



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Community Medicine**

**PREVALENCE AND PATTERN OF PHYSICAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN RESIDING IN URBAN SLUMS OF MUMBAI.**

**KEY WORDS:** Domestic Violence, Child Abuse, Child Health.

**Dr. Kamaxi M Bhatte.**

Professor (addl) Seth G.s.m.c & K.e.h Hospital. Parel, Mumbai.

**Dr. Ashis Samuel John.\***

Senior Resident. Department Of Community Medicine. Ltmmc& Gh Sion, Mumbai. \*Corresponding Author

**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Physical violence against children at their homes is a global concern and a pervasive but under addressed issue in our society. There is a dearth of data on violence suffered by children in urban slums of metropolitan cities which this study aimed to address.

**Aim:** to find out the pattern of domestic violence against school going children at their homes.

**Materials and methods.** This was a school based cross sectional study, conducted in 200 students in the age group 11-15 belonging to a Municipal school in Goregaon, Mumbai. Data regarding domestic physical violence was collected through confidential face to face interviews using a pre validated interview schedule.

**Results:** A positive history of domestic physical violence was given by 82 students (41%). Slaps/beats/kicks were found to be the most common type of violence with 59 (71.95% of victims) children giving positive history.

**Introduction and rationale.**

Physical violence against children at their homes is a global concern and a pervasive but under addressed issue in our society. It can occur either as a form of child abuse or as an undesirable instrument used in well intended child grooming. Most incidences of violence are results of the belief that corporal punishment is necessary for ensuring discipline and that it will benefit the child in the long run. Social approval of violence results in acceptance of violence by both the victim and the assailant as normal and inevitable'.

The World Health Organization (WHO) <sup>2</sup> defines 'physical abuse' of a child as an ' **incident resulting in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power, or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents**'.

A study conducted by Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) <sup>3</sup>, Government of India, in 2007 found out that out of the child respondents, **68.99% reported having been physically abused, most of them (54.68%) being boys**. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) <sup>4</sup> has registered 84189 incidences of crime against children for the year 2015 at a crime rate of 19.2.

Despite having various governmental and non-governmental institutions that work among children, there is a dearth of data which on violence suffered by children in urban slums of metropolitan cities which this study aimed to address.

**Aim.**

To find out the prevalence and pattern of physical domestic violence against school going children at their homes.

**Materials and Methods.**

This was a school based cross sectional study conducted over a period of one year from June 2015 to June 2016 in a municipal school situated in Goregaon, Mumbai.

Upper primary and high school students of the school were involved in the study.

**Sample Size Estimation.**

Assuming 50% prevalence of domestic physical violence against children, and allowing an error of 7.5%, sample size was calculated according to the formula **N = 4PQ/R<sup>2</sup>** as 178. Allowing for 15% non-response rate, adjusted sample size became 206. Final study included 200 students.

**Inclusion criteria.**

Upper primary and high school students in the age group 10-15.

**Exclusion criteria**

Students of 10<sup>th</sup> standard in view of academics. Those unwilling to participate in the study.

**Methodology.**

A municipal school in an urban slum of the metropolitan city was chosen as study site taking into consideration the school's location and the number of students in target classes. Approval for conducting the study was taken from the Institutional Ethics Committee of the Institute. Permission was also obtained from the Principal of the selected school for collection of data from the school children. Considering the sensitive nature of the study, collaboration was sought with an NGO working among the children of the chosen school.

A questionnaire was prepared based on previous studies conducted on the topic and in consultation with experts in the field. A pilot study was conducted taking 10 students randomly from each standard and appropriate changes were made to the questionnaire depending on the information obtained from it.

Formal Data collection was done by face to face interviews with individual students by the investigator in the presence of a volunteer from the NGO, maintaining strict confidentiality. Interview was conducted in a separate room to which students were sent one by one according to their class roll numbers.

Data was entered using Microsoft Excel 2010 software and was coded and analyzed using SPSS version 16 statistical software.

**Results.**

Out of the 200 students, 103(51.5%) were males and 97(48.5%) females. Age of the students ranged from 11 completed years to 15 completed years.

**Table 1: Family characteristics of students. (N=200)**

Variable	Distribution(percentage)	
<b>Family Size</b>	<5	55(27.5)
	5-7	101(50.5)
	>7	44(22)
<b>Family Structure</b>	Nuclear	135(67.5)
	Broken Nuclear	36(18)
	upplemented Nuclear	29(14.5)
<b>Family Status</b>	Intact family	164(82)
	Parents Separated	14(7)
	Parents Divorced	2(10)
	Either parent expired	20(10)

Educational classification of Father and Mother was classified as per Kuppuswami

Scale for Socio Economic Status in Urban Areas. More than half of Fathers ( N=128 , 64%) and only a quarter (N= 54, 27%) of mothers had *Middle School or Above* educational classification.

