A Statistical Study on Nature and Extent of Violence against Women in Puducherry

Kiruthika
Department of Statistics, Pondicherry University, India

Abstract: *Violence against women is a crucial topic of discussion in all the countries in the world. In India, in spite of government's policy to overcome this problem, violence against women is predominant. The main focus of the present study is to know the type of violence against women prevalent in Puducherry. The impact of socio-economic characteristics of the respondents on the different type of violence against women is explored. The various issues related to violence against women and the remedial measures are discussed. The main factors influencing the occurrence of violence against women are also analyzed using statistical techniques.*
Keywords: *Domestic violence, Physical violence, Psychological violence, Sexual violence, Violence against women*

I.   Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is an issue pervading in all the countries and has significant impact on the health and socio-economic status of woman. In 1993, The United Nations Declaration defined Violence Against Women as "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats to such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". Violence against women continues to be a human rights issue in many countries in spite of the fact that numerous efforts are taken to eliminate it at the national and international levels. VAW not only affects the victims but also leaves deep traumatic effect on children and affects their growth. Violence against women has always stimulated much debate among researchers and policy makers on what, why and how to measure the true extent of violence. Research on violence against women cuts across various academic disciplines which includes law, social science, health, statistics etc. Several factors play a role in perpetuating violence against women such as poverty, patriarchal systems, socio-cultural norms and values. The extent of consequences of VAW is difficult to ascertain as it sometimes causes female morbidity and mortality. Violence against women is classified mainly as physical, sexual and psychological violence. Psychological impact on violence is more severe than the physical violence as it has more long term health effects. Intervention and prevention efforts to VAW have been initiated by various women's organization and government throughout the world.

In the recent past, there has been an increased awareness about adverse effect of VAW. There is an increased attention by government, United Nation bodies, and international organizations to deal with the problem of violence against women. Many interdisciplinary researches are being conducted to strengthen survey methodologies, develop indicators and collect reliable information regarding violence against women in India and other countries. Demographic and health surveys have been carried out at the global level, focusing on domestic violence and its effects on the health of women and girls. In most of the surveys on violence against women conducted in Asia, the study population is restricted to samples of married women only, thereby creating a serious underestimation of overall prevalence of violence against women in society. Generally, the study on violence against women concentrates on information about the victim only and there is a data gap on socio-economic background of the offender like relationship between victim and offender and other details like time of crime, weapon used etc. These information will help in setting up effective mechanism for protection of victims and implementing strict laws. Many studies have been carried out to overcome the problem of violence against women.

Sunita Kishor [12] discusses about the measurement of domestic violence, challenges and data gaps in this area. World Health Organization (WHO) and other agencies are also taking initiatives to overcome the violence against women throughout the world. Many international organizations are regularly conducting meetings and carrying out research to overcome the serious problem of violence against women. Many books and articles are written on various issues and methodology of violence against women [5, 6, 9, 10, 13]. A detailed literature review on statistical methodology used in violence against women has been done by Mangoli R N and Tarase N G [7]. Many articles on violence against women in India reveal that there is a need to collect more information on different types of violence as most of the crimes are not reported [2, 3, 4]. This shows that there is an urgent need to collect reliable information in all the regions of India regarding violence against

women. Only if reliable and complete data on violence against women is available, the government could take effective steps to curtail violence against women in India. Recently, many books based on violence against women have been published [1, 8]. A detailed literature review on violence against women in India has been done by Sheela Saravanan [11] .

In recent years, violence against women has gained a lot of public acknowledgement in India. In India also many government departments and non-governmental organizations are working rigorously to eliminate the problem of violence against women. The 1998-99 and 2005-06 survey reports of National Family Health Survey (NFHS), India give information on quality of health and family planning services, domestic violence, reproductive health, the nutrition of women and the status of women. The incidence of crime against women published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that only a small percentage of crimes are actually reported. Victims of violence generally prefer to maintain silence due to existing social traditions and customs in spite of strong laws. Many crimes are not reported and there is a need to get more information particularly in smaller towns and villages.

