities. Education offered for conflict resolution and anger management, on domestic violence, social outreach, and parenting programs, and community awareness campaigns for the general public would be helpful. A public dialogue may be useful in progressing towards the end of domestic violence; while denial, silence, and shame are roadblocks. By remaining quiet, solutions are not sought to end the abuse and the cycle of violence is perpetuated²⁴.

Where to find help²⁵:

In an emergency, call your local emergency number or law enforcement agency. The following resources also can help:

- Someone you trust. Turn to a friend, loved one, neighbor, co-worker, or religious or spiritual adviser for support.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE (800-799-7233). Call the hotline for crisis intervention and referrals to resources, such as women's shelters.
- Your health care provider. Doctors and nurses will treat injuries and can refer you to safe housing and other local resources.
- A local women's shelter or crisis center. Shelters and crisis centers typically provide 24-hour emergency shelter, as well as advice on legal matters and advocacy and support services.
- A counseling or mental health center. Counseling and support groups for women in abusive relationships are available in most communities.
- A local court. Your district court can help you obtain a restraining order that legally mandates the abuser to stay away from you or face arrest. Local advocates might be available to help guide you through the process.

NO ONE DESERVES TO BE ABUSED

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"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed." - Mahatma Gandhi
Hinduism is a way of life, with diversity of religion, and Indian teachings share the importance of seva (service).

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Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya, Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!

(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality, and peace!)

Notes and References:

¹ Homo sapiens: <http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/human-fossils/species/homo-sapiens>; accessed on 26 January 2015.

² Id.

³ Women Under Islam:

<http://www.clarionproject.org/understanding-islamism/womens-rights-under-sharia>

<http://www.allaboutmuhammad.com/women-under-islam1.html>

<https://sites.google.com/site/islamicscripturesunveiled/Home/woman-subdued>

http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2011/01/islam_a_religion_custom_made_f.html

Islam a Closer Look: <http://islamacloserlook.com/women-in-islam/>

<http://www.billionbibles.org/sharia/sharia-law.html>

<http://www.mwcoalition.org/quotas/id10.html>

Sharia councils have been operating in the UK since the 1980: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10973009/Sharia-courts-ban-would-harm-British-Muslim-women.html>

Indian Women Use Sharia Law to Fight: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/05/06/indian-women-sharia-law-gender-equality_n_5274519.html

⁴ Women's rights: <http://www.franceonu.org/france-at-the-united-nations/thematic-files/human-rights-rule-of-law/women-s-rights/france-at-the-united-nations/thematic-files/human-rights-rule-of-law/women-s-rights/article/women-s-rights#Discrimination-and-violence>

Violence against women in France 'worrying', European report shows: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/europe/20140306-violence-against-women-france-scores-bad-european-average>

Mirror, Mirror, Tell Me Who I Am: Colonial Empire: <http://publicculture.org/articles/view/23/1/mirror-mirror-tell-me-who-i-am-colonial-empire-and-french-identity>;

On January 28, 2015, the Prime Minister of Australia, Tony Abbott, announced the establishment of a new panel to advise the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) on domestic violence laws:

http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?disp2_l205404297_text

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Japan, Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims:

http://www.japaneselawtranslation.go.jp/law/detail_main?re=02&vm=02&id=113

Some more countries: http://www.loc.gov/lawweb/servlet/lloc_news?browse_topic_Domestic-violence

Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention):

http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default_en.asp

⁵ Id.

⁶ Psychologists around the world have made contributions in research, clinical assessment, and intervention and prevention of domestic violence: <http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/amp/54/1/21/>

⁷ Intimate Partner Violence for Men and Women in the US (2012):

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0749379702005147>; "IPV victimization was defined as physical, sexual, or psychological abuse by an intimate partner (defined as a current or former spouse or a cohabiting intimate partner, regardless of gender."

Intimate Partner Violence in the United States (2010): Intimate partner violence (IPV) is associated with unwanted pregnancy, women not using their preferred contraceptive method, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, miscarriages, repeat abortion, a high number of sexual partners, and poor pregnancy outcomes:

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953610001681>

Two broad themes of the 1990s provide the most promising directions for the future. The first is the importance of distinctions among types or contexts of violence. Some distinctions are central to the theoretical and practical understanding of the nature of partner violence, others provide important contexts for developing more sensitive and comprehensive theories, and others may simply force us to question our tendency to generalize carelessly from one context to another. Second, issues of control, although most visible in the feminist literature that focuses on men using violence to control "their" women, also arise in other contexts, calling for more general analyses of the interplay of violence, power, and control in relationships:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00948.x/abstract;jsessionid=D6E0C7481EA3B819A1A24FB1BD38CFB4.f04t01?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>

Intended Function of Domestic Violence Is Different for Arrested Male and Female Perpetrators:

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/abstractdb/AbstractDBDetails.aspx?id=154139>

Domestic Violence among Muslim Indian Americans (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka) in the US:

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1009412119016#page-1>;

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1009403917198#page-1>;

Domestic violence in Southeast Asians (Laotians, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Chinese):

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1300/J015v09n01_08#.VOKD1y4_09w;

The most important factor in these women's lives seemed to be childhood indoctrination into the ideals of "good" wife and mother that include sacrifice of personal freedom and autonomy. Although the majority of women worked as professionals, economic independence did not seem to provide them with a sense of empowerment. Furthermore, they felt responsible for the reputation of their families in India, were eager not to compromise their families' honor with a divorce, and operated under the added pressures of preserving traditions and presenting an "unblemished" image of the community to the U.S. mainstream:

<http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/2/3/238.short>; National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 Summary Report," (2013).

