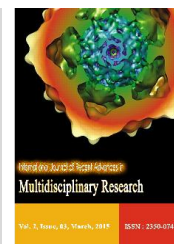


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## Research Article

### EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC AND CULTURAL DETERMINANTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AMONG MARRIED WOMEN

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#### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Domestic violence against women is a serious public health concern in every community and culture (Hyman I 2000). It has drawn attention from the medical community because it has a negative and harmful impact on the mental, physical, and social health of women (Heise L et al 1999) (Jewkes R 2002),( Diaz O.2002) and (Keeling J 2004). The world health organization reports that 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% (WHO 2007). The domestic violence is a complex issue to research as the extent and forms of its occurrence remain largely hidden and there is a great degree of social acceptance of the issue.

**Objectives:** To study socio cultural & demographic factors related to domestic violence and to assess help seeking behaviour.

**Methods and material:** A cross sectional study was conducted among class IV workers colony, JJH hospital campus Mumbai. A semi structured questionnaire was used to collect information about violence and other variables.

**Statistical analysis:** chi square test of significance using open epi software.

**Results:** The prevalence of domestic violence was 52%. Out of this physical violence constituted 9.7%, psychosocial violence constituted 66%, economic violence constituted 14.6% and combined violence was 9.7%. The socio-demographic variables like age, education, employment, duration since marriage, family composition were found to be significantly associated with domestic violence.

**Conclusions:** The social, demographic, cultural, economic factors limit women's response to violence.

#### INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence against women is a serious public health concern in every community and culture (Hyman I 2000). It has drawn attention from the medical community because it has a negative and harmful impact on the mental, physical, and social health of women (Heise L 1999), Jewkes R 2002),( Diaz O.2002) and (Keeling J 2004). World health organization (WHO) has defined domestic violence as "the range of sexually, psychologically, and physically coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by current or former male intimate partners" (WHO1997). It is often difficult to conduct research on violence against women, since most women are reluctant to disclose information as they consider it confidential and intimate.

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They often feel shame, fear, guilt, and do not want to be disloyal to their partners (Ellsberg M 2001). The rate of women who are exposed to violence by their husbands is 45% in India, 47% in Philippines and 52% in Kenya (UNESCO 2000). National Family Health Survey-III carried out in 29 states of India 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. Bihar was found to be the most violent, with the abuse rate against married women being as high as 59%. Strangely, 63% of these incidents were reported from urban families rather than the state's most backward villages. It was followed by Madhya Pradesh (45.8%), Rajasthan (46.3%), Manipur (43.9%), Uttar Pradesh (42.4%), Tamilnadu (41.9%) and West Bengal (40.3%) [NFHS- III 2005-06]. The domestic violence is a complex issue to research as the extent and forms of its occurrence remain largely hidden and there is a great degree of social acceptance of the issue.

With this background present study was conducted in married women residing at class iv workers colony, JJ hospital campus Mumbai with the objectives to study socio-cultural and demographic factors related to domestic violence and to assess help seeking behaviour and the coping mechanisms adopted by women to counter domestic violence.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional study was conducted in 198 women in the age group of 15-49 years during the period of 1/8/ 2008 to 31/10/ 2008 in Class IV workers colony of JJH campus of Mumbai. By considering prevalence of domestic violence in India 45% and error of 20% sample size estimated was 117 (Lwanga SK 1992). There were 207 women in this colony. Out of these four women more than 49 years of age and three women separated from their in laws were excluded and two refused to participate in the study. Hence, final sample size was 198. The information was collected about the socio- demographic profile of the study population and any occurrence of domestic violence (physical, psychosocial, economic), causes of violence, women's response to the violence, their help seeking behaviour. The informed consent to participate in the study was obtained from all the participants. The data was gathered by having face-to-face interviews with women in their homes with the help of pre-designed, pre-tested, semi-structured proforma in local language. During the interview, privacy was maintained to obtain the information. We guaranteed the anonymity of the responses. The statistical analysis was performed using Chi square test of significance using Open epi software.

### Definitions used (Michael et al. 2003)

**Physical violence** was defined as any of the following acts of violence perpetrated by her husband like pushed her, shook her, or threw something at her, slapped her, twisted her arm or pulled her hair, punched her, kicked her, dragged her, or beat her ,tried to choke her or burn her by purpose or threatened her or attacked her with a weapon.

**Psychosocial violence:** as any of the following act like ignoring one's feeling, restriction on movement or personal choice, ridiculing her values or beliefs ,controlling money or decision making,not communicating or keeping important information away from her,humiliate her in front of others,threat to harm her or to leave her or blaming the women for everything that goes wrong.

**Economic violence:** any of the following act like keeping resources both monetary & material beyond women's reach, not allowing her to work even if she wants, expecting her to run house in minimal amount, giving her no power in deciding where and how to use money or asking for account of every penny spent, without allowing her to make choices.

