

Shifting the focus:

IMPACTS ON WORKPLACES WHEN MEN ENGAGE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

A REPORT FOR THE
INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT
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WOMEN & CHILDREN



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Executive Summary

This report details the impacts of domestic violence (DV) on workplaces in Maharashtra, India and outlines eight core recommendations for employers to create safer workplaces. Research is based on interviews with 116 male workers who were identified by counselling centres and workplace management as having perpetrated violence against their intimate partners.

Results show that when workers perpetrate DV, their workplaces are at increased risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities. Such risks impact workers themselves, their co-workers, customers, and their workplaces. Workers who behave abusively at home are also more likely to have arguments with

co-workers and customers, be late to or absent from work, and experience a general inability to focus. The type of abuse engaged in did not mitigate the impact DV perpetration will have on the perpetrator's workplace - a worker who verbally abuses his partner is as likely to cause an accident at work as one who physically abuses his partner. Overall, the increased risk to workplaces associated with DV perpetration presents a significant liability risk for employers.

The prevalence of different workplace impacts identified across the 116 interviews with perpetrators of domestic violence are outlined in Table 1. below.

Table 1. Impacts of domestic violence on the workplace

Impact on workplace	Prevalence
Accident and injury	16%
Absent or late to work	15%
Working under the influence	5%
Irritability/arguments	28%
Unable to focus	42%

Note: Participants may have disclosed experiencing multiple different impacts (e.g., Injury and irritability).

In this sample of workers, a majority indicated that they verbally abused their partner. Many used physical violence, emotional abuse, and the threat of violence to control their partner's behaviour. Fifty percent of perpetrators admitted to beating, slapping, or otherwise physically abusing their partner, and several shared that they had

contemplated murdering their partner. A majority of interviewees did not recognise their behaviour as "domestic violence" or as unacceptable. Many workers expressed misogynistic attitudes, equated DV with physical violence only, and expressed the popular myth that DV is caused by alcohol abuse.

Eight Core Recommendations

In order to eliminate DV and in eliminating the negative impacts of DV perpetration on the workplace, employers must take action to overcome several barriers, including the underlying myths and misunderstandings related to DV. Employers can lead the way by developing and supporting policies and procedures that create safer workplaces. Training and support for management and workers of all levels can help reduce the occurrence of DV and, in turn, reduce the negative impact DV perpetration has on workplaces.

These eight core recommendations for employers are to:



1. Develop workplace policies and procedures for DV perpetration that include DV workplace risk assessments, reporting procedures, and support for workers who have experienced DV, as per ILO Convention 190.



2. Develop concrete education, awareness raising, and training materials that are accessible to workers and appropriate to their workplace. Materials should:
 - a. Engage with myths and facts around DV.
 - b. Constructively address misogynistic attitudes and beliefs.
 - c. Unpack different types of violence, power, and control.
 - d. Create a supportive atmosphere that constructively engages with workers' experiences.
 - e. Outline workplace policies and procedures related to DV perpetration.
 - f. Outline reporting procedures and workplace/community supports for workers.



3. Support and facilitate the creation of Women's Advocate positions within unionised and non-unionised, formal and informal, work environments, to:
 - a. Support and guide workplace DV policies and procedures
 - b. Participate in risk assessments and safety planning.
 - c. Signpost and provide resources to women experiencing DV.
 - d. Act as a resource on equity issues in the workplace.¹



4. Foster strong leadership on issues of DV in the workplace and proactively engage workers in conversation around issues of DV prevention and intervention, including working with women employees and women's advocates.



5. Provide specialised training to teach workers about DV and its impacts on families and workplaces.



6. Implement progressive discipline policies that engage perpetrators of DV and work with them to change their behaviour in a positive and supportive way, including through mandatory counselling and programmes that teach them about the impact of violence and harassment.



7. Develop a health and safety committee (in larger workplaces) or identify health and safety representatives (in smaller workplaces) that take on a leadership role in education, training, and awareness raising initiatives in workplaces and that work collaboratively with Women's Advocates.



8. Provide and circulate lists of internal and external resources for survivors and perpetrators of DV, including legal, counselling, and safety planning resources, in an accessible and prominently visible location.

1. For more information on the role of Women's Advocates and collective bargaining strategies related to domestic violence and workplace safety, see Unifor's Bargaining a Domestic Violence Policy & Program document here: <https://bit.ly/3wNSEok>

Introduction



Globally, there is a growing body of research on the impact of domestic violence (DV) on workplaces. The majority of this research is focused on impacts for survivors of DV and the responsibility of employers to support and accommodate those who currently are or have previously experienced DV.² It is now clear that when workers are experiencing DV at home, the impacts are also felt in the workplace. Victimization extends into workplaces, impacting the safety and productivity of workers and co-workers, resulting in lost revenue and increased costs to employers.³ Governments, labour movements and unions have worked to address this problem.

