Research Article

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To determine the pattern and effects of verbal, emotional and physical abuse in both sexes

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ABSTRACT

Background: Abuse is a word used for bad effect or for a bad purpose and is of several types. Presence of abuse in a civilized society is the major obstacle in achieving complete health. In India there has been 760 percent increase in abuse rate from 1971 to 2009. We listen a lot about abuses against fairer sex, but there exist abuses against males too. So, we decided to undertake this study to find out whether both sexes suffer from abuse or not and what are their pattern and effects?

Methods: Predesigned questionnaires were distributed to 100 males and 100 females aged 15 to 55 years, requested to honestly and completely fill and return. Collected data was analyzed under set format of scoring.

Results: Frequency of verbal abuse was 33.57% in males and 18.71% in females while overall frequency was 25.15% and its effects were in 36.33% males and 22.66% females, while the overall effect was observed in 30.66%. Frequency of emotional abuse was 25.42% in males and 20.14% in females while overall frequency was 29.25% and its effects were in 29.33% males and 23% females, while the overall effect was observed in 28.33%. Frequency of physical abuse was 25.71% in males and 14.85% in females while overall frequency was 22.8% and its effects were in 39.33% males and 22.66% females, while overall effect was observed in 29.33%. There was no statistically significant co-relation of effects and types of different abuses with gender, age, socio-economic status and religion (p<0.01).

Conclusions: Males are not only the sufferers of all types of abuse but are effected, more than females and that occurrence and types of abuse are not statistically significant with gender, age, socio-economic status and religion.

Keywords: Effects of abuse, Pattern of abuse, Verbal abuse, Emotional abuse, Physical abuse, Both sexes

INTRODUCTION

Abuse is a word used for bad effect or for a bad purpose and includes misuse, misapply, misemploy, mishandle, exploit, pervert, excessive and habitual use, treat with cruelty or violence, physical maltreatment, verbal maltreatment, injury, assault, violation, rape, unjust practices; crimes, or other types of aggression.

Abuse includes all forms of physical ill-treatment, emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect, and

exploitation that results in actual or potential harm to a person's health, development or dignity. Within this broad definition, five subtypes can be distinguished-verbal abuse; emotional abuse; physical abuse; sexual abuse; neglect or negligent treatment.¹

UN and the WHO, recognize abuses towards both men and women as major obstacles to the goal of complete health and it violates, and impairs the enjoyment of people's fundamental rights and proper health.²

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A lot is discovered and known about abuses, but very few studies show the pattern of abuses in both sexes. Very few studies are conducted in India and hardly any study done in UP is available in literature. Here people still believe that the fairer sex is more commonly abused than the other sex.

The World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women, found that between 15-71% of women aged 15-49 years reported physical and/or emotional violence by intimate partner at some point in their lives. World Bank data says that women aged 15-44 are more at risk from physical violence and domestic violence, than from cancer, motor accidents, and even malaria.

On the other hand a study by the men's rights campaign group states that more than 40% of domestic violence victims in UK are male. Men assaulted by their partners are often ignored by police, see their attacker go free and have far fewer refuges to flee to than women. The official figures underestimate the true number of male victims.⁵

Another report by the men's rights campaign group parity claims that about two in five of all victims of domestic violence are men, contradicting the widespread impression that it is almost always women who are left battered and bruised.⁵

A UN world study found, that between 14 to 76 percent of women are targeted for physical and sexual violence in their lifetime, in different parts of India, and most of them within intimate relationships.⁶

National crime records bureau found, that 21,397 cases of physical and sexual violence were reported in 2009 alone, all over the country-against 2,487 cases reported in 1971, an 8.6 times increase in 38 years. 8,093 cases, of dowry-related deaths were reported in 2007 alone; and murders of many other women were falsely labeled 'suicides' or 'accidents'.

