

A cross-sectional study on domestic violence among married women of reproductive age in rural mandya

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Abstract

Introduction: Domestic violence against women is a global problem and present in every country cutting across the boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age. It has serious consequences on the women's mental, physical, reproductive and sexual health.

Materials and Methods: A community based, cross-sectional study was conducted from 200 women of reproductive age (18-49 years) residing in rural field practice area of Adichunchanagiri Institute of Medical Sciences (AIMS), Mandya, Karnataka, with a predesigned, pretested, semi-structured questionnaire, pertaining to the socio-demographic parameters, type, frequency, modes, reasons for domestic violence and legal support seeking behaviour in them. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: The prevalence of domestic violence was found to be 39.5%. The common type of domestic violence was psychological violence 59(74.7%), followed by 35(44.3%) had physical violence and 15(18.9%) sexual violence. Insult (84.7%), beating and slapping and pressure for sex 12(80%), were the most common types of violence's observed respectively. Husband was the 48(60.8%) most common perpetrator of domestic violence. Alcohol addiction of husband was the leading cause for domestic violence. The common reason to stay in violent relationship was for children 55 (69.6%), the common response to violence was tolerating 57(72.2%). Domestic violence significantly associated with factors such as occupational status of the women includes agriculture, business & government service, husband's educational status such as graduation & primary school education and with their habits of smoking & alcohol consumption. The legal help seeking behaviour was very less 7(8.9%) and most common reason cited was social stigma 22 (27.8%) %).

Conclusion: About one third of the women in the reproductive age group were exposing to domestic violence and psychological violence was the most common type. The occupational status of the women, such as agriculture, business & government service, the husband's, educational status including graduation & primary school education, and alcohol & smoking habits were independent risk factors for developing domestic violence. The legal help seeking behaviour of the women was very low.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Reproductive age, Women, Rural.

Introduction

The World Health Organization defines domestic violence as "the range of physically, psychologically and sexually coercive acts used against adult and adolescent women by current or former male intimate partners."¹ It is a global issue, deeply ingrained across national boundaries in all racial, cultural and socio-economic classes. It is estimated that about 20%-50% of women in most countries have experienced domestic violence from an intimate partner.² Domestic violence has widespread societal problem with consequences reaching far beyond the family. There is growing evidence that violence within the family becomes the breeding ground for other social problems such as substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and violent crimes of all types. Even though it is perpetrated by men and women, most commonly, the victims are women and the perpetrators are their husbands, followed by in-laws.

Domestic violence also goes by many names: wife abuse, marital assault, woman battery, spouse abuse, wife beating, conjugal violence, intimate violence, battering, partner abuse, and so forth. As per the World Bank report, one work day out of each five lost by women is because of

health problems emerging out of domestic violence. Domestic violence as such not only causes physical harm, which undermines the social, psychological, financial, and emotional well-being of not only the victim, but of the society as a whole. It has serious consequences on the women's mental, physical, reproductive and sexual health leading to temporary or permanent disabilities, depression and suicide amongst others. According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS) – IV in India, among women aged 15-49 years, 31.1% of women experienced spousal violence after marriage, amongst 34% were reported from rural families itself. In relation to type, 23% have ever experienced physical violence, and 9% have ever experienced sexual violence. Of which, only 22% of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by anyone have sought help. But only 4% of abused women who sought help for the violence from the police.³

In Indian scenario, there is a dearth of information on this issue, specifically on prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors in rural area. Thus, the present study was conducted in field practice area of AIMS, Mandya, on rural population of married women of

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reproductive age 18-49 years to study the prevalence, type of violence, factors associated with it and legal support seeking behaviour of these women, so that it provides suggestions to the lawmakers and enables judiciary system to handle medico-legal issues in the appropriate manner.

Objectives

1. To determine the prevalence of domestic violence among married women of reproductive age 18-49 years.
2. To determine the pattern of domestic violence among these women.
3. To assess factors influencing domestic violence
4. To assess the legal support seeking behaviour of these women.

