

## Original Research Article

# Prevalence and correlates of domestic violence in a resettlement colony of union territory of Chandigarh, India

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Domestic violence is not just a problem of the lower and middle classes. Domestic violence is a pervasive problem in India that cuts across age, education, social class and religion. Present study was done with the objectives to study the prevalence of domestic violence issue; to measure different types of domestic violence (i.e. physical, sexual and emotional) ; and to assess the correlation of different socioeconomic factors with occurrence of domestic violence in rural field practice area of Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh.

**Methods:** A cross sectional study was conducted in rural field practice area amongst 800 women of reproductive age group by interview technique after obtaining an informed consent from. The questionnaire was based upon National Family Health Survey-3 questionnaire. The data was fed in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using Epi Info statistical software.

**Results:** The prevalence of any type of domestic violence was 17.75%. Most common type of violence was humiliation, followed by physical violence in the form of slap (14.5%), twist, push, punch and kick. More severe forms like burns, dislocation, cuts were low (1.75%). The prevalence of sexual violence was found to be 1%. Domestic violence was associated with illiteracy in women ( $p=0.001$ ), low income of women ( $p<0.001$ ), reserved category of family ( $p<0.001$ ), alcohol consumption in husband ( $p<0.001$ ), low income or unemployed husband ( $p<0.001$ ). No association of domestic violence was found with unemployment in women and illiteracy in husband.

**Conclusions:** It needs more education, empowerment and sensitization in both men and women to change the patriarchal nature of Indian society and to break the culture of silence and tolerance against such heinous crime of inhumanity.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, Married women, Reproductive age, Chandigarh

## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990s, there has been growing concern about violence against women in general and domestic violence in particular, in both developed and developing countries. The signs of domestic violence (DV) are not always obvious and a lot of women do not report that they are being abused. 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.<sup>1</sup> Domestic violence is defined to include violence by spouses as well as by other household members. Victims of domestic violence are abused inside what should be the most secure environment their own homes and usually by the persons they trust most (a husband or an intimate male

partner). The situation for men is different, since they are more likely to be attacked by a stranger or acquaintance than by someone within their close circle of relationships.<sup>2-6</sup> According to a National Family and Health Survey in 2005, total lifetime prevalence of domestic violence was 33.5% and 8.5% for sexual violence among women aged 15–49. Levinson in 1989 using data from 90 societies throughout the world identified four factors namely, economic inequality between men and women, a pattern of using physical violence to resolve conflict, male authority and control of decision making in the home, and divorce restrictions for women; taken together, are strong predictors of the prevalence of violence against women in a society.<sup>7</sup> Violence against women occurs daily in homes throughout the world and the National Coalition against Domestic Violence reports that 1.3 million women each year are victims of domestic abuse.<sup>8</sup> Most cases of domestic violence are never reported. Women are socialized to accept, tolerate, and even rationalize domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences. There are several domestic violence laws in India. The most recent legislation is the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) 2005. The PWDVA, a civil law, includes physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, and economic abuse as domestic violence. Present study was done with the objectives to study the prevalence of domestic violence issue; to measure the occurrence of different types of domestic violence i.e. physical, sexual and emotional; and to assess the correlation of different socioeconomic factors with occurrence of domestic violence in resettlement colony of rural field practice area of Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh, India.

## METHODS

### Study design

A cross-sectional type of study.

### Study period

The study was carried out over a period of one year i.e. from May 2014 to April 2015.

### Sample size

20% (800 women) of the total of ever-married women of reproductive age group (4000 approximately) were taken in the present study.

### Sampling technique

Stratified random sampling technique was used.

### Study area

The field practice area i.e. Lal Bahadur Shastri Colony and Resettlement Colony of Rural Health Training Centre

(RHTC), Government Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh

### Study population

Included 800 ever-married women of reproductive age group i.e. 15-49 years. Information was collected on different forms of violence experienced by study subjects.

### Study tool

Pre-designed, pre-tested module on domestic violence given in National Family Health Survey-3 was used for the present study. The module collects detailed information on physical, sexual, and emotional violence perpetrated by husbands against their wives. Interview technique was used to collect the data. Informed consent for the survey was obtained from the respondent at the start of the individual interview. Field staff was provided specialized training for conducting interviews so that the privacy at the time of interview and confidentiality of responses was ensured. On request, information on sources of help for abused women was provided.

