

A Cross Sectional Study of Domestic Violence in Ever Married Women in Urban Slum of Latur



Social Science

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Violence against women and girls has grievous effects on their physical, psychological, sexual and economical status. The prevalence of domestic violence in ever married women in India was nearly 39.7% (NFHS-3).

Aim and objective: To find out the prevalence of different types of domestic violence against ever married women in reproductive age group. Material and methods: This community-based, cross-sectional, descriptive and observational study was conducted on all the ever-married women in the reproductive age group residing in the urban slum of Latur. Statistical analysis was done by using IBM SPSS 21.0 version. Results: The overall prevalence of domestic violence against ever married women was 55.83%. The prevalence of current physical and psychological violence was 28.16% and 49.03% respectively and the prevalence of ever physical and psychological violence was 37.9% and 55.83% respectively. The most common perpetrator of domestic violence against married women were their husband (83.48%), followed by mother in law (44.35%). Main reasons for domestic violence were, not cooking properly (25.21%); not attending to households (24.34%); not having a male child (26.96%); dowry related problems (19.13%) and alcoholic addiction of husbands (53.04%) of the study subjects. Conclusion: The prevalence of domestic violence is more in urban slums, therefore more attention is needed towards those vulnerable women folk residing in these areas.

Introduction:

Violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures, and maims – physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girls' equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy fundamental freedoms¹. Violence against women and girls takes place in the community, society, at the place of work, at public places and even at their homes, what should have been the most secure environment for them. In fact intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence against women.² A report published by WHO in 2013 called 'Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence' states that the global prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among all ever-partnered women was 30.0%. The prevalence was highest in the WHO African, Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, where approximately 37% of ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives with prevalence in South-East Asia to be 37.7%³ The National Family Health Survey-III (NFHS-3) of India collected information from married and unmarried women age 15-49 years about their experience of emotional, physical and sexual violence which revealed that married women were more likely to experience violence by their husbands than by anyone else and the prevalence was nearly 39.7%. It was also reported that spousal violence varied greatly by state; ranged from 6.9% in Himachal Pradesh to 60.8% in Bihar and 41.8% in West Bengal. In Maharashtra physical violence was 30.6%, sexual violence was 2.0% and emotional, physical or sexual violence was 33.4%.⁴ Being a confidential, intimate, sensitive and stigma associated with it, domestic violence is hidden and grossly underreported in India including Maharashtra ;urban slums being most vulnerable for domestic violence.

Aim and objectives: The present study was conducted with the aim to find out the prevalence of different types of domestic violence against ever married women in reproductive age group (15-45 years). **Material and methods:** It was a community-based, cross-sectional, descriptive and observational study conducted in Patel chowk area, ward no.1, Latur, (urban slum) which is also the Urban Health Centre field practice area of Gov-

ernment Medical College, Latur. (Patel chowk area has 4 wards out of which 1 ward was selected randomly by lottery method.)

Study population: All the ever-married women in the reproductive age group (15-45 years) residing in the area.

Inclusion criteria: All the ever-married women of 15-45 years of age, permanent residents of Patel chowk, ward no.1 and willing to participate.

Exclusion criteria: All un-married women and married women above 45 years of age; mother in law; non-cooperative women who refused to furnish necessary information; women who were seriously physically or mentally ill.

Study duration: December 2013 to November 2014. Ethical clearance for study was taken from the institutional ethical committee of Government Medical College, Latur, before starting the study.

Study tool: It was a pre-designed, pre-tested semi-structured interview schedule.

Procedure of data collection: Home visits were carried out, and face to face interview with the study subjects was done in the absence of their guardian/husband but in the presence of a female health worker/female intern by the Principal Investigator. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants and informed consent was obtained.

Domestic violence: Operational definition of domestic violence was used as per definition of the United Nations as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life".⁵

Information was taken about the socio-demographic profile of the study population and any occurrence of domestic violence (both physical and psychological) imparted to them either during current period, life time or both.

Current violence: Presence of domestic violence in the last one

year was regarded as current violence.

Life time violence: Presence of domestic violence any time in their lifetime, but before one year was regarded as life time violence.

Statistical analysis: Chi-square test and Fisher's exact test were applied and statistical analysis was done by using IBM SPSS 21.0 version.

