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Original Research Article

Prevalence and associated factors of domestic violence against married rural women of Gurugram, Haryana

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ABSTRACT

Background: The global health burden from domestic violence against women in reproductive age group is about 9.5 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs). Women suffering from violence have more chances of suffering from physical, emotional, and mental problems such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. The objectives of the present study are to find the prevalence and awareness of domestic violence in an urban slum of Gurugram and to elicit associated risk factors and the reasons for tolerance of domestic violence.
Methods: A community based, cross sectional study was conducted among married women (18-45 years) using a semi structured questionnaire in a rural area of Gurugram by systematic random sampling. Sample size collected was 900. Study population was enquired about the awareness regarding domestic violence, self-experience about domestic violence and about the form of violence experienced and the reasons for their tolerance. Data was entered and analyzed using Epi Info ver 7.
Results: Total 980 subjects were enquired about their awareness and self-experience of domestic violence. Overall prevalence of domestic violence in the study population was 28%. Prevalence of domestic violence was statistically significantly associated with education, employment, duration of marriage (p value <0.05).The prevalence was highest of emotional violence (40.5%), followed by physical (33.4%), economic (21.4%) and sexual violence (4.7%).
Conclusions: Public health professionals should emphasis on measures to raise public awareness so that women can talk freely about domestic violence and its consequences and help in mitigating this medico-social problem.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Physical violence, Psychological violence, Sexual violence

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is a universal stigma that tears the fabric of communities and threatens the life, health, and happiness of the affected women. It is a major contributor to the physical and mental ill health of the victim, and it is evident to some degree, in almost every society of the world.[1] The global health burden from violence against women in reproductive age group is about 9.5 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs).[2] Although women today have proven themselves in almost every field of life, affirming that they are no less than men, the reports of violence against women are much higher in number than those against men. Reasons for it being so prevalent are the mindset of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males and the economic dependence of the females.[3] Women suffering from violence have more chances of suffering from physical, emotional, and mental problems such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide.[4]

Violence against women can be in various forms physical, sexual, psychological. Physical violence includes acts of physical aggression such as slapping, hitting, kicking and beating. The common sexual abuses

women endure are forced intercourse, and other forms of sexual coercion. Psychological abuse includes acts like intimidation, constant belittling, humiliating and various controlling behaviors such as isolating a person from their family and friends, monitoring their movements, and restricting their access to information or assistance. When abuse occurs repeatedly in the same relationship, the phenomenon is often referred to as "battering".[4]

According to NFHS-4, the prevalence of domestic violence in Haryana prevails at 30%. Very few studies have been undertaken in this region on this sensitive topic. Thus, this study was undertaken to study the prevalence and awareness of domestic violence and the risk factors associated with it.[5]

Objectives

The objectives of the present study are to find the prevalence of domestic violence against married rural women of 18-45 years age in Gurugram, Haryana and to elicit associated factors and the reasons for tolerance of domestic violence.

METHODS

A community based cross sectional study was conducted from July 2018 to June 2019 among the married women in the age group of 18-45 years, covering a total of 2373 households of rural field practice area of Gurugram. Considering the prevalence of domestic violence according to NFHS-4 as 30% in the given population, the optimum sample size was calculated using formula $(1.96)^2 p \times q/L^2$, taking 10% refusal or dropout as 950.

Among 2373 households in the 6 villages of rural field practice area, married women in the age group 18-45 were selected based on systematic random sampling method.

All eligible females found in each household were selected. If the houses that were either locked or those in which the eligible woman was not present at the time of the visit, were revisited at least three times before she was excluded from the study.

Selection of subjects

Inclusion criteria

Married women are in reproductive age group 18-45 years who are willing to give consent for the study.

Exclusion criteria

Subjects who are not co-operative and not willing to give consent for the study and unmarried, widowed, separated, and divorced women will be excluded

Data collection

After taking informed consent, the pre-designed and pre-tested questionnaire based performa was used for the data collection. All the study participants were explained about the purpose of the study and were ensured strict confidentiality. Written informed consents in the local language were taken from the participants prior to the study.

Data analysis

Collected data was entered in MS office excel sheet and analysed using Epi-Info version 7.0 and appropriate analysis was done.

RESULTS

Total 980 subjects were enquired in 950 households sampled about their awareness and self-experience of domestic violence. Out of total female studied, 43.3% of participants had never heard the term domestic violence. However, 38.2% considered domestic violence to be a threat for the community.

Prevalence of domestic violence

Overall prevalence of domestic violence in the study population was 25.7% i.e., 252 among 980 had experienced some form of domestic violence in their life.

The study (Table1) showed that prevalence of violence was experienced more in females who were in the age group of 26-35 years (29.3%) comparative to other age groups, whereas education level also played a major role in the prevalence of domestic violence. The study revealed that the maximum number of females where not educated who experienced any kind of violence (44.92%). The husbands or perpetrators used to dominate more uneducated, illiterate females than the ones who were educated. The association of level of education and prevalence of domestic violence was statistically significant. The employment of the females played a major role in the existence of domestic violence. The females who were working had less domestic violence (20.30%) rather than those who were not working and dependent on their husbands. This association came out to be statistically significant in our study. Other than this domestic violence was more prevalent in joint families (29.7%) rather than nuclear families which were a positive association that showed that females in joint families were more prone to be targeted for domestic violence.

