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Community Medicine

PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ITS DETERMINANTS AMONG EVER MARRIED WOMEN IN A RURAL AREA OF TAMIL NADU - A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT Violence against women violates their rights and poses a public health issue with immediate and long-term consequences. 53% of Indian women find husband's physical abuse acceptable. The study examines domestic violence prevalence and its forms among unmarried women in rural Tamil Nadu, aiming to understand the sociodemographic factors involved. Its findings will shed light on this issue and its societal implications. This community-based cross-sectional study involved ever married women aged 15-49 years. Excluded were participants with debilitating illnesses or who did not give consent. The sample size was 503 women selected through multistage sampling. Data was collected through interviews using a pretested questionnaire, and analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS version 17. The study found significant associations between women's occupation and physical abuse, with unskilled workers at higher risk. Verbal abuse was linked to socio-economic status, family type, and number of children, prevalent in the middle class (32%), nuclear families (70%), and 1 to 2 children in households (76%). Higher occupational positions correlated with lower likelihood of sexual abuse. Socio-economic status also influenced sexual abuse, with higher prevalence among upper middle-class women (34.9%). Women in nuclear families faced higher rates of social abuse (62.8%), while joint and broken families showed a decreasing trend. Alcohol consumption by husbands correlated with a higher prevalence of social abuse (71.3%). Economic abuse was more prevalent in nuclear families (64.3%), but decreasing compared to other family types. Women in a rural area have to be educated regarding the domestic violence as it is emerging as a big public health problem. Through the NGOs and from the government the women were informed about the Prevention of Domestic violence act 2005, and they were encouraged to seek the help of the police in the nearby area.

KEYWORDS : Domestic Violence, Ever-married women, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, Rural Tamil Nadu.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a public health problem and it is violating the rights of women. Anyone can be a victim of such violence irrespective of age, sex, race, caste, women can be victims but mostly the victims are women. The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993) accepted that the rights of women and girls are "an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights." The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Violence against women has immediate effects on women's health, sometimes it is fatal. Physical, mental, and behavioral health consequences persist long after the violence has stopped. Violence against women occurs in every country and culture and is rooted in social and cultural attitudes and norms that privilege men over women. Women are far more likely than men to experience injury as a result of physical violence by intimate partners. In most cases women who have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner at any time after 15 years are significantly more likely than other women to report overall poor health, chronic pain, memory loss, and problems in walking and carrying out daily activities. Studies have also found women who are abused by their intimate partners are more likely to report a range of health problems such as headaches, chronic pelvic pain, back pain, abdominal pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and gastrointestinal disorders.

Women experiencing intimate partner violence are also to be at greater risk of unintended pregnancy. Intimate partner violence in pregnancy also increases the likelihood of miscarriage, stillbirth, pre-term delivery and low birth weight babies. The 2013 study showed that women who experienced intimate partner violence were 16% more likely to suffer a miscarriage and 41% more likely to have a pre-term birth. These forms of violence can lead to depression, post-traumatic stress and other anxiety disorders, sleep difficulties, eating disorders, and suicide attempts.

In India, the attitudes of the society that convey acceptance or justification of domestic violence have made the situation worse. Half of Indian girls around 53 percent think that a husband is justified in beating his wife. Crime against women in India reached 2,44,270 cases registered (NCRB, Government of India) of which,1,06,527 cases were related to cruelty by husband or his relatives. It is pertinent that reported cases of domestic violence represent only the tip of the iceberg where the majority of cases are invisible both socially and institutionally. The worst problem in India is the victim will not realize that they are victimized. Only one fourth of them seeking help to end violence against them because the way women are brought up in India explains the scenario.

In Tamil Nadu 38558 women complained of domestic violence through petitions, out of them 13823 women filed cases in court 10,742 cases were pending in the courts,3484 cases were given judgement.600 of them required immediate medical treatment.21,374 victims were dealt by Protection officers and they were not given any case. In 2016 WHO endorsed a global plan of action to strengthen the health system to address interpersonal violence against women, girls, and children. WHO collaborated with international agencies and organizations to reduce and eliminate violence globally through initiatives such as the Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Together for Girls, the Violence Against Women

Working Group of the International Federation of Obstetrician-Gynecologists (FIGO) and the UN Joint Programme on Essential Services Package for Women Subject to Violence.