### Statistical analysis

The data was entered in Microsoft Office Excel Sheet. Totals and percentages were calculated. Data was tabulated. Data was analyzed using standard statistical software Epi Info.

## RESULTS

The prevalence of any type of domestic violence was 17.75% in the present study. Most common type of violence was humiliation, followed by physical violence in the form of slap (14.5%), twist, push, punch and kick. More severe forms like burns, dislocation, cuts were rare (1.75%).

**Table 1: Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of ever-married women who have ever experienced domestic violence.**

Particulars	No. (%)	P value
<b>Illiterate woman</b>	104 (73.23)	0.001 (Significant)
<b>Unemployed woman</b>	111 (78.16)	0.00 (Significant)
<b>Low income in woman</b>	139 (97.88)	0.00 (Significant)
<b>Reserved category</b>	71 (50)	0.00 (Significant)
<b>Nuclear family</b>	124 (87.32)	0.01 (Significant)
<b>Illiterate man</b>	67 (47.18)	0.07 (Not significant)
<b>Unemployed man</b>	91 (64.08)	0.00 (Significant)
<b>Low income in man</b>	24 (16.90)	0.00 (Significant)
<b>Alcoholism in man</b>	76 (53.52)	0.00 (Significant)

Table 1 shows the distribution of women in percentages that have ever experienced domestic violence, by background characteristics during the year 2014-15. Domestic violence was associated with illiteracy in women ( $p=0.001$ ), low income of women ( $p<0.001$ ), reserved category of family ( $p<0.001$ ), alcohol consumption in husband ( $p<0.001$ ), low income or unemployed husband ( $p<0.001$ ). No association of domestic violence was found with unemployment in women and illiteracy in husband. Distribution of ever-married women in percentage of who report specific persons who committed the violence is shown in Table 2. The prevalence of sexual violence was found to be 1%. The people involved in such incidences of sexual violence were own friends/ acquaintance (25%), teacher (25%) and did not report any name in remaining cases (as shown in Table 3).

**Table 2: Distribution of ever-married women who report specific persons who committed the violence (n=147).**

Person	No. of women who reported (%)
Sister/brother	45 (31.69)
Current husband	28 (19.71)
Mother-in-law	27 (19.01)
Mother/step-mother	14 (09.85)
Father/step-father	10 (07.04)
Father-in-law	08 (05.63)
Employer	06 (04.22)
Other in-laws	04 (02.81)
Others	05 (03.52)

**Table 3: Experience of sexual violence (n=800).**

History of sexual violence	No. of respondents (%)
Yes	8 (1.0)
No	38 (4.75)
Refused to answer	754 (94.25)

## DISCUSSION

The most common type of violence against women worldwide is domestic violence.<sup>9</sup> Studies report that violence against women by their family member or intimate-partner is prevalent in Asia, Europe, and South America.<sup>10-12</sup> There are many studies suggesting the widespread domestic violence perpetrated against Arab women by their spouses.<sup>13</sup> The prevalence of any type of domestic violence in our study was 17.75%. The prevalence of physical or sexual violence ranges from 6% in Himachal Pradesh, 13% in Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya, 46% in Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan and 59% in Bihar and other states with 40% or higher prevalence include Tripura, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Assam.<sup>14</sup> A study by Ramprez et al found that prevalence of domestic violence among urban population in India was 57%, whereas a another study

done in South Africa showed lifetime prevalence of domestic violence to be 25%.<sup>15,16</sup> In a study done jointly by International Centre for Research on women (ICRW) and International Clinical Epidemiologists Network (INCLEN), in rural and urban slum and non-slum areas in 7 cities in India found the prevalence of psychological and physical violence to be 43.5% and 40.3% respectively.<sup>17,18</sup>

