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Prevalence and factors associated with psychological violence against married women in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala

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ABSTRACT

Background: The distribution and determinants of violence against women may vary in time across the region and within the region. It results in women's physical and psychological sufferings and the final impact will reflect in the health system. Kerala is one of the leading states in India for female literacy and health indices. Still different forms of domestic violence including physical, psychological, economical and sexual violence are prevailing as a public health problem. Among the various domains this study measured the prevalence of psychological violence and identified associated factors, among married women aged 18-55 years in Thiruvananthapuram district.

Methods: A community based cross-sectional study was conducted between January and May 2017. Sample size calculated was 270. Multistage cluster sampling was done. Tool used was semi structured questionnaire; conducted house visits and direct interview. Psychological violence was measured using modified scale validated in local language.

Results: The life time prevalence of psychological violence was 25.2% (95% CI 20.2-30.6). The predictors of psychological violence found were care obtained during pregnancy (AOR 0.107), household structure (AOR 7.8), in laws' satisfaction with marriage (AOR 0.046), less communication with own family (AOR 8.6) and partner's parents quarrel (AOR 31.3).

Conclusions: Psychological violence is still prevalent in the community. The associated factors include those relating to habit of the partner, house hold conditions, marital elements and family environment. The study identified nurturing friendly atmosphere in the family and improving familial bond as the core strategy to prevent psychological violence. Similar studies are recommended in each setting separately since risk factors varies with change in settings.

Keywords: Married women, Kerala, Prevalence, Psychological violence

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women (VAW) can occur in many forms over the world. Throughout the life span, female gender is prone to face one or the other forms of violence. Gender inequality manifests as female foeticide, female infanticide, abuse of the girl child, domestic violence in the family, mental torture, physical violence, social harassment etc. Domestic violence including partner and non-partner violence, comprises 'physical, psychological, sexual and economic abuse'.

Domestic violence is a global issue affecting 30% of the population. The burden in our country is higher than the global prevalence data. Various national studies show that, up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime. The burden in India was 37.2% and 31.1% from study conducted by National Family and Health Survey in 2005-06 and 2015-16 respectively.

Domestic violence is traumatic and incapacitating. Female partners often feel they have nowhere and

nobody to help, especially in societies where it is not easy for women to leave their husbands and live alone. In most cultures, women used to bear violence against them in calm for fear of adverse repercussions. The position of women in India is not equal to that of men in terms of access, contribution and reward. Neglected and abused women live under constant fear, threat and humiliation even in her shelter which actually should be a source of cherish and emotional bonding. Family is the basic unit of society. When family becomes a source of inequality, exploitation, and violence, it can create personality disorders and psycho-somatic problems among the victims.

Eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) was adopted as a target 5 on gender equality and empowerment of women in 2015 sustainable development goals (SDG). Studies are essential for building evidence-based prevention and monitoring progress to SDG. Further, data will help to plan about the future allocation of resources and the implementation of preventive strategies.

Among the sub domains of domestic violence, psychological violence constitutes a big share. Multisite household survey report in 2000 showed 65.1% whereas 2001 study showed 64.9% had experienced psychological violence in Thiruvananthapuram district.^{4,5} There is no recent published data of psychological violence in the study setting.

Assessing the prevalence will give a picture of this public health problem prevailing in the community and also help to compare the present burden with the previous studies done in the district. Assessing the factors associated with psychological violence also is needed for taking effective control and preventive measures. The measures taken will finally improve the health outcomes not only of the females but also of the whole community and future generations. Hence this study measured the prevalence of psychological violence and identified associated factors, among married women aged 18-55 years in Thiruvananthapuram district.

METHODS

Study setting, subjects and sampling

A community based cross-sectional study was conducted among ever married women aged 18-55 years, in Thiruvananthapuram district between January and May 2017. Sample size calculated was 270. A study done in 2000 by INCLEN has showed a prevalence of psychological violence in Thiruvananthapuram as 43.5%. Thiruvananthapuram district was the study setting. It has 6 taluks namely Thiruvananthapuram, Neyyattinkara, Chirayinkeezhu, Nedumangadu, Varkala and Kattakkada with 120 villages. Samples were taken from 1 urban village and 5 rural villages to cover all the taluks. Urban village was taken from the Thiruvananthapuram taluk.