Materials and Methods

A community based, descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in rural field practice area of AIMS, Mandya, India for a period of 3 months from 1st December 2018 to 28th February 2019 using convenient sampling method with sample size of 200. The study sample includes all married women in the reproductive age of 18-49 years living with their spouses and/or his family members at least for past 12 months. Using a predesigned, pretested, semi-structured questionnaire, which is translated to local language

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic profiles of the study subjects

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age group	18 – 27	66	33.0
	28 – 37	87	76.5
	≥38	47	23.5
	Total	200	100.0
Age at marriage	15-17 years	40	20
	18-21	117	58.5
	22-25	43	21.5
	Total	200	100.0
Duration of married life	≤7 years	68	34.0
	8-15 years	73	36.5
	≥16 years	59	29.5
	Total	200	100.0
Religion	Hindu	173	86.5
	Muslim	25	12.5
	Christian	2	1.0
	Total	200	100.0
Socio-economic status (modified BG Prasad classification)	Upper	6	3.0
	Upper middle	35	17.5
	Middle	92	46.0
	Lower middle	44	22.0
	Lower	23	11.5
	Total	200	100.0

In the present study, data was collected from 200 married women of reproductive age (18-49 years) from rural field practice area of AIMS, Mandya, India. The majority of women were in the age group of 28-37 years (76.5%) with the mean age (31.5±6.9) years & range of 19-49 years. 58.5% of the individuals were married at the age 18-21 years. The duration of married life among 34% of individual was less than 7 years and 36.5% of individuals were between 8-15 years and remaining 29.5% were ≥16 years. With respect to religion, 173(86.5%) were Hindus and 25(12.5 %) were Muslims. Regarding socio

Kannada, data was collected. Informed written consent was taken from each of the participants after confidentiality of their responses was assured and the purpose of study was explained. The questionnaire includes information pertaining to the socio-demographic parameters, type, frequency, modes, reasons for domestic violence and legal support seeking behaviour among them.

Inclusion criteria

Married women in the age group between 18-49 years who were willing to participate in the study.

Exclusion criteria

Participants who were seriously ill and not present during the time of the study.

Statistical analysis

The data was entered into MS Excel 2016 and analysed using IBM SPSS 20 statistics package. Data was expressed in terms of means and proportions. To test the significance of categorical variables, multiple logistic regression was done. A p value ≤ 0.05 was considered as statistically significant.

economic status, (as per modified BG Prasad classification) 46.0% belonged to middle class, 22.0% were lower middle class, and 17.5% were in the upper middle class.

Table 2: Socio-demographic profiles of the study subjects in relation to education and occupation.

Variables	Category	Married women		Husband	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Educational status	Illiterate	47	22.5	9	4.5
	Primary	51	25.5	27	13.5
	Secondary	43	21.5	104	52.0
	Pre-university	52	26	33	16.5
	Graduate	7	3.5	27	13.5
	Total	200	100	200	100
Occupation status	Professional	3	1.5	2	1.0
	Government service	22	11.0	1	0.5
	Private sector	3	1.5	10	5
	Business	0	0.0	14	7
	Agriculture	25	12.5	28	14
	Labour	9	4.5	77	38.5
	Housewife	129	64.5	52	26.0
	Other	9	4.5	16	8
	Total	200	100	200	100

Regarding education of women (Table 2), 22.5% were illiterate, 25.5% were educated up to primary school, 21.5% were studied up to secondary school, 26% studied till pre-university and remaining 3.5% study population were graduates. In relation to occupation, 64.5% of them were housewives 12.5% were agriculturists and 11.0% had government job. As far as education of husband was concerned, 52% of them have been studied up to secondary school, 16.5% were studied up to pre-university, 13.5% each were graduates and primary school education respectively. By occupation, 38.5 % of them were dependent on agriculture, 26% were labourers and 14.0% were businessmen. In relation to habits of husband as stated by their wives, 72(36.0%) were smokers, 71(35.5%) were alcohol users, 5(2.5%) had habit of gambling and 3(1.5%) were believed to be having illegal affair.

