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Psychological consequences of domestic violence on children

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Abstract

Domestic violence is a universal phenomenon and a lot of families suffer in all over the world. Most children are exposed to domestic violence in each country and societies. And is has a horrible and disagreeable psychological, emotional, physical, and social effects on children. This article has been written to study psychological impacts of domestic violence on children. We have analyzed lots of prestigious books, articles, and researches in the context of domestic violence and its psychological effects on children. Our research findings show that children who exposed to domestic violence may have depression, anxiety, panic attacks, posttraumatic stress disorder, sadness, anger, powerlessness, and other psychological distress. Moreover, they are usually weaker at performing development activities and have problems of remembering and using new information likewise Children who exposed domestic violence may be faced with a lots of emotional problems (fear, low self-esteem, insecurity), cognitive functioning, and behavioral problems such as: aggression and introversion, and social problems (weak social skills in their lives and social isolation) and they will show other signs of emotional problems such as: self-harm, weight-loss and bed-wetting. Effect of domestic violence can be different long term and short term; the short term effects may start from primary beginning of domestic violence and may continue till or after last event. But if the domestic violence is very deep the impact can be long term. And the connection between long term effect and short term effect may related to different factors such as: the length of time of violence, exposure of child, age of child and intensity of violence and finally the degree of level to which child has accessibility to some help, if the child has strong source of help the effects of trauma will be reduced significantly.

Keywords: Domestic violence, psychological, physical, emotional, anxiety, depression

Introduction

Domestic violence is a common phenomenon in Afghan society that is committed physically "beating, kicking", psychologically "humiliated and insulted" and other forms. And since about a decade ago it was regarded as a normal action, and was not considered as serious social and family problems, while violence is the most destructive phenomenon that disrupted family circle and other social institutions in Afghan society. Since domestic violence puts serious and irreparable consequences in the family and society, especially on its victim's women and children, it has been taken serious in Afghan society. Domestic violence has root in wrong traditions and culture of our society that does not represent Afghan authentic culture. Unfortunately now families are suffering from various types of vulnerability and crisis such as: Divorce, marital conflict, abuse of the elderly, suicide, child abuse, and etc. all these problems is collected under domestic violence Umbrella. Domestic violence is a global plague that destroys the family and society body and Threat the health of people.

And it is caused physical, sexual, and psychological problems for a lot of people. Usually children and women are the main and first victims of domestic violence. In most cases, it usually happens by the close family members, like husband. Domestic violence is a violence that occurs in a private setting, and generally occurs among those that linked to each other due to intimacy, blood or legal relationship. This type of violence is the most common form of violence with the highest rate of frequency, and lowest report to the police, and most social, psychological and economic side effects. Among the different types of violence such as family, society and the state violence, domestic violence is a serious social problem. That despite cultural and intellectual development still exists in the community. This type of violence is not limited to urban or rural life, religion, race, tribe, country. Domestic violence is beyond from the boundaries of class and races, religions, tribes and countries.

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Today it becomes as universal phenomenon. And it has a huge impact on the formation of other social problems in different parts of the world. Afghanistan is also a country where domestic violence has deep root and long history and most families suffering from it. The aim of this research is to investigate about domestic violence, types of domestic violence in Afghanistan, domestic violence and its impact on children.

Importance of research

It is clear for all of us that Afghanistan has passed Three decades of war, and war is the main cause of more problems, particularly violence in each society. Unfortunately Afghanistan also is the one of those communities that violence has been seen in different forms and at different levels. Unfortunately is unpleasant reality of our country. More people and family suffer from it; especially women and children are the main victims of this violence and hurt physically and psychologically. That is the thing which made us to focus on adverse psychological consequences of domestic violence on children.

Objective of research

1. To describe the most common types of domestic violence in Afghanistan.
2. To analyze the main psychological effects and consequences of domestic violence on children.

Domestic violence in the historical context

Today, domestic violence has become a universal phenomenon. Domestic violence has a large impact on the formation of social evils in different parts of the world. In our country, domestic violence opened the way for violence in other social structures and caused political violence. Violence is a phenomenon that has a long history as old as human life. The sacred text of the Abrahamic religions, the first appearance dates back to the time of Adam and incidents of violence between their two sons. Regardless of the event, symbolic or real, The report in the religious scriptures reflects the fact, that violence and aggression has the same age as human. Another point which is prominent in this story is that, the potential of violence as well as force of non-violence in human nature, since its creation has been entrusted.

