

# **INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE: CAUSATIVE FACTORS, SELF ESTEEM AND MENTAL HEALTH OF WOMEN**

A Thesis

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**P.SUJI**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**



**AMRITA VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM**

**COIMBATORE CAMPUS (INDIA)**

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## **CHAPTER - V**

### **DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUSION**

#### **DISCUSSION**

The prevalence of IPV is seen in all settings, regions, and religious groups. Although there is some dissimilarity in reporting by region, studies show that women in the southern part of India report lesser physical abuse than in women from the northern part of India (Stephenson 2006). According to the national survey, 8% of married women have been subjected to sexual violence, 31% have been physically abused in a way such as slapping or pinching and 14% of Indian women have experienced psychological abuse throughout their lives (Plichta 2004). Couples disparities in educational level, marital age, dowry pressure, poverty, alcoholism are highly associated with IPV in India (Sabri 2015). Therefore, taking appropriate steps to minimize partner violence need research evidence for a better understanding of the situation. However, findings of this study will be useful for counselors, health professionals working in IPV related care, and useful for policymakers.

The present study has several findings. Age is a basic characteristic of an individual. Age is an important factor for marriage. From the study, it can understand that almost 70 percent of the respondents suffering from abuse are between the age group 20-35 yrs. of age. This is a transition state for the couples after their marriage exhibits their actual behavior. The level of abuse in the ANOVA test shows that the age group between 21-25 years of age women face a high level of abuse when compare to other age groups. When women marry at the right age also face a problem because she has not given a chance for acquiring the life skills of handling family. Thus, women at the time of entering into life take time to adjust with the new family member. Meanwhile, if the expectations of husband and family members not satisfied it may lead to abuse. Hence the women continue to manage it, at the same time husbands taken advantage and continue to abuse more. The same is supported by Madhani (2017) stated that Women aged 21-25 remain silent when undergo abuse rather than women aged 30 years and above. Even women age at the time of marriage between 18-20 years had face a higher level of abuse when compared to other age groups. This is supported by Sunita Kishore and Kiersten Johnson in 2014 reports that woman's age at marriage is related to experiencing violence,

because when a woman marries at a young age, she has not given a chance to acquire the life skills and the maturity needed to ensure her security in marriage and within the spousal relationship. This study also finds that if there are 10 years of difference between the husband and wife there is a higher level of abuse faced by women when compared to other groups. This is supported by Avo Stephen Adebawale (2018) stated that the age gap in married women has many problems like a difference of opinion, less maturity and late sexual life also affects if the age difference is more between husband and wife.

The education and occupation are important aspects nowadays. In this study primary schooling of partners' education and partners with no job involve more in abusing their wife when compared to other groups. This is supported by Atteraya (2015), Karuna S. Chibber (2012), Sanni Yaya, and Biswajit Ghose (2019) stated that in family background husband's primary education level associated with violence. This is also supported by Panda & Agarwal (2005) Suneeta Krishnan (2009) stated that women whose husband is employed were less likely to report violence when compared to women with unemployed husbands. Thus, unemployed husbands have a high frequency of abusing their wives. Hence the ANOVA value shows that there is a significant difference in the level of abuse based on age, age at marriage, partner education, the age difference between husband and wife, and type of marriage.

The present study indicates that sociodemographic variables like age, education, residence, age at marriage, the age difference between husband and wife, marriage duration shows there is a significant difference level of self-esteem. Compare to other age groups the women belong to 40 – 50 years of age have a high level of self-esteem, whereas the age group between 20 -30 years of age shows low self-esteem this may be due to the maturity level in handling family problems. In the education level, women did their post-graduation have a high level of self-esteem, and women who did their secondary school level shows low self-esteem when compare to other groups because education gives them will power to handle things and have a self-image. Maria Phelp, a survivor stated that women with high self-esteem also affected by partner violence but they can leave their abusive partners because they are empowered and have a better self-image. The age difference between the husband and wife plays an important role. In this present study 4-6 years of age difference shows that women have high self-esteem when compare to other

groups. Lesser the age difference between partners is equally matured to handle the situation. Whereas, the age difference of more than 10 years shows that women have low self-esteem. Hence when there is more age difference between partners there is a possibility of controlling behavior seen among the partners and this is one of the common causative factors for partner violence. The present study also identified that marriage duration between 11-15 years of women has high self-esteem when compared to other groups. The experience gained through their family life in the past has given higher confidence to build their self-esteem. Whereas the marriage duration within 1 year shows that women have low self-esteem as soon as a woman enters into the marital life it takes time for her to acquire basic life skills and she is not confident enough in handling situations. Thus, the ANOVA value shows that there is a significant difference in the demographic variables.

The mental health of women in marital life plays an important role. Women living with their abusive husbands undergo high trauma, pressure, fear about the future. The women who are abused either emotionally or physically frequently are additionally discouraged because they experience the sentiment of worthlessness. These emotions frequently endure long term and it is recommended that many get treatment for it due to the uplifted danger of suicide and other traumatic indications (Ola W. Barnett 2000)). This present study concentrates more on the neurotic problems of women. Women in the age group of 45-50 years have high mental health despite the abuse. Higher the age higher is the experience earned to manage the issues occurring between partners. Whereas the age group of 21-24 years shows women have low mental health. Mason R (2008) examines how Sri Lankan Tamil women in Toronto understand, define, and experience intimate partner violence. Findings suggested that intimate partner violence definition is not culturally specific. Tamil women defined intimate partner violence broadly and recognized it in different ways. However, psychologically abusive behaviors are considered harmful in this community. The women who had experienced intimate partner violence reported poor physical and mental health than those who have not experienced partner violence.

Many research studies have proven that rural women have poor mental health due to partner violence. This study reveals that rural women have high mental health when compare to women in urban and semi-urban because rural women ventilate their feeling to others about their abusive

partner whereas the women in urban have less chance to ventilate their emotions due to societal pressure. Study indicates the women earns more than 30,000 have high mental health when compare to other groups. Creators like Dalal, & Lindqvist, (2012a); Slabbert, 2016; Atteraya et al., (2015) & Chibber et al., (2012) have expressed that women with a low financial and low salary of the family are more defenseless against partner violence and due to this woman have low mental health.

The age difference between husband and wife and marriage duration shows that there is a significant difference in mental health. 1-3 years of age difference shows that they have high mental health. In 2014 (Andrew Francis Tan) Emory University studied 3,000 recently married and divorced people reported that the age gap between husband and wife was associated with breaking up the married life. Thus, the age gap of 5 years was less likely to separate than the couples who had an age gap of 10 to 20 years. Hence the study shows that there is a significant difference in age, residence, income level, and the age difference between husband and wife. This is supported by national family health survey IV reported that 30 percent of the women age 15-49 in India have experienced physical violence. Physical injuries like eye injuries, sprain, bone dislