

Review Based Study of Physical Violence Experienced by Women from their Husband in Nepal.

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Abstract

The article is based on the issues of violence against women (VAW) by their husbands. The experience of physical violence faced by women from their husband in Nepal is the main focus of this article. Violent behaviors like physical attacks or harm done by men against women have been unfortunate events in individuals. The article shows the status of Nepal in the world in the context of violence. The objectives of the article are to identify the situation of violence against women by age, level of education, caste/ ethnicity and occupation of the women. The data for this article was collected by cross-sectional survey and the study was quantitative descriptive study. The prevalence of all forms of VAW by husband was common among women aged 15-49. Even physical violence (22.8%) was higher than emotional (12.3%) and sexual (7%) violence. Physical violence is pervasive in any status of the women; in such a situation the government must focus its programs to eliminate any type of violence against women.

Key words: Physical violence, prevalence, problem, spousal, women

Background:

Act of physical aggression includes slapping, punching, kicking, beating and biting. Violence against women is one of the most widespread problems and may take place in any age, family, community, cultural, ethical or religious groups and region in different forms and disparately impacts their life (Garcia-Moreno, Jansen, Ellsberg, Heise, & Watts, 2005). It is widely accepted method for controlling women (World Health Organization, 2013). With the re-emergence of the feminist movement, violence against women was viewed as the serious social problem in early 1970's (Tjaden et al., 2000). "Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group

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or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation” (WHO, 2009).

Violence against women by husband is manifested in various forms of physical, sexual, and emotional assault. Wife beating is the most common form of violence against women by husband. In many developing countries there is widespread acceptance of wife beating, both among men and women, because of the commonly held norms about gender roles. Such attitudes and social norms have resulted in a high prevalence of wife beating and in the social and economic subordination of women (Hindin, 2003; Kishor and Subaiya, 2008). The subordinate role of women in the family, as well as cultural and social factors, contributes to violence against women by husband. The home, which is expected to be the most secure place, is often where women experience violence, while the husbands and partners who are considered to be the protectors of their wives and their own partners are their primary abusers (Hindin et al., 2008).

Nepalese women have been contributing to their family, community, society and the nation. There has been change in the political status of women after restoration of democracy in 1990. As a result, women’s participation in politics has begun (Pradhan, 2005). The Interim Legislature has passed a resolution on 30 May 2006 for women’s representation in every state structure at a minimum ratio of 33% (Renaissance Society Nepal, 2009). As a result, women’s representation in the Constituent Assembly has reached an all-time-high (one-thirds) (Renaissance Society Nepal, 2009). However, women who were actively participating in politics have experienced discrimination, exclusion, harassment and violence (Soediono, 2016). This study explored the perception and the experience of violence against the women of Kathmandu in politics.

Violence against women is pervasive and complex in Nepal. It has significantly impacted women’s life (Sedain, 2017). Twenty individuals are victims of physical violence every minute in USA (Burgess, Regerh & Roberts, 2013). Physical abuse can have lasting effects on physical and mental health. Physical abuse can cause many chronic health problems. Women who are abused also are more likely to develop depression or digestive disorder. Some research studies have explored the violence experienced by women of rural, poor, pregnant, uneducated, disable, marginalized communities in Nepal (Puri, Misra, & Hawkes, 2015; Gurung & Acharya, 2016; Government of Nepal, 2012). The recent Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2016, has collected information on the domestic violence (Ministry of Health, 2016). However, their focus was not on the experience of violence against

political women, who can represent large group of female population.

The reliable information on the highly educated girls' and women's experience of spousal violence in Nepal is lacking. There are some studies on experience of spousal violence, which have been undertaken in the recent years (Asia Foundation, 2010; Adhikari, & Tamang, 2010; Government of Nepal, 2012 & Puri et al., 2015). However, these studies presented data on the violence experience of poor uneducated rural female respondents. This gap of information has created difficulties in getting the real picture of the spousal violence among educated girls and women in Nepal. The study by Hawkes et al (2013) quoted that lack of education is the cause of violence against women by husband in Nepal.

Demographic Health Survey (2016) showed that 22 percent of women aged 15-49 years have experienced violence since the age of 15 in Nepal (Ministry of Health, 2016). These studies revealed the fact that Nepal is not an exception to violence against women and institutionalized at home/family, community, society and the state. Violence against women is wide spread in Nepal and every year large number of Nepalese women is suffering from different forms of violence (Asian Development Bank, 2010).

Studies have found high rates of mental health problems, emotional distress, and suicidal behavior among women who have suffered violence by husband (Krug et al., 2002). Women abused by intimate partners physically, sexually, or both had significantly higher levels of emotional distress than non-abused women. Women who had been abused by their partners were more likely, than non-abused women, to have ever thought of suicide and to have attempted it. This is consistent with other research in developing and industrialized nations. In Nepal, suicide has been reported to be the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age, and the third-leading cause of death among pregnant women (Pradhan et al., 2010; Pradhan et al., 2011). In another study conducted in Nepal, 69 percent of women who experienced violence against women by husband reported psychological problems (fear, depression, and tension) and 6 percent had attempted suicide—a rate 10 times higher than that reported by women who had not suffered violence (Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers, 2012).