Cain, that greedy and jealously threats his brother to death and extirpate seedling of his life, it can be gifted violence of human in contrast Habil, avoid from the application of rational of force, and declares his conciliatory position to his brother, it can be a symbol of his non-violence behavior. Looking at the old and new history we can find out both potential of human violence and non-violence.

Violence throughout history has had various factors, race, and religion, political, economic and gender, so human and his dignity was in his belonging to a certain race, religion or political opinion. Different terms can be used instead of domestic violence like: spouse and woman maim conjugal violence, cordial violence. This article is discussing about discussing about domestic violence in the rage of history, domestic violence in Afghanistan and its types and intensity in Afghanistan.

Domestic violence in socially constructed, have developed over time and reflect prevailing understanding, interests and power distribution^[7]. Domestic violence happens between partner and delinquent in a relationship where they know

each other. Both adult and adolescent can be affected by domestic violence. Partners might have children or haven't children and relationship maybe long or short length. Recognition the intimate background or history helps us in realizing the nature of problem and developing impressive interposition. Domestic violence for an outer spectator can look much the same stranger to stranger violence (choking, punching, slapping and kicking). Domestic violence victims experience traumas similar to victims of stranger violence (e.g. burns, internal injuries, head injuries, bruise, stab wounds, broken bones, muscle damage and psychological trauma).

However delinquent and victim relevant and are affected by the violence which are shaped by intimate context of domestic violence but unfortunately it leads outer to takes this type of violence less seriously rather than other types of violence. Perpetrators in domestic violence have continuous accessibility to their victims they know their vulnerabilities and daily program and also can carry on after violent incident to exercise considerable emotional and physical control over their everyday lives. Moreover, perpetrator may know about the victim's medical condition, prior loyalty to their children, they use this information to prey their assaults to increase the victims fear.

Victims of domestic violence not only deal with the particularities of a specific trauma (e.g. head, injury) and the fear of future assaults by a known assailant, but must also deal with the complexities of an intimate relationship with that assailant. Many perpetrators believe that they are entitled to use tactics of control with their partners, and too often find social supports for those believe. It is the family nature of these relationships that sometimes gives the perpetrator social permission to abuse. Unlike victims of stranger violence, victims of domestic violence face social barriers to a separation from their perpetrators as well as barriers to other strategies for self-protection^[10].

Definition of domestic violence

We can use different terms for domestic violence like: spouse beating, spouse abuse, conjugal assault, wife abuse, partner abuse and women maim conjugal violence. Each culture has their own comprehension from domestic violence generally each behavior with intention of revealing or behavior with the intention of worn but understandable to import bodily injury to another person is called domestic violence. The world health organization in 2002 defined domestic violence as a "any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physically, psychologically or sexual harm to those in the relationship, and includes: physical aggression, psychological abuse, forced intercourse and other form of sexual coercion and various controlling behaviors^[8]. Definition of domestic violence found in the United Nation Declaration on the Elimination of violence against women, which states in article 1:

The term "violence against women" mean any act of gender-based violence that result in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harms to women, including threats of such acts: arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. It is states:

"Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household,

dowry related violence. Marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women non-spousal violence related to exploitation [2].

If we pay attention to above definitions we can see that, in domestic violence one partner get seriously physical, psychological and sexual damage. And the delinquent tries to control all life of victims.

Domestic violence in Afghanistan

Domestic violence, special domestic violence against women is one of the most serious issues in Afghanistan. Like other countries and societies history of domestic violence against women in Afghanistan refer to the history of humankind and human community [3]. The social and political changes during three decades of war in Afghanistan caused widespread domestic violence and put numerous challenges for women. It is clear that violence against women is one of the most serious issues that not only violates the basic women's human rights but also obstructs women's development and realization of their rights [4]. According to the Islam and Afghan culture men must respect women and their relationship should be based on mutual respect, although the public perception in Afghanistan on gender relation seemingly stating a special status and respect women, but unfortunately investigations and researches show different actuality. Violence is among the manifold difficulties and challenges facing women in their social and private life. Violence is perpetrated against women in various forms and manifestations and the perpetrators are men and sometimes women themselves in the family and society [3].