In our study, most common type of violence was humiliation, followed by physical violence in the form of slap (14.5%), twist, push, punch and kick. Similar results were shown by Sinha et al in their study.<sup>19</sup> A Study by Borah showed domestic violence in 26.4% of study participants and further, of all types psychological violence was most common.<sup>20</sup> More severe forms physical violence like burns, dislocation, cuts were found to be rare (1.75%) in our study. In NFHS-3, among ever-married women it was found that 12% of women reported to have been kicked, dragged, or beaten up, and 2% reported that their husbands tried to choke or burn them on purpose.<sup>21</sup>

In our study, domestic violence was significantly associated with illiteracy in women ( $p=0.001$ ) and low income of women ( $p<0.001$ ). NFHS-3 report showed that 44% of women with no education have experienced violence at some time since the age of 15, and 26% have experienced violence in the past 12 months. These proportions decline with education being 14% for women who have completed 12 years of education and 6% for women who have completed more than 12 years of education.<sup>21</sup> A study by Saradmoni et al, found that both forms of violence were inversely associated with education and employment levels of the women and their husbands.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to our study findings, a study done by Sinha et al, did not find any significant association between women's education or employment with domestic violence.<sup>19</sup> A study done in Nigeria, showed similar results that ever-married educated women are less likely to rationalize wife-beating under any circumstances than women with no formal education; further the study also found that ever-married women who participated or were involved in household decisions are 1.04 times more likely to support wife-beating compared with those who reported no involvement in household decision-making.<sup>23</sup>

In present study, we found that reserved category of family ( $p<0.001$ ), alcohol consumption in husband ( $p<0.001$ ) and low income or unemployed husband ( $p<0.001$ ) were also significantly associated with domestic violence. Further our study shows no association of domestic violence with unemployment in women and illiteracy in husband. According to the results of NFHS-3 multiple risk factors similar to our study results were found to be associated with Domestic violence; namely educational attainment by the female, her employment status, the employment status of the husband, alcohol consumption by the partner and

demographic factors like caste and religion.<sup>21</sup> Similar to our study results, independent variables for gender-based violence found in a study done by Ngonga in Zambia are; alcohol abuse, income level, area of residence and gender.<sup>24</sup> Study by Semahegn found that alcohol consumption by husband, being pregnant, decision making power and annual income to be predictors of domestic violence in Ethiopia.<sup>25</sup>

The prevalence of sexual violence was found to be 1% in present study. Our low results can be explained by the fact that around 95% of women in our study refused to share their personal information about sexual violence. The people involved in such incidences of sexual violence were own friends/ acquaintance (25%), teacher (25%) and did not report any name in remaining cases. In NFHS -3 report shows that lifetime sexual violence was 9% of sample of 69704 ever-married women between the ages 15 to 49 who participated.<sup>21</sup> Study done in Pondicherry by George et al reported sexual violence against 13.5% of 310 participants in their study, which is much higher than our study reports.<sup>26</sup> Study done in Saudi Arabia by Barnawi found that violence against women ranged from being emotional (69%), social (34%), economic (26%), physical (20%), and sexual violence (10%).<sup>27</sup> Another study Ozpinar et al on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women revealed that of the women who participated, 20.2% to emotional, 14.8% to physical, 11.2% to economic and 7.9% to sexual violence or abuse within the last 12 months.<sup>28</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The prevalence of domestic violence is around 18% in rural areas of Chandigarh and it is significantly associated with illiteracy in women, unemployment and alcohol consumption in men and overall low income of family. Around 95% of women refused to share their personal information about sexual violence, which shows the cultural pattern of silence, tolerance and insecurity in sharing this information. It needs more education, empowerment and sensitization in both men and women to change the patriarchal nature of Indian society and to break the culture of silence and tolerance against such heinous crime of in humanity. There is an urgent need to understand the men's perspectives, along with the factors and circumstances that shape the masculinity of men in India.

## Recommendations

There are many forms of violence against women; the research suggests that in the present Indian rural setting, solutions to domestic violence must be found within the family setting and within the community setting. Strategies that should be explored further are education of women and girls; gender-sensitive education directed at males; the formation of women's groups to minimize isolation and increase power; and the use of mass media

to promote more balanced, healthy perceptions of male-female relationships. Factors which are predictive of low gender-based violence in women are more female power inside as well as outside the home (equal authority), active community intervention in violence, presence of all-female work or solidarity groups and sanctuary from violence (shelters, friends, and family).

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