The objectives of the study are; to estimate the prevalence of domestic violence among ever married women in a rural area of Tamil Nadu, to identify the factors associated with domestic violence among ever married women in a rural area of Tamil Nadu and to study different types of domestic violence and its association with socio demographic profile among ever married women in a rural area of Tamil Nadu.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the community level as a community based cross sectional study to estimate the prevalence of domestic violence and its determinants among ever married women in in Keelasivalpatti PHC area of Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu.

It was carried out from April 2017 to July 2018 for a period of 15 months. The study population comprised of married women in the age group of 15 - 49 years and the study participants included ever married women in the age group of 15 - 49 years. Study participants that were excluded were participants who are sick with debilitating disorders and who did not give consent.

The sample size was calculated using $Z^2_{1-\alpha/2} \, pq/d^2$. It was calculated to be 421. The total collect sample size is 503 ever married women using multistage sampling method. The participants were interviewed using a pretested and predesigned questionnaire. Informed verbal consent was obtained before the start of the interview. After getting the clearance from Institutional ethical committee in Govt Stanley medical college and Department of Public health and preventive medicine the study was conducted.

Data collection was done in the study area after obtaining permission from The Department of Community Medicine and the Dean, Govt. Stanley Medical College.

The collected data was entered for analysis in Microsoft Excel. This data was exported to IBM SPSS version 17 for analysis. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviations, and range) were employed to describe continuous variables, while frequency distributions were obtained for dichotomous variables. Associations between qualitative variables were done using Chi square tests, Fisher's exact test; multivariate analysis was done with the sociodemographic variables Odds ratio and their confidence intervals was calculated to assess the estimate of the risk. A P-value of less than 0.05 has been considered to be significant.

The Operational Definitions Include:

"Ever married women are persons who have been married at least once in their lives although their current marital status may not be 'married'."

"The term 'domestic' includes violence by an intimate partner and by other family members, wherever this violence takes place and in whatever form"

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the age wise distribution of ever married women. 19 (3.8%) were <20 years of age, 217 (43.1%) were in the age group of 20-29 years. Mean age of the women is 31.50±7.719. Among the study participant's husband's age 114 (22.7%) were in the age group of 20 to 30 years, 124 (24.7%) were between 41 to 50 years. Mean age of Husbands is 37.78±7.995. Among the literates 92 (18.3%) had primary education, 118 (23.5%) had gone to up to middle school, 128 (25.4%) completed high school, 74 (14.7%) had completed

diploma or higher secondary education. 304 (60.4%) were living in nuclear family, 192 (38.2%) were living in joint family, 7 (1.4%) belonged to broken families. age in years during marriage 209 (41.5%) were married between 15 to 20 years, 247 (49.2%) were married between 21 to 25 years, 44 (8.7%) were between 26 to 30 years, only 3 (0.6%) were married above 30 years. the number of children among the study participants. Around 33 (6.6%) had no children, 37 (74.2%) had 1 to 2 children, 97 (19.3%) had 3 and more children.

In this study, it is noted that married women's education is significantly associated with prevalence of physical abuse with a higher prevalence of married women have gone to high school (33%) were physically abused. From Table 2, there is a statistically significant association between husband's education and physical abuse with a higher prevalence of husband's education in high school (32.4%). There is a statistically significant association between women's occupation and physical abuse with a greater number of unskilled workers getting physically abused. It is noted that statistically significant association found between type of family and physical abuse with women in nuclear family are physically abused than others with a prevalence of 68.2%. There is a statistically significant association between alcohol abuse and physical violence. Around 90.9% were physically abused when their husband is under alcohol.

It is found that a statistically significant association found between women's age and verbal abuse with a higher prevalence in the age group of 30 to 39 years of ever married women (40%). There is a significant association between women's education and verbal abuse with a higher prevalence among women who completed their middle schools (30%). There is also a statistically significant association found between socio economic status, type of family, number of children and verbal abuse with a higher prevalence in middle class (32%), nuclear family (70%), 1 to 2 children (76%) respectively. Around 85.3% of married women are verbally abused when their husband drunk alcohol. There is a statistically significant association found between alcohol and verbal abuse.