So we can say violence in general and special against women is seen wildly and unfortunately it is unpleasant reality of Afghan society. Also, domestic violence opened the way for violence in other social structures and caused political violence. Violence against women in Afghanistan is common and extensive. Surveys indicate that up to (87.2%) of Afghan women experience violence on a regular basis [9]. However, there have been considerable recovery in women rights issues, examinations and findings of researches are alarming. More than 3000 instances of violence were registered by AIHRC in the first six months of Afghan year, which began on (2012.03.21) [4]. Although, the enormous amount of cases is not only denoting extensive violence against women, but also unveil a greater realization of women's right, that led off to further reported cases and samples. However, fight programs against violence special violence against women are increasing, but unfortunately there is a shortage in investigation based on vast field observation on violence against women and its causes and outcomes.

Despite the lengthy historical background of violence against women, it is a matter of several decades that violence has been placed in the center of social problems in Afghanistan. In other words, it was in the post-Taliban era that violence started to be regarded as a socio-culture issue and a violation of human-moral values and women's human rights after AIHRC- as Afghanistan's national human rights institution- and other human rights organizations and activities started to grow [3].

However, main successes have been made in various areas such as: women's education, association of women in civil and political activities, health and safety during the last decade, deep-rooted social and cultural issues yet stand

against understanding of their freedom in many sections of our country. Violence against women is one of the serious violations [5]. Though government of Afghanistan ratified some laws to prevent violence against women like: law on elimination of violence against women which has 44 articles and 4 chapter. In article 4 of this law violence against women is recognized as a crime and article 5 of the law states all activities which are recognized as violence against women. We can say that one of Afghanistan's successes in the recent years is the creation of legal supports for human right in its national law. Violence is a crime; no one shall be entitled to commit violence at residential area, governmental or non- governmental institution, organizations, public places, transport or any other places. If committed he/she shall be punished in according to the provision of this law [6].

The law also specified important instances as violence against women such as: rape, forcing into prostitution, recording and publicizing the identity of the victims, burning, throwing acid and other toxic materials, forcing into self-emulation, suicide or use of poison or other toxics, injuring, beating and tearing, sale of women for marriage, giving bad, forcing to marriage, prevention from getting married, marrying an underage, mistreatment, humiliation and threatening, annoying and harassing, forced isolation, not providing alimony, deriving from inheritance, not paying mahria, disallowing access or personal belongings, disallowing education and work, harsh labor, marrying more than one wife without considering [5]. Despite we have these laws unfortunately still we witness different types of violence against women in Afghanistan.

Types of domestic violence in Afghanistan

Violence against women in Afghanistan occurs in various forms, Such as: Physical violence, Psychological violence, Sexual violence, Economic violence, Legal violence, Cultural and social violence, and other types of domestic violence. The most common types are physical, sexual, economic, psychological and verbal violence which recorded during the year (1390). Unfortunately, violence against women is not terminated to aforesaid boundaries, we can witness vary forms of violence which exists in different segment of Afghan society. Such as: bad, exchange, forced marriage, forced divorce, kicking out of home, child marriage, deprivation from education, prevention from leaving home and visiting their relatives which remained out of the above classification [3].

Every of the upper categories simultaneously with their statistic have been appraised accurately and afterward sub-categories of any form of violence against women simultaneously with their statistic and level of their incidence have been considered separately.

Physical violence

Physical violence refers into form of violence in which perpetrator intentionally want to hurt victim physical that can be cause physical injury and sometimes even death [1]. Physical violence can be intensive or slight and its effects and signs can be visible or invisible, any type of assaults and physical clashes, such as: slapping, kicking, pinching, biting, hair pulling, breaking limbs, pushing, sever beating, dissipate acid, burning, throwing objects and etc, are samples of physical violence.

According to AIHRC research, predominated violence against women is physical violence [4]. According to investigation and researches findings physical violence has the first position between other types of violence and as well has the most victims among 1249 cases of violence against women were registered by the AIHRC during the first half of 2012 year (see picture 1, 2; table 1) [5].



