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Types of Abuse and Socio-Demographic Profile of Women Victims: An Analytical Study

Dr.P.Suji

Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of Social Work, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, India.

R.Priyadharsini

Assistant Professor & Head, PG & Research Department of Social Work, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, India.

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between various types of abuse—physical, verbal, sexual, and economic—and the socio-demographic characteristics of women victims. Using a sample of 200 respondents, the study applies Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine significant differences across variables such as age, education, residence, partner occupation, income, and age at marriage. The findings indicate that verbal abuse shows significant variation across multiple socio-demographic factors, while physical and sexual abuse remain largely uniform. Economic abuse is significantly associated with education, occupation, and age at marriage. The study concludes that socio-economic vulnerabilities and structural inequalities play a crucial role in influencing abuse intensity.

Key Words: Abuse, Women, Partner violence

Introduction

Violence against women is a pervasive global issue that cuts across cultural, economic, and social boundaries. It manifests in multiple forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse, often co-occurring within intimate relationships. According to the World Health Organization, nearly one in three women worldwide has experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime[1].

Abuse is not only an individual or relational issue but is deeply rooted in socio-demographic and structural factors such as age, education, income, and cultural norms. Previous research highlights that women with lower socio-economic status and limited autonomy are at greater risk of experiencing abuse. Understanding how these factors influence the type and intensity of abuse is essential for developing targeted interventions and policies[2].

Types of Abuses

Physical Abuse

Physical maltreatment happens when a spouse utilizes the physical power against his wife. Physical damage is most able to be seen and a transparent type of violence. Women who experienced physical maltreatment are increasingly inclined to psychological wellness issues. The forms of physical abuse are kicking, punching, pulling hair, beating, threatening with weapons like knife, rod, etc. Around the world, the level of women enduring genuine wounds due to physical domestic violence ranges from 19% - 55% [3]. Physical injuries, on the contrary, to psychological torture, are more evident and can be more effectively-recognized by wellbeing experts just as courtrooms relating to legal prosecution.

Verbal Abuse

Verbal abuse is an important element of sincerely oppressive connections. The perpetrator reliably makes proclamations that negatively mark an individual. This seriously affects the confidence and certainty of the individual encountering the verbal abuse. The indications of verbal abuses are ridiculed, using filthy language about one's character, speaking unnecessarily about partner's parents and their family members, commenting about partner's complexion and physical features, and humiliation in public and private places [4]. As indicated by an examination by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, suicide endeavors in India correspond with physical and psychological IPV [5].

Sexual Abuse

Sexual Violence includes offenses such as forced sex, forced exposure to pornography, any act of a sexual nature to abuse, humiliate, or degrade women. Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) considers the forced sex in marriages as a crime if the wife is below the age of 15. Marital rape is not a criminal offense under IPC [6]. The victims of marital rape need to take a plan of action to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA). The act PWDVA came into power in the year 2006, which outlaws conjugal assault. It just offers a common solution for the offence[7].

Economic Abuse

Economic Violence includes the refusal of food, cloth, medicine, and money at the time of necessity to a woman or her children, forcing a woman to quit her job, not allowing a woman to take up employment, preventing her from using or accessing any part of the house, refusing to pay house rent in case of rented accommodation or other bills like electricity, forcing her out of the house, selling or disposing of her stridhan (property gifted to the bride at the time of marriage) forcefully, taking away her salary forcefully and any other economic violence. As apparent, the inclusion of such actions as 'domestic violence' would be very helpful to those married women who face deprivations and threats at their matrimonial home [8].