From Table 3, it is stated that there is a significant association found between women's occupation and sexual abuse with a higher number of women getting sexually abused among unskilled workers (38.6%) and home makers (38.6%). There is a decreasing trend of getting sexually abused when the women occupied a higher order in occupation. There is also a statistically significant association found between socio economic status and sexual abuse with a higher prevalence rate among upper middle-class women of 34.9%. There is also a significant association between alcohol abuse and sexual violence. Around 83.1% of husbands sexually abusing their wives when they are under alcoholic intoxication.

There is a statistically significant association found between women's age and social abuse with greater number of sexually abused in the age group of 30 to 39 with a prevalence of 39.5%. There is a statistically significant association found between women's education and social abuse with a higher prevalence of women getting socially abused in the category of middle school (38%).

Women living in a nuclear family are socially abused at a higher rate (62.8%) and there is a decreasing trend of social abuse in joint family and broken families. There is a significant association between alcohol abuse and social violence. Around 71.3% women were socially abused when their husband drinks alcohol.

In Table 4, there is a statistically significant association between women's age and psychological abuse with a higher prevalence of women in the age group of 30-39 years. There is

a significant association between factors like husband's age, women's education, husband's education, women's occupation, socioeconomic status, type of family, number of children, alcohol abuse and psychological violence with a higher prevalence of with 40.1% in the husband's age group of 31 to 40 years, higher prevalence of women's education in the category of primary school (27.2%), higher prevalence of husband's education in the category of high school (29.6%), higher prevalence of women's occupation among unskilled Workers (35.8%), higher prevalence of socioeconomic status under upper class of 32.7%, higher prevalence in nuclear family of 63%, higher prevalence with one to 2 children category of 67.9% respectively.

There is a statistically significant association found between type of family and economic abuse with a higher prevalence in nuclear family of 64.3% and there was a decreasing trend of economic abuse when compared to other type of families.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of Socio-Demographic variables

Variables		Frequency N=503
Age group in years	<20	19 (3.8)
	20 to 29	217 (43.1)
	30 to 39	155 (30.8)
	40 to 49	112 (22.3)
Husband's age group	20 to 30	114 (22.7)
	31 to 40	229 (45.5)
	41 to 50	124 (24.7)
	51 to 60	36 (7.2)
Education of women	Illiterate	10 (2)
	Primary	92 (18.3)
	Middle	118 (23.5)
	High	128 (25.4)
	Diploma/Higher Secondary	74 (14.7)
	Degree	81 (16.1)
Husband's education	Illiterate	13 (2.6)
	Primary	78 (15.5)
	Middle	137 (27.2)
	High	130 (25.8)
	Diploma/Higher Secondary	69 (13.7)
	Degree	76 (15.1)
Occupation of women	Home maker	184 (36.6)
	Unskilled	142 (28.2)
	Semiskilled	71 (14.1)
	Skilled	55 (10.9)
	Clerical/Shop owner/ Farmer	39 (7.8)
	Semi Professional	12 (2.4)
	Professional	0 (0)
Husband's Occupation	Unemployed	1 (0.2)
	Unskilled	75 (14.9)
	Semiskilled	150 (29.8)
	Skilled	198 (39.4)
	Clerical/Shop owner/ Farmer	67 (13.3)
	Semi Professional	8 (1.6)
	Professional	4 (0.8)
Type of Family	Nuclear Family	304 (60.4)
	Joint Family	192 (38.2)
	Broken Family	7 (1.4)
Socio economic class	Upper	222 (44.1)
	Upper middle	124 (24.7)
	Middle	110 (21.9)
	Lower middle	32 (6.4)
Age at marriage in years	15 to 20	209 (41.5)
	21 to 25	247 (49.2)
	26 to 30	44 (8.7)
Number of children	No children	33 (6)
	1 to 2	373 (74.2)
	3 and above	97 (19.3)

