



Domestic Violence among Ever Married Women of Reproductive Age Group in a Rural Area of Karnataka: A Cross Sectional Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Domestic violence is a widespread social evil and continues to be a major public health problem. Domestic violence by marital partners is the most common type of violence against women. This not only has serious impact on their physical, mental health but also impedes women's socio-economic development.

Objectives: 1. To determine the prevalence of domestic violence among the ever married women in reproductive age group. 2. To identify the types of domestic violence and factors associated with it.

Methodology: A Community based, cross sectional study was conducted in Javarnahalli, a rural field practice area of AIMS, BG Nagara, Mandya. Study population constituted all 186 married women of reproductive age group (15-49 years) residing in Javarnahalli. Ethical committee approval, informed consent from study participants was taken. A pre designed, pretested structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Statistical analysis was done using SPSS version 20.

Results: The overall prevalence of domestic violence was 54.3%. 42.1% suffered from both current and lifetime physical and psychological violence. 48% suffered from both current and sexual violence.

Conclusion: In this context, more social support for women, community awareness, making women self reliant by increasing their literacy levels can be recommended.

Keywords: Domestic violence, ever married women, reproductive age group.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a global issue and continues to be a widespread, deeply rooted social evil. Domestic violence described as the power, misused by one adult in a relationship, to control another. Most commonly the victims are women and the perpetrators are their husbands.

World Health Organisation 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.^{1,2}

According to WHO, globally more than one-third of women suffer physical and sexual violence, with a lifetime prevalence of violence ranging from 10% to 69% from different population survey.^{3,4}

In India, National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), reported a burden of domestic violence as 37%

among ever married women in the reproductive age group.⁵

Domestic violence not only has serious impact on physical, mental health of women but also impedes socio economic development of a country, in the form of loss of women's labor hours and increased health care costs.⁶

Domestic violence varies with the local social norms and literacy level of women, hence it is important to assess the problem of domestic violence in a given geographical region for initiating supporting measures.⁷

This study was carried out to determine the prevalence of domestic violence and identify factors associated with domestic violence in a selected rural area of Karnataka.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A Community based, Cross sectional study was conducted in Javarnahalli, one of the rural field practice area of Department of Community Medicine, AIMS, B.G. Nagara, Karnataka, from June 2016 to Nov 2016.

The study subjects constituted ever married women of reproductive age group (15-49 years) residing in the study area. The eligible participants were initially contacted during one of the Village Health and Nutrition day conducted in the local anganwadi centre and were explained about the study. Out of 198 eligible participants in the study area, 12 refused to give informed consent for the study participation.

So, the study subjects constituted all 186 married women of reproductive age group (15-49 yrs) residing in the study area, who gave written informed consent.

The list of all ever married women in reproductive age group was obtained from the family folder maintained at PHC.

Method of data collection: Data was collected using predesigned, pretested, structured questionnaire prepared in local language.

Institutional ethical committee approval, informed consent from the study participants was taken and anonymity, confidentiality was ensured.

For study participants, who found difficulty in filling the questionnaire, a face to face interview was conducted in the absence of their husband, with the help of local anganwadi worker. Their responses was audio recorded and it was reconfirmed.

Study participants who were hesitant and did not respond during the initial contact, were subse-

quently contacted during village health and nutrition day conducted at the local anganwadi centre.

In this study, the presence of domestic violence in the last 1 year constituted current violence and the presence of domestic violence anytime in their lifetime, but before 1 year constituted lifetime violence.

In the study, Domestic violence constituted violence against women by her husband or in-laws, the form of: slapping, hitting, beating, kicking, head banging, pulling hair (Physical violence) insulting, blaming, threatening (Psychological violence); forced sex (sexual violence).

Statistical test like Pearson's chi-square was used and analysis was done using SPSS Version 20.

RESULTS

In the present study, data was collected from 186 ever married women in the reproductive age group (mean age: 26.32 ± 4.34 years). Mean age of their husbands was 32.14 ± 5.47 years.

Among the study participants, 28.9% were illiterate, 34% had completed primary education, 21.9% studied upto middle school, 9.6% passed secondary level and 6% studied upto higher secondary and above. 52.5% of the study participants were homemakers, 24% were unskilled laborers, 14% were skilled laborers, 9% were self-employed or having their own business.

Table 1: Distribution of physical and psychological violence (n=76)

Type of violence	Women(%)
Only lifetime psychological violence	15 (19.73)
Both lifetime and current psychological violence but no physical violence	10 (13.15)
Both current and lifetime physical and psychological violence	32 (42.1)
Both lifetime physical and psychological violence and only current psychological violence	14 (18.42)
Both lifetime physical and psychological violence and no current violence	5 (6.5)

Table 2: Distribution of sexual violence (n = 25)

Type of violence	Women (%)
Only current sexual violence	4 (16)
Only lifetime sexual violence	9 (36)
Both current and lifetime sexual violence	12 (48)

Table 3: Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Perpetrators	Women (n=101) (%)
Husband	83 (82.17)
Other family members	18 (17.82)

Table 4: Main reasons of domestic violence (n=101)