The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) *Convention concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work*, C190, recognises that DV can affect employment,

productivity, and health and safety. The Convention also recognises that governments, employers' and workers' organisations, and labour market institutions can help, as part of other measures, to respond to and address the impacts of DV.⁴ This includes the need to incorporate DV-related policies and procedures into collective bargaining discussions.

Unions in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and countries in Europe and Asia Pacific now educate members, stewards and leaders about DV. Argentina, Australia, France, Italy, the Philippines, New Zealand, Spain, some provinces in Canada, and many states in the United States (U.S.), provide legislated DV leave for absence from work. In some countries, such as Canada, employers are now legally required to take steps to ensure a safe workplace for those experiencing DV.⁵

2. MacGregor, J. C., Naeemzadah, N., Oliver, C. L., Javan, T., MacQuarrie, B. J., & Wathen, C. N. 2020. "Women's Experiences of the Intersections of Work and Intimate Partner Violence: A Review of Qualitative Research." *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, Doi. 1524838020933861.
3. MacQuarrie, B., Scott, L. K., Lim, D., Saxton, M. D., MacGregor, J., & Wathen, N. 2019. Understanding Domestic Violence as a Workplace Problem (pp. 93-114). In R. Burke and A. Richardsen (Eds.) *Increasing occupational health and safety in workplaces: Research and practice*. Edward Elgar Publishing, Northampton, MA.
4. International Labour Organization (ILO). 2019. *Convention concerning the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work*. 108th ILC session, 21 June 2019. Geneva: International Labour Organization. https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0:NO:P12100_ILO_CODE:C190.
5. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. N.d. *Violence and Harassment in the Workplace – Family (Domestic) Violence*. Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, Government of Canada. https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/violence_domestic.html.

Drawing on interviews with 116 men working in Maharashtra, India, who were identified as having perpetrated DV, this report unpacks the different forms of violence that perpetrators engage in to demonstrate both the range and impact of these abusive behaviours.

Historically, models for ending DV have focused predominantly on increasing awareness of the impact of DV on victims, developing resources to help potential victims identify when they might be at risk, and ensuring that help is available to facilitate escape from violent relationships. The intersection of DV *perpetration* and the workplace has been far less explored. Expanding focus to workers who perpetrate DV is crucial in broadening the scope of our understanding. As emphasised in movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp, employers and workers downplaying, ignoring, dismissing and ultimately failing to take action against abuse is a way of condoning DV and is itself a part of the problem.

Workers and workplaces need to be able to recognise controlling, degrading, and emotionally or physically abusive behaviors. Workers must have the skills to speak out against these behaviors, highlighting the critical need for programs and policies in workplace that can help prevent abuse and respond to those perpetrating abuse. Moreover, documenting workplace impact and creating responsibilities around dealing with DV victimisation without paying similar attention to the impact and responsibilities of employers around DV perpetration may have unintended negative consequences. Given the gendered patterns of DV, an exclusive focus on victimisation opens the potential for DV to be perceived as a “women’s

issue” that workplaces can avoid by not hiring women. Given the protective value of employment for women against DV and the importance of employment for escaping DV, such unintended consequences would be especially harmful.

The current study was conducted to raise awareness and better understand the intersection of DV perpetration and workplace safety and productivity. Findings will contribute to efforts to inform the training, and prevention and intervention initiatives such as the introduction of women’s advocate programmes and the incorporation of this work into collective bargaining. Drawing on interviews with 116 men working in Maharashtra, India, who were identified as having perpetrated DV, this report unpacks the different forms of violence that perpetrators engage in to demonstrate both the range and impact of these abusive behaviours. The research demonstrates that perpetrators engage in a range of abusive behaviours towards their partners and that the type of abuse engaged in does not mitigate the impact domestic violence perpetration has on the perpetrator’s workplace. The report demonstrates the different ways that engaging in acts of DV negatively impacts the perpetrator’s workplace, with a focus on workplace accidents, absences, arguments with co-workers and customers, and an inability to concentrate that exacerbates these issues.