Results:

Fig no. 1: Percentage of study subjects who have experienced Domestic Violence ever, in the past 12 months (current) and before past 12 months (lifetime) (N = 206)

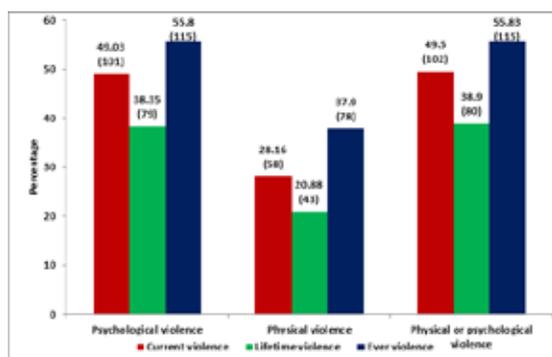


Table no.2: Prevalence of different forms of physical and psychological violence

| Type of violence* | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Physical violence (n=78) | | |
| Slapping | 57 | 73.08 |
| Beating | 36 | 46.15 |
| Hitting with objects | 18 | 23.07 |
| Sexual abuse | 3 | 3.84 |
| Psychological violence (n=115) | | |
| Insulting | 107 | 93.04 |
| Threatening | 26 | 22.61 |
| Withholding food or resources | 12 | 10.43 |

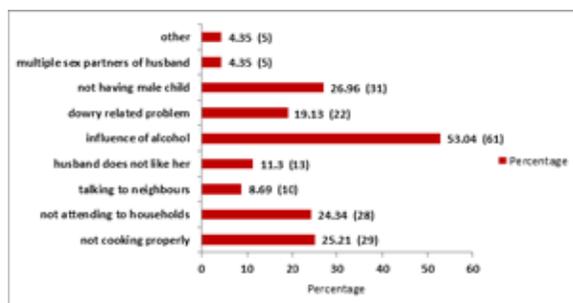
*Multiple responses

Table no.3: Persons committing Domestic Violence (N=115)

| Persons | Frequency* | Percentage |
|---------------|------------|------------|
| Husband | 96 | 83.48 |
| Mother in law | 51 | 44.35 |
| Father in law | 7 | 6.08 |
| Other in laws | 4 | 3.48 |

* Multiple responses

Fig no. 4: Distribution of study subjects according to main reasons of domestic violence* (N= 115)



*MultipleResponse

The present study found that the overall prevalence of domestic violence against ever married women was 55.83%. The prevalence of current physical and psychological violence was 28.16% and 49.03% respectively and the prevalence of ever physical and psychological violence was 37.9% and 55.83% respectively. The findings showed higher prevalence of domestic violence among slum population compared to the NFHS-3 observation in the general women population. The most common form of physical violence was slapping (73.08%) and the most common form of psychological violence was insulting (93.04%).

The most common perpetrator of domestic violence against married women were their husband (83.48%), followed by mother in law (44.35%)

Main reasons for domestic violence were, not cooking properly (25.21%); not attending to households (24.34%); not having a male child (26.96%); dowry related problems (19.13%) and alcoholic addiction of husbands (53.04%) of the study subjects. This indicates that gender roles and traditional societal norms and alcohol abuse are at the basis of this social problem.

Discussion: In the present study prevalence of domestic violence was found to be high. Prevalence of any form of domestic violence ever among the ever married women was found to be 55.83%. Similar findings were found by Abhik Sinha et al⁶ in a study conducted in a slum of Kolkata which revealed the prevalence of domestic violence to be 54%. Another study conducted in the slums of Bangalore by Corinne H Rocca et al⁷ showed the prevalence of domestic violence to be 56% which is similar to the index study. In the studies conducted by Kamlesh Kumar Sharma et al⁸ among nurses in New Delhi and Manisha Ruikar et al⁹ in urban slums Pune, the prevalence of physical violence and psychological violence were 43.3% and 65% and 61.5% and 73.3% respectively.

The most common form of physical violence was slapping (73.08%) followed by beating (46.15%) and hitting with objects (23.07%) which was consistent with the findings of other studies.^{9,10,11,12,13} Insulting was the most common form of psychological violence in the present study and other studies.^{6,10,11}

As regards the persons committing domestic violence, husbands (83.48%) were the most common perpetrators, followed by mother in law (44.35%). Similar findings were found in many other studies.^{6,12,13,14,15} Among the main reasons for domestic violence were, not cooking properly, not attending to the households, alcohol addiction of husbands, dowry related problems and not having a male child which were corroborative with other studies.^{6,10,15,16}

Recommendations: As the prevalence of domestic violence is more in urban slums, more attention is needed towards those vulnerable women folk residing in these areas. Many societal norm and gender roles which are unfavorable to women needs to be challenged. Unless such norms are broken women will continue to experience domestic violence. Availability of alcohol, which is one of the major cause of domestic violence, should be reduced. General awareness of this problem among the community and society should be raised by using different communication method including mass media like television and films in order to bring about a change in community's attitude. Social support of the women should be increased and such organization which support and help victims of domestic violence should be strengthened. The laws against the perpetrators of domestic violence should be made more stringent so that it would be beneficial to curb the issue.

Limitations:

The sensitivity and stigma associated with violence as well as fear of reprisal, may lead to under-reporting of violence. Recall

bias may be present in disclosing the violent episodes. A small sample size has limited the generalizability of the present study.

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