Table 2: Factors associated with physical and verbal abuse among married women

Parameters		Physical abuse n(%) Yes (N=176)	No (N=327)	Chi square	P value	Verbal abuse n (%) Yes (N=150)	No (N=353)	Chi square	P value
Women's age	<20	3(1.7)	16(4.9)	5.903	0.116	3(2)	16(4.5)	17.813	0.001*
	20-29	69(39.2)	148(45.3)			46(30.7)	171(48.4)		
	30-39	60(34.1)	95(29.1)			60(40)	95(26.9)		
	40-49	44(25)	68(20.8)			41(27.3)	71(20.1)		
Husband's age	21 to 30	38(21.6)	76(23.2)	0.881	0.83	25(16.7)	89(25.2)	5.491	0.139
	31 to 40	79(44.9)	150(45.9)			70(46.7)	159(45)		
	41 to 50	44(25)	80(24.5)			41(27.3)	83(23.5)		
	51 to 60	15(8.5)	21(6.4)			14(9.3)	22(6.2)		
Women's education	Primary	43(24.4)	49(15)	47.908	0.001*	36(24)	56(15.9)	41.978	0.001*
	Middle	49(27.8)	69(21.1)			45(30)	73(20.7)		
	High	58(33)	70(21.4)			41(27.3)	87(24.6)		
	Higher secondary	14(8)	60(18.3)			12(8)	62(17.6)		
	Graduate	7(4)	74(22.3)			8(5.3)	73(20.7)		
	Illiterate	5(2.8)	5(1.3)			8(5.3)	2(0.6)		
Husband's education	Primary	34(19.3)	44(13.5)	53.295	0.001*	31(20.7)	47	21.474	0.001*
	Middle	47(26.7)	90(27.5)			39(26)	98		
	High	57(32.4)	73(22.3)			48(32)	82(23.2)		
	Higher secondary	19(10.8)	50(15.3)			12(8)	57(16.1)		
	Graduate	10(5.7)	66(20.2)			13(8.7)	63(17.8)		
	Illiterate	9(5.1)	4(1.2)			7(4.7)	6(1.7)		
Women's occupation	Professional	0 (0)	0(0)	46.841	0.001*	0(0)	0(0)	22.477	0.001*
	Semi Professional	2(1.1)	10(3.1)			2(1.3)	10(2.8)		
	Clerical, Shop owner, Farmer	4(2.3)	35(10.7)			7(4.7)	32(9.1)		
	Skilled	12(6.8)	43(13.1)			9(6)	46(13)		
	Semi-skilled	31(17.6)	40(12.2)			26(17.3)	45(12.7)		
	Unskilled	77(43.8)	65(19.9)			60(40)	82(23.2)		
	Home maker	50(28.4)	134(41)			46(30.7)	138(39.1)		
Husband's occupation	Professional	0(0)	4(1.2)	53.295	0.001*	1(0.7)	3(0.8)	14.527	0.024
	Semi Professional	0(0)	8(2.4)			0(0)	8(2.3)		
	Clerical, Shop owner, Farmer	9(5.1)	58(17.7)			14(9.3)	53(15)		

	Skilled	52(29.5)	146(44.6)			52(34.7)	146(41.4)		
	Semi-skilled	78(44.3)	72(22)			53(35.3)	97(27.5)		
	Unskilled	36(20.5)	39(11.9)			29(19.3)	46(13)		
	Unemployed	1(0.6)	0(0)			1(0.7)	0(0)		
Socio economic status	Upper	39(22.2)	183(56)	77.034	0.001*	45(30)	176(50.1)	77.034	0.001*
	Upper middle	48(27.3)	76(23.2)			38(25.3)	86(24.4)		
	Middle	69(39.2)	41(12.5)			48(32.1)	62(17.6)		
	Lower middle	18(10.2)	14(4.3)			14(9.3)	18(5.1)		
	Lower	2(1.1)	13(4)			5(3.3)	10(2.8)		
Type of family	Nuclear	120(68.2)	184(56.3)	12.767	0.002*	105(70)	199(56.4)	16.435	0.001*
	Joint	51(29)	141(43.1)			40(26.7)	152(43.1)		
	Broken	5(2.8)	2(0.6)			5(3.3)	2(0.6)		
Age at marriage	15 to 20	75(42.6)	134(41)	2.126	0.547	62(41.3)	147(41.6)	0.615	0.893
	21 to 25	89(50.6)	158(48.3)			76(50.7)	171(48.4)		
	26 to 30	11(6.3)	33(10.1)			11(7.3)	33(9.3)		
	Above 30	1(0.6)	2(0.6)			1(0.7)	2(0.6)		
Number of children	No children	5(2.8)	28(8.6)	18.465	0.001*	6(4)	27(7.6)	14.945	0.001*
	1 to 2	121(68.7)	252(77.1)			100(66.7)	273(77.3)		
	>3	50(28.4)	47(14.3)			44(29.3)	53(14.9)		
Alcohol status	Yes	160(90.9)	149(45.6)	99.288	0.001*	128(85.3)	181(51.3)	51.538	0.001*
	No	16(9.1)	78(54.4)			22 (14.7)	172(48.7)		