Methods

The report is a secondary analysis of data originally collected and analyzed by SAMYAK, a communication and resource centre based in India that works on issues of gender, masculinities, health and development. The SAMYAK research and field investigation team designed the research tools and conducted all data collection with local, Marathi-speaking researchers. Interviews were conducted by members of SAMYAK's research team in Marathi across Maharashtra, the country's second-most populous state. Interview locations include Akola, Amravati, Dhule, Jalgaon, Latur, Nasik, Osmanabad, and Yavatmal. Excerpts from 116 interviews with perpetrators of DV were provided by SAMYAK and shared with the CREVAWC research team by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

For the purposes of this study, DV was defined as any form of physical, sexual, verbal, cultural, spiritual, emotional or psychological abuse, including financial control, neglect, stalking and harassment, occurring between past or current intimate partners of the opposite or same sex. Partners may or may not be married, common law, or living together. Male workers who were known to have committed DV against their partners were selected with the help of counselling centers and the supervisors of male workers working at the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). Counsellors and supervisors were the first contacts for the study and acted as gatekeepers in seeking the consent of the participants. Counsellors and supervisors then provided the investigators with a list of respondents who had consented to participate in the study. These respondents were then contacted by the research team to schedule interviews. Written consent was received prior to the interviews taking place.

Preliminary coding and translating of coded segments from Marathi to English was conducted by SAMYAK's research team. This coding identified and categorised participants' responses into the following categories: demographic and basic information about the participant; the participant's family background of the participant; the participant's experiences performing violence against their partner; the participant's knowledge and perceptions performing domestic violence against their partner; the participant's experiences performing domestic violence against their partner; and impact of domestic violence on the participant's workplace.

Using this interview data, the CREVAWC research team analyzed the 116 interviews with a focus on impacts on the workplace of DV perpetration. Data was coded using qualitative and quantitative analysis software MaxQDA Analytics Pro 2020. Two codes, "Impact on Workplace" and "Violence" were created prior to analysis to reflect the goals of the research. Additional codes and sub-codes were then identified and developed during the first round of analysis using a grounded theory approach and verified during a second in-depth review of the interview data which included creating tallies of specific impacts and reviewing coding results with members of the research team. A brief literature review was conducted to compare the research team's results with those of similar studies on the impact of DV in the workplace, including ones conducted in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the U.S. This review confirmed that the research team's findings were in line with international results.

Findings

Domestic violence

Violence

Workers perpetrating domestic violence engaged in a range of abusive behaviours, including perpetrating sexual, verbal, emotional and physical violence against their partners. When asked if they had ever beaten their partners, 50 percent of workers said that they had.

"Yes, I beat her." (Conductor A)

"I have beaten my wife two, three times." (Driver A)

Participants' explanations for perpetrating DV ranged from job-related stress to anger that housework or meal preparation were not completed.

"Once she did not make tiffin...so I fought with her and slapped her." (Driver B)

There was also clear connection between verbal abuse and escalations to physical violence.

"When verbal debate increases to an extent, it gets physical. If one needs to, then they must." (Factory Worker A)

In this instance, violence was understood by the perpetrator as something that he "must" do when a verbal argument has reached a certain threshold, framing it as inevitable and the only solution to resolving the dispute. This link between verbal arguments and an escalation to physical violence was expressed across the majority of interviews. Several men also shared that they had thought about murdering their partner, with one perpetrator saying that, when he believed that his wife was lying to him, he beat her and thought about killing her:

"One of my sons was going to fetch a goat from his aunt. I asked him if he were carrying anything to give [his aunt], he said no. When I checked, I found something in his bag. I came home and asked my wife if she had given her anything. She said no. I asked her almost 3 to 4 times, but she didn't accept. Then I get angry and beat her. She lied. I was thinking to kill her." (Labourer A)

Other forms of violence that perpetrators described included verbal abuse and emotional and psychological abuse, such as beating their children and blaming their spouse for the beatings or threatening violence.

"If she feels I am angry she avoids talking, and if she insists, then I just remind her of previous incidences [of violence]." (Depot Manager A)

When asked if they had ever beaten their partners, 50 percent of workers said that they had.

Coercive control and controlling behaviour

Coercive control is defined here as an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim. **Controlling behaviour** is defined here as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate to and/or dependent on their abuser by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour⁶ (CPS, 2017). Perpetrators of DV engaged in a wide range of coercive and controlling behaviours, frequently using violence and threats of violence to control their partner, children or other family members to limited their freedoms.