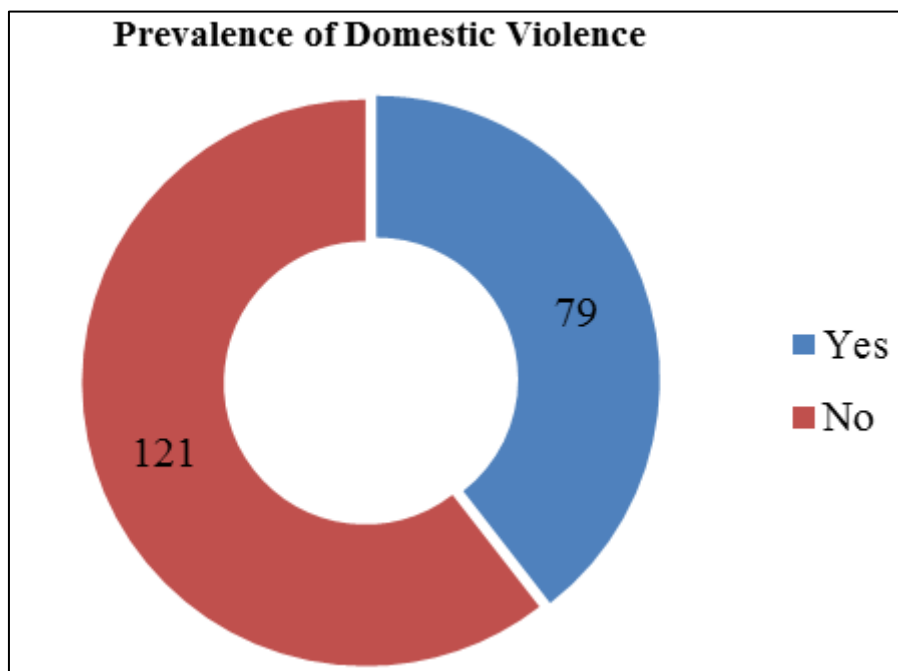


Fig 1: Prevalence of domestic violence

Table 3: Distribution of study subjects based on prevalence of types of violence's

Type of Violence (N=79)		N	%
Physical Violence* (n=35)	Beating and Slapping	30	85.7
	Throwing things on her	6	17.1
	Twisting arm	7	20.0
	Pulling hair	6	17.1
	Kicking	7	20.0
	Pushing	8	22.8
	Attacking her with weapons	3	8.5
	Burning	3	8.5
	Other reasons which are not cited here	3	8.5
Psychological violence* (n=59)	Insult	50	84.7
	Humiliating in front of others	40	67.7
	Intimidation	9	15.3
	Belittling	23	38.9
Sexual Violence* (n=15)	Pressure for sex	12	80.0
	Forceful unprotected sex	8	53.3
	Hurt for sex	3	20.0

*Multiple Responses

In the present study, 79 (39.5%) women had experienced some type of domestic violence in the past 1 year. (Fig 1). Among them, 59(74.7%) of them reported psychological violence, 35(44.3%) had physical violence and the sexual violence 15(18.9%) was cited less frequently. Among 64(81.0%) of women suffered from any one type of violence, 14(17.7%) of women suffered from any two types of violence and 10(12.7%) suffered from three types of violence.

Among psychological violence, Insult (84.7%), humiliating in front of others (67.7%) and belittling (38.9%) were found as common. In the physical violence, beating and slapping (85.7%) were the most common types found. Among Sexual Violence, Pressure for sex 12(80%) was the most common type reported.

Table 4: Distribution of study subjects based on frequency of violence in the last one year

Frequency of violence in the last one year	Frequency (N= 79)	Percentage
Everyday	3	3.8
Few times in a week	15	19.0
Few times in a month	42	53.2
Few times in a year.	19	24.0

Table 5: Distribution of study subjects based on domestic violence experienced from

Domestic Violence experienced from	Frequency (N= 79)	Percentage
Husband	48	60.8
Other family members of husband (In-Law)	31	39.2