Table 3: Factors associated with Sexual and Social abuse among married women

Parameters		Sexual abuse n (%) Yes (N=83)	No (N=420)	Chi square	P value	Social abuse n (%) Yes (N=129)	No (N=374)	Chi square	P value
Women's age	<20	3(3.6)	16(3.8)	0.73	0.866	2(1.6)	17(4.5)	9.543	0.023*
	20-29	36(43.4)	181(43.1)			45(34.9)	172(46)		
	30-39	23(27.7)	132(31.4)			51(39.5)	104(27.8)		
	40-49	21(25.3)	91(21.7)			31(24)	81(21.7)		
Husband's age	21 to 30	17(20.5)	97(23.1)	3.159	0.368	22(17.1)	92(24.6)	4.272	0.234
	31 to 40	38(45.8)	191(45.5)			59(45.7)	170(45.5)		
	41 to 50	25(30.1)	99(23.6)			36(27.9)	88(23.5)		
	51 to 60	3(3.6)	33(7.9)			12(9.3)	24(6.4)		
Women's education	Primary	19(22.9)	73(17.4)	7.184	0.207	25(19.4)	67(17.9)	34.7	0.001*
	Middle	25(30.1)	93(22.1)			49(38)	69(18.4)		
	High	20(24.1)	108(25.7)			24(18.6)	104(27.8)		
	Higher secondary	11(13.3)	63(15)			16(12.4)	58(15.5)		
	Graduate	7(8.4)	74(17.6)			9(7)	72(19.3)		
	Illiterate	1(1.2)	9(2.1)			6(4.7)	4(1.1)		
Husband's education	Primary	18(21.7)	60(14.3)	5.06	0.409	21(16.3)	57(15.2)	13.686	0.018*
	Middle	22(26.5)	115(27.4)			46(35.7)	91(24.3)		
	High	18(21.7)	112(26.7)			31(24)	99(26.5)		
	Higher secondary	14(16.9)	55(13.1)			14(10.9)	55(14.7)		
	Graduate	9(10.8)	67(16)			11(8.5)	65(17.4)		
	Illiterate	2(2.4)	11(2.6)			6(4.7)	7(1.9)		
Women's occupation	Professional	0(0)	0(0)	15.24	0.009*	0(0)	0(0)	9.233	0.1
	Semi Professional	1(1.2)	11(2.6)			1(0.8)	11(2.9)		
	Clerical, Shop owner, Farmer	2(2.4)	37(8.8)			8(6.2)	31(8.3)		
	Skilled	2(2.4)	53(12.6)			8(6.2)	47(12.6)		
	Semi-skilled	14(16.9)	57(13.6)			24(18.6)	47(12.6)		
	Unskilled	32(38.6)	110(26.2)			41(31.8)	101(27)		
	Home maker	32(38.6)	152(36.2)			47(36.4)	137(36.6)		
Husband's occupation	Professional	0(0)	4(1)	12.862	0.045*	1(0.8)	3(0.8)	12.902	0.045*
	Semi Professional	0(0)	8(1.9)			0(0)	8(2.1)		
	Clerical, Shop owner, Farmer	7(8.4)	60(14.3)			22(17.1)	45(12)		
	Skilled	25(30.1)	173(41.2)			41(31.8)	157(42)		
	Semi-skilled	33(39.8)	117(27.9)			47(36.4)	103(27.5)		
	Unskilled	18(21.7)	57 (13.6)			17(13.2)	58(15.5)		
	Unemployed	0(0)	1(0.2)			1(0.8)	0(0)		
Socio economic status	Upper	17(20.5)	205(48.8)	23.822	0.001*	53	169(45.2)	4.768	0.312
	Upper middle	29(34.9)	95(22.6)			39	85(22.7)		
	Middle	27(32.5)	83(19.8)			25	85(22.7)		
	Lower middle	8(9.6)	24(5.7)			10	22(5.9)		
	Lower	2(2.4)	13(3.1)			2	13(3.5)		
Type of family	Nuclear	50(60.2)	254(60.5)	8.664	0.013*	81(62.8)	223(59.6)	8.917	0.012*
	Joint	29(34.9)	163(38.8)			43(33.3)	149(39.8)		
	Broken	4(4.8)	3(0.7)			5(3.9)	2(0.5)		