We also looked for the association of duration of marriage and domestic violence prevalence. In our study the newly married females had a higher prevalence of experiencing domestic violence (<5 years) rather than those who has married with the person for >10 years.

Table 2 showed that 40.5% females had a bitter experience of emotional violence in any form. Emotional violence was done in different ways and mostly the perpetrators were the husband or mother in law.

Table 1: Prevalence of domestic violence among study population as per various socio-demographic factors.

Variable	Category	Total (n=980)	Prevalence of domestic violence (n=252) N (%)	Statistical value
Age (in years)	18-25	254	54 (21.2)	$x^{2=}$5.6425, Df=2 p value=0.059531
	26-35	398	117 (29.3)	
	36-45	328	81 (24.69)	
Education status	Illiterate	276	124 (44.92)	x^2=31.202, Df=3 p value<0.00001
	Primary and middle school	312	89 (28.52)	
	High school	258	25 (9.68)	
	Higher secondary and above	154	14 (9.09)	
Employment status	Unemployed	448	144 (32.14)	x^2=17.84, Df=1 p=0.000024
	Employed	532	108 (20.30)	
Type of family	Nuclear	364	69 (18.95)	$x^{2=}$13.8463, Df=1 p value=0.000198
	Joint	616	183 (29.7)	
Duration of marriage (in years)	<5	323	124 (33.24)	x^2=66, Df=2 p value=<0.00001
	5-10	273	43 (29.2)	
	>10	384	57 (15.65)	

The females or their family were humiliated, abused for some or the other reason. The second most common type of violence was physical violence which was experience by 33.4% of females followed by economic violence experienced by 21.4% and then the last was sexual violence which was experienced by 21.4%.

Table 2: Types of violence (n=252).

Type of violence experienced	N (%)
Physical violence	84 (33.4)
Emotional violence	102 (40.5)
Sexual violence	12 (4.7)
Economic violence	54 (21.4)

Table 3: Reasons for domestic violence perceived by affected women (n=252).

Reasons for violence	N (%)
Husband under influence of alcohol	110 (43.6)
Demand for dowry	69 (27.38)
Wife not able to conceive	39 (15.47)
Only girl child born	21 (8.33)
Others	13 (4.78)

According to this study (Table 3), it was found that the major reason for which the females had to undergo this torture was merely the alcohol intake (43.6%) of their husbands which was routinely followed by violence. The common reason was the hunger for more dowry by the groom and the groom's family (27.38%) which made the innocent females a soft target. The another reason for domestic violence was not able to conceive after marriage (15.47%) and/ or a female gave birth to only girl child and not any sons as still the orthodox thinking exists that the true predecessor of the family is the son and not the daughter. "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" The government has initiated this but the implementation is still partial in at least the rural areas of Haryana.

Table 4: Reasons for tolerance of domestic violence by women (n=252).

Reasons for tolerance	N (%)
Social stigma	95 (39.13)
Economic dependence	69 (27.54)
Under peer pressure	51 (20.29)
No reasons	39 (13.04)

Now in this equity demanding genre, females still have to brain storm themselves and believe in them that they are no less than any male. But it's still the society's incompetency that the violence done to them upto this extent was tolerated. The major reason (Table 4) which they covered this heinous crime with a smile was the fear of society or social stigma (39.13%). "Log Kya Kahenge" is the reason they hide all the pain in their hearts without complaining or sharing to anyone. The other reason they had to bear this torture was their incompetency to earn and financial dependence on their husbands (27.54%). Many females just tolerated everything for the reason being their parents or any guardian which told them whenever they urged to take some steps: "Sab Theek Ho Jayega". But in these cases things never become alright. And few females had no reasons to give (13.04%) but their tears in eyes spoke their words.

DISCUSSION

In this study done in rural area of Gurugram, it was found that the prevalence of domestic violence overall was 28%

which is a bit lower than the average domestic violence as per reported by NFHS-4 i.e., 30%. A similar was done in Haryana which showed that 28.9% currently experienced domestic violence that was quite similar to our study.[1] In our study, the prevalence of emotional violence was highest i.e., 40.5% which was similar to studies done in rural Pondicherry.[6] Physical violence experienced by 33.4% followed by economic violence experienced by 21.4% and sexual violence was experienced by 21.4%. According to NFHS-4, it's not the psychological but the most common type of violence is physical violence (30%), followed by emotional violence (14%). Seven percent of ever married women have experienced sexual violence.[7]

In our study, socio-demographic factors also play a major role. Illiteracy was associated with higher prevalence of domestic violence (30.9%) which was similar with many other studies like done in an urban slum of Mumbai, Maharashtra.[8,9] Not only education but occupation also plays a major role. In our study females who were financially independent has a lesser experience of domestic violence (21.9%) rather than those who were dependent (35.29%).

Husband's consumption of alcohol was found to be a significant factor associated with violence. Evidence from other studies supported husbands/partners' alcohol consumption as a significant factor of domestic violence and might be because of reduced self-control of individuals due to excessive alcohol consumption.[10,11]

CONCLUSION

Although there is much progression in our society but still domestic violence forms an integral part. Majority of people still fear from talking about it and many are not aware with the term but simple discussion easily helped the respondents identify domestic violence. Measures should be taken to raise public awareness so that they can talk freely about it and its consequences.

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