

Domestic Violence and Twitter Initiative

June 25, 2020

The National Commission for Women (NCW) registered an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lock down. Activists working on the ground claim that **not only is there a spurt in domestic violence in India, but also in severity of these assaults and their traumatic effects on women.** UN Women has called it a shadow pandemic and the UN Chief Antonio Guterres urged governments around the world to put women's safety first while responding to the pandemic.

Domestic Violence Act

- It was brought into force by the Indian government in 2006.
- The Act provides for the first time in Indian law a **definition of domestic violence, with this definition being broad and including not only physical violence, but also other forms of violence such as emotional/verbal, sexual, and economic abuse.**
- It is a **civil law meant primarily for protection orders and not meant to be enforced criminally.**
- Primarily meant to provide protection to the wife or female live-in partner from domestic violence at the hands of the husband or male live-in partner or his relatives, the law also extends its protection to women living in a household such as sisters, widows or mothers.

Twitter Initiative

- Twitter has expanded its **#ThereIsHelp initiative** to help women across India and other countries in the Asia Pacific who are survivors of domestic violence.

- It also introduced “a **dedicated gender-based violence search prompt** for hotlines and support in local languages” under the initiative.
- If users search for keywords associated with gender based violence (threatening, fear, sexual violence, rape), a **notification will pop up in their local language directing them to the hotlines of the local organizations** where they can seek help together with the list of NGOs that can provide the support they need.