## RESULTS

In our study, majority of the women (43.9%) were in the age group of 20-30 years. About 68.2% belonged to Hindu religion followed by Buddhist (19.7%).Majority of the women(41.4%) were educated up to secondary school followed by primary school(30.3%). Out of 198 women, 70.7% women were

unemployed and only 29.3 % were working. Out of total, 68.7% women belonged to joint family (Table-1). The prevalence of domestic violence was found to be 52.%. Out of this, physical violence contributed 9.7%,psychosocial violence contributed 66% ,economic violence was present in 14.6%.The combination of two or more was present in 9.7%.The domestic violence was absent in 48% women Graph 1. The domestic violence was 71.26% among 20-30 year age group as compared to women with age group more than 40 years and less than 20 years and the difference was significantly associated with age (p=0.000).The Muslim women faced more domestic violence 81.25% as compared to other religions but statistically it was not significant.(p=0.06).The domestic violence was 85% among lower educated women and was significantly associated with education(p=0.000). The women living in joint family faced 66.9% domestic violence as compared to women living in nuclear family (19.35%) and significant association was found between domestic violence and family composition (p=0.000).Out of total 198 women, 74.74% of the women faced domestic violence in initial period of their marriage i.e within first 5-10 years of their marriage and the difference was significantly associated with duration since marriage (p=0.000). Thus, sociodemographic factors like age, education of women, , education of husband , family composition and duration since marriage were found to be highly significant with the domestic violence Table 2. The unemployed women (65%) experienced more violence as compared to employed women (20.69%) and was statistically significant (p =0.000).The prevalence of domestic violence was 95% among those women whose husbands were unemployed. The domestic violence was significantly associated with husband's employment (p=0.000) but not with husband's education Table 3. Among the causes of violence, household issues were the common cause of violence (34.9%) followed by alcohol or other addiction (21.4%) Table 4.

**Table1. Socio-demographic characteristics of women**

Variables	Number	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
<20	25	12.6
20-30	87	43.9
31-40	66	28.3
>40	20	10.1
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	135	68.2
Muslim	16	8.1
Buddhist	39	19.7
Others	8	4
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	36	18.2
Primary school	60	30.3
Secondary school	82	41.4
Higher secondary and above	20	10.1
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed	58	29.3
Unemployed	140	70.7
<b>Age at marriage</b>		
<20	180	90.9
20 and above	18	9.1
<b>Duration since marriage</b>		
<5 years	27	13.6
5-10 years	99	50
>10 years	72	36.4
<b>Family composition</b>		
Nuclear family	62	31.3
Joint family	136	68.7

**Table 2. Association of socio-demographic and cultural variants with domestic violence**

Variables	Domestic violence present (n=103)	Domestic violence absent (n=95)	Total (n=198)	P-value
Age	<20	6 (24)	19 (76)	25(12.6)
	20-30	62(71.3)	25(28.7)	87(43.9)
	31-40	30(45.5)	36(54.6)	66(33.3)
	>40	5(25)	15(75)	20(10.1)
Religion	Hindu	70(51.9)	65 (48.2)	135(68.9)
	Muslim	13(81.3)	3 (18.8)	16(8.1)
	Buddhist	17(43.6)	22 (56.4)	39(19.7)
	Others	3(37.5)	5(62.5)	8(4.0)
Education	Illiterate	13(36.1)	23(63.9)	36(18.2)
	Primary school	51(85)	9(15)	60(30.3)
	Secondary school	35(42.7)	47(57.3)	82(41.4)
	Higher secondary and above	4(20)	16(80)	20(10.1)
Education of husband	Illiterate	11(55)	9(45)	20(10.1)
	Primary school	43(53.8)	37(46.3)	80(40.4)
	Secondary	37(56.9)	28(43.1)	65(32.8)
	Higher secondary and above	12(36.4)	21(63.6)	33(16.7)
Age at marriage	<20	95(52.8)	85(47.2)	180(90.9)
	20 and above	8(44.4)	10(55.6)	18 (9.1)
Duration since marriage	<5 years	14(51.9)	13(48.2)	27(13.6)
	5-10 years	74(74.7)	25 (25.3)	99(50)
	>10 years	15(20.8)	57(79.2)	72(36.4)
Family composition	Nuclear family	12(19.35)	50(80.7)	62(31.3)
	Joint family	91(66.91)	45(33.1)	136(68.7)

\*Significant p value , \*\* Highly significant p value

**Table 3. Association of occupational status of women and her husband with domestic violence**

Employment status	Variables	Domestic violence present (n=103)	Domestic violence absent (n=95)	Total (n=198)	P-value
Women	Employed	12(20.7)	46(79.3)	58(29.3)	$\chi^2=32.26$
	Unemployed	91(65)	49(35)	140(70.7)	$Pp=0.000$ d(f)=1
Husband	Employed	68(43.0)	90(57)	158(79.8)	$\chi^2=34.65$
	Unemployed	38(95)	2(5)	40(20.2)	$p=0.000$ d(f)=1