The following indicators of psychological abuse and coercive control were identified in multiple interviews:

- Perpetrators telling their partners not to talk to their parents or family members.
- Perpetrators ‘throwing out’ or banishing their partners to their maternal home.
- Perpetrators limiting their partner’s access to communicate, including taking away their phones.
- Perpetrators using parents or in-laws as a means of external pressure to control behaviour.
- Perpetrators controlling and harming their children and blaming their partner for it, as well as saying that the mother’s behaviour is damaging their children.
- Perpetrators using fear, violence and threats of violence to control their partner’s lifestyle, clothes, behaviour, ability to leave the house.
- Perpetrators verbally abusing their partners during arguments, including “Using slang” (Driver D, Driver E).
- Perpetrators engaging in or threatening to engage in self-harm.
- Sexual violence.

The connection between the perpetrator’s desire for control over their partner and the use of threats and physical violence to achieve this control is demonstrated by this worker, who did not want his wife to speak with her parents:

“Once my wife and I had a debate and she called her parents. I told her to not call but she didn’t listen, so I slapped her.” (Computer Operator A)

Many perpetrators viewed the abuse they inflicted as beneficial and necessary, perpetrated in both love and anger. Explaining his method of domestic abuse, one perpetrator shared that:

“Yes, she should be controlled. But with love... [If] she does not understand by words, then only raise hand. Little bit beat her too. And after beating, should explain with love and in anger should beat her also.” (Assistant A)

This perpetrator also “slapped” his wife when he found her watching television and blamed her for the “stress” that beating her caused him. He also shared that the “stress” of domestic disputes caused him to lose focus and make mistakes when replacing tires on vehicles at his work.

6. Crown Prosecution Service. 2017. “Controlling or Coercive Behaviour in an Intimate or Family Relationships.” Legal Guidance, Domestic Abuse. 30 June 2017. United Kingdom: Crown Copyright. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-intimate-or-family-relationship>

Workers who perpetrate DV also shared extensive lists of the behaviours and duties they expect their spouse to achieve each day, demonstrating the all-encompassing nature of the control they wish to achieve. In the words of one perpetrator:

“Before I return home from work, she has to be in the house. The lamp should be lit in front of God. When the husband comes home, she should give him tea. If she didn’t do it and gives some excuse, then I get angry and then I beat her. I beat her when she is wrong. If I come to the home and see the door is locked and my wife [has gone] somewhere to watch TV, it is not acceptable to me.” (Labourer A)

Children are also used as a means of control, with perpetrators blaming their partners for a child’s mistake and/or yelling and being physically violent towards both their partners and their children.

“I was shouting at my little child; he was quite naughty, and she was loving him, so I slapped her.” (Driver A)

While physical violence may be the most easily recognised form of DV, the research found that it is often perpetrated in combination with other forms of violence and is just one of many tools of abuse.

Table 2. Domestic violence prevalence

Physical abuse	Prevalence
Beating/slapping partner	50%
Violence towards children	3%
Verbal abuse	
Threats, emotional abuse, psychological abuse, and/or derogatory language is used to harm spouse	92%
Coercive control	
Controlling lifestyle and activities	37%
Throwing out spouse	6%
Threatening violence to spouse or self-harm	9%
Threatening children, using children to harm spouse, saying spouse’s actions harm her children	11%
Parental/in-law pressure	5%

Some participants refused to answer questions or acknowledge they had ever perpetrated domestic violence, despite being selected for the study by persons who knew of their history of domestic violence perpetration. As such, the actual prevalence of particular forms of violence may be higher than is reported in this table. Some participants also perpetrated multiple forms of domestic violence (e.g., physical abuse and emotional abuse).

Impacts on the workplace

Accidents and injuries

Our findings demonstrate that domestic violence perpetration has a significant impact on perpetrators' ability to safely perform their work duties, putting customers, co-workers, and the perpetrator themselves at risk of serious injury or death and creating risks for business and employer accountability.

Sixteen percent of perpetrators shared that the violence they engaged in had directly contributed to accidents that caused injury to themselves and/or others at work. One participant that physically abused his wife shared that after fighting with his wife:

"I can't focus at work. Once I had an accident while there were passengers on board. Me and passenger got injured in that accident." (Auto Rickshaw Driver A)

Another participant shared that if his wife "commits mistake, then I do beat her" (Driver F). After physically abusing his wife, the participant said he is more likely to have an accident at work:

"Once I went to work after a conflict with wife, I was lost while driving and the tire exploded. Not only the vehicle got damaged but since tire exploded in the middle of Ghat [valley] it could have been a very serious accident. I am lucky that my life was saved...Accidents happened many times, twice it happened in the same month due to this tension." (Driver F)