The northern state of UP experiences relatively high rate of domestic violence and gender disparities. Average physical abuse in the state prevalence ranges from 10-45%. According, to a 2006 survey of 6,902 men in UP, upto 45% of men acknowledged that at one point or another were physically abused by their wives. 8

In Indian male dominated society; we listen to the different kind of abuse against fair sex, whole day long, both in print and audio visual media. Some incidences even mobilized the masses and compelled the governments to make the laws more and more stringent for the accused and more relaxing for the victims. It is good to help the victims and punish the accused, but the question is how many of them come to the courts. Many of them occur and remain unnoticed.

This problem is rising day by day at fast pace, and needs to be controlled now. We the younger generation always think of equal rights for both sexes and so we were inspired to undertake this survey to see whether only the fair sex or both sexes suffer from abuse - what are its pattern and effects on the life of victims?

METHODS

We have included only three kinds of abuses for the purpose of this initial study;

Verbal abuse

Verbal abuse is a form of abusive behavior involving the use of language. While oral communication is the most common form of verbal abuse, it also includes abusive words in written form. It includes but is not limited to constant criticism, cursing, name calling, repeated insults that hurts or are likely to hurt a person.

Emotional abuse

The rejecting, ignoring, criticizing, insulting, threatening, harassing, degrading, humiliating, intimidating or terrorizing of a person. Acts or omissions that cause, or are likely to cause conduct, cognitive, affective or other mental disorders, emotional stress or mental suffering.

Physical abuse

Physical acts of assault that are not limited to but may include acts such as hitting, punching, kicking, biting, throwing, burning or violent shaking that cause, or could cause physical injury.¹⁰

Study design

This is a cross-sectional study in which 100 males and 100 females aged 15-55 years were selected for the study.

A study was conducted by using purposive sampling in Sanjeevni Association and Bharat Vikas Parishad.

Inclusion criteria

Subjects present at the time of the survey having 15-55 years of age and who gave the written consent were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria

Subjects who have not given the written consent and those who are below the age of 15 and above the age of 55 years were excluded from the study.

Tool for data collection

Pre-designed questionnaire and general health questionnaire were the tools for the data collection.

Data analysis

Data obtained from the study was analyzed by applying chi-square test using Microsoft excel 2010.

Topic was approved, questionnaires were designed in consultation with the guide, study areas were confirmed and approved; appointment was made with the organizations in consultation with the office bearers and thereafter, visited these places at the allotted date and time.

At the start of the meeting, initial 15 minutes were spent in informing the members about the importance of this study and how to answer and fill the questionnaire.

Thereafter a consent form was distributed to the subjects full filling the inclusion criteria and collected after each understood the required details and had given the consent to be included into the study.

The questionnaires were distributed to each one of them. They were given an opportunity, to ask any questions pertaining to the study and have them answered. The study subjects were given an appropriate time, to understand and answer all the questions. Thereafter the completed questionnaires were collected.

Similar exercise was done in both the organizations. Collected data was then analyzed in excel spread sheet and chi-square test was applied.

First, we calculated the frequency distribution of the abuses to find out, the percentage of occurrence of verbal, emotional and physical abuses and their effects in the major area (i.e. rumination, magnification and helplessness), along with their frequency for each question separately, and then, we scored all the three types of abuses.

- Scoring was done as follows: each question consisted of five options to choose from.
- Very often/daily-5 points
- Often/weekly-4 points
- Sometimes/monthly-3 points
- Rarely/yearly-2 points
- Never-1 point

So, the total score could range from a minimum of 9 to a maximum 45 for verbal abuse, a minimum of 14 to a maximum of 70 for emotional abuse and a minimum of 17 to a maximum of 85 for physical abuse.

Then, they were given a 'yes' or 'no' based on 50% cutoff i.e. those who scored more than 50% were under category 'yes' and those below 50% were under 'no'.

Then, the frequency tables were analyzed using chisquare test to know whether a statistically significant relation existed between the dependent and the independent variables.

Dependent variables

- Verbal abuse
- · Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse

Independent variables

- Gender
- Age
- · Socio-economic status
- Religion

Similar kind of scoring was done for the effects of the three abuses.