Even though some surveys have been conducted on this topic in the past by the social scientists, the focus of the surveys was mainly in the collection and compilation of the data. On the other hand, it is now proposed to statistically analyze the data to identify the inherent correlation structure among the various factors to identify the root causes for the violence against women. The socio-economic information about the age, profiles of education, employment, economic conditions, housing conditions, behavioural pattern, marital status, health conditions etc. and the type of violence (physical, sexual, emotional and economic) of women in the rural and urban areas of Puducherry are also collected.   The problem is to identify the socio-economic factors that influence the nature, type and intensity of violence against women.   The major factors due to which women are subjected to violence in Puducherry is identified by interacting with people working in this field. A detailed questionnaire has been developed based on the discussion with sociologist and other experts in women studies.

In this paper, the main objective is to explore different forms of violence against women prevalent in Puducherry and various issues related to this social problem.   This work also aims to determine women's perception of effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies for solving the problem of violence against women. The main factors influencing VAW is studied and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques. The methodology used in this study is described in Section II.   The results are discussed in Section III and conclusion of the study is given in Section V.

II.   Methodology

The primary data collection on violence against women in Pondicherry was carried out by direct enquiry method. A detailed questionnaire was prepared and the main survey was conducted. The sampling units were selected by applying suitable sampling techniques.   Selection of areas and sampling units has been done based on the 2001 census data of Puducherry. Since the study is to be conducted in the rural and urban areas of Puducherry, a multistage stratified random sampling method is applied to select samples from the five rural areas namely Villianur Commune Panchayat, Nettapakkam Commune Panchayat, Bahour Comune Panchayat, Mannadipet Commune Panchayat, Ariyankuppam Commune Panchayat and five urban areas namely Pondicherry Minicipality, Ozhukarai Munciplaity, Villianur Town, Kurumbapet Town, Ariyankuppam Town separately. Stratified random sampling is used in the first two stages. At the first stage, Puducherry population is divided into rural and urban area. In the second stage, stratification is done based on number of places (wards/villages) in each of the five rural and urban areas. Then from each selected second stage units, random sample of households are selected. The sampling units are selected with probability proportional to size using the census data. All the villages/towns are stratified according to population size. The number of sampling units in rural and urban areas is decided on the basis of percentage of urban and rural population in Puducherry. The survey was conducted among women in the age group 18-80 years. One woman from each selected household was included in the survey. The various objectives were investigated by conducting a sample survey in Puducherry. The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS software.

III.   Results and Discussion

A general opinion survey on violence against women was initially conducted and then from these respondents the women affected due to violence were identified. The details of socio-economic characteristics of affected women respondents are presented in Table 1. Majority of women participants are in the age group 18-29 (50%) and 30-39 (25.4%). Most of the respondents (86%) are Hindu and 64% belong to OBC category. Regarding the educational status, nearly 45% of the women respondents are having college education. About 74% respondents reside in urban area and are nuclear family. 60% of participants are married women.

The various forms of violence experienced by the respondents are presented in Table 2. About 52.7% of woman respondents have experienced psychological violence. The result shows that all types of violence are widespread in Puducherry in which physical violence (11.6%) and financial abuse (13.8%) is more prevalent as

compared to other types of violence. With regard to frequency of occurrence of violence, majority of women (72%) said that violence occurs sometimes.

It was investigated whether income plays any role in the occurrence of violence against women in any household. About 41.4% cases husband/male income is more than wife/female and 33.7% male is sole earning member in the family. About 85% of affected woman informed about the violence experienced by them. It was further probed to know about person who commits the crime and remedial measures. The survey results show that husband (25.6%) and relative (29.8%) are the main offenders in violence against women. Table 3 shows that married woman are subjected to violence by husband and relatives. In nuclear family violence occurs more than joint family. The results also revealed that there is significant association between the factors such as age, marital status, family type and the person committing the crime.

Regarding reporting of violence, women prefer to get help from family members (48.6%) and friends (34.3%). Only 8% of women are in favour of approaching police, Non-governmental organization, lawyer or helpline. The awareness about remedial measure for violence against women among women in Puducherry is to be updated. According to the women participants in Puducherry, prevention of violence against women can be implemented by counselling services (33.1%), strict laws (21.3%), public education (12.2%), education of youth (13.3%) and improved standard of living/employment (10.3%). Most of the women (42.9%) prefer to maintain silence and 22.7% respondents suggest that talking to a relative or friend will help them to overcome this problem. Only 20% of the women feel that violence against women can be overcome by fighting back or opting for legal action. The analysis of the data shows that woman's education plays a significant role on solving the problem of violence against woman.