*Multiple Responses

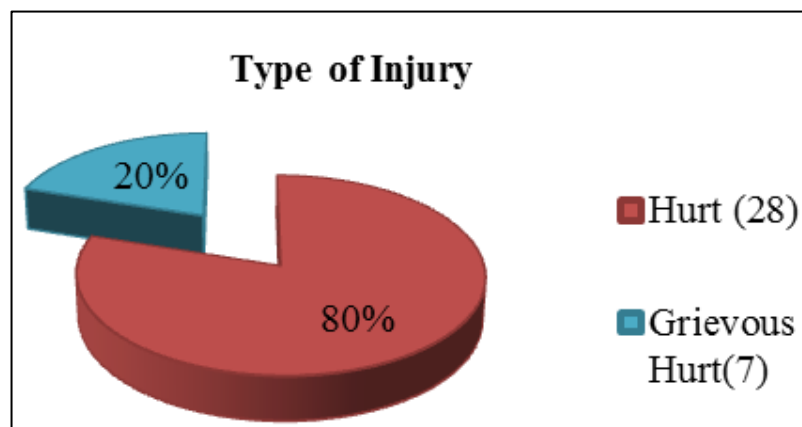
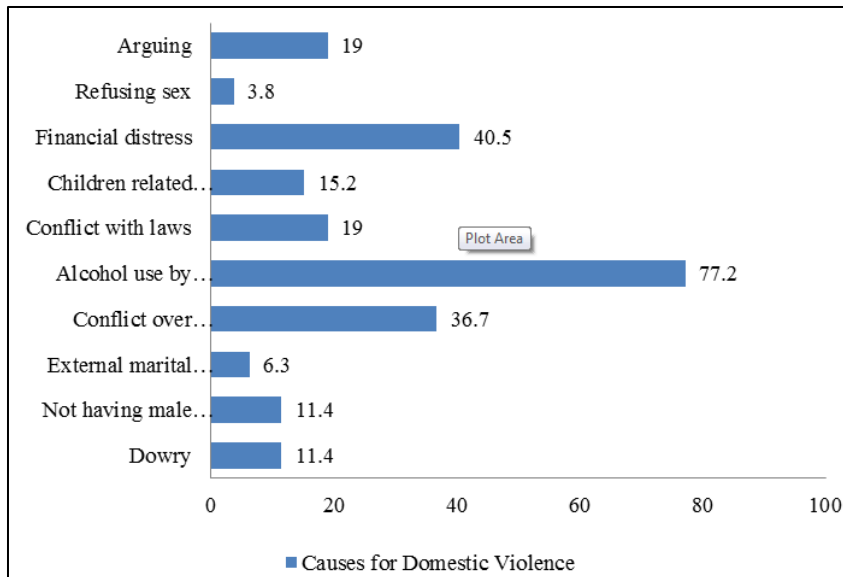


Fig 2: Pie chart showing distribution of study subjects based on type of injury sustained in physical violence

In the present study, (Table 4) 42(53.2%) of the victims suffered domestic violence, few times in a month, the perpetrators were mostly husbands 48(60.8%) followed by other members in family like mother-in-law, father-in-law 31(39.2 %).(Table 5) Among the victims suffered from physical violence (35), 28(80.0%) reported simple hurt and 7(20.0%) suffered from Grievous hurt (as per legal definition of Indian IPC code 320).(Fig. 2).

The most common reason cited for domestic violence was alcohol use by husband (77.2%), financial distress (40.5%), followed by conflict over cooking (36.7%). The other includes, 19% reported due to arguing and conflict with in-laws, 15.2% due to children related issues, 11.4% were due to dowry and not having male child. The least reason found to be external marital affairs (6.3%) and refusal to have sex (3.8%). (Fig. 3)



*Multiple Responses

Fig. 3: Distribution of study subjects based on causes for Domestic Violence (N= 79)

Table 6: Distribution of study subjects in relation to reasons for stay in violent relationship

Reasons to stay in violent relationship	Frequency (N= 79)	Percentage
Stayed for children	55	69.6
Social stigma	30	37.9
Acceptance	24	30.4
Love for husband	38	48.1
Financial dependence	1	1.3

*Multiple Responses

Table 7: Distribution of study subjects based on victim's response to violence

Response to violence	Frequency (N= 79)	Percentage
Parents & Relatives support	31	39.2
Friends & Neighbour's support	14	17.7
Tolerate it	57	72.2
Try to convince	23	29.1
Left the house	6	7.6
Support groups ⁺	3	3.8
Attempted suicide	0	0.0

⁺Support groups include Mahila Mandals, NGOs etc.