Each set of questions (for the effects of verbal, emotional and physical abuse) consisted of 13 questions; out of which Q1, Q3, Q5, Q9 and Q12 were about rumination (to go over in the mind repeatedly); Q6, Q8 and Q 10 were about magnification (always thinking the worst will happen, despite evidence to the contrary) and Q2, Q4, Q7, Q11 and Q13 were about helplessness (hopelessness, negative-outcome expectancy and helplessness expectancy).

Each question consisted of five options to choose from.

- Strongly agree- 1 point
- Agree- 2 points
- Uncertain- 3 points
- Disagree- 4 points
- Strongly disagree- 5 point

Some questions out of these 13 were reverse scored. (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q12 and Q 13 were reverse scored).

Then, a total score was calculated for rumination (which ranged from min. 5 to max. 25), magnification (which ranged from min 3 to max 13) and helplessness (which ranged from min 5 to max 25); this was called as the raw score

The transformed score was calculated by using a formula;

Transformed score = actual raw score- lowest possible raw score

Possible raw score range

These were categorized into 'yes' or 'no' on the basis of 50% cut-off value of their raw scores.

Then, the frequency tables were analyzed using chisquare test to know whether a statistically significant relation existed between the effects of the three abuses with the above stated independent variables.

Chi-square test was separately applied to see the relationship between the total scores for rumination, magnification and helplessness for verbal, emotional and physical abuse with the socio-demographic factors.

A general health questionnaire was used to assess the general health status of the subjects.

For this, the population was classified into three groups:-

- Scores about 11-12 typical
- Evidence of distress-scores >15
- Severe problems and psychological distressscores >20
- Then, the percentage of no. of subjects under each category was tabulated

The final conclusions were drawn and presented.

RESULTS

Socio-economic profile (n=200)

Sample population was divided into equal number of males and females (i.e. 100 each), out of them 71% were between the age group 15-25 years, 85% were Hindus and 89% belonged to upper socioeconomic class.

Verbal abuse

25.5% people faced name calling almost daily, 30% people faced constant criticism sometimes, 30% people were insulted repeatedly, 25.5% people were expressed negative expectations almost once weekly, 30% people were reminded of their past mistakes constantly and 20% people were threatened of violence sometimes.

Frequency of verbal abuse was 33.57% in males and 18.71% in females while overall frequency was found to be 25.15%; and its effects were found in 36.33% males and 22.66% females, while the effect was 30.66% collectively in both sexes.

Gender wise frequency distribution of verbal abuse (n=100)

32% males faced name calling daily while only 19% females faced it daily; 36% males were constantly criticized in contrast to only 24% females; 31% males and 29% females were insulted repeatedly 36% males

while only 15% females faced negative expectations almost once weekly; 21% females and 39% males were reminded of their past mistakes constantly; 30% males and 15% females were distrusted sometimes and 31% males were cursed sometimes.

Effects of verbal abuse

32% people agreed that they ruminate over verbal abuse, 23% people agreed that they magnify verbal abuse and 37% people agreed that they are helpless against verbal abuse.

Gender wise frequency distribution of effects of verbal abuse (n=100)

37% males and 27% females agreed that they ruminate over verbal abuse 29% males while only 10% females agreed that they magnify these verbal abuses; 43% males in contrast to 31% females agreed that they are helpless against verbal abuse.

Emotional abuse

32% people were humiliated or belittled on a monthly basis; 35.5% people were subjected to silent treatment sometimes; 27% people had at some point of life been shown jealousy towards them and 22.5% people were stalked sometimes.

Frequency of emotional abuse was 25.42% in males and 20.14% in females while overall frequency was found to be 29.25% and its effects were found in 29.33% males and 23% females, while the effect was 28.33% collectively in both sexes.

Gender wise frequency distribution of emotional abuse (n=100)

Equal no. of males and females i.e. 32% were humiliated or belittled sometimes; 21% males and 11% females were blamed for problems of other's lives often; 40% males while 31% females were subjected to silent treatment sometimes; 20% males were restricted to have contact with their family or friends; 24% male and 18% females were sometimes restricted to move out of the house; 24% females and 22% males were shown jealousy towards them almost weekly and 19% males were threatened to commit suicide in contrast to only 8% females.