**Table 4. Common causes of domestic violence among study participants**

Common causes of violence *	Percentage
Over household issues	34.9
Alcohol /other addiction	21.4
Instigation by other family members	9.7
Economic reasons	13.6
Not getting child/having only female child	1.9
Dowry related	4.9
Suspicious about character	2.9
No specific reason	10.7
Total	100

\*Multiple response

**Table 5. Distribution of women according to Women's response to violence**

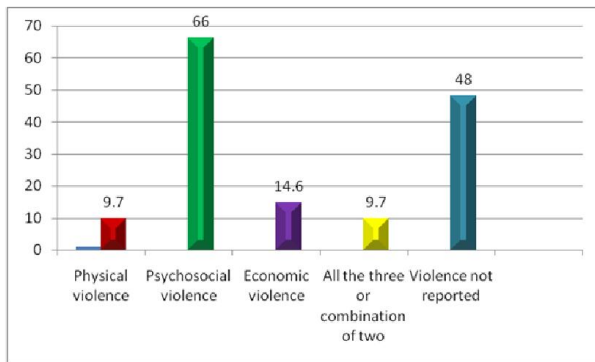
*Women's response to violence	Percentage
Didn't do anything , continued to Quiet & tolerate	44.7
Shared with natal family members	28.2
Shared with marital family members	1.9
Shared with both	3.9
Shared with friends/relatives	19.4
Took external help/legal help	1.9
Total	100

\*Multiple response

**Table 6. Distribution of women according to Reasons for not seeking help**

*Reasons for not seeking help	Percentage
These things happen in married life	55.3
Telling someone will worsen the matter/ it is the matter of family honour	19.4
Don't feel need to share	2.9
Ultimately I have to stay with my husband/ basic needs are met	17.5
It is my fate/destiny	4.9
Total	100

\*Multiple response



**Graph 1. Distribution of women according to type of violence**

Majority of the women (44.7%) did not do anything and continued to be quiet and tolerated the violence, some (28.2%) shared with natal family members others (19.4%) shared with friends and relatives. Table 5. When asked about the reason for not seeking help, 55.3% of the women answered that these things happened in married life and it is the matter of family honour and telling someone will worsen the matter rather than improving (19.4%) Table 6.

## DISCUSSION

In our study, prevalence of domestic violence was reported to be 52%. Most prevalent form of violence was psychosocial (66%) followed by economic (14.7%) followed by physical (9.7%). Our findings coincides with other studies conducted (Kocacik and Dogan 2006). In a study conducted by Chandrasekaran et al the prevalence of domestic violence was 42% (Chandrasekaran, 2008). International Centre for Research on women in partnership with INCLEN, in a study encompassing rural and urban slum and non-slum areas in 7 cities in India found the prevalence of psychological and physical violence to be 43.5% and 40.3%, respectively (Burton B 2000). In a survey of more than 24,000 women in 10 countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) found that 10-69% of women reported being physically assaulted by an intimate male partner at some point in their lives (WHO 2002).

The sociodemographic factors like age, education of women, employment of women, occupation of husband, family composition and duration of marriage were significantly associated with domestic violence. Young age (20-30years) has been identified as a risk factor for domestic violence in our study. Kocacik reported in his study that higher proportion of victims were in the age group of 30 to 34 years. (Kocacik and Dogan 2006). This difference was might be due custom of marriage of female in earlier age group in Indian scenario than in developed countries. In the study conducted by Chan and his colleagues, women's employment and education were significantly associated with domestic violence. The same study found that both forms of violence were inversely associated with education and employment levels of the women and their husbands (Chan, 2005). Findings were consistent with our study. Among causes of domestic violence, household issues ranked first (34.9%) and alcohol and other addiction (21.4%) ranked second. Our findings are consistent with other studies (Sinha, 2012) and Saradmoni, 1994). About 45% women remained quite and tolerated the violence.

When asked about reasons for not seeking help most of the women answered these things happen in married life and telling someone will worsen the matter and finally it is the matter of family honour it indicates women tend to accept violence as something normal this might be related to the fact that men culturally posses women that manhood is associated with violence .The domestic violence has not been studied from all points of view i.e. sexual violence has not been studied. The results of the study could not be generalised to whole population.

There is a need to provide social and political support to the victims of the domestic violence. The social acceptance of domestic violence as a routine event has to be eliminated. The education of women and her spouse found to be an effective tool to minimize this issue. The education through the school about gender equality might reduce the male dominance culture in india. The empowerment of women through formation of community based group centers to report any such domestic violence freely.

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