The respondent's opinion on major causes of domestic violence in a family in Puducherry was also investigated. Majority of respondents (91%) feel that financial problem and husband's habit like drinking, gambling etc. are the main cause of domestic violence. The other causes are suspicious nature (78.5%), no child (76.2%), dowry related problems (70.7%) and extra marital affairs (70%).

Further it was probed whether the socio-economic status of woman respondents play any role on the type of violence experienced. Table 4 illustrates the prevalence of various forms of violence experienced by women by different socio-economic characteristics. The rural and urban differences were clearly visible. Urban woman reported higher prevalence of physical and psychological violence as compared to rural woman in Puducherry. The women in the age group 18-29 have experienced psychological violence as compared to other age groups. However, there were apparent differences due to family type. Woman in nuclear family reported higher prevalence of all types of violence. Married women were more susceptible to psychological violence. The data reveals that educated women are also affected due to various forms of violence. The above associations were tested using chi-square test. It was also found statistically that the area of residence (rural/urban) has association with prevalence of various forms of violence reported by women. The other factors such as age, education, family type and marital status are not significant.

The study on nature and extent of violence against women revealed that psychological violence is prevalent in Puducherry. It was further examined through logistic regression by taking presence or absence of psychological violence as a dependent variable and women's socio-economic characteristics as covariate. The results of logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 5. The psychological violence has significant association with age and education status. The odds ratio of psychological violence experienced by woman in age group 18-29 to other age group is 1.291. This shows that the odds of experiencing psychological violence for women in age group 18-29 are 29.1% higher than other groups. The result also indicates that the odds ratio of illiterate to educated woman is 1.936; the odds of experiencing psychological violence for illiterate are 93.65 higher than educated woman.

IV.   Tables
Table 1 Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Respondents(%)	Characteristics	Respondents(%)
Residence		**Education**	
Rural	26.5	Illiterate	14.4
Urban	73.5	School	39.2
		College	45.3
		Research	1.1
Age		**Employment**	
18-29	50.3	Employed	65.2
30-39	25.4	Unemployed	34.8
40-49	12.7		
More than 50	11.6		
Religion		**Marital Status**	
Hindu	86.2	Unmarried	30.9
Muslim	7.2	Married	60.8
Christian	6.1	Separated	1.1

Others	0.6		Widowed	7.2
Caste			**Family Type**	
General	24.9		Nuclear	80.1
OBC	64.6		Joint	19.9
SC	9.9			
ST	0.6			

Table 2 Prevalence of various forms of violence against women

Forms of violence against women (VAW)	Prevalence in Puducherry (in %)
Physical Violence	11.6
Psychological Violence	52.7
Sexual Violence	3.9
Domestic Violence	9.9
Workplace Violence	7.7
Financial Abuse	13.8

Table 3 Association of various factors and offender (* p-value – significant)

Characteristics	Person committing the crime (offender) (in percentage)					χ^2 (p-value)
	Husband	**Boy friend**	**Friend**	**Stranger**	**Relative**	
Age						
18-29	5.0	5.6	15.0	11.1	6.7	
30-39	10.0	0.6	2.3	5.0	7.8	90.091
40-49	6.2	0.6	0.0	1.2	3.9	(0.000*)
More than 50	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.6	6.7	
Family Type						
Nuclear	22.2	6.1	15.6	10.6	23.3	18.151
Joint	3.4	0.6	1.7	7.2	6.7	(0.006*)
Marital Status						
Unmarried	0.0	5.0	11.7	8.3	3.9	
Married	25.6	1.7	5.0	8.9	21.1	69.624 (0.000*)
Widowed	0.0	0.0	2.2	0.6	4.4	

Table 4 Prevalence of various forms of violence in Puducherry by some socio-economic characteristics of women (* p-value – significant)