Methodology

Data for this study was based on the 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). NDHS was nationally representative cross sectional sample survey, which was conducted under the aegis of Ministry of Health of the Government of Nepal. Stratified two-stage cluster sampling was used in rural areas and three-stage in

urban areas to select household for the survey. In rural areas, wards were selected as primary sampling units (PSUs) in the first stage and households in second stage. In urban areas, wards were selected as PSUs in first stage, one enumeration area (EA) was selected from each PSU in second stage, and households were selected from sample EAs in third stage. The total weighted number of analytic sample population for violence against women by husband is 3,562 women. The 2016 NDHS sample contained 11,473 households, and 12,862 women aged 15-49 years were interviewed; response rate was 98% (Ministry of Health et al., 2017).

Status of violence against women: Wife beating is the most common name of violence within household. In the name of dowry, many women have to bear their mother-in-law's and relatives' insulting words and even some of them are murdered. Beating and burning can also result from the issues of dowry (SAATHI, 1997). Close to three in five women (58%) reported that their husbands had physically forced them to have sexual intercourse. Similarly, more than two in five (45%) mentioned that they had experienced unwanted sexual intercourse because they were afraid of what their husbands might do if they refused. A few women (3%) reported that their husband forced them to do something sexual activity that they found themselves exploited out of 1,536 women had experienced at least one form of sexual coercion and that almost half of the total (45%) had experienced at least two forms of sexual coercion (MOHP, NDHS-2016).

Findings:

National Demographic Health Survey included some questions to ever married women aged 15-49 to extract the information on physical violence. Among them, the majority of study population of different socio-demographic characteristics has experienced different types of physical violence.

Experience of physical violence by age: Various population-based studies in Nepal have indicated physical violence as a reason for poor health, insecurity, and inadequate social mobilization among women. The experience of physical violence varies substantially by background characteristics. Every age group of ever married women were found to have experienced physical violence at least once throughout their life. Ever-married women are more likely than never-married women to have experienced physical violence, indicating that in Nepal violence perpetrated by spouses is more prevalent than violence perpetrated by other individuals.

More than one in five (22.8 percent) women aged 15-49 have experienced spousal physical violence since age 15. The experience of spousal physical violence of women age 35-39 (26.5 percent) were more likely than other age groups. From

the study population, women of age group 20-24 (17.1 percent) experienced least physical violence. The data of physical violence experienced by women between age group 45-49 was still high at 25 percent followed by the women of age group 15-19 at 19.7 percent.

Experience of physical violence by educational level: The educational level of women is one of the major factor associated with physical violence. About 26 percent of ever married women have experienced physical violence since age 15 with having different educational level. Experience of physical violence was found to have decreased with education level, from 31.1 percent of women with no education to 8.7 percent among study women with a School Leaving Certificate (SLC) and above. Similarly, about one fifth of women (24.5 percent) with primary education reported about their experience of violence against women by husband. The remaining 17.1 percent of study women with secondary level were reported to have experienced spousal physical violence.

Experience of physical violence by caste/ethnicity: The caste/ethnicity is one of the important component associations with spousal physical violence. The experience of spousal physical violence seems to differ in different caste/ethnicity. Though ever married women of all ethnic groups of Nepal have experienced physical violence at least once in their life, Brahmin and Chhetri caste have experienced less spousal physical violence compared to the Muslim and other castes of Terai region. This study population was categorized into five ethnic groups. Among them, Terai caste group reported higher experience of physical violence by their husband, followed by Muslim (36.2 percent). Similarly, one third of Dalit women experienced spousal physical violence. And Women of Brahmin/Chhetri caste reported the least physical violence by their husband at 12.2 percent.

Experience of physical violence by occupation: Occupation is one of the important variables which determine the level of experience of spousal physical violence. In general, women who engaged in income generating activities, experience less spousal physical violence than those who do not involve in any economic activities.

The distribution of sample women aged 15-49 by occupational status shows that women involved in agriculture experienced more spousal physical (24.5 percent). Similarly, about one fourth of non-agricultural women experienced physical violence. Nearly, one fifth (19.1 percent) of unemployed women reported their experiences of spousal physical violence.

Conclusion:

Prevalence of the physical (33.3%) and sexual violence (20.3%) among educated women was almost similar to the violence experienced by the disable women in Nepal (Puri, Mishra, & Hawkes, 2015). This finding suggests that all Nepalese women are vulnerable and at the greater risk of the violence. Emotional violence was one of the common forms of violence, and one-fourth of women had experienced emotional violence in the past 12 months. This study found that about one-fifth of primary level education women had experienced some forms of sexual abuse in their life time. Similarly, findings on physical or sexual violence against women of childbearing age within marriage in Nepal, based on nationally representative data set reported 14% of women experienced sexual violence by their husband (Pandey, 2014). Whereas the similar type of study conducted in rural part of Nepal (Achham, Gulmi, Rupendehi, & Ilam) showed that about three in five married women experienced any forms of sexual violence in their life time (Watts, & Zimmerman, 2002). The result of the studies on the experience of violence against women by husband was mixed for province wise, educated/uneducated having less/more number of children. However, all Nepalese women are at the risk of violence against women by husband. It may also be due the existing similar cultural, religious norms, wealth quintile and values among all Nepalese women.

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