Picture 1

Picture 2

Table 1: Physical violence

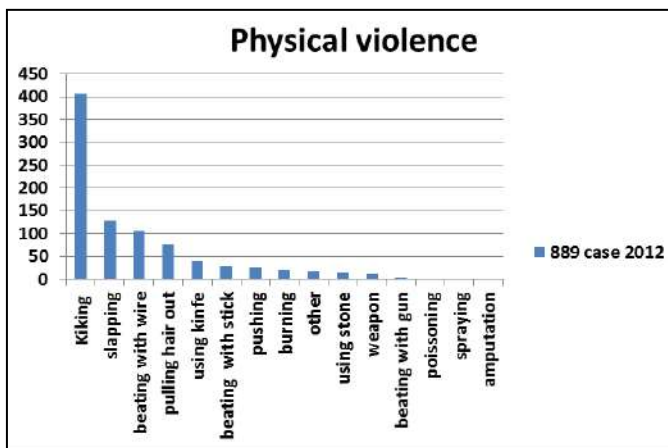
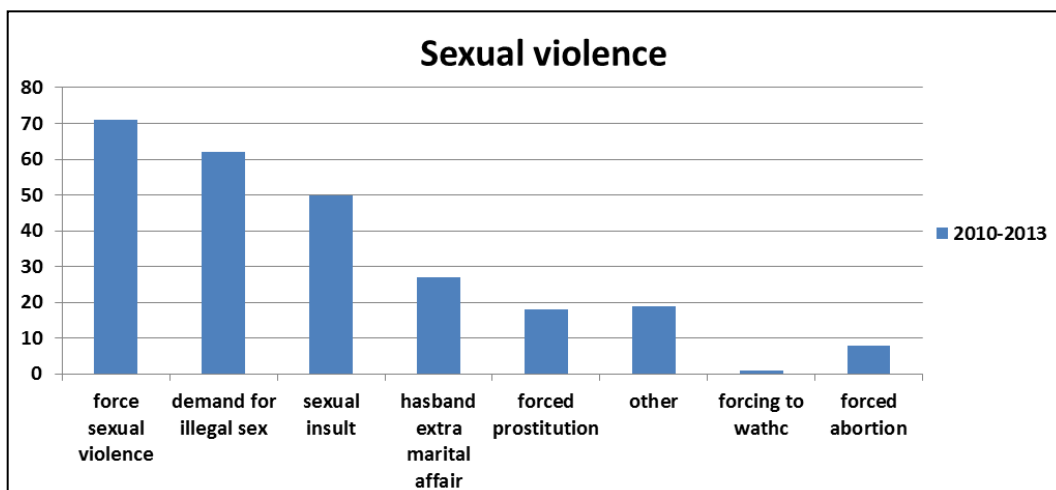


Table 2: Sexual violence against women



Psychological and verbal violence

Psychological violence refers into form of violence in which that perpetrators resort to verbal violence, bad language and force to treat and control their victims. In other words, any words or aggressive behavior that provides humiliation, insult, and harasses someone is become under umbrella of psychological violence. Even silence that could cause such a