Review of Literature

WHO reports that globally, 29% to 62% of women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Hence, physical violence was a major cause among women. According to the National Family Health Survey II, 21% of women in India have experienced physical violence from their husbands since the age of 15, and 2% have been beaten up by their in-laws.[9]. 40% of married women in Tamil Nadu have been physically mistreated since the age of 15[10]. The National Family Health Survey III report stated that overall, 30% of women aged 15-49 in India had experienced physical violence and sexual violence. The women who suffered physical and sexual violence range from 5% in Sikkim, 44-46 % in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Manipur. [11] stated that physical IPV was associated with structural and ideological patriarchal beliefs and alcohol use. However, Rachel Kidman conducted a comparative study in 34 countries and reported that marriage before the age of 15 was more prone to physical and sexual violence in 9 countries. Hence, in early marriages before the age of 18, women experienced verbal, physical, or sexual IPV[12]. NFHS IV report shows that one-fourth of married women have experienced physical or sexual abuse by husbands. The physical injuries included eye injuries, sprain, bone dislocation, deep wounds, broken bones and broken teeth. Physical abuse is higher in rural areas (32%) than in urban areas (25%) [13]. 10% of women undergo emotional abuse by their husbands, like humiliation or making women to feel bad about themselves. Physical abuse is a major issue for IPV, childhood abuse, and in-law abuse. Emotional abuse happens, along with physical and sexual abuse. All types of abuse from in-laws are associated with IPV. So, the community health centers have to provide prevention and intervention programmes to minimize the abuse.

[9]conducted a cross-sectional study to analyze the lifetime prevalence of abuses like physical, sexual, economic, emotional, and controlling behavior among Tanzanian ever partnered women. Around 1,049 women were considered for the study. The result shows that overall, about 61% of women reported physical and sexual IPV. Partner controlling behavior was the highly prevalent type of abuse, with 82% of women in their lifetime [14]. A study in Angola by analysing cross-sectional data from the Angola demographic and health survey (2015-2016) and found that 32.3% of women experienced physical abuse, 27.3% experienced emotional abuse, and 7.4% experienced sexual abuse [15]. Thus, women who experienced emotional and sexual IPV are at higher risks of sufferings from medical conditions, and hence primary attention is given in primary care settings.. [16] examined spousal age differences and IPV in Nigerian women who experienced physical abuse. About 20.5% had experienced bruises, 8% had a case of eye injuries, sprains, and dislocations, and 3.7% had wounds, broken teeth, and bones.

Methodology

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design. A total of 200 women respondents were randomly selected for the study from the protection officer for DV Act list, Coimbatore. Datas were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring different types of abuse and socio-demographic characteristics. The dependent variables are types of abuse (physical, verbal, sexual, and economic). Independent Variables: Age, education, residence, partner occupation, income, and age at marriage. The statistical tool Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test for significant differences across groups at the 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Table 1 Types of Abuse based on Age

Types of Abuse /	Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Physical Abuse	21-24	20	4.3500	1.18210	
	25-27	34	4.1471	1.35137	
	28-31	58	4.2759	1.13622	F=1.321

	32-35	48	4.3958	1.16216	P =>0.05 Not Significant
	36-39	24	4.0417	1.19707	
	40-43	10	4.1000	.73786	
	44--47	4	2.7500	.95743	
	48-51	2	3.5000	.70711	
	Total	200	4.2150	1.18142	
Verbal Abuse	21-24	20	4.5500	.94451	
	25-27	34	4.8824	.68599	
	28-31	58	4.8966	.40565	F= 5.720
	32-35	48	4.9583	.20194	P=<0.05
	36-39	24	4.7083	.90790	Significant
	40-43	10	5.0000	.00000	
	44--47	4	3.5000	1.91485	
	48-51	2	3.0000	2.82843	
	Total	200	4.8100	.70454	
Sexual Abuse	21-24	20	2.7000	1.68897	
	25-27	34	2.5294	1.50223	
	28-31	58	2.3621	1.32053	F = .512
	32-35	48	2.5000	1.50177	P = >0.05
	36-39	24	2.4167	1.24819	Not Significant
	40-43	10	1.8000	.42164	
	44--47	4	1.7500	.50000	
	48-51	2	1.0000	.00000	
	Total	200	2.4100	1.38980	
Economic Abuse	21-24	20	4.0500	1.31689	
	25-27	34	3.8235	1.35893	
	28-31	58	4.2241	1.10887	