Multistage cluster sampling was done. Each village from the six taluks of the district were the sampling units. 45 samples from each cluster was studied. When more than one eligible subject was present in a house one participant was selected randomly. Subjects who were not willing to give consent, for whom privacy could not be ensured and those who have had any serious medical or psychiatric illness were excluded.

Data collection

Tool used was a semi structured questionnaire adapted from the WHO multi country study on domestic violence and modified for local contexts to collect socio demographic features, household details, marital factors, habits of the partner, family environment of the respondent. Of the 11 items of the 20-item domestic violence questionnaire (DVQ) which was validated in Malayalam (local language) was used for measuring psychological violence.7 Each house selected was visited by the investigator and enquired the details given in the questionnaire by conducting face to face interview. To get community support ASHA (accredited social health activists) workers were also included when required in the data collection process. All participants were interviewed in the Malayalam language. Respondents were informed the purpose and objectives of the study and informed consent obtained from them. The participants were informed that the inclusion in the study will be voluntary and confidentiality was assured.

Study variables

The exposure variables collected were i) Socio demographic features of both respondents and their partners which included age in completed years, spousal age difference, education, spousal educational difference, employment, income per month, religion and place as rural/urban; ii) Habit of the partner were collected like alcoholic consumption(categorised as: never drink, sometimes drink, very often drink and always drink, reported based on the perception of respondents), cigarette smoking (categorised as: ever smoked or not), any history of anti-psychotic drug intake by husband if the respondent knows, husband's extra marital affair as perceived by the respondent, husband reaching late at home (reported based on the perception of respondents as daily late, frequently late, occasionally late and rarely late), husband's habit of joining for meals with the partner and whether husband gave expected care during pregnancy, if applicable; iii) Household details collected were house condition (categorised as: pucca, semipucca and katcha) based on the quality of materials used to make roof, floor and exterior wall), house typology as individual/flat/slums, household structure as nuclear/ extended, total number of members living in the home, total number of bedrooms in the home and overcrowding index which was computed by dividing the number of members by number of bedrooms and a value more than 2 was considered as high and up to 2 as low; iv) Marital

factors studied were age at marriage, number of living children, marital status (categorised as: married, divorced or separated and widowed), type of marriage (categorised as: marriage without the consent of parents (love marriage) and marriage with the consent of parents (arranged marriage), number of marriages respondents had, consanguineous marriage or not, marital duration (categorised as: 0-5 years, 5-10 years and >10 years), respondents' willingness to get married, husband's satisfaction with marriage (based on respondent's perception), in laws' satisfaction with marriage (based on respondent's perception), and whether respondent has received any pre-marital counselling or not; v) Family environment details collected were the frequency of contact with own parents or family of origin (categorised as: <once a week and ≥once a week), support from own family in post marital life, possession of any property by respondent, witnessed noticeable quarrel between parents of the respondents and partners and about the decision maker of family affairs (categorised as: husband, in laws, husband and wife and wife).

The main outcome variable was life time psychological violence. Psychological domain has multiple items to measure the violence. In this study scoring of 1 to 8 was given for each item. 1 to 6 scores measure the presence of current violence for the past 12 months. As score increases from 1 to 6, the severity of violence also increases. Score of 7 measures past history of violence, whereas a score of 8 measures absence of violence which was coded as 0. Score from 1 to 7 indicates presence of life time psychological violence and was assigned a code of 1. Finally, prevalence of outcome variable was measured using code '0' and '1'.

Psychological violence was measured using eleven questions. The questions used were: i) Did your husband limit you to see or interact with your friends? ii) Did your husband restrict your freedom to see or cooperate with your relatives? iii) Did your husband feel angry or suspicion while you talk to some other men? iv) Did your husband purposely ignore you without any sex? v) Did your husband threaten to hurt or harm you? vi) Did your husband humiliate you in front of others? vii) Did your husband accuse you of being unfaithful? viii) Did your husband treat you like a servant? ix) Did your husband exclude you from decision making? x) Did your husband keep away from home without informing you? xi) Did your husband keep silent with his relatives while they insult you?

