

Research Article

Domestic violence against women: a crosssectional study in rural area of Amravati district of Maharashtra, India

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ABSTRACT

Background: Domestic violence against women is a matter of serious public health concern in most of the communities and culture. In India, the problem has been highlighted after legislation against domestic violence in 2005, popularly known as the protection of women from domestic violence act. Main objectives of the study were to assess the prevalence of domestic violence against women, to study the sociodemographic factors in females suffering from domestic violence and to identify causes of domestic violence in them.

Methods: A crosssectional study was carried in the field practice area of rural health training centre of Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Memorial Medical College, Nerpinglai in Amravati district of Maharashtra state for a period of 3 months. Simple random sampling method was used for the selection of samples. The study participants were interviewed using a predesigned pretested questionnaire. Proportion, Chi square test were calculated for the analysis of the study.

Results: Out of 400 study participants interviewed, 161 (40.25%) reported some type of violence i.e. either in the form of physical, emotional or sexual violence in their life time or in recent past. The most common type of violence reported was physical violence. The most common cause of domestic violence reported in our study was financial problems followed by influence under alcohol.

Conclusions: The prevalence of domestic violence was 40.25% which is still high and necessary measures should be taken to strengthen the laws for women and to empower them.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Physical violence, Rural women

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a global issue reaching across national boundaries as well as socio economic, cultural, racial and class distinctions. This problem is not only widely dispersed geographically, but its incidence is also extensive, making it a typical and accepted behaviour. Women from all kinds of backgrounds are affected by Violence every day. Sometimes, they are attacked by strangers, but most often they are hurt by people who are close to them. Domestic violence against women is a matter of serious public health concern in most of the communities and culture.¹

According to WHO, Domestic Violence is defined as 'Any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in private or in public life'.²

The proportion of women who had ever experienced physical or sexual violence or both by an intimate partner ranged from 15% to 71%, with the majority between 29% and 62% as reported by World Health Organization.² Government of India has made serious effort in curbing the problem of domestic violence by the formation of

Protection of women from domestic violence act, 2005, which stated that any act, conduct, omission and commission that harms or injures or has a potential to harm or injure will be considered as domestic violence by the law.³ National family health survey-III that was carried out in 29 states during 2005-06, has found that a substantial proportion of married women have been physically or sexually abused by their husbands at some time in their lives. The survey indicated that, nationwide, 37.2% of women experienced violence after marriage.⁴

WHO reported few factors that are associated with increased risk of experiencing intimate partner violence, which include low educational qualification, exposure to violence between parents, abuse during childhood, attitudes to accept violence and gender inequality.⁵

Domestic violence is not considered seriously unless it involves homicide or serious physical injury to the victim. But from medical point of view long standing domestic violence results in more psychological disorders as compared with physical health problems⁶

The cycle of domestic violence is repeated across generations. It can be clearly stated from previous studies that rural women with low educational and social status are more prone for domestic violence.

The study was conducted to estimate the actual prevalence, vulnerability factors and immediate reaction of study participants to domestic violence. Majority of the studies conducted on domestic violence are done in urban setting and less data is available from rural area.

Main objectives of the study were to assess the prevalence of domestic violence against women, to study the sociodemographic factors and to identify causes of domestic violence.

METHODS

A population based cross sectional study was carried out in the field practice area of Rural Health Training Centre of Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Memorial Medical College, Nerpinglai in Amravati district of Maharashtra state for a period of 3 months from 1 May 2015 to 31 July 2015.

The total population covered under Rural Health Training Centre is 28,724 and distance from Dr PDMMC is around 35 Km.

Considering the prevalence of domestic violence as 47.2%, 7 with 95% confidence interval and absolute error of 5% the calculated sample size comes out to be 383. A total of 400 study participants who gave consent were included in the study.

List of all married females of the village was made and simple random sampling method was used for the selection of study participants.

Data collection method

A pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire was used to interview the study participants. Three principle domestic violence outcome variables (physical, emotional and sexual violence) were determined by responses to a set of questions for each variable.

Questions were posed to get their experience to a specific act of violence during their life time or recent past. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in local language with women in their homes. Interviews were conducted in a private place in or outside the respondents' home, and care has been taken to avoid presence of other family/community members during interview.

Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. In case of presence of husband or other family members the house was revisited and the woman was interviewed to assure reliable data and confidentiality.

Data entry and analysis

Data was entered using Epi info 7 version3.4 and proportions were calculated and chi-square test was applied where applicable.

RESULTS

A total of 400 study participants who gave consent were included in the study; out of them, 161 (40.25%) reported some type of violence i.e. either in the form of physical, emotional or sexual violence in their life time or in recent past (Figure 1).