	32-35	48	4.2708	1.16216	
	36-39	24	4.2083	1.38247	
	40-43	10	4.4000	.96609	F= .589
	44--47	4	4.0000	1.15470	P=> 0.05
	48-51	2	3.0000	.00000	Not Significant
	Total	200	4.1400	1.21150	

The ANOVA values of table 80 (F=1.321; p >0.05) shows that there is no significant difference between physical abuse based on the age group of the respondents. The ANOVA value (F=5.720; p <0.05) shows that there is a significant difference in verbal abuse based on the age group of the respondents. The mean value reveals that those respondents whose age 40-43 years had face verbal abuse compared to other age groups. The ANOVA value (F= .512; p>0.05) shows that there is no significant difference between sexual abuse based on the age group of the respondents. The ANOVA value (F= .589; p >0.05) shows that there is no significant difference between economic abuse based on the age group of the respondents. Thus, the respondents whose age group between 40-43 years had face verbal abuse compared to other age groups.

Table-2 Types of Abuse based on Education

Types of Abuse /	Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Physical Abuse	Did not attend school	2	4.5000	.70711	
	Primary School	3	4.6667	.57735	
	Secondary School	50	4.4200	1.01197	F= .998
	Higher Secondary	29	4.3103	1.22776	P = >0.05
	Under Graduate	61	4.2459	1.09019	Not Significant
	Post Graduate	53	3.9057	1.40417	
	Diploma	2	4.0000	1.41421	
	Total	200	4.2150	1.18142	
Verbal Abuse	Did not attend school	2	5.0000	.00000	

	Primary School	3	5.0000	.00000	
	Secondary School	50	5.0000	.00000	
	Higher Secondary	29	4.8966	.40925	F = 1.320
	Under Graduate	61	4.6721	.85091	P = >0.05
	Post Graduate	53	4.7170	.94822	Not Significant
	Diploma	2	5.0000	.00000	
	Total	200	4.8100	.70454	
Sexual Abuse	Did not attend school	2	3.0000	2.82843	
	Primary School	3	1.3333	.57735	
	Secondary School	50	2.3000	1.34392	
	Higher Secondary	29	2.5517	1.29797	F= .634
	Under Graduate	61	2.4918	1.42154	P = >0.05
	Post Graduate	53	2.4151	1.46016	Not Significant
	Diploma	2	1.5000	.70711	
	Total	200	2.4100	1.38980	
Economic Abuse	Did not attend school	2	5.0000	1.41421	
	Primary School	3	4.6667	.00000	
	Secondary School	50	4.6800	.71257	F = 2.890
	Higher Secondary	29	4.0000	1.33631	P = <0.05
	Under Graduate	61	3.9836	1.29733	Significant
	Post Graduate	53	3.8302	1.31172	
	Total	200	4.1400	1.21150	

The ANOVA values (F=.998; p >0.05) show that there is no significant difference between physical abuse based on the education of the respondents. The ANOVA values (F=1.320; p >0.05) show that there no is significant difference between verbal abuse based on the education of the respondents. The ANOVA values (F= .634; p >0.05) shows that there is no significant difference between sexual abuse based on the education of the respondents. The ANOVA

values ($F= 2.890$; $p < 0.05$) show that there is a significant difference between economic abuse based on the respondents' education. Thus, the respondents who did not go to school had to face severe economic abuse compared to other groups. Because the women who did not attend the school some of them goes to low-income job some may not get to the job. Hence partners who do not provide basic needs, and not pay the children education fees, so women undergo economic abuse.