Age at marriage	15 to 20	40(48.2)	169(40.2)	2.93	0.403	54(41.9)	155(41.4)	3.686	0.297
	21 to 25	37(44.6)	210(50)			68(52.7)	179(47.9)		
	26 to 30	5(6)	39(9.3)			7(5.4)	37(9.9)		
	Above 30	1(1.2)	2(0.5)			0(0)	3(0.8)		
Number of children	No children	6(7.2)	27(6.4)	6.27	0.043*	2(1.6)	31(8.3)	8.083	0.018*
	1 to 2	53(63.9)	320(76.2)			97(75.2)	276(73.8)		
	>3	24(28.9)	73(17.4)			30(23.3)	67(18)		
Alcohol status	Yes	69 (83.1)	240(57.1)	19.758	0.001*	92(71.3)	217(58)	7.157	0.007*
	No	14(16.8)	180(42.9)			37(28.7)	157(42)		

Table 4: Factors associated with psychological and economic abuse among married women

Parameters		Psychological abuse n(%)		Chi square	P value	Economic abuse n (%)		Chi square	P value
		Yes (N=162)	No (N=341)			Yes (N=245)	No (N=258)		
Women's age	<20	3(1.9)	16(4.7)	22.5	0.001*	6(2.4)	13(5)	2.577	0.462
	20-29	50(30.9)	167(49)			109(44.5)	108(41.9)		
	30-39	57(35.2)	98(28.7)			77(31.4)	78(30.2)		
	40-49	52(32.1)	60(17.6)			53(21.6)	59(22.9)		
Husband's age	21 to 30	26(16)	88(25.8)	17.669	0.001*	54(22)	60(23.3)	0.558	0.906
	31 to 40	65(40.1)	164(48.1)			115(46.9)	114(44.2)		
	41 to 50	53(32.7)	71(20.8)			60(24.5)	64(24.8)		
	51 to 60	18(11.1)	18(5.3)			16(6.5)	20(7.8)		
Women's education	Primary	44(27.2)	48(14.1)	26.094	0.001*	53(21.6)	39(15.1)	9.257	0.099
	Middle	39(24.1)	79(23.2)			57(23.3)	61(23.6)		
	High	39(24.1)	89(26.1)			61(24.9)	67(26)		
	Higher secondary	18(11.1)	56(16.4)			31(12.7)	43(16.7)		
	Graduate	15(9.3)	66(19.4)			35(14.3)	46(17.8)		
	Illiterate	7(4.3)	3(0.9)			8(3.3)	2(0.8)		
Husband's education	Primary	35 (21.6)	43 (12.6)	21.322	0.001*	47(19.2)	31(12)	8.486	0.131
	Middle	41(25.3)	96(28.2)			63(25.7)	74(28.7)		
	High	48(29.6)	82(24)			63(25.7)	67(26)		
	Higher secondary	14(8.6)	55(16.1)			31(12.7)	38(14.7)		
	Graduate	16(9.9)	60(17.6)			32(13.1)	44(17.1)		
	Illiterate	8(4.9)	5 (1.5)			9(3.7)	4(1.6)		
Women's occupation	Professional	0(0)	0(0)	11.42	0.044*	0(0)	0(0)	8.407	0.135
	Semi Professional	4(2.5)	8(2.3)			3(1.2)	9(3.5)		
	Clerical, Shop owner, Farmer	7(4.3)	32(9.4)			15(6.1)	24(9.3)		
	Skilled	12(7.4)	43(12.6)			21(8.6)	34(13.2)		
	Semi-skilled	24(14.8)	47(13.8)			37(15.1)	34(13.2)		
	Unskilled	58(35.8)	84(24.6)			73(29.8)	69(26.7)		
	Home maker	57 (35.2)	127 (37.2)			96(39.2)	88(34.1)		
Husband's occupation	Professional	1(0.6)	3(0.9)	7.157	0.307	2(0.8)	2(0.8)	8.465	0.206
	Semi Professional	1(0.6)	7(2.1)			3(1.2)	5(1.9)		
	Clerical, Shop owner, Farmer	16(9.9)	51(15)			28(11.4)	39(15.1)		
	Skilled	60(37)	138(40.5)			90(36.7)	108(41.9)		
	Semi-skilled	56(34.6)	94(27.6)			75(30.6)	75(29.1)		
	Unskilled	28(17.3)	47(13.8)			46(18.8)	29(11.2)		
	Unemployed	0(0)	1(0.3)			1(0.4)	0(0)		
Socio economic status	Upper	53(32.7)	169 (49.6)	18.2	0.001*	104(42.4)	118(45.7)	5.118	0.275
	Upper middle	50(30.9)	74(21.7)			57(23.3)	67(26)		
	Middle	42(25.9)	68(19.9)			54(22)	56(21.7)		
	Lower middle	15(9.3)	17(5)			21(8.6)	11(4.3)		
	Lower	2(1.2)	13(3.8)			9(3.7)	6(2.3)		
Type of family	Nuclear	102(63)	202(59.2)	16.85	0.001*	138(56.3)	166(64.3)	9.583	0.008*
	Joint	53(32.7)	139(40.8)			100(40.8)	92(35.7)		
	Broken	7(4.3)	0(0)			7(2.9)	0(0)		
Age at marriage	15 to 20	74(45.7)	135(39.6)	2.262	0.52	96(39.2)	113(43.8)	4.97	0.174
	21 to 25	76(46.9)	171(50.1)			121(49.4)	126(48.8)		
	26 to 30	11(6.8)	33(9.7)			25(10.2)	19(7.4)		
	Above 30	1(0.6)	2(0.6)			3(1.2)	0(0)		
Number of children	No children	10(6.2)	23(6.7)	6.781	0.034*	18(7.3)	15(5.8)	0.483	0.785
	1 to 2	110(67.9)	263(77.1)			180(73.5)	193(74.8)		
	>3	42(25.9)	55(16.2)			47(19.2)	50(19.4)		
Alcohol status	Yes	136(84)	173(50.7)	51.146	0.001*	155(63.3)	154(59.7)	0.678	0.41
	No	26(16)	168(49.3)			90(36.7)	104(40.3)		

DISCUSSION

The current study is a community based cross sectional study conducted to estimate the prevalence of domestic violence and its determinants among ever married women in a rural area of Tamil Nadu. In the present study various forms of domestic violence were estimated. The overall prevalence of domestic violence found in this study was 54.87% which was similar to the study done in rural Puducherry (56.7%) and Eastern India (40, 41). The NFHS-4 reported a prevalence of 44.2% among ever married women in rural area of Tamil Nadu. The reason for this difference could be due to the small geographical area and small sample size covered in this study. The physical abuse accounts 35%, verbal abuse accounts 29.8%, sexual abuse accounts 16.5%, economic abuse accounts 48.7%, social abuse accounts 25.6%, psychological abuse accounts 32.8%. In a WHO conducted multi country study on women's health and domestic violence against women 13-61% experienced physical violence by her partner, 6-59% of people experienced sexual violence by their intimate partner at some point in their lives, 20-75% experienced verbal /emotional abuse in their life time. The present study fell within this range.

George et al has done a similar study the prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors among married women in a rural area of Puducherry South India reported 51.3% of psychological violence, in this study the prevalence of psychological violence was 32.8%. The prevalence of physical abuse in the present study was 35% whereas the prevalence of physical abuse by George et al was 40%. The difference was due to the acceptability of physical violence at the hands of husbands by the women in a rural area.