Characteristics	Prevalence of Violence (in percentage)				χ^2 (p-value)
	Physical Violence	**Psychological Violence**	**Sexual Violence**	**Other forms of violence (domestic, financial, workplace)**	
Residence					
Rural	0.6	20.0	0.1	5.5	28.997
Urban	7.7	32.7	3.8	29.9	(0.001*)
Age					
18-29	3.4	26.0	3.4	8.4	
30-39	3.3	14.3	0.6	5.7	64.260
40-49	0.6	3.3	0.1	4.0	(0.330)
More than 50	1.1	6.6	0.1	0.6	
Education					
Illiterate	0.6	9.3	0.1	3.9	
School	3.3	20.0	1.1	12.2	41.994 (0.072)
College	4.4	23.4	2.7	14.0	
Family Type					
Nuclear	7.2	41.4	3.9	23.2	14.193
Joint	1.1	8.8	0.1	8.9	(0.164)
Marital Status					
Unmarried	2.2	14.9	2.8	5.2	
Married	5.0	32.0	0.6	12.2	43.707
Separated	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.1	(0.051)
Widowed	1.1	2.8	0.0	0.6	

Table 5 Logistic regression to examine the association of socio-economic variables on the prevalence of psychological violence

Characteristics	B	S.E.	Wald	p-value	Exp(B)
Constant	-2.395	0.898	7.045	0.008	0.092
Age (18-29, 30-39, 40-49 More than 50)	0.256	0.099	6.697	0.010	1.291
Education (Illiterate, School, College, Research)	0.660	0.281	5.524	0.019	1.936

V. Conclusion

The present study discusses about the nature and extent of violence against women prevalent and opinion on domestic violence in Puducherry. The majority of women in the study experienced emotional/psychological violence as compared to other violence. Husband and relative are the persons who commit the crime as compared friend or stranger. The survey also reveals that woman prefer to share their violence experiences mostly with family member or friend. Only few women have approached helpline or police. In terms of awareness about various preventive and remedial measures for violence against women, most of the women are in favour of solving the problem by either maintaining silence or talking to a friend or relative. There is lack of awareness among the women in Puducherry about the various initiatives taken by the government and non-governmental agencies to solve this problem.

The study demonstrates that in Puducherry, violence against women is persisting considerably across all socio-economic strata. Some characteristics of women namely, residence, age, education, family type and marital status has influence on the prevalence of violence. Woman is at risk of violence from husband than any other type of offender. Woman in lower age group and less educated are more susceptible to violence. These results provide preliminary information about type of violence more prevalent in Puducherry and to assess the situation to develop interventions as well as policies towards preventing violence against women.

Acknowledgement

References

[1] Ahuja R., 2009. Violence Against Women, Rawat Publications.
[2] Ashok Kumar and Khan M. E., 2010. Health Status of women in India: Evidences from National Family Health Survey 3 (2005-2006) and future outlook, 6(2) : 1 -21.
[3] Bontha V Babu, and Shantanu K Kar, 2009. Domestic Violence Against Women in Eastern India: A Population-based Study on Prevalence and Related Issues, BMC Public Health, 9:129.
[4] Ghosh D., 2007. Predicting Vulnerability of Indian Women to Domestic Violence Incidents, Research and Practice in Social Sciences, 3 (1) : 48-72.
[5] Johnson, Holly, Natalia, Ollus, Sami, Nevela, 2008. Violence Against women: An International Perspective, Springer.
[6] Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise, 2005. Researching Violence Against Women – A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists, World Health Organization and Program for Appropriate Technology in Health(PATH) publications.
[7] Mangoli R. N., and Tarase N. G., 2009. Crime Against Women: A Statistical Review, International Journal of Criminology and Sociological Theory, 2(2) : 292-302.
[8] Mukerjee D., 2005. Women and Urban Crimes, Kalpaz Publications.
[9] Renezetti C. M., Edleson J. L. and Bergen R. K., 2011. Source Book on Violence Against Women, 2nd Edition, Sage Publications.
[10] Ruchira Tabassum, Naved, 2003. A Situational Analysis of Violence Against Women in South Asia, Violence Against Women in South Asia – A Regional Analysis – UNFPA Bangladesh and Country Technical Services Team for South and West Asia, Kathmandu.
[11] Sheela Saravanan, 2000. Violence Against Women in India – A Literature Review, Institute of Social Studies Trust.
[12] Sunita Kishor, 2005. Violence against women: A statistical overview, challenges and gaps in data collection and methodology and approaches for overcoming them, paper presented in Expert group meeting, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and World Health Organization (WHO), April 11-14, 2005, Geneva, Switzerland.
[13] Umesh Kamat, Ferreira A. M. A., Motghare D. D., Neeta Kumar and Pinto N. R., 2010. A cross-sectional study of physical spousal violence against women in Goa, Healthline, 1(1): 34-40.