Effects of emotional abuse

29% people agreed that they ruminate over emotional abuse; 27% people agreed that they magnify emotional abuse and 29% people agreed that they are helpless against emotional abuse.

Gender wise frequency distribution of effects of emotional abuse

35% males strongly agreed that they ruminate over emotional abuse while 28% females agreed that they ruminate over emotional abuse; 29% males and 25% females agreed that they magnify emotional abuse and 24% females and 16% males strongly agreed that they are helpless against emotional abuse.

Physical abuse

20% people were pushed almost daily; 30% people were pinched often; 23% people said that someone twisted their arm at least once every month; 22.5% people had been slapped sometimes and 18.5% people had been punched at some point in their life.

Frequency of physical abuse was 25.71% in males and 14.85% in females while overall frequency was found to be 22.8% and its effects were found in 39.33% and 26.66% females, while the effect was 29.33% collectively in both sexes.

Gender wise frequency distribution of physical abuse

29% males in contrast to only 12% females were pushed almost daily; 35% males and 27% females were pinched almost weekly; 29% males while only 17% females said that someone twisted their arm at least once every month; 26% males and 19% females had been slapped sometimes; 22% males while only 6% females had been punched sometimes; 18% males in contrast to only 9% females had been kicked often and 21% males and 14% females were threatened with an object or a weapon sometimes.

Effects of physical abuse

31% people strongly agreed that they ruminate over these physical abuses; 23.5% people agreed that they magnify these physical abuses and 33.5% people agreed that they are helpless against physical abuse.

Gender wise frequency distribution of effects of physical abuse: 20% males and 26% females strongly agreed that they ruminate over physical abuse; 33% males while only 14% females agreed that they magnify physical abuse while 49% males and 28% females were uncertain whether they were helpless against physical abuse or no.

Co-relation of different abuses with independent variables using chi-square test

There is no statistically significant co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuse with gender (p>0.01).

Table 1: Correlation of occurrence of different types of abuses with gender.

	Female	Male	Total	
Verbal abuse	45	72	117	
Emotional abuse	36	55	91	
Physical abuse	21	41	62	
Total	102	168	270	
Probability of chi-square	P value of chi-sq.=0.99, p>0.01 (not significant)			

Table 2: Co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses with socio-economic status.

	15-25	25-35	35-45	45-55	Total
Verbal abuse	75	25	8	9	117
Emotional abuse	53	22	9	8	92
Physical abuse	26	20	8	8	62
Total	154	67	25	25	271
Probability of chi-square	P value of chi-sq.=0.677, p>0.01 (not significant)				

There is no statistically significant co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses with age (p >0.01).

Table 3: Co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses with socio-economic status.

	Upper	Upper- middle	Lower- middle	Upper- lower	Total
Verbal abuse	09	101	06	03	119
Emotional abuse	05	75	06	03	89
Physical abuse	05	48	06	03	62
Total	19	224	18	09	270
Probability of chi-sq.	P value significa		= 0.994, p>	0.01 (Not	

There is no statistically significant co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses with socioeconomic status (p > 0.01).

Table 4: Co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses with religion.

	Hindu	Muslim	Others	Total
Verbal abuse	98	14	05	117
Emotional abuse	81	07	03	91
Physical Abuse	56	05	01	62
Total	235	26	09	270
Probability of chi-square	P value of chi-sq.=0.97, p>0.01 (Not significant)			

There is no statistically significant co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses with religion (p>0.01).

Our study shows that there is no statistically significant co-relation of effects of different types of abuses with gender, age, socio-economic status and religion (p<0.01).

We found no significant correlation of rumination, magnification and helplessness in different types of abuses with gender, age, socio-economic status and religion (p<0.01).

General health status of the population:

- Among the study population, 58% females were under severe psychological distress while only 42% males were experiencing severe psychological distress.
- 2. 86% of the people under severe psychological distress were between the age; 15-25 years.
- 3. 90% of the people, which showed signs of distress, were of upper-middle socio-economic status.
- 92% of the people under severe psychological distress were Hindus.