Sexual violence

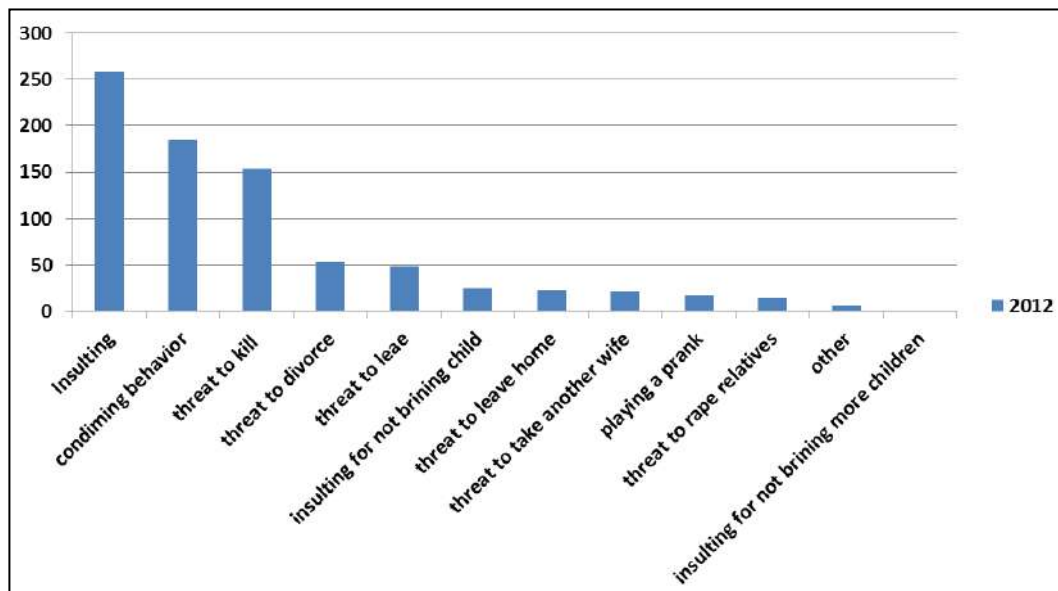
Sexual violence is one of the most serious problems of women in the world. Or in other word it refers into type of violence in which the abuser inflicts sexual action upon victims without their desire or interest. Sexual violence is committed in various forms such as sexual assaults, sexual degradation, illegitimate sexual affair/ sodomy, and ill-treatment, forced prostitution, forced abortion and etc. Since in many cultures including our culture men assume themselves as owners of women sexual violence is very common [1]. Some studies show that this is not a common type of violence; But in some cultures and many civil laws, forced sexual contact, that man as the woman's husband imposes, is considered as sexual violence. Because the woman does not have to defer husband sexual desires without her won desire. In these countries, such violence is prohibited. In our country, Afghanistan, Sexual Violence, in many cases, is commonplace or normal, especially because the women should defer to all sexual desires of her husband. So our people in most cases do not consider it as sexual violence. Furthermore, many cases of sexual violence in our country is observed, that perpetrators perpetrate against children. Although accurate studies have not been done in this area and we do not have access to reliable statistics in this case just we have very tiny information for instance: According to statistics in 2007, 51 and in 2008, 88 cases of sexual violence, has recorded to the regional offices of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission in Heart. In the same way from (2010) until (2013), 256 cases of sexual violence have been recorded in all Afghanistan by the independent human right commission which shows different types of this violence. According to statistics in 2014, 179 cases of psychological violence, has recorded to the regional offices of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission [14]. It is probable, many of those that are victim of violence; do not report this violence for different reason such as: Lack of awareness of sexual violence, personality and culture shame or other reasons.

state is considered as a kind of psychological violence. Or any action, which could result in personal psychological distress, and have negative moral and emotional effects, is taken into account as psychological violence. Agent of psychological violence, with the implementation of this action, defines himself as a determinant of the fate of the victim, by this way, he wants to monitor and control

everyday life of his victim. This action, which is hurt mental, intellectual, mental and spiritual of victim, also causes Psychiatric disorders, anxiety, forgetting and continuous anger. And in some cases, it leads to suicide. This type of domestic violence can choose their victims from among all family members. Most victims of psychological violence are women and children; but there are a lot of men who are victims of this violence. Perhaps lack of spiritual peace and security, in some cases, will be very painful, rather than physical violence, the thing that many women tolerate in different societies and cultures daily [15]. Although physical violence appears to be the most common form of violence against women, but according to some experts ideas, cases of psychological violence is very much and it is included about more than

half of all types of violence. Although in our country the rate of physical violence is too such an extent higher that people do not consider psychological violence as violence, but if we pay attention to reports and number of cases which has been recorded in independent commission we realize that the number of psychological violence is very widespread. This type of violence include different forms such as: making fun of someone, threat to polygamy, humiliating language, assault on her relatives, accusation, threat to abandonment and etc. According to statistics in 2012, 808 cases of psychological violence, has recorded to the regional offices of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission which include different forms (see table 3) [3].

Table 3: Psychological and verbal violence



According to statistics in (2014), 1482 cases of psychological violence, has recorded to the regional offices of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission [3].

