

From the Desk of the Editor

It is my immense pleasure to announce this issue of *Criticality* as a Special Issue devoted to the theme of domestic violence.

Domestic violence unfolds within the ordinary, everyday setting of the home, where one family member, or someone closely tied to the family, inflicts harm on another through physical force, as well as mental, sexual, or emotional abuse. It is most often encountered within relationships of marriage, intimate partnership, and cohabitation, where proximity and dependence can allow violence to remain hidden and prolonged. This sort of violence is not developed in a vacuum. It is based on patriarchal family systems, traditional and cultural practices, alcoholism, sexual discrimination, limited legal protection mechanisms, fear and humiliation with which survivors are burdened, low policy mandates, and a perennial lack of economic independence for women.

The problem is a massive one. Nearly 1 in 3 women are subjected to violence at some time during their life, according to the World Health Organization. In this context the Activism Foundation for Social Research & Action initiated a Research Programme on Domestic Violence & Intolerance in the Maniktala slum of Kolkata, 2023–2025. The programme involved surveys, systematic data collection, and careful analysis, supported by focused group discussions. A distinctive element of this initiative was the organisation of Public Conversations. Unlike conventional research practices, these conversations sought not only to present findings before the community, but also to generate awareness among victims and, where possible, encourage them to consider research-based and context-specific ways of responding to their situations.

Given the importance of this engagement, the Editorial Board decided to bring out a Special Volume on Domestic Violence. In response to the Call for Papers, we received several thoughtful contributions from executives of the Activism Foundation who were directly involved in the research, along with submissions from other scholars. Sumana Goswami, Project Coordinator of the programme, offers a broad and integrated overview of the research in her of responsibility that moves beyond policy and legal frameworks. Eshany Bala, another Executive Researcher, examines children's education both as a factor contributing to domestic violence and as an area deeply

affected by it. Subhranil Ghosh, Executive Researcher, investigates the economic correlates of intimate partner violence in a brief research note.

In addition to these articles, this issue contains pieces that complement the emphasis on domestic violence. Chandrima Biswas's four case studies underscore the fact that violence within families has been experienced by the survivors, though they are often invisible to us. Titasha Sinha critically analyses women's agency and personal space in the backdrop of suffering from adversities in marriage. A commentary by Anindya Bhattacharya contributes significantly to the debate. The issue also includes a book review on domestic violence by Tanay Dutta.

I would like to thank Dr. Sourish Jha, Chairman, Activism Foundation for Social Research & Action for his guidance and insightful comment during the course of research programme.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Sumana Goswami, *Managing Editor* of Criticality for her constant support and untiring efforts in bringing out the issue in time. I thank the Deputy Editors also, Dr. Amlan Lahiri, Dr. Nibedita Raha, Dr. Eshita Sur, Dr. Titasha Sinha, Dr. Chandrima Biswas, Dr. Pinky Isha and Dr. Ananya Chatterjee for their help during all stages of publication.

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I alone remain responsible for any inadvertent omissions or typographical errors.

Dr. Prantosh Sen
Executive Editor