Data analysis

All data were entered into the Microsoft excel sheet and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) trial version. The categorical variables have been summarised as frequencies and proportions. The quantitative variables have been summarized as mean and standard deviation. Bivariable analysis using Pearson chi-square test was performed for all the categorical

variables. If any of the cells in contingency table had expected values less than 5, Fishers exact test was used, instead of Chi square test. The odds ratio and its 95% CI were used as a measure of strength of association. 95% CI was also computed for the outcome proportions using Winpepi software and taking into account the cluster effect. Binary logistic regression modelling was performed to find the predictors of outcome. P value <0.05 was used to indicate statistical significance. Binary logistic regression was used to predict lifetime psychological violence which was the outcome. A significance level less than 0.05 was used for assigning co-variates to the regression model. Backward Conditional method of regression was employed for discarding non significant exposure variables.

Ethical considerations

Protocol was prepared and sent to institutional research and ethical committees of Government Medical College, Thiruvananthapuram. Research and ethical committees had cleared the protocol. Informed consent from participants was sought for study. Confidentiality was maintained throughout study. Minimum requirements for asking about partner violence like protocol, questionnaire, privacy, and confidentiality were ensured.⁸

RESULTS

Socio demographic factors of respondents and partners

Mean (SD) age of respondents was 40.75 years (9.0) and partners was 45.07 years (9.7). Most of the respondents (45.8%) were 5-10 years younger than their partners. Majority of the respondents and their partners (26.7% each) had degree as their educational qualification. 137 out of 270 respondents (50.7%) showed same level of education as that of their partners. 51.9% of the respondents were unemployed; out of the employed 30.7% were in the government sector. Among the partners 33% were employed in private sector and 3% were unemployed. 50.7% of the females had no income whereas 15 respondents (5.6%) had monthly income of rupees above 50000. 35.6% male partners were earning monthly income of rupees 5000-20000. More than half of the respondents [139 (51.5%)] belonged to Hindu. 83.3% belonged to rural area and 16.7% belonged to urban area.

Habit of partner

Most of the respondents [165 (61.1%)] reported their partners had never drank alcohol. More than two third partners were nonsmokers. 76 out of 270 (28.1%) partners were smokers and 194 (71.9%) were nonsmokers. 7 out of 270 (2.6%) respondents said their husbands had history of intake of anti-psychotic drug intake. 7 out 270 (2.6%) respondents said their husbands were having extramarital relations. 5 (1.9%) participants said their husbands were always late at home, 43 (15.9%)

said it was frequent, 69 (25.5%) said it was occasional and 153 (56.6%) said it was rare. 184 (68.1%) responded that their partners would join meals and 86 (31.9%) responded that their partners were not used to join for meals. 190 (70.4%) said they received the expected care during pregnancy from partners; 69 (25.6%) did not get the expected care.

Household details

Mean (SD) number of members living in a house was 4.32 (1.6). It varies from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 11. The distribution of respondents' house condition, typology, structure and overcrowding index is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The distribution of respondents' house condition, typology, structure and overcrowding index.

Variable	Categories	Frequency of respondents	Percentage (%)
House	Pucca	185	68.5
condition#	Semipucca	51	18.5
(n=270)	Kutcha	34	12.6
House typology	Individual	245	90.7
(n=270)	Slum	25	9.3
House	Nuclear	192	73.3
structure (n=270)	Extended	72	26.7
Overcrowding	Low	238	88.1
index# (n=270)	High	32	11.9

Table 2: The distribution of variables relating to marriage.