These participants identified a direct link between the DV they engaged in and their increased risk of accidents at work. Significantly, all types of DV perpetration were related to increased risk of workplace accidents. As demonstrated by this participant who verbally abused his wife, an increased risk of workplace accidents and injuries is present irrespective of the violence being verbal, psychological, physical or sexual:

"If I do verbal abuse... I am not able to concentrate on work. Once we had conflict about tiffin, so while cutting sugarcane I had thought of it in my mind and injury happened." (Farmer A)

Absent or late for work

Fifteen percent of workers indicated that they had been absent or late to work because of engaging in DV perpetration. In some cases, this absence was a direct result of recognising their increased risk of causing and/or experiencing workplace accidents or injuries following DV perpetration. As one participant shared:

"Sometimes due to stress, drivers get lost in their own thoughts, and this can happen while driving bus. What we can do if this happens on road. When people are so stressed, they should avoid going to work. Leaving home after fighting and then driving, can lead accident." (Driver G)

Another stated that:

"When there is a fight at home I don't go to office as my job is risky and accidents can happen..." (Driver H)

15 percent of workers indicated that they had been absent or late to work because of engaging in DV perpetration.

Working under the influence of alcohol

A popular myth is that DV is caused by alcohol abuse. This belief was expressed by most perpetrators interviewed. When asked about causes of DV, perpetrators shared that it is something engaged in by alcoholics and/or men who drink too much, despite many of them going on to share they themselves were sober when they abused their spouses. While some men shared that they only abuse their spouse while under the influence of alcohol, the majority did not mention alcohol in connection with the abuse they inflicted. This is in line with previous research.

“Although some abusers are more prone to being violent when drunk, many more abuse when completely sober. Alcohol and drugs may increase the violence, but they do not cause it. Alcohol and drug abuse are separate issues from domestic abuse, though they may overlap. Blaming chemical dependency for abuse misses the point that the abuser is responsible for their actions.”⁷

In connection with both accidents at work and workplace absences, some participants shared that they consume alcohol during or following the perpetration of DV. This consumption impacts the workplace in several overlapping ways, including increasing the risk of workplace accidents, the worker being late to or absent from work, reduced productivity, an inability to focus, and arguments with coworkers and/or customers.

Five percent of participants shared that they had consumed alcohol prior to, during and/or after engaging in DV and that this directly impacted their work. One participant who physically abused his wife shared that due to the tension that resulted from his violence he:

“...had drinks at 1:30pm in afternoon. And had accident with another vehicle.” (Driver I)

Some participants demonstrated an awareness of the violence they commit and their use of alcohol in relation to DV but stopped short of recognising the potential impacts of their insobriety on their workplace. When asked about the impact of his violence on his work, a participant that admitted to regularly “beating” his wife responded with:

“I get drunk and go to work so it doesn’t matter.” (Driver J)

Arguments with co-workers and customers

A significant number of men (28 percent) indicated that their perpetration of DV makes them tense, irritable and more likely to engage in arguments with their co-workers and/or customers, with some characterising this as “inevitable” (Railway Keyman A). These arguments and irritability have a negative impact on the overall work environment of the perpetrator and their co-workers, as well as the experiences of customers and other clients.

As one participant shared:

“I argue with people (passengers) many times. I try to make people understand but sometime due to conflict at home I argue with passengers.” (Conductor B)

Another participant shared that, after engaging in DV:

“... at work the tone in which I speak to the passengers changes and is very irritable, more so at night. After conflict at home, if a person is driving at night, it will definitely have a consequence.” (Conductor C)

7. Toronto Employment & Social Services. 2012. Domestic Violence Initiative: Myths & Facts. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/937b-EE1b-Myths-and-Facts-FINAL.pdf>.



In some cases, a perpetrator's irritability leads to a cascade of negative workplace interactions, impacting senior staff, co-workers, customers and the perpetrator themselves. This participant, who psychologically and verbally abused his wife, demonstrated this effect when he stated that:

"If the officer gives different duty, then workers like me end up fighting with manager. The real cause of fight is the unaddressed anger from the fight with [my] wife and leaving home without food, but it comes out in a different aggressive way at work. Then, obviously, manager gets angry, because his ego gets hurt and then he gives charge sheet and punishment or abuse workers in public. This makes us (workers/ drivers) further angry, and we sometimes take it out on passengers." (Conductor C)

Here, the worker's anger and irritability from the DV he perpetrated leads to negative engagements with a manager at work, which leads to an escalation of conflict and irritability in the workplace that impacts the overall environment and all those within it.