Table-3 Types of Abuse based on Area of Residence

Types of Abuse /	Residence	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Physical Abuse	Rural	84	4.2738	1.20592	F= .222
	Urban	112	4.1786	1.17185	P =>0.05
	Semi-Urban	4	4.0000	1.15470	Not Significant
	Total	200	4.2150	1.18142	
Verbal Abuse	Rural	84	4.7143	.88592	
	Urban	112	4.9018	.50153	F = 3.051
	Semi-Urban	4	4.2500	.95743	P = <0.05
	Total	200	4.8100	.70454	Significant
Sexual Abuse	Rural	84	2.3929	1.43130	
	Urban	112	2.4375	1.36745	F = .201
	Semi-Urban	4	2.0000	1.41421	P = >0.05
	Total	200	2.4100	1.38980	Not Significant
Economic Abuse	Rural	84	4.2381	1.23814	
	Urban	112	4.0625	1.20271	F = .518
	Semi-Urban	4	4.2500	.95743	P =>0.05
	Total	200	4.1400	1.21150	Not Significant

The ANOVA values of table 82 ($F=.222$; $p > 0.05$) show that there is no significant difference between physical abuse based on the residence of the respondents. The ANOVA values ($F=3.051$; $p < 0.05$) show that there is a significant difference between verbal abuse based on

the area of residence of the respondents. The mean value reveals that respondent who lives in urban had to face verbal abuse compared to other groups. The ANOVA values ($F= .201$; $p >0.05$) show that there is no significant difference between sexual abuse based on the area of residence of the respondents. The ANOVA value ($F= .518$; $p >0.05$) shows that there is no significant difference between economic abuse based on the residence of the respondents. Thus the respondents live in an urban area face verbal abuse because both couples are educated, working, and women are empowered so due to these factors frequent quarrels and arguments happen between couples that lead to more verbal abuse.

Table-4 Types of Abuse based on Partner Occupations

Types of Abuse/ Partner Occupation		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Physical Abuse	No Job	16	4.0000	1.36626	
	Driver	15	4.5333	.91548	
	Coolie	14	3.9286	1.54244	
	Agriculture	18	4.7778	.64676	F= 1.259
	Teacher	9	4.0000	1.11803	P = >0.05
	Engineer	39	4.0513	1.33670	Not Significant
	Business	47	4.2766	.94873	
	Private Concern	42	4.4500	1.23438	
	Total	200	4.2150	1.18142	
Verbal Abuse	No Job	16	4.0000	1.26491	
	Driver	15	5.0000	.00000	
	Coolie	14	5.0000	.00000	F = 3.961
	Agriculture	18	4.8889	.47140	P = <0.05
	Teacher	9	4.0000	1.11803	Significant
	Engineer	39	4.6923	.97748	
	Business	47	4.8298	.66982	

	Private Concern	42	5.0000	.00000	
	Total	200	4.8100	.70454	
Sexual Abuse	No Job	16	2.3125	1.40089	
	Driver	15	2.1333	1.40746	
	Coolie	14	1.8571	1.09945	F = 1.340
	Agriculture	18	3.0000	1.49509	P = >0.05
	Teacher	9	2.2222	1.09291	Not Significant
	Engineer	39	2.1795	1.18925	
	Business	47	2.5106	1.45770	
	Private Concern	42	2.3000	1.34164	
	Total	200	2.4100	1.38980	
Economic Abuse	No Job	16	4.1250	1.14746	
	Driver	15	5.0000	1.06010	
	Coolie	14	4.5714	.93761	F = 3.336
	Agriculture	18	4.6667	.68599	P = <0.05
	Teacher	9	4.5333	1.06010	Significant
	Engineer	39	3.4615	1.42987	
	Business	47	4.1915	1.19124	
	Private Concern	42	3.9000	1.20961	
	Total	200	4.1400	1.21150	

The ANOVA values (F=1.259; p>0.05) show that there is no significant difference between physical abuse based on partner occupation of the respondents. The ANOVA values (F=3.961; p <0.05) indicate that there is a significant difference between verbal abuse based on partner occupation of the respondents. The mean value reveals that partner occupations like the driver, coolie verbally abused the respondents. The ANOVA values (F=1.340; p >0.05) show that there

is no significant difference between sexual abuse based on partner occupation of the respondents. The ANOVA values ($F= 3.336$; $p<0.05$) imply that there is a significant difference between economic abuse and partner occupation of the respondents. The mean value reveals that partners working as a driver involved in economical abuse of the respondents. Thus the nearest mean value reveals that partners occupation like a driver, coolie, and private employee verbally and economically abused the respondents because of low income, especially the partners working as coolie and driver are alcoholic, hence partners daily consume alcohol and abuse the women verbally and economically by not paying enough money for the families basic needs and children's education.