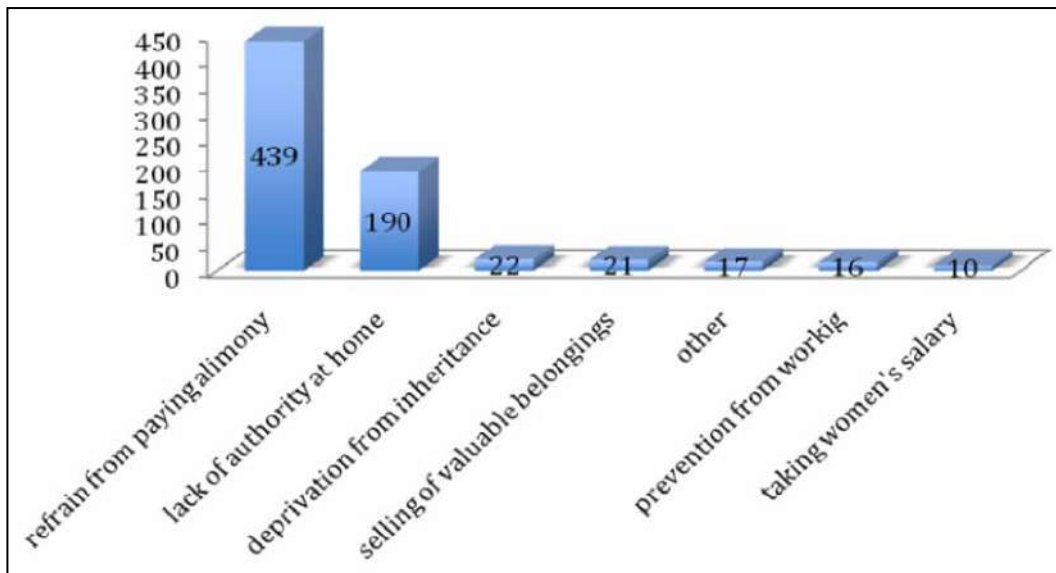
Economic violence

This type of violence refers into form of violence in which perpetrators take the Economic sovereignty to force other member of family to follow his directions [1]. Economic violence against women happens in various types and based on the customs dominant in the societies of Afghanistan, it comes into sight with all its severity. Delinquents try to control victims by limiting or controlling their accessibility to all of the family resources: such as: food, money, shelter, and transportation, insurance. The perpetrators try to prevent victims become financially self-sufficient as a way to retain their control and power, so they do not let victims to get job and make money. Women are abused by economic violence in many different forms and they sustain harmful damages

in this case because of harmful customs and practices dominant in Afghanistan’s society. The available facts include 190 incidences of lack of authority at home, 22 incidence of deprivation form inheritance, incidences of selling of valuable belongings, 16 incidences of prevention from work, 10 incidences of taking away women’s salary and 17 other cases of economic violence. Because most women economically depend on men or on their husband in the family this situation put women in a subordinated status or position. These usually deprive women from the decision-making concerning to household issues and unfortunately men inflict their will on women without taking into consideration their agreement.

Under this situation and in case of economic violence, women not only lose their welfare and prestige, but remain under the yoke of men in the family and in the society and they have to bear other types of violence too [2]. (See table).

Table 4: Economic violence



Domestic violence and its impact upon children’s personality development

When we usually speak about the psychological effects of domestic violence upon, we pay attention the effects on children life situation in a home where spousal abuse is happening. Unfortunately most children leave in homes where there is domestic violence or conflict between spouses. Estimated that yearly 133 till 257 million children are exposed to domestic violence or witnessed domestic violence in their homes, which most of them witness conflict between their parents [15].

In nowadays most researches focus on domestic violence and its psychological impact on children but yet they can not to measure the cases of domestic violence specifically. Therefor it’s hard to be explicit about the number of families which are affected by domestic violence not only in Afghanistan but in other country too. However, several studies have found that 85-90% of the time when a violent incident took place in a domestic situation, children were present and children were also abused during the violent incident in about 50% of those cases [4]. Usually children’s development reveal withindoors foster and safe environment. McGee identified the following effects on children: fear, sadness, anger, powerlessness, health problems, educational difficulties, and impact on their relationships with abusing parent, non-abusing parent, siblings and peers [7]. It is clear that if environment is not suitable and include fear it will make several psychological problem for children for instance, they will speak later or the will get anxiety, depression, or their physical, psychological, mental, language development and emotional development will delay. Domestic violence can lead to other common emotional traumas such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, substance abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder [1].

All these problems will impact on learning process of children and will destroy their learning process such as: concentration, or memorizing. An extensive survey of research evidence has shown how strongly the experience of violence is associated with adverse outcomes for children’s development [4]. Domestic can have root in marital conflict or marital conflict can be caused domestic violence because it has strong relation with behavior and social problems.