Main reason	Women (%)
Dowry related problem	18 (17.82)
Not having a male child	13 (12.87)
Doubting the fidelity	9 (8.91)
Alcohol addiction of husband	41 (40.59)
Not attending to household	8 (7.92)
Not earning for the family	7 (6.93)
Other reasons	5 (4.95)

Table 5: Socio demographic characteristics and prevalence of domestic violence

Characteristics	Domestic violence		P value
	Yes	No	
Age group			
15-20	5(33.33)	10(66.66)	<
21-25	10(55.55)	8(44.44)	0.05
26-30	32(53.86)	38(46.15)	
31-35	15(51.72)	14(48.27)	
36-40	14(45.71)	15(54.28)	
41-45	7(41.17)	10(58.82)	
46-49	2(20.00)	8(80.00)	
Age at Marriage			
< 18 years	32(68.08)	45(58.44)	<0.05
>18 years	54(49.54)	55(50.44)	
Education of wife			
Illiterate	35(53.03)	31(46.96)	<0.05
Primary	36(48.00)	39(52.00)	
Secondary	10(35.71)	18(64.28)	
Higher secondary and above	5(29.41)	12(44.44)	
Education of husband			
Illiterate	33(57.89)	24(42.00)	<0.05
Primary	31(51.66)	29(48.33)	
Secondary	12(32.43)	25(67.56)	
Higher secondary and above	10(31.25)	22(68.75)	
Employment status of husband			
Unemployed	26(81.25)	6(18.75)	<0.05
Employed	60(38.96)	94(61.03)	
Socio Economic status			
Upper	8(40.00)	12(60.00)	<0.05
Upper middle	12(37.50)	20(62.50)	
Lower middle	15(45.45)	18(54.54)	
Upper lower	18(47.36)	20(52.63)	
Lower	33(52.38)	30(47.61)	
Duration of marriage			
< 5	34(53.12)	30(46.80)	<0.05
5-10	32(45.71)	38(54.20)	
>10	20(38.46)	32(61.53)	

Figure in parenthesis indicate percentage

Among the husbands, 3.2% were unemployed, 4.8% were professionals, 21.6% were unskilled laborers, 21.3% were skilled laborers, 29.7% were self-employed.

Out of 186, 101 study participants reported domestic violence. Thus the overall prevalence of domestic violence was found to be 54.3%. Out of 101, 76 reported either physical or psychological violence.

42.1% reported both current and lifetime psychological violence [Table 1]. 25 out of 101 study participants reported sexual violence, out of which 48% reported both current and lifetime sexual violence [Table 2].

82.17% of the study participants who suffered domestic violence reported their husbands as the perpetrators, while 17.82% reported other perpetrators causing domestic violence [Table 3].

Dowry related problem (17.82%) and alcohol addiction of husband (40.59%) were reported to be the main reasons of domestic violence [Table 4].

Study participants of the age group (26-30yrs) reported a higher prevalence of domestic violence. Study participants who were married at less than 18 years of age reported a higher prevalence of domestic violence, compared to their counterparts who were married at more than 18 years of age.

Study participants with unemployed husbands reported a higher prevalence of domestic violence, compared to the study participants with employed husbands.

The prevalence of domestic decreased with increase in educational, socio economic status and duration of married life of the study participants.

These differences were found to be statistically significant [Table 5].

DISCUSSION

The present study reported an overall prevalence of 54.3%. 42.1% of study participants reported both current and lifetime physical and psychological violence and 48% reported both current and lifetime sexual violence.

A large multisite household survey [INCLLEN], had found that about 44% women reported at least one psychologically abusive behavior and 40% reported at least one form of physical violence.⁶ ICRW in partnership with INCLLEN, found the prevalence of psychological and physical violence to be 43.5% and 40.3% respectively.⁸

A study conducted in Kerala by Saradomoni K, found the prevalence of lifetime physical and psychological violence to be 35.7% and 64.9% respectively.⁹ Another study conducted in Bangalore slums, found the prevalence of lifetime and current domestic violence to be 56% and 27% respectively.¹⁰

According to this study, husbands were the usual perpetrators of violence (82.17%), similar findings was seen in NFHS-3 and other studies from different states of India.¹¹⁻¹³

Among the socio-demographic variables examined, ICRW found low levels of education to be associated with domestic violence with highest level of significance. Similar significant findings was seen in a study conducted in Gwalior city in 2009 by Mishra et al .¹⁴ Saradmoni .K found that both forms of violence were inversely associated with education and employment levels of the women and their husbands, which was also observed in the present study.

In the present study, as the socio economic status of the family decreased a higher prevalence of domestic violence was seen. Studies carried out by other researchers also reported similar significant association.¹⁵⁻¹⁹

CONCLUSION

The overall prevalence of domestic violence was found to be 54.3%. Statistically significant association was seen with literacy status of women and their husband, socioeconomic status.

In this context, more stringent actions to be taken through Government legislation, making women more self-reliant by increasing their literacy rate, financially stable, community mobilizing strategies creating community awareness can be recommended.

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