Table-5 Types of Abuse based on Income

Types of Abuse / Income		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Physical Abuse	5,000 to 10,000	37	4.1351	1.31576	
	11,000 to 20,000	18	3.7778	1.30859	F = 2.574
	21,000 to 30,000	3	2.6667	1.15470	P = <0.05
	31,000 and above	2	3.5000	2.12132	Significant
	Total	60	3.9333	1.33869	
Verbal Abuse	5,000 to 10,000	37	4.6216	1.06331	
	11,000 to 20,000	18	4.6667	1.02899	F = 8.010
	21,000 to 30,000	3	4.6667	.57735	P = <0.05
	31,000 and above	2	2.5000	2.12132	Significant
	Total	60	4.5667	1.11030	
Sexual Abuse	5,000 to 10,000	37	2.3784	1.47858	
	11,000 to 20,000	18	2.4444	1.50381	F = .525
	21,000 to 30,000	3	1.6667	.57735	P = >0.05
	31,000 and above	2	3.5000	2.12132	Not Significant
	Total	60	2.4000	1.46368	
	5,000 to 10,000	37	4.1892	1.30890	

Economic Abuse	11,000 to 20,000	18	3.6111	1.37793	F = 1.104
	21,000 to 30,000	3	3.6667	1.52753	P = >0.05
	31,000 and above	2	4.0000	1.41421	Not Significant
	Total	60	3.9833	1.33393	

The ANOVA values (F=2.574; p<0.05) show that there is a significant difference between physical abuse based on the income level of the respondents. The mean value reveals that respondents who earn 5,000-10,000 had faced physical abuse compared to other groups. The ANOVA values (F=8.010; p <0.05) show that there is a significant difference between verbal abuse based on the income level of the respondents. The mean value reveals that respondents who earn more than 20,000 had faced verbal abuse compared to other groups. The ANOVA values (F=.525; p >0.05) show that there is no significant difference between sexual abuse based on the income level of the respondents. The ANOVA values (F= 1.104; p>0.05) reveal that there is no significant difference between economic abuse based on the income level of the respondents. Thus, the respondents who earn 10,000-30,000 had faced physical abuse and verbal abuse compared to other groups. Because due to the ego between the partners those women are earning, women who spend her income without informing her partner, and if she raises her voice against partner, he complained that she is feeling superior because of her earnings.

Table-6 Types of Abuse based on Age at Marriage

Types of Abuse / Age at Marriage		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Result
Physical Abuse	18 to 20 years	50	4.4400	1.03332	
	21 to 23 years	95	4.2421	1.06906	F = 1.553
	24 to 26 years	46	4.0000	1.47573	P = >0.05
	27 years and above	9	3.7778	1.30171	Not Significant
	Total	200	4.2150	1.18142	
Verbal Abuse	18 to 20 years	50	4.8800	.52060	
	21 to 23 years	95	4.8632	.47514	F= 5.876

	24 to 26 years	46	4.8043	.83319	P = < 0.05
	27 years and above	9	3.8889	1.76383	Significant
	Total	200	4.8100	.70454	
Sexual Abuse	18 to 20 years	50	2.4200	1.38638	
	21 to 23 years	95	2.5684	1.39644	F = 2.391
	24 to 26 years	46	2.2826	1.42459	P = > 0.05
	27 years and above	9	1.3333	.50000	Not Significant
	Total	200	2.4100	1.38980	
Economic Abuse	18 to 20 years	50	4.5800	.81039	
	21 to 23 years	95	3.9579	1.31210	F = 3.108
	24 to 26 years	46	4.0652	1.27196	P = <0.05
	27 years and above	9	4.0000	1.22474	Significant
	Total	200	4.1400	1.21150	