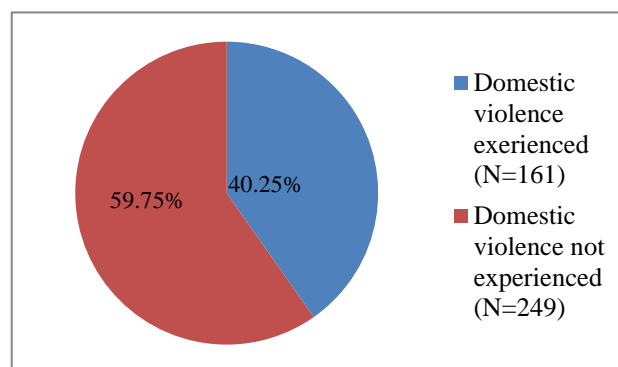


Figure 1: Prevalence of domestic violence amongst study participants.

Table 1 shows the distribution of study participants according to sociodemographic profile. Of the females in the age group of 20-40 years 37.3% experienced domestic violence whereas 44.9% of the females above 40 years of age experienced domestic violence. History of domestic violence is reported more in the illiterate females (65.1%) as compared to females studied upto primary or secondary level (36.1%) and graduate or post graduate females (31.2%). Domestic violence is more

common among labourers (48.07%) followed by housewives (38.2%). Domestic violence is more

commonly reported amongst Hindu females (40.3%) and females residing in nuclear families (46.69%).

Table 1: Distribution of study participants according to sociodemographic profile.

Characteristics	Domestic violence experienced (N= 161)	Domestic violence not experienced (N=239)	Total (N=400)
Age groups (in years)			
20-40	91(37.3)	153(62.7)	244 (61)
≥40	70(44.9)	86 (55.1)	156 (39)
Educational qualification			
Illiterates	41 (65.1)	22 (34.9)	63 (15.75)
Primary/Secondary	110 (36.1)	195 (63.9)	305 (76.25)
Graduate	10 (31.2)	22(68.8)	32 (8)
Occupation			
Housewives	52 (38.2)	84(61.8)	136 (34)
Farmer	54 (37.7)	89 (62.3)	143 (35.75)
Labourer	50 (48.07)	54 (51.93)	104 (26)
Private/Govt Sector	5 (29.41)	12 (70.59)	17 (4.25)
Religion			
Hindu	141 (40.3)	209 (59.7)	350 (87.5)
Muslim	1(5.8)	16 (94.2)	17 (4.25)
Buddhist	19 (57.53)	14 (42.42)	33 (8.25)
Type of family			
Nuclear	127 (46.69)	145 (53.31)	272 (68)
Joint	34 (26.56)	94 (34.54)	128 (32)

Table 2: Different types of domestic violence experienced by the victims.

Types of violence	Number	Percentage
Only physical violence	43	26.8
Only emotional violence	39	24.2
Only sexual violence	01	0.6
Physical and emotional violence	48	29.9
Physical and sexual violence	04	2.4
Emotional and sexual violence	01	0.6
Physical, emotional and sexual violence	25	15.5

Table 3: Forms of physical violence experienced by women by intimate partner.

Physical violence	Number	Percentage
Slapped or thrown something at her that could hurt her	120	74.53
Pushed her	94	58.38
Hit her with fist or something else that could hurt	78	48.44
Kicked, dragged or beaten her	65	40.37
Choked or burn her	50	31.05
Threatened her with or actually used knife, rod, stick, stone	39	24.22

Physical and emotional violence (29.9%) was most commonly seen amongst victims followed by only physical violence (26.8%) and only emotional violence (24.2%) as in Table 2. Table 3 shows that the most common form of physical violence was slapping or

throwing something at females (74.53%). The commonest emotional violence was being insulted or made to feel bad about herself was experienced by 70.18% of females (Table 4).

The commonest form of sexual violence was physically forced to have sexual intercourse against her will (Table 5). The most common cause of domestic violence was

found to be argument over money (42.85%) and influence under alcohol (33.54%) (Table 6).

Table 4: Forms of emotional violence experienced by women.

Emotional violence	Number	Percentage
Being insulted or made to feel bad about herself	113	70.18
Being humiliated or belittled in front of others	79	49.06
Being intimidated or scared on	51	31.67
Being threatened with harm	47	29.19

Table 5: Forms of sexual violence experienced by women.

Sexual violence	Number	Percentage
Being physically forced to have sexual intercourse against her will	31	19.25
Having sexual intercourse because she was afraid of what her partner might do	21	13.04
Being forced to do something sexual she found degrading or humiliating	20	12.42

Table 6: Reasons stated for domestic violence by victims.