Our study shows that there is no statistically significant co-relation of effects of different types of abuses and their effects with gender, age, socio-economic status and religion (p<0.01).

DISCUSSION

In the present study, out of total number of 200 subjects with equal males and females, 71% were between the age group 15-25 years, 85% were Hindus while 89.5 were from upper lower socio-economic class.

With overall frequency of 25.15%; 33.57% males and 18.71% females suffered verbal abuse; and its effect was observed in overall subjects in 30.66% while 36.33% and 22.66% females were affected by this verbal abuse.

With overall frequency 29.25%; 25.42% males and 20.14% females suffered emotional abuse; and its effect was observed in overall subjects in 28.33% while 29.33% male and 23% females were affected by this emotional abuse.

With overall frequency 22.8%; 25.71% males and 14.85% females suffered physical abuse; and its effect was observed in overall subjects in 29.33% while 39.33% male and 22.66% females were affected by this physical abuse.

Our findings suggests that males not only suffered rather more males as compared to females has been the victims of different kind of abuse and also they have been effected more than females. Our findings are in accordance with Ron Acierno and Melba A et al who analyzed data from 5777 respondents. One-year prevalence was 4.6% for emotional abuse, 1.6% for physical abuse, 0.6% for sexual abuse, 5.1% for potential neglect, and 5.2% for current financial abuse by a family member. One in 10 respondents reported emotional, physical, or sexual mistreatment or potential neglect in the past year. ¹¹

The prevalence and frequency of Intimate partner violence (IPV) against men is highly disputed, with different studies coming to different conclusions for different nations, and many countries having no data at all. Some researchers believe the actual number of male victims is likely to be greater than law enforcement statistics suggest, due to the high number of men who do not report their abuse. ¹²

Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions at least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime with the abuser usually someone known to her. ¹³

Whereas women who experience domestic violence are openly encouraged to report it to the authorities, it has been argued that men who experience such violence often encounter pressure against reporting, with those that do facing social stigma regarding their perceived lack of machismo and other denigrations of their masculinity. Additionally, intimate partner violence (IPV) against men is generally less recognized by society than IPV against women, which can act as a further block to men reporting their situation. ^{14,16}

Domestic violence in India includes any form of violence suffered by a person from a biological relative, but typically is the violence suffered by a woman by male members of her family or relatives. ^{17,18} 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. ¹⁹

A 2014 study in The Lancet states, "whereas an 8.5% prevalence of sexual violence in India is among the lowest in the world, it is estimated to affect 27.5 million women in India". Further, the 2006 survey found that 85% of women who suffered sexual violence, in or outside of marriage, never sought help and only 1% report it to the police. 20,21

The 2012 National Crime Records Bureau report of India states a reported crime rate of 46 per 100,000, rape rate of 2 per 100,000, dowry homicide rate of 0.7 per 100,000 and the rate of domestic cruelty by husband or his relatives as 5.9 per 100,000.²² These reported rates are significantly smaller than the reported intimate partner domestic violence rates in many countries, such as the United States (590 per 100,000) and reported homicide (6.2 per 100,000 globally), crime and rape incidence rates

per 100,000 women for most nations tracked by the United Nations. $^{23-25}$

Our study shows that there is no statistically significant co-relation of occurrence of different types of abuses and their effects with gender age, socio-economic status, and religion (p<0.01).

We found no significant correlation of rumination, magnification and helplessness in different types of abuses with gender, age, socio-economic status and religion (p<0.01).

Our finding about the general health of the subjects was 58% females were under severe psychological distress while only 42% males were experiencing severe psychological distress among the study population; 86% of the subjects between the age 15-25 years, were under severe psychological distress; 90% of the people of upper-middle socio-economic status showed signs of distress and 92% of Hindu were under severe psychological distress.

These finding point out that in our Indian society, majority of both sexes are affected by different kind of abuse and that the abuse needs to be dealt strictly to make our society healthy.

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Institutional Ethics Committee

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