

# **An overview of the meaning of Coercive control, what does wife-beater mean? The Case of Ms X , a woman victim of violence from her husband, whose prime intention was to tarnish her name and image so that no other man would desire her again and ruin the future of her child**

<sup>1</sup>Yudhistir S.M.F. Jugessur, Researcher

---

**ABSTRACT:** *The paper illustrates the meaning of Coercive control and wife beater means. The paper is inspired by the case of Ms X , a woman victim of violence from her husband. Due to legal and confidentiality issue, the real names are not mentioned in this article. Any woman can identify themselves as Ms X. I can related my own personal childhood to what women who are victim of violence go through. I remember the nights I had to run away from house to sleep into the woods , just to escape those kicks at home and I later even went to stay alone, just to get those peaceful silent nights. And same as those women , like Ms X, who is victimized , rather than supported, myself I was assaulted by the public when I went to stay alone , running away from home. Some pretend to be good samarithans but it is another hell. Escaping a hell to another hell. Sometimes a simple man is better than extravagant partners that end up making your life a hell.*

**KEYWORDS:** *coercive control, wife beater , samarithans*

---

Date of Submission: 01-03-2024

Date of acceptance: 08-03-2024

---

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Violence on women is nothing new but denied by the society. Violence at home is still a taboo in the society and only those who have been victim understand what being punched , kick in the visage by their husbands mean. The oppressors normally have the characteristics of being violent in the society also, this might explain why many prefer to ignore reality and side with the oppressors. I can related my own personal childhood to what women who are victim of wife beaters go through. I remember the nights I had to run away from house to sleep into the woods , just to escape those kicks at home and I later even went to stay alone, just to get those peaceful silent nights. And same as those women , like Ms X, who is victimized , rather than supported, myself I was assaulted by the public when I went to stay alone , running away from home.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

Violence at home<sup>1</sup> includes any behaviour, in an intimate or family relationship, which is violent, threatening, coercive or controlling, causing a person to live in fear and to be made to do things against their will. It is often part of a pattern of controlling or coercive behaviour. Women and children are overwhelmingly the victims of domestic and family violence and those who use violence are overwhelmingly male. Domestic and family violence can be perpetrated by a partner, family member, carer, house mate, boyfriend or girlfriend. Women also commit domestic and family violence against men, as do same-sex partners<sup>2</sup>. Some characteristics of domestic and family violence include (1) Physical violence such as physical assault or abuse; for example non-fatal strangulation, suffocation and head injuries , other forms of harm or injury, damage to property or belongings.(2) Reproductive coercion or abuse (3) Sexualised assault and other abusive or coercive behaviour of a sexualised nature.(4) Emotional or psychological abuse , threats of violence , blackmail and bribery (5) Financial abuse (6) Stalking (7) Use of Technology to abuse; for example harassment, impersonation, monitoring/stalking, threats and attacks through mobile phones and other devices, social media and online accounts (8) Spiritual or religious abuse; for example using spiritual or religious beliefs to scare, hurt or control you and not limited to.

### III. FINDINGS

Violence against women and girls (VAW) <sup>3</sup> is a widespread and systematic violation of fundamental human rights and an enduring form of gender-based discrimination. It occurs in every country of the world, rich and poor, stable and in conflict, and affects most women and girls, regardless of their age or socio-economic status. Violence against women takes many forms and calls for a range of measures – curative and preventive, immediate and long term. The pervasive and persistent nature of this violation of women’s human rights requires an equally broad response aimed at changing the mindset of individuals and influencing the criminal justice system and the development of public policy. A research conducted by the Scottish Women’s Aid <sup>4</sup> about domestic abuse describe Coercive control is a purposeful and sustained pattern of behaviour whereby one person within the relationship (most usually a man) seeks to exert power, control or coercion over another. A range of tactics are used such as isolating the partner from sources of support and social interaction, exploiting their resources (financial and emotional), depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour <sup>6-9</sup>. Evan Stark’s book<sup>7</sup> *Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Everyday Life* was published in 2006 and made mention of this word coercive. It contained a critique of what Stark described as ‘the domestic violence paradigm’ that focused on discrete incidents of physical violence, between couples sharing a domestic space, where separation was understood to equate to safety for the victim. Instead, based on work undertaken by the women’s movement and his own work with victims/survivors, he outlined a course of conduct by perpetrators that removed their partner’s liberty and autonomy. Wife battering, or wife beater <sup>11, 12</sup> refers to repeated unwanted violent acts-psychological, sexual, and/or physical-by an assailant against his wife and/or partner. These acts are intended to control the partner by inflicting pain and inducing fear. In most cases, battering occurs in cycles comprising a tension-building phase of unpredictable length, a violent explosion, and then a calm, and often loving, respite. These contradictory behaviors engender confusion and ambivalence in battered women; they may develop a pattern of 'learned helplessness'. Coercive control can involve any behaviour which scares, hurts, isolates, humiliates, harasses, monitors, takes away another person's freedom or unreasonably controls their day-to-day activities. It can include physical violence and sexual abuse.

### IV. CONCLUSION

There are parallels between the psychological responses of women experiencing coercive control and those taken hostage and facing imprisonment and torture. Coercive control impacts on a victim/survivor’s physical, emotional, psychological, social, sexual & reproductive and financial health and well-being both in the immediate and longer term, continuing even after the relationship has ended. Research has highlighted that experiencing coercive control leads to poorer physical health overall compared with women who have not experienced violence, and it increases the risk of women developing a range of health problems <sup>10</sup>.

### REFERENCES

- [1]. Insight Exchange Team, 2021  
Available at <https://www.insightexchange.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Guide-to-understanding-and-responding-to-coercive-control-abuse-and-violence.pdf>
- [2]. NSW Bureau of Crime Statistic research , 2022  
Available at [https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_pages/Domestic-Violence.aspx](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_pages/Domestic-Violence.aspx)
- [3]. UN Women , United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of women, Ending Violence against women and girls, 2011
- [4]. Scottish Women's aid , 217  
Available at <https://womensaid.scot/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/CoerciveControl.pdf>
- [5]. Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. P. (1993) ‘Violent Men and Violent Contexts’ in Dobash, R. E. and Dobash, R. P. (eds) *Rethinking Violence Against Women* (London: Sage)
- [6]. Dobash, RP. & Dobash, RE. (2004) ‘Women’s Violence to Men in Intimate Relationships: Working on a Puzzle’, *British Journal of Criminology* 44(3): 32449
- [7]. Stark, E. (2007) *Coercive Control: How Men entrap Women in Personal Life*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- [8]. Johnson, M.P. (2006). ‘Conflict and control: Gender symmetry and asymmetry in domestic violence.’ *Violence Against Women*, 12(11), 1-16
- [9]. Hester, M. (2009) *Who does what to whom?: Gender and domestic violence perpetrators*. (Bristol: University of Bristol in association with the Northern Rock Foundation).
- [10]. Krug E et al. (2002) *World Report on Violence and Health: Volume 1*. (Geneva: World Health Organisation)
- [11]. Herbert C. (1983) *Wife Battering*
- [12]. Walker L: *The Battered Woman*. New York, Harper and Row, 1979.