Occupational classification of parents was similarly assessed via Kuppuswami scale for socio-economic status and it was found that 139 (69.5%) fathers were either a semi-skilled worker, skilled worker or a shop owner. On the other hand 157(78.5 %) mothers were either unemployed or an unskilled worker.

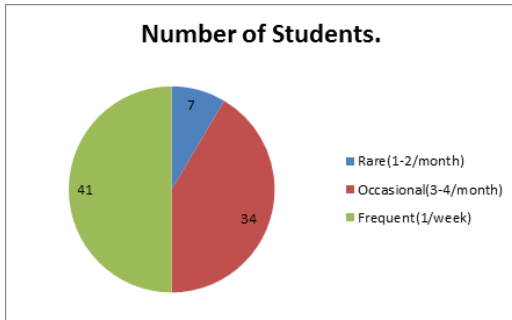
**Table 2: Distribution of students according to their socioeconomic status as per Kuppuswami scale. (N=200)**

Socioeconomic status.	Number of Students	Percentage
<b>Lower</b>	12	6.0
<b>Upper Lower</b>	150	75.0
<b>Lower Middle</b>	38	19.0
<b>Total</b>	200	100.0

**History of Violence.**

Out of the total 200 students interviewed, a positive history of domestic physical violence against them in the last six months before the date of interview was given by 82 students (41%). As sole abusers, both father and mother were equally common, each accounting for 30 children (36%) who were physically abused. Additionally, in the case of 22 victims (28%), father and mother both were responsible for physical violence. Slaps /beats/kicks were found to be the most common type of violence that was delivered to children, with 59 (71.95% of victims) children giving positive history . Much fewer cases (N=22, 26.82%) were reported in which sticks or other hard objects were used to beat the child. Only one case of shaking was reported out of the entire sample.

**Table 3. Distribution of children according to frequency of violence against them. (N=58)**



Occurrence of visible injury was very rare as reported by the students. Out of the entire sample, only 17(8.5 %) students responded that they have sustained visible injuries due to domestic physical violence in the last six months. This makes up 20.7% of victims.

Seven children reported that they were saved by their mother from a bout of physical violence while seven children were rescued by other relatives. Only one child gave history of father saving him from an act of violence. Of the remaining 67 who have suffered violence, none gave a history of a third person saving them.

**Discussion.**

Positive history of domestic physical violence was given by 82 students (41%) in comparison to the nationwide study by Ministry of women and child development<sup>3</sup> which gives a figure of 68.99%. According to the same study, prevalence of physical violence in Maharashtra is 75.90 including both domestic and school based violence.

Both the parents were equally responsible for violence as per the current study, whereas mothers were more common perpetrators of violence against children in a study by Ministry of women and child development<sup>3</sup>.

While the incidence of slaps, beats, kicks and beating with sticks was comparable in this study and others, history of shaking was very low in the current study (.01%) compared to the study by Ministry of Women and Child Development (5.02%)<sup>3</sup>.

In 50 percent of students with history of violence, there was a high frequency of violence, with incidence of at least one episode per week.

Positive history of occurrence of visible injury following violence was given by 17 students, which is 20.7% of those who are victims of domestic physical violence. In a study conducted by Ministry of Women and Child Development<sup>3</sup>, GOI, among those reporting physical abuse by family members, in 14.83% cases the physical abuse resulted in swelling or bleeding or causing serious physical injury to the child.

The current study reveals that as far as the children were aware, most common cause of physical domestic violence against them was disobedience, as it was in 33 out of total 82 cases(40%). The other common reasons were poor performance in school or not doing homework (28%). In the case of 24.4% children the reason for which they were subjected to violence was not clear to them. In a study conducted by Singhi P<sup>5</sup> et al, the main reasons cited for physical violence were not studying (38%), not doing household chores (21%), demanding and non-compliant behavior (18%), hitting a sibling (15%) and getting low grades in examinations.

**Conclusions.**

Study found that physical violence against school going children of 11-15 year age group is fairly common, with 2 out of 5 students in the sample giving positive history, and the most common type of abuse was slaps and beats. Disobedience was given as the most common reason for which violence was committed against children. Both the parents were equally responsible for carrying out violence against children.

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