Research has found that witnessing domestic violence can have a detrimental impact on children [7]. Despite it is hard to explain these data but we should remember that most research carried out focus on this issue. Research on children exposed to domestic violence has often looked at children in refuges or shelters. These children are coping not only with the aftermath of frightening domestic incidents but a sudden change of home, school and friendships, adjustment to refuge living and what may have been the breaking of the family secret [4]. But unfortunately most children who suffered from domestic violence were forgotten because researchers do not access to them because of some limitations or boundaries in each society according to their culture or traditions. We need to remember that ‘association is not causation’ it means we can’t say that exposure to domestic violence causes these behaviors which develop in children; it’s not simple [4]. Usually domestic violence related with many factors (parental antisocial personality, Poverty, child sexual and, substance abuse maternal depression, parenting style, and physical abuse) which make difficult to know and explain the main roots of domestic violence. Researches have shown Children who witness violence can suffer a range of physical and emotional harms, even if they themselves have never been physically abused [3]. Domestic violence can damage self-regulation and children social relationship as well as. And sometimes when children feel that they cannot stop the violence in their home, they will fell weak or powerless and become angry, because usually they believe that they are able to control the aggressive behavior within the home while they cannot do it, they reproach themselves. In this situation in the most families, mothers usually effort to minimize violence or deny it, to make calm their children. This action tells us that each mother want their children must not discuss or speak what they heard or saw. Without a way out children will try to create a result that include blaming themselves or their mother because of conflict among their parents. Unfortunately this is what each mothers attempts to prevent it. Parents most often believe that their offspring do not realize the domestic violence which exists in their family but vice versa children often know about it they realize the violence directly or indirectly. There for they nearly always attempt to make happy their

parents and prevent from conflict and make correct the problems if in family have several child, they will talk to each other to solve these problems. Early work on children and domestic violence (Evanson, 1982) found that 72% of mothers who were victims of domestic violence felt that their children had experienced negative emotional impacts because of the violence [7]. Children usually are people who see directly the violence toward their mother such as: punching, insulting, hitting, emotional abuse, psychological abuse and physical abuse in the home. Over 80 research papers were reviewed and a variety of behavioral, emotional, cognitive and physical functioning problems among children were found to be associated with exposure to domestic violence [8].

Conclusion

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon it has a long history as old as human life. As we considered domestic violence is an extensive and common phenomenon in the world. It is not limited to urban or rural life, religion, race, tribe, country. Domestic violence is beyond from the boundaries of class and races, religions, tribes and countries. And it has a huge impact on the formation of other social problems in different parts of the world. Unfortunately Afghanistan also is the one of those communities that domestic violence has been in different forms and different levels. Domestic violence in Afghanistan like other countries and societies until a few years ago was not considered as a social phenomenon, and as usual, was considered as individual abnormal behavior. Despite after the collapse of the Taliban in Afghanistan, Institutions of civil society, have begun efforts (education program, celebrate the International Day for the Elimination of Violence in different cities of Afghanistan, preparing and distributing films about negative effects of domestic violence on children and women) to eliminate the culture of violence especially violence against women, but we still see domestic violence in different parts of Afghanistan. Because on the on hand still Forced and early marriages, Beating of women and prevent their social activities as tribal customs are continuing in various parts of Afghanistan. And on the other hand some families apply Physical and psychological violence to educate their children. Today, many cultures and societies recognize domestic violence as a serious social problem.

Domestic violence can be happened in different forms (physical, sexual, verbal and psychological, and economic) in all over the word, the intensity and numbers of them are different. In Afghanistan Physical, sexual, psychological and economic are most common. According to global statistics, about 90 percent of victims of domestic violence are women. Although the figure is different in different countries and cultures for instance: Each year, between one and five million women in the United States suffer nonfatal violence at the hands of an intimate partner. In Chile, every year 63% of women are physically abused. In Kenya 42 percent of women are regularly physically abused. Therefore, they are considered as the main victims of violence. In Afghanistan in 2005, 1664 number of incidents of violence against women registered. Likewise In 2006, 1545 cases in 2007, about 2374 incidents of violence against women was recorded. As the same way in 2014, 2026 cases and in 2015, 519 case of violence against women were recorded.

The impact of violence cannot be limited only to victims most children who have witnessed or exposed domestic violence suffer from the bad consequences of violence in family life. Estimated that yearly 133 till 257 million children are exposed to domestic violence or witnessed domestic violence in their homes, which most of them witness conflict between their parents. McGee identified the following effects on children: fear, sadness, anger, powerlessness, health problems, educational difficulties, and impact on their relationships with abusing parent, non-abusing parent, siblings and peers. It is clear that if environment is not suitable and include fear it will make several psychological problem for children for instance, they will speak later or the will get anxiety, depression, or their physical, psychological, mental, language development and emotional development will delay. Domestic violence can lead to other common emotional traumas such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, substance abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder.

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