⁸Violence against women: a statistical overview: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/vaw-stat-2005/docs/expert-papers/fougeyrollas.pdf>

⁹ European report: <http://www.english.rfi.fr/europe/20140306-violence-against-women-france-scores-bad-european-average>

¹⁰Violence Against Indian Women: <http://www.tribal-institute.org/lists/vaiw.htm>

Resources: <http://www.indianlaw.org/safewomen/resources>

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¹¹Violence at Home in India: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-29708612>

Violence against women in India is an issue rooted in societal norms: <http://www.freiheit.org/Aktuelle-Berichte/1804c270551p/index.html>

¹²see Chapter 15 in the NFHS-3 final report: <http://www.rchiiips.org/nfhs/nfhs3.shtml>

¹³ EU guidelines on violence against women and the fight against all forms of discrimination against women.

French face jail for psychological abuse of partners: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/feb/26/french-jail-psychological-abuse-partners>

¹⁴ Domestic victims hotline to call: US: <http://www.thehotline.org/>; US & Canada: <http://www.dahmw.org/>; UK: <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/>; AU: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>; India: <http://www.hotpeachpages.net/IE/asia/asia1.html#India>; World: <http://www.hotpeachpages.net/IE/>

¹⁵ Domestic victims hotline to call: US: <http://www.thehotline.org/>; US & Canada: <http://www.dahmw.org/>; UK: <http://www.womensaid.org.uk/>; AU: <https://www.1800respect.org.au/>; India: <http://www.hotpeachpages.net/IE/asia/asia1.html#India>; World: <http://www.hotpeachpages.net/IE/>

¹⁶ Thriller: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOnqjkJTMaA>

¹⁷ One who has quasi-schizophrenic, alternating phases of pleasantness and unpleasantness: <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/d/dr-jeekyll-and-mr-hyde/summary-and-analysis/chapter-1>

¹⁸ Know the Signs: http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/learn/domestic-violence/about-issue/know-signs?gclid=CMvJiKe_58MCFcOGaQod7DwA-w

Often, it can be difficult to identify what types of abuse are and what constitutes each type of abuse. These are some telltale signs of physical, sexual, emotional, economic and psychological abuse:

Physical. any use of force that causes pain or injury such as, hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc.. This type of abuse also includes the use of weapons, denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use upon him or her.

Sexual. Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.

Emotional. Any pattern of behavior that causes emotional pain that can include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, being unfaithful, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children. Perpetrators may also be emotionally neglectful, such as not expressing feelings or respecting the survivor's feelings and opinions.

Economic. Making or attempting to make an individual financially dependent by maintaining total control over financial resources, withholding one's access to money, or forbidding one's attendance at school or employment. Forcing a survivor to use his or her credit to rack up debt is also very common and can present problems in the future when attempting to obtain credit.

Psychological. Elements include—but are not limited to—causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

¹⁹Domestic violence against women: Recognize patterns, seek help: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/domestic-violence/art-20048397>

²⁰ Who Does Domestic Violence Affect? <http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org/learn/domestic-violence/about-issue/who-does-domestic-violence-affect>

²¹ Id.

²² Conflict and Control Gender Symmetry and Asymmetry in Domestic Violence: <http://vaw.sagepub.com/content/12/11/1003.short>
The Personal Sense of Power: <http://mors.haas.berkeley.edu/research/anderson/jopy734.pdf>

²³ An African-American perspective on community and family violence: www.idvaac.org/media/pubs/Grenville-CommInsights.pdf

²⁴ An African-American perspective on community and family violence: www.idvaac.org/media/pubs/Grenville-CommInsights.pdf

²⁵ Where to find help: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-living/adult-health/in-depth/domestic-violence/art-20048397?pg=2>

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Apna Ghar (Our Home) provides holistic services and conducts advocacy across immigrant communities to end gender violence: <http://www.apnaghar.org/>; Office: 773-883-HOME (4663); Email: info@apnaghar.org.
Ford Foundation: <http://www.fordfoundation.org/issues/sexuality-and-reproductive-health-and-rights/protecting-womens-rights>
Self Defense: http://www.ncdsv.org/images/SelfDefenseinfo_LACAAW.pdf

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