*Multiple Responses

The most common reason given by victim to stay in violent relationship includes (Table 6), stayed for children 55 (69.6%), love for husband 38(48.1%), social stigma 30(37.9%) and acceptance 24(30.4%). The common victim's response to violence (Tables 7) includes tolerating 57(72.2%), seeking for parents & relative's support 31(39.2%), try to convince 23(29.1%) and friends & neighbour's support 14 (17.7%). The least was found to be approaching support groups like Mahila Mandals, NGOs etc. and no cases were found to have been attempted suicide.

Table 8: Results of logistic regression done on the study variables (N = 200)

Characteristics	B	Exp(B)	95% C.I for Exp (B)		P value
			Lower	Upper	
Age groups					
Age >37 years	1.563	4.774	.818	27.845	.082
Age 18-27 years	-1.386	.250	.042	1.490	.128
Age 28-37 years	0				
Women's Education					
Graduate	-19.089	5.123	0.060	1.256	.994
Illiterate	-2.265	.104	.004	2.468	.161
Primary	-1.654	.191	.020	1.812	.149
PUC	-.657	.519	.080	3.345	.490
Secondary	0				
Occupation of woman					
Agriculture	-35.436	4.076	2.422	6.859	.000
Business	-35.453	4.007	4.761	3.373	.000
Government service	-32.229	1.007	4.302	2.359	.000
Housewife	-47.850	1.656	0.686	4.214	.985
Labour	-32.490	7.759	7.759	7.759	
Private sector	-21.087	6.950	0.798	3.912	.997
Professional	0				
Husband's education					
Graduate	4.040	56.842	5.865	550.909	.000
Illiterate	1.348	3.852	.126	118.000	.440
Post graduate	18.203	8.025	0.658	5.899	.998
Primary	1.716	5.562	1.008	30.697	.049
PUC	-1.652	.192	.017	2.216	.186
Secondary	0				
Smoking					
Yes	-3.410	.033	.006	.169	.000
No	0				
Alcohol					
Yes	-4.109	.016	.003	.102	.000
No	0				

B = slope of the gradient in logarithmic scale, Exp (B) = antilog of B=Adjusted Odds ratio

In order to assess overall effect of various variables on Domestic violence, the Multiple Logistic Regression model was applied (Table 8). The variables that were statistically significant in the univariate logistic regression analysis were included in the multiple logistic regression model. A statistically significant association was observed between woman's occupation status such as agriculture, business & government service, husband's educational status such as graduation & primary school education and alcohol & smoking habits of them with domestic violence may be considered as independent risk factors for developing domestic violence.

In relation to awareness of victim about the presence of legal provisions against domestic violence were 60(75.9%). However, the behaviour to seek legal support was very less 7(8.9%) and most common reason gave was social stigma 22(27.8%) attached to the society.

Interestingly we found, 34(43.04%) of male partners knew about domestic violence experienced by their mother during their childhood, 25(31.7%) of children witness

domestic violence in the family and 29(36.7%) of victims had health issues due to domestic violence, among which anxiety and depression was the most common issue observed.

Discussion

Violence against female occurs even before her life starts and continues throughout her whole life. Domestic violence against women is a global problem and present in every country cutting across the boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity and age.⁴ It estimated that about 20%-50% of women in most countries have experienced domestic violence from an intimate partner. This is also a vicious cycle that will beget future involves in violence, as it becomes a norm for the children growing up in this setting.

In the present study, the current prevalence of domestic violence against married women of reproductive age in rural Mandyawas 39.5%. In a similar study by Vachhani et al., reported slightly higher prevalence 58% in rural population

of Surendranagar district of Gujarat.⁵ In various studies conducted among women in rural area of Puducherry, South India⁶, and Eastern India⁷ reported, similar type prevalence 56.7% and 56% respectively. According to a study by Sarkar M; reported much lesser incidence rate 23.4%, among adult and adolescent females in Dearah village of Singur, West Bengal.⁸ According to studies conducted in Niladri Vihar, Bhubaneswar, and in the slum of Alamgunje, Burdwan district of West Bengal, the prevalence of domestic violence was 35% and 40.4% respectively. This is in accordance with our study. However, these studies were conducted in urban slums.⁹

In relation to type of violence, 59(74.7%) reported of psychological violence, 35(44.3%) of them about physical violence and 15(18.9%) about sexual violence. In a similar study, Verbal/psychological violence was the most common form of domestic violence (85.7%) followed by physical (71.4%) and sexual violence (57.1%).⁹ In the study on eastern India also reported, 52% prevalence of psychological violence, 16% physical and 25% in the sexual violence.⁷ A study conducted in a rural area of Puducherry reported 51.3% psychological violence, 40% physical violence, and 13.5% sexual violence.⁶ A study on urban slum population in the Bhubaneswar reported, 34% suffered from physical, 35 % emotional and 17% from sexual violence.¹⁰ However, a study from urban part of Aurangabad, Maharashtra reported that, 57.71% experienced physical and 50% psychological violence.¹¹

In the psychological violence, insult 50 (84.7%), humiliating in front of others 40(67.7%) and belittling 23(38.9%) were found to be the most common. In relation to physical violence, beating & slapping 30(85.7%) was the most common followed by pushing 8(22.8%) and pressure for sex 12(80%) was the most common form observed among sexual violence. In a study by Bhattacharya A, humiliation 82 (91.1%) was the commonest form of psychological violence (n=90). Slapping and or beating 67(89.3%), kicking 54(72%), were the major forms of physical violence (n=75) and most common form of sexual violence (n=60) was forced sexual intercourse 35(58.3%).⁹ The study conducted by Mohapatra I et al, also reported humiliating in front of others 18 (51.4%) and insult 9(25.7%) were the most common forms of emotional violence. Hitting & beating 15(42.8%) and slapping 14(40.0%) were the commonest forms of physical violence. In relation to sexual violence, physical force to have sexual intercourse was the commonest.¹⁰ In a study by Nair et al. in rural area of Gujarat showed that, slapping (80%), kicking, punching or hitting with an object (74%), pulling by the hair/dragging (27%) and forced sex (27%) were the types of reported physical abuse.¹²

With respect to frequency of violence in the past one year, females reported that, maximum 42(53.2%) of them suffered violence few times in a month, followed by few times in a year 19(24.0%) and then few times in a week 15 (19%) in the present study. Sarkar M observed that, maximum number of females (81.82%) exposed to domestic violence few times in the year. Others reported the

frequency of violence as few times in a week and few times in a month (9.09% each).⁸ The frequency of domestic violence as reported by Bhattacharya A, every day (20.95%), weekly (19.05%), once in 15 days (22.86%), monthly (24.76%) and occasionally (12.38%).⁹

In the study, husband 48(60.8 %) was responsible for violence among majority of the women. Some women reported that in-laws (husbands' parents) 31 (39.2 %) were responsible for few acts of violence, which is similar to many other studies. Mohapatra I in their study reported that, husband (18 %) was mostly responsible for violence among majority of women, followed by in-laws particularly emotional violence and few cases of physical violence wherein in-laws and husbands' kin's (7%) were involved.¹⁰ In a study by Sarkar M on rural area of west Bengal reported the most common perpetrator of domestic violence is by husband 24 (72.73%).and slapping as the specific act of physical assault(72.73%).⁸ However, Nair U reported that, even though the victims were mostly wives (78%) and the perpetrators were their husbands, frequent physical violence was much less reported than verbal and psychological harassments.¹²

Among the victims suffered physical violence (35), 28(80.0%) reported of simple hurt which includes minor injuries without treatment, minor pain, sprain, bruises and small cuts. 7(20.0%) suffered from Grievous hurt (as per legal definition of Indian IPC code 320) which required medical attention. In a study by Shreemanta, on rural population of Andhra Pradesh also reported of similar pattern, where 70% of them sustained injuries of a nature which required no medical attention or house hold remedy and 30% of them received injuries which required hospital treatment.¹³ Other study reported, 44.5% of them who had injuries had pain lasted for more than a day, followed by 31.5% of them having minor injuries. Medical attention/hospitalization was required by 17% of the individuals.¹⁴

The most common reason cited for domestic violence was alcohol use by husband (77.2%), financial distress (40.5%), followed by conflict over cooking (36.7%). The other includes, 19% reported due to arguing and conflict with in-laws, 15.2% due to children related issues, 11.4% were due to dowry and not having male child. Sina A found that the main factors behind domestic violence were alcohol addiction of the husband, followed by 'not cooking properly' and dowry related problem.¹⁵ In the study by Kocacik and Dogan, economic problems were reported as the most important reason for domestic violence (31.4%).¹⁶ Mohapatra I in their study reported, alcohol addiction of the husband (20%), dowry related problems and not having a male child (4%), as well as some inconspicuous reasons like not cooking properly or talking with neighbours (6%) as the major factors associated with domestic violence.¹⁰

The most common reason gave by victim to stay in violent relationship includes, stayed for children 55 (69.6%), love for husband 38(48.1%), social stigma 30(37.9%) and acceptance 24(30.4%). The common victim's response to violence includes tolerating 57(72.2%),

seeking for parents & relative's support 31(39.2%), try to convince 23(29.1%) and friends & neighbour's support 14(17.7%). The least was found to be approaching support groups like Mahila Mandals, NGOs etc. and no cases were found to have been attempted suicide.

By multiple logistic regressions, the overall effects of various socio-demographic variables were assessed. It was found that, the occupational status of the women, such as agriculture, business & government service i.e, self-dependency were protective against domestic violence. However, the husband's educational status such as graduation & primary school education were found to be strongly associated with domestic violence. In relation to habits of their husband such as use of alcohol and smoking were independent risk factors for developing domestic violence.

Awareness about, the presence of legal provisions against domestic violence was found in 60(75.9%). However, the behaviour to seek legal support was only 7(8.9%) and most common reason reported was social stigma 22(27.8%) attached to our Indian society.

Bhattacharya et al., reported, majority of the victimized women preferred to be silent sufferers. These women had never sought any help, even from their relatives and close friends. They preferred to rely upon their own strategies to deal with the situations. The help seeking behaviour was found only in one third (31.5%) of women who had faced violence in their lifetime. Among them, 21.9% women sought help from their parents, followed by 16.2% from friends/neighbours and only 6.7% had reported to police which represented the tip of the iceberg.⁹ Shrivastava PS reported 2 (2%) women had reported to police and only 4 (4%) sought help from NGOs, even in urban population.¹⁷ The similar results have been reported in other studies where 32.7% and 74.4% respectively did not report the abusive situations in which they were living and those who sought help, most often from their own families.^{18,19} Another similar study revealed that 74.9% never sought for any help; 13.9% sought for first aid, 4.9% sought for professional help, 3.6% reported to police.²⁰ A study by Rajini S reported that, 26% of the respondents have never sought any type of help from anyone, 35% have sought help from some source and 39% have said someone about the violence they experienced.¹⁴ Similarly, in another study 73% of them have never sought any help and only 23% of the women have sought some help.²¹

From the above findings, we can conclude that inspite of relatively long history of public and private activism against the domestic violence it is still continued to be a part of culture. In India, especially the men believe, violence against women as a means of discipline. In spite of their rude and aggressive behaviour, most women neither protest nor retaliate against abuses for reasons of shame, fear, guilt, or simply because they do not want to be disloyal to their partners. Lack of education and economic dependency most often make them less confident to disclose their problems freely without any hesitation.

Limitations

1. The results of the study cannot be generalised since it is a cross-sectional study.
2. Recall bias and conscious falsification due to social stigma attached to it or any another reason cannot be ruled out at cross-sectional study.

Conclusion

Overall prevalence of domestic violence was found to be 39.5%. Psychological violence 59(74.7%) was the most common type of domestic violence. The occupational status of the women, such as agriculture, business & government service, the husband's educational status including graduation & primary school education, and alcohol & smoking habits of them were independent risk factors for developing domestic violence.

In this context, improving the education status and employment of the women, increasing the community awareness regarding risk factors for domestic violence & encouraging supportive groups to deal with domestic violence, stringent rules on sale of alcohol and bringing strict regulations & amendments to the existing law against domestic violence are recommended to curb the incidence rate of violence against women.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

Ethical Approval

An Institutional Ethical Committee clearance was obtained before study.

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