Variables	Categories	Frequency of respondents	Percentage (%)
Marital status	Married	144	90.4
(n=270)	Widowed	17	6.3
(H-270)	Separated	9	3.3
Type of marriage (n=270)	Marriage with parental consent	235	87
Type of marriage (n=270)	Marriage without parental consent	35	13
Number of marriages (n=270)	1	264	97.8
rumber of marriages (n=270)	>1	6	2.2
Consanguineous marriage	Yes	11	4.1
(n=270)	No	259	95.9
Marital duration	0-5 years	37	13.7
(n=270)	5-10 years	36	13.3
`	>10 years	197	73
Respondent's willingness to	Yes	247	91.5
marriage (n=270)	No	23	8.5
Husband's satisfaction with	Yes	250	92.6
marriage (n=270)	No	15	5.6
marriage (n=270)	Do not know	5	1.9
In laws satisfaction with	Yes	248	91.9
marriage (n=270)	No	18	6.7
muriuge (n=270)	Do not know	4	1.5
Premarital counselling	Yes	25	9.3
(n=270)	No	245	90.7

Marital details

The distribution of variables such as marital status of respondent, type of marriage, number of marriages of respondent, consanguineous marriage, marital duration, willingness to marriage, husbands' and in laws satisfaction and pre-marital counselling is as shown in Table 2.

Family environment

235 (87%) study subjects used to communicate at least once a week with their own parents or family of origin

whereas 35 (13%) for less than once a week. 215 (79.6%) opined they would have the support of their own family members at needy times; 52 (19.3%) would not have the support whereas 3 (1.1%) were not sure about it. 165 (61.1%) respondents were possessing any kind of property whereas 105 (38.9%) did have no property. 195 (72.2%) of the participants told they had not witnessed noticeable quarrel between own parents whereas 69 (25.6%) had experienced. 172 (63.7%) of the participants told they had not witnessed noticeable quarrel between partners' parents whereas 16 (5.9%) had experienced. More than half [142 (52.6%)] of the family affairs were controlled by husbands alone whereas 89 (32.9%) by

both husband and wife, 25 (9.2%) by in laws and 14 (5.1%) by wives alone.

Psychological violence

Prevalence of psychological violence in the life time obtained was (68/270) 25.2% (95% CI 20.2-30.6). The item wise prevalence of different categories of psychological violence is as shown in Figure 1.

Bi variable analysis of factors associated with psychological violence

The main outcome was to assess the life time prevalence of psychological violence. Secondary case control analysis was done to find out the factors associated with prevalence of psychological violence. The variables tested were socio demographic variables, habit of the partner, household details, marital history, and family environment. The protective factors which were found significant include habit of the partner like joining for meals (OR=0.44), care given during pregnancy (OR=0.18) and house hold factors such as good housing condition (OR=0.47), marital factors like respondent's willingness marriage (OR=0.39),to satisfaction with marriage (OR=0.04) and family environment such as support from own family (OR=0.32). The risk factors which were found significant include poor education of respondent and partner with an odds ratio of 1.8 and 2 respectively, habit of the partner like alcoholism (OR=2.7), smoking (OR=2), extramarital affairs (OR=7.8), coming late at home (OR=3.2), house hold factor like nuclear family with an odds ratio of 2.2. Others included marital factors

like separated/widowed (OR=4.9), in laws' satisfaction with marriage (OR=1.8) and family environment such as less communication with own family (OR 4.5), own parents and partner's parents quarrel with an odds ratio of 2 and 5.6 respectively. The results of bivariable analysis is shown in Tables 3-7.

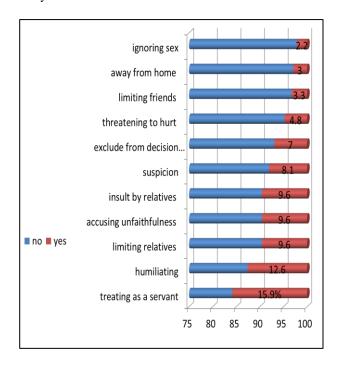


Figure 1: The item^{\$} wise prevalence of different categories of psychological violence.

\$ items are detailed in methodology.

Table 3: The bi	variable an	alvsis of soci	o demogra	phic factors.