Reasons	Number	Percentage
Argument over money	69	42.85
Under influence of alcohol	54	33.54
Not attending household	48	29.81
Not cooking properly	39	24.22
Dowry related problems	25	15.52
Talking to neighbours	25	15.52
Women neglected household chores	24	14.90
Not having male child	18	11.18
Women refuses for sex	8	4.9
Not having child	6	3.7

Table 7: Association of domestic violence with various sociodemographic factors.

Characteristics	Domestic Violence experienced	Domestic violence not experienced	Total	Chi square test
Age groups (in years)				
20-40	91 (37.3)	153 (62.7)	244 (61)	$\chi^2 = 2.27$
≥40	70 (44.9)	86 (55.1)	156 (39)	p=0.06
Educational qualification				
Illiterates	41 (65.1)	22 (34.9)	63 (15.75)	$\chi^2 = 19.45$
Primary/Secondary	110 (36.1)	195 (63.9)	305 (76.25)	p<0.05
Graduate	10 (31.2)	22 (68.8)	32 (8)	
Occupation				
Housewives	52 (38.2)	84(61.8)	136 (34)	$\chi^2 = 0.34$
Working women	109 (38.4)	155 (54.6)	264	p>0.05
Religion				
Hindu	141 (40.3)	209 (59.7)	350 (87.5)	$\chi^2 = 0.001$
Muslim/Buddhist	20 (40)	30 (60)	50	p=0.48
Type of family				
Nuclear	127 (46.69)	145 (53.31)	272 (68)	$\chi^2 = 14.66$
Joint	34 (26.56)	94 (34.54)	128 (32)	p<0.05

The history of domestic violence is significantly associated with educational qualification and family composition (Table 7). The history of domestic violence was reported more amongst Illiterate females and females residing in nuclear families.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, prevalence of domestic violence amongst women (in the form of either physical, emotional or sexual violence) is reported as 40.25% which is comparable to the prevalence of domestic violence (37.2%) as reported in NFHS-3 2006 and is less than the prevalence (68%) reported in the study conducted by Khapre MP et al in rural area Sawangi in Wardha district and Mishra et al reported 47.2%.^{8,9} However it is more than the prevalence (21.2%) reported by Kavita VP et al in rural area of Pondicherry.¹⁰

In present study it was found that maximum women are in the age group of 20-40 and other studies also show that majority of the women in the age group of 21-30 years and 30-39 years had history of domestic violence.^{8,10,11}

The present study noted that women in nuclear families are experiencing more domestic violence as compared to the joint family. This finding is supported by other studies too; which also show that domestic violence is more common in nuclear family as compared to joint family. In nuclear families, there are no elderly people to solve the conflicts between the couples and to control erratic behavior of males.^{9,10}

In addition to this, there is no protection to women in nuclear family. As Hindus were predominate in the village, in our study domestic violence was reported more in Hindus than Muslims which was also seen in other studies.^{10,11} History of domestic violence was reported less amongst educated females which was seen in other studies.^{8,10}

In the present study the most common form of domestic violence was reported as physical violence followed by emotional violence and sexual violence which is supported by the finding of the multicentric study carried out by the WHO and study done by Pewa et al which also showed that physical violence is the most common type of domestic violence.^{2,12}

Slapping or throwing something at the female is the most common form of physical violence reported in our study which is supported by the study done by Begum et al⁸ in urban slum and Khapre MP et al in rural area which showed that slapping and beating to wife was commonest form of physical violence.⁸

Being insulted or made to feel bad about herself is the most common form of emotional violence experienced by females in our study which is supported by study done by

Bhuiya A which shows using bad words about females is commonest form of verbal abuse.¹³

The present study reveals that being physically forced to have sexual intercourse against her will is the commonest form of sexual violence but could not find a study from India that have considered any form of the sexual violence. The most common cause of domestic violence reported in present study was financial problems followed by influence under alcohol. Other studies also reported that alcohol abuse and financial reasons have strong association with domestic violence.^{8,12}

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that prevalence of domestic violence amongst women (in the form of physical, emotional or sexual violence) is 40.25%.

The physical violence is the most common type of domestic violence and the most common cause is financial and consumption of alcohol by male partner. Slapping or throwing something at the female is the most common form of physical violence. Being insulted is the most common form of emotional violence and physically forced to have sexual intercourse against her will is a commonest form of sexual violence.

Recommendations

It is recommended that there is need to inform, educate & communicate to the society about domestic violence and the existing laws to protect women against domestic violence. Emphasis should be given on female education so as to make them self-reliant through capacity building, skill development using the platform of mahila bachat gat, mahila mandals, panchayats.

Role of social activists, formal and nonformal community leaders is important in prevention of alcohol addiction because there is vicious circle of alcoholism, poverty and domestic violence. Combined efforts in this respect through community participation along with social welfare will be a better sustainable solution to these problems.

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