Inability to focus

Almost half of participant (42 percent) indicated that engaging in DV negatively impacts their ability to focus on their work, with consequential increases in workplace accidents, mistakes that impact the finances of both the worker and the company, and a reduction in productivity.

Participants described this inability to focus as resulting in forgetting aspects of their job ("...forget my work, important notices", Junior College Lecturer A), not being able to perform their job to their usual level ("I can't teach my students properly", Assistant Professor A) and being unable to achieve work quotas ("...difficulty in concentrating on work, giving a required work output", Chief Principal Machinist A).

An inability to focus can also have a severe impact on the health and safety of workers and their customers. Several participants described their inability to focus as increasing the risk of fatal workplace accidents ("...it can cause any mistake and end up in fatal accidents", Labourer B), particularly in workplaces where driving and/or working with heavy machinery is a component of the job.

The following quote indicates the dramatic reduction in performance and productivity that workers can experience following the perpetration of DV:

"I forgot things whichever are planned. Suppose I have to complete 10 assignments in a day, I only complete 2 of them... I could not complete the task." (Project Manager A)

Many workers reported their salary being reduced as a result of their poorer work performance and conflicts with coworkers. One participant shared that following a reduction in his work performance he:

"...got a memo, faced no-pay leaves, cut off in salary payment which resulted in lot of irritation" (Traffic Controller A).

The negative salary impacts exacerbate a cycle of violence wherein financial strain increases work- and home-related stresses, further increasing the risk of DV perpetration, and the impact of perpetrating DV then further reduces workplace performance.

"Due to stress, one cannot concentrate on work and then due to work there is violence at home. It is all connected. [Because of] the conflict at home you cannot focus at work, then salary gets deducted and it is very difficult to focus." (Conductor A)

Table 3. shows the prevalence of different impacts of DV perpetration on the workplace. Some perpetrators declined to answer questions related to the impact of DV on their work, so the actual prevalence of some impacts may be higher than reported.

Table 3. Prevalence of different impacts of domestic violence perpetration on the workplace

Impact on workplace	Prevalence	Number
Accident and injury	16%	19
Absent or late to work	15%	17
Working under the influence	5%	6
Irritability/arguments	28%	33
Unable to focus	42%	49

Note: Participants may have disclosed experiencing multiple different impacts (e.g., injury and irritability).

These workplace impacts can lead to the perpetrator being sent home from work early, forced to take time off or losing their employment, resulting in them losing some or all of their income and potentially facing additional disciplinary measures. All of these factors were identified as increasing the risk of DV occurring when the perpetrator returns home, and fail to address the root causes of either the DV itself or its impact on the workplace.



Barriers to addressing domestic violence

Poor recognition of domestic violence

A significant barrier to addressing and eliminating domestic violence, and thereby improving worker's focus, efficiency and reducing the risk of workplace accidents, is that most perpetrators do not recognise their behaviour as violent and unacceptable, do not recognise the link between physical violence and other forms of abuse, and do not recognise and/or act on the negative ways that their perpetration of violence impacts their workplace. Instead, perpetrators frequently minimise, dismiss or attempt to normalise and justify their behaviour, despite its obvious negative impacts on work and home.

Physical violence, one of the only forms of abuse recognised as violence by participants, was viewed by perpetrators as an escalation that results from conflicts not being successfully resolved verbally and was framed as an acceptable escalation of or aberration from normal verbal conflict. In the words of one participant:

"Even if I beat her sometimes, it is not so serious. We mostly have verbal arguments." (Depot Manager A)

Demonstrating the escalation from verbal to physical, as well as his minimisation of the violence he perpetrates, one participant shared that he and his wife have:

"Mostly verbal arguments, if exceed then I just slap her. No more than that." (Datta Krupa Bags A)

Some perpetrators also denied that the physical abuse they engage in is violence. As one driver said while describing if, when, and why he hits his wife:

"Yes, sometimes. The child is crying so there are issues. The husband gets troubled if the child continues crying, then the wife should be hit... but this is not violence." (Driver K)

Another perpetrator who admitted to frequently beating his wife shared his belief that, because it was for the “benefit” of his children, it did not count as violence:

“I can not specify the reasons as every time there will be different reason. Suppose the children are not doing well then, we will blame the mother (wife) for that wrong behaviour of children. We beat children as well as their mother for it. And this is violence but at that time even I don't feel it is violence.” (Project Manager A)

In addition to denying that their abuse was truly “violence”, perpetrators generally did not acknowledge their responsibility for their own actions and blamed their spouses for the violence they inflicted on them. For example, as one medical officer shared:

“I have slapped her twice. The situation in which I did this was created by her. For that I still feel bad but I was not responsible alone for the situation, she was also responsible for it. She did many things that she should not have done, hence I lost my patience.” (Medical Officer)

Misogynistic attitudes and beliefs were also pronounced with many perpetrators convinced that reports of DV and violence against women in the news were fake and that the courts were biased against men. As one perpetrator shared:

“In today's day and age, men committing violence are stories from the past. These are all fake cases. In family disputes no such things happen and cases of violence are false cases... [Women] do this to show off their own independence.” (Bus Driver A)

Believing that violence is a result of women asserting their independence and that reports of DV in the media are all “fake cases” prevents perpetrators from recognising their own actions as harmful and constituting DV. This means that, on their own, perpetrators are unlikely to change their behaviour or recognise the negative impact their actions have on themselves, their families, and their workplaces.

Lack of clear and consistent workplace response

When asked about workplace support or if they have disclosed their domestic abuse to friends or co-workers, perpetrators gave mixed responses. Many expressed the belief that their workplace was not receptive to talk about home, and so they tried to avoid discussing or thinking about their home life at work. Others shared that they had disclosed information about domestic disputes to their co-workers, managers or supervisors and had received a range of responses, with some being shut down and told not to talk about it and others receiving feedback that validated their own beliefs regarding the acceptability of DV.

Many workers also expressed frustration that their supervisors and management “don't care” about them, which was framed as contributing to their “work stress” that feeds into their anger towards their partner. One worker, who shared that he used to beat his wife but no longer did, noted that one of his co-workers beats his wife “every day” and that he and his fellow co-workers “tried explaining to him, don't do this” (Mechanic A), but that it was not effective.

Men's responses to questions about workplace disclosure show that conversations about DV are happening in the workplace, albeit informally, and that there is both room and a need for deeper engagement, education and training related to these issues.

Workers are also looking for and in need of support. When asked, the majority of workers said that they would benefit from access to workplace counselling supports where they can discuss and work through what they characterised as “stress” related to both home and work. It is important to note that, in order to intervene, prevent and reduce DV and its impacts on the workplace, DV must be unpacked and taken out from under the umbrella of “stress”. Lumping DV, its perpetration and workplace stressors together as equal and uniform allows violence to be normalised, minimised and prevents then recognition of its root causes, ultimately impeding our ability to disrupt cycles of violence and provide appropriate supports to all involved.

Key findings and recommendations

Workplaces are important places for domestic violence intervention and prevention. Results of this study show that in order to create safer workplaces, it will be necessary to address how violence is misunderstood, rationalised and dismissed, while also educating employers on how the range of violence employees perpetrate at home directly impacts their behaviour and actions while at work.

This requires understanding the ways that different forms of violence – verbal, physical or psychological – and coercive control intersect, and to create support for workers and management to educate workers about violence and its impact on both their homes and workplaces.

Recognising and addressing fundamental myths and facts about DV needs to be a core component of any efforts. Interviews completed for this study suggest that education must include specific messages that address the following:

- Most perpetrators inaccurately equate domestic violence with severe physical beating. It is therefore necessary to provide education that DV has many forms, including physical, sexual, verbal, cultural, spiritual, emotional and psychological abuse, financial control, neglect, stalking and harassment. Non-physical forms of abuse cannot be discounted as being less severe, less important to address or less harmful to victim-survivors. Educational tools, such as the Power and Control Wheel (see Figure. 1) can be helpful guides for unpacking and understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violence behaviours that constitute DV.
- Most perpetrators do not recognise their behaviour as “domestic violence” or unacceptable. Perpetrators do not recognise the link between physical violence and other forms of abuse and are likely to describe DV as merely stress, conflict, arguments and domestic disputes. The high levels of normalisation and minimisation of DV perpetration allow perpetrators to continue believing that their behaviour is acceptable and reduces possibilities for change. Therefore, education and training must address the differences between healthy discussions and respectful disagreements and DV.
- Many perpetrators of abuse express misogynistic attitudes and beliefs and deny the prevalence of DV. Many perpetrators were convinced that reports of DV and violence against women in the news are fake and demonstrate a societal bias against men. Education and training must address the sociocultural factors that reinforce these attitudes and beliefs. This must focus on the ways that misogynistic attitudes harm both men and women, while also providing evidence-based materials on the prevalence of DV to cut through the myths.
- Many perpetrators believe the popular myth that domestic violence is caused by alcohol abuse. Education and training materials must highlight that alcohol and drugs may increase the risk of violence, but that they do not cause it. As evidenced in these interviews, DV is commonly perpetrated by persons that are not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Materials should focus on the responsibility of the perpetrator for their actions.