Factor	Category	Life time psychological violence (n=68)	Without psychological violence (n=202)	OR	P value#
Place	Rural	62	163	2.4	0.059
Flace	Urban	6	39	2.4	0.039
Education of	Up to high school	34	72	1.8	0.04*
respondent	Pre degree and above	34	130	1.0	0.04
Employment of	Unemployed	33	107	0.83	0.576
respondent	Employed	35	95	0.83	0.570
Income of	Low- moderate income	66	189	2.2	0.370
respondent	High income	2	13	2.2	0.370
A an difference	Wife older	3	2	16	0.102
Age difference	Wife same or younger	65	200	4.6	0.103
Education of	Up to high school	35	68	2	<0.014*
partner	Pre degree and above	33	134		<0.014
Joh tyma of nautnau	Government sector	18	65	1.3	0.448
Job type of partner	Non governmental	50	137	1.3	0.446
Income of partner	Low- moderate income	59	173	1.09	1.00
	High income	9	29	1.09	1.00

^{*}P value<0.05 is considered significant #chi square test

Table 4: The bi variable analysis of habit of the partner.

Factor	Category	Life time domestic violence (n=68)	Without domestic violence (n=202)	OR	P value#
Alcohol	Alcoholic	39	66	2.7	0.001*
consumption	Non alcoholic	29	136	2.1	0.001**
Cmakina	Yes	27	49	2	0.019*
Smoking	No	41	153	2	0.019
Anti psychotic drug	Yes	4	3	. 4.4	0.060
intake	No	60	199	4.4	0.060
Extramarital affairs	Yes	5	2	7.8	0.012*
Extramarital allairs	No	63	198	7.0	0.013*
Coming late at home	Yes	22	26	2.2	۰0 001*
Coming late at home	No	46	176	3.2	<0.001*
Inining for mools	Yes	37	147	0.44	0.007*
Joining for meals	No	31	55	0.44	0.007*
Care during	Yes	29	161	Λ 10	<0.001*
pregnancy	No	34	35	0.18	<0.001**

^{*}P value<0.05 is considered significant #chi square test

Table 5: The bi variable analysis of household factors.

Factor	Category	Life time domestic violence (n=68)	Without domestic violence (n=202)	OR	P value#
House condition	Good	38	147	0.47	0.015*
House condition	Bad	30	55	0.47	0.015**
Uougo tymology	Individual house	58	187	0.46	0.090
House typology	Slum	10	15	0.40	
Household stancture	Nuclear	57	141	2.2	0.026*
Household structure	Extended	11	61	2.2	0.026*
Overcrowding index	Low	62	176	1.5	<0.001*
	High	6	26	1.5	<0.001*

^{*}P value<0.05 is considered significant #chi square test

Table 6: The bi variable analysis of marital factors.

Factor	Category	Life time domestic violence (n=68)	Without domestic violence (n=202)	OR	P value#
Marital status	Separated and widowed	15	11	4.9	<0.001*
Maritai status	Married	53	191	4.9	
Type of mannings	Marriage with the consent of parents	9	26	1.03	1.0
Type of marriage	Marriage without the consent of parents	59	176	1.05	
Marital duration	Up to 10 years	17	56	0.86	0.753
Marital duration	More than 10 years	51	146	0.80	
Respondent's willingness	Yes	58	189	0.39	0.045*
for marriage	No	10	13	0.39	0.045
Husband's satisfaction	Yes	54	196	0.04	c0 001*
with marriage (n=265)	No	13	2	0.04	<0.001*
In laws' satisfaction with	Yes	51	197	1 0	0.048*
marriage (n=266)	No	13	5	1.8	0.048
Promorital councelling	Yes	5	20	0.72	0.63
Premarital counselling	No	63	182	0.72	0.03