The ANOVA values ($F=1.553$; $p>0.05$) show that there is no significant difference between physical abuse based on age at marriage of the respondents. The ANOVA values ($F=5.876$; $p<0.05$) show that there is a significant difference between verbal abuse based on age at marriage of the respondents. The mean value reveals that respondents whose age is between 18-20 years face verbal abuse. The ANOVA results ($F=2.391$; $p>0.05$) show that there is no significant difference between sexual abuse based on respondents' age at marriage. The ANOVA results ($F= 3.108$; $p<0.05$) show that there is a significant difference between economic abuse based on respondents' age at marriage. The mean value reveals that respondents whose age is between 18-20 years face economic abuse. Thus, the respondents whose age is between 18-20 years have faced verbal abuse and economic abuse. Because of the young age of women as soon as they enter the marriage life it takes time for them to settle in a new environment and family. Meanwhile, it takes some time to acquire skills in marriage life and if the partner is an alcoholic who is not supportive to purchase household things and not provide basic needs for her it is difficult for women to run a family. Hence, they face verbal and economic abuse.

Findings

Age and Types of Abuse

ANOVA results indicate no significant differences in physical, sexual, and economic abuse across age groups. However, a significant difference was observed in verbal abuse ($F = 5.720$, $p < 0.05$), with women aged 40–43 reporting higher levels.

Education and Types of Abuse

There was no significant difference in physical, verbal, or sexual abuse based on education. However, economic abuse showed significant variation ($F = 2.890$, $p < 0.05$), with women lacking formal education experiencing higher levels.

Residence and Types of Abuse

No significant differences were found in physical, sexual, or economic abuse across rural, urban, and semi-urban areas. Verbal abuse showed significant variation ($F = 3.051$, $p < 0.05$), with urban women reporting higher levels.

Partner Occupation and Abuse

Physical and sexual abuse did not vary significantly across partner occupations. However, verbal ($F = 3.961$, $p < 0.05$) and economic abuse ($F = 3.336$, $p < 0.05$) showed significant differences, particularly among partners employed as drivers, coolies, and private workers.

Income and Types of Abuse

Physical ($F = 2.574$, $p < 0.05$) and verbal abuse ($F = 8.010$, $p < 0.05$) showed significant variation across income levels, while sexual and economic abuse did not. Women in lower income groups reported higher abuse.

Age at Marriage and Abuse

No significant differences were found for physical and sexual abuse. However, verbal ($F = 5.876$, $p < 0.05$) and economic abuse ($F = 3.108$, $p < 0.05$) were significantly higher among women married between ages 18–20.

Discussion

The findings suggest that verbal abuse is highly sensitive to socio-demographic variations, unlike physical and sexual abuse, which appear more uniformly distributed. This may indicate that verbal abuse is more closely tied to daily interpersonal dynamics and socio-economic stressors.

Economic abuse emerges as strongly linked to structural disadvantages such as lack of education, low income, and unstable employment. Women with limited educational attainment are more likely to be financially dependent, increasing their vulnerability. The higher prevalence of verbal abuse in urban areas may reflect changing gender roles and increased interpersonal conflicts. Similarly, early marriage is associated with higher abuse due to limited emotional maturity and economic dependence. These findings align with existing literature emphasizing the role of gender inequality, economic stress, and patriarchal norms in shaping abusive behavior.

Conclusion

The study concludes that socio-demographic factors significantly influence certain types of abuse, particularly verbal and economic abuse. Women who are less educated, economically dependent, or married at a younger age are more vulnerable. Policy interventions should focus on: Enhancing women's education, Promoting economic independence, Addressing harmful social norms, Strengthening support systems for victims. A multi-dimensional approach is necessary to effectively reduce violence against women.

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