- The type of abuse engaged in does not mitigate the impact that perpetrating DV will have on the perpetrator’s workplace. This demonstrates the need to have a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of DV that is not limited to physical violence that result in visible injury or homicide, as workplaces are negatively impacted irrespective of the type of DV that is perpetrated. This means that verbal, psychological and sexual violence must be recognised as violence, and that eliminating their perpetration is as important as eliminating physical abuse, acknowledging that these forms of violence are often engaged in simultaneously.
- When providing workplace support, we must unpack the use of the term “stress” from DV. Many perpetrators described their problems as “stress” related to both home and work. It is important to note that, in order to intervene, prevent and reduce DV and its impacts on the workplace, DV must be unpacked and taken out from under the umbrella of “stress”. Lumping DV, its perpetration and workplace stressors together as equal and uniform allows violence to be normalised and minimised, preventing recognition of its root causes and impeding our ability to disrupt cycles of violence and provide appropriate supports to all involved.

Figure 1. Power and control wheel developed by the Domestic Abuser Intervention Program.⁸



8. Coercive Control Collective (CCC). 2018. “The Power and Control Wheel.” Coercive Control Collective, 12 March 2018. <https://coercivecontrolcollective.org/news/2018/3/12/the-power-and-control-wheel-1>

These considerations feed into a broader set of core recommendations to employers to overcome sociocultural barriers to eliminating DV and address the impact of DV perpetration on workplaces. We recommend the following:

1. Develop workplace policies and procedures for DV perpetration that include DV workplace risk assessments, reporting procedures, and support for workers who have experienced DV, as per ILO Convention 190.
2. Develop concrete education, awareness raising, and training materials that are accessible to workers and appropriate to their workplace. Materials should:
 - a. Engage with myths and facts around DV.
 - b. Constructively address misogynistic attitudes and beliefs.
 - c. Unpack different types of violence, power, and control.
 - d. Create a supportive atmosphere that constructively engages with workers' experiences.
 - e. Outline workplace policies and procedures related to DV perpetration.
 - f. Outline reporting procedures and workplace/community supports for workers.
3. Support and facilitate the creation of Women's Advocate positions within unionised and non-unionised, formal and informal, work environments, to:
 - a. Support and guide workplace DV policies and procedures
 - b. Participate in risk assessments and safety planning.
 - c. Signpost and provide resources to women experiencing DV.
 - d. Act as a resource on equity issues in the workplace.⁹
4. Foster strong leadership on issues of DV in the workplace and proactively engage workers in conversation around issues of DV prevention and intervention, including working with women employees and women's advocates.
5. Provide specialised training to teach workers about DV and its impacts on families and workplaces.
6. Implement progressive discipline policies that engage perpetrators of DV and work with them to change their behaviour in a positive and supportive way, including through mandatory counselling and programming that teaches them about violence and its impacts.
7. Develop a health and safety committee (in larger workplaces) or identify health and safety representatives (in smaller workplaces) that take on a leadership role in education, training, and awareness raising initiatives in workplaces and that work collaboratively with Women's Advocates.
8. Provide and circulate lists of internal and external resources for perpetrators and survivors of DV, including legal, counselling, and safety planning resources, in an accessible and prominently visible location.

9. For more information on the role of Women's Advocates and collective bargaining strategies related to domestic violence and workplace safety, see Unifor's Bargaining a Domestic Violence Policy & Program document here: <https://bit.ly/3wNSEok>

Limitations

The current report is based on a secondary analysis of data collected and initially analyzed by SAMYAK. When the project came to the CREVAWC research team for final analysis and report development, it was decided that CREVAWC would proceed using the preliminary coding in English that SAMYAK had already provided. As the CREVAWC research team did not have access to the complete interview transcripts, either in Marathi or translated into English, a finer-grained analysis of verbal and/or psychological abuse was not possible. A lack of audio or visual interview-data also means that relevant data that could be gained through an analysis of the participant's tone and/or body language may have been missed, though the SAMYAK research team did

incorporate interviewer notes in many cases, such as noting that the participant was laughing while answering or that a participant refused to answer a particular question. A final limitation was the refusal of some participants to answer questions or admit to their violent behaviour, despite being identified by professionals as having perpetrated DV. Importantly, it should be noted that these limitations may have led to an underestimation of the prevalence of certain forms of DV and the impact of their perpetration on the workplace, meaning that rates of certain forms of violence and rates of workplace impacts, such as workplace accidents, may be higher than reported in this study.



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