^{*}P value<0.05 is considered significant #chi square test

Table 7: The bi variable	analysis of family	environment of respondents.
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Factor	Category	Life time domestic violence (n=68)	Without domestic violence (n=202)	OR	P value#
Communication with own family	<once a="" th="" week<=""><th>19</th><th>16</th><th>4.5</th><th><0.001*</th></once>	19	16	4.5	<0.001*
Communication with own family	≥Once a week	49	186	4.3	<0.001
Support from own family in post	Yes	44	171	0.32	0.001*
marital life (n=267)	No	23	29		
O	Yes	38	127	0.74	0.31
Ownership of property	No	30	75		
Own naments swampel (n=261)	Yes	24	45	2	<0.022*
Own parents quarrel (n=261)	No	40	155		
Doutnou's novements arrowed (n=100)	Yes	10	6	~ ~	0.001*
Partner's parents quarrel (n=188)	No	58	196	5.6	
Decision maker of family affairs	In laws	7	18	1.1	0.80
	Partners	61	184	1.1	0. 80

^{*}P value<0.05 is considered significant #chi square test

Multivariable analysis to find out the predictors of lifetime psychological violence

Maximum value of Nagelkerke R square with minimum number of variables and significance of the model in the Chi square table were the criteria used for finalizing the model. The model was found to be significant with a p value of <0.001. The variables found to be significant predictors of psychological violence were care obtained during pregnancy, household structure, in laws' satisfaction with marriage, frequency of communication with own family, and partner's parents quarrel. The model could explain 67.8% of the variability seen in life time psychological violence (Nagelkerke R square =0.678). The results of multivariable analysis to find out the predictors of life time psychological violence is as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Results of multivariable analysis to find out the predictors of life time domestic violence $(r^2=0.678)$.

Variables	Adjusted OR	P value
Care given during pregnancy	0.107	0.005
Household structure	7.8	0.045
In laws' satisfaction with marriage	0.046	0.047
Less frequent communication with own family	8.6	0.03
Partner's parents quarrel	31.3	0.01

DISCUSSION

The study was undertaken to find out the prevalence of life time psychological violence among ever married women of Thiruvananthapuram district. A secondary case control analysis was done to study the factors

associated with it which includes variables related to socio demography, household details, marital history, habit of the partner and family environment. The prevalence of life time psychological violence obtained was 25.2% (95% CI 20.2-30.6%). The most common form of psychological violence was treating as servant (15.9%).

In United Nations multi country study the reported psychological violence ranges 4.1%-27.7%. Systematic review of Indian studies shows the median and range of lifetime estimates of psychological abuse was 22% and 2-99% respectively. In an Indian study insulting, threatening and withholding or delaying food were the most common forms of psychological violence. In

As in most other studies, poor education of both respondents and partners were associated with violence among intimate partners. Among the habit of partners alcoholism, smoking and having extramarital relations found to be a major risk factor for violence. Victims of violence in Kerala showed alcoholism of the male partner as the most common cause. The main reason reported for lack of trust between partners was suspected or actual infidelity and when women question them with suspicions of infidelity, this provokes their male partners and triggers violence. Among the most control of the most control

Nuclear family seems to be a risk factor of psychological violence. It may be because some type of violence can be prevented by living with a joint family whereas in some cases joint family itself perpetrates violence.

Separated and widowed women had higher risk of victimization whereas factors such as respondent's willingness for marriage and husband's satisfaction with marriage were came as a protective factor. Though in law's satisfaction with marriage found as a risk factor, on regression it came as one of the protective factor. There was no association between love (marriage without

parental consent)/arranged marriage with violence but in one study love marriage and non-registration of marriage were significantly associated with violence.¹² It can be due to the inadequate sample size to study the associated factors.

Similar to current result, one study proved history of father ever beat mother was associated with a 92% chance of violence and witnessing such quarrels of parents is also significantly associated with violence in the future as obtained from one study. 15,16

The variations in factors contributing to psychological violence might be due to the differences in the study design, settings and importantly none of them specifically looked for psychological domain of domestic violence.

CONCLUSION

Abuse in the form of psychological violence is still prevailing in the district but lesser than the previous studies. Of the psychological violence the most common form was treating as servant. Psychological violence is mainly affected by multiple components like socio demographic elements, habit of the partner, family environment, marital and household factors. Most of the independent factors are modifiable by interventions aimed at individual, family and community levels, suggesting its preventable nature. The study provides rationale for nurturing friendly family atmosphere and improving familial bond as the core strategy in the prevention of psychological violence.

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