The prevalence of physical abuse in the present study was 35% whereas the prevalence of physical abuse by George et al was 40%. The difference was due to the acceptability of physical violence at the hands of husbands by the women in a rural area. A study conducted by Dasgupta et al in a rural area in West Bengal and an individual and community level determinants of domestic violence in rural Bangladesh by Michael Koenig et al also took the same age group of study participants from 15 to 49 years. A woman was abused throughout her life but during the reproductive age group it produces some impact on health.

Women's education has found an association with various forms of violence such as physical, verbal, sexual, social, psychological. Jejeebhoy and Cook et al found a significantly reduced risk of physical abuse by the husband with increasing education of the wife. There is a significant association between husband's education and various forms of domestic violence. The trend here is as husband's education increases beyond high school the prevalence of various forms of domestic violence decreases. Women's education and husband's education doesn't have a significant association with sexual abuse. This is similar to the study by Babu et al in eastern India. It is similar to the studies conducted by Visaria et al 1998. In Indian scenario higher levels of Education for women as well as husband were found to be protective against domestic violence.

A study conducted by Dasgupta et al in a slum of West Bengal family income was a significant predictor of domestic violence. In that study the occurrence of violence decreased with increasing family income. In the present study per capita income and the socio-economic status had a strong association with domestic violence. This could be due to the purchasing power of the family, as still now the family was maintained by the women in Indian scenario. When the purchasing power decreases there will be an increase in frustration which may result in some form of domestic violence. Higher socio-economic status has shown an inverse relation to the risk of domestic violence. This is similar to the studies by Visalia et al, Jejeebhoy and cook et al, Mahajan et al and Evaluation project 1997.

Type of family, number of children also found to have significant association with various forms of violence. Prevalence of violence decreases in cases of joint family as well as when the couple having more than 2 children. This is similar to the studies done on Puducherry by George et al. Kimuna et al, George et al, Dasgupta et al found a very strong association between alcohol intake and domestic violence. Kimuna found that wife of a drunken man increases the risk of physical and sexual violence. In the present study it increases the risk of physical, sexual, verbal, social, psychological violence.

The present study showed a strong association between alcohol and various forms of domestic violence and socio-economic status which also regressed through logistic regression. It showed a similar result with Dasgupta et al in rural slum of West Bengal.

The study shows the importance of domestic violence and its impact on health on various aspects. It concluded a prevalence of physical violence around 35%, economic abuse around 48.1%, verbal abuse was around 29.8%, sexual abuse around 16.5%, social abuse around 25.6%, psychological abuse was 32.8% and the overall prevalence of domestic violence in any form was 54.87%. In this the prevalence of economic abuse was high. Even though it was high the women were supported in many forms at the policy level by the government. The other forms of violence like physical, verbal, social, psychological have to be considered and there was a strong association found between alcoholism, socio economic status, and education of the women as well as the education of the spouse. Women in a rural area have to be educated regarding the domestic violence as it is emerging as a big public health problem. Through the NGOs and from the government the women were informed about the Prevention of Domestic violence act 2005, and they were encouraged to seek the help of the police in the nearby area.

The study has strengths as well as some limitations. The study was conducted with a questionnaire to assess various forms of domestic violence which is similar to the NFHS 4 questionnaire so that it can be compared with other studies. Domestic violence is a sensitive issue. It is difficult to get the data from the participants, it may have recall bias. There will be under reporting of cases due to fear of stigma and lack of awareness about legal aspects available under the provisions for women empowerment.

Married women would not reveal the abuses due to domestic violence usually. The study was conducted in PHC area only so the primary care physician has to be encouraged to do screening for domestic violence at the health facilities with a screening tool. Village health nurses, anganwadi workers can be involved to interact with the women as they are part of the community for creating a rapport and providing health services which was needed to the victims. Special care should be given to illiterate women and they have to be educated through VHN and AWW. With the help of National mental health programmed operating at the district level the psychiatric illness of a women due to domestic violence have to be addressed. Legal options and other helplines have to be generated in the public. Engaging self-help groups in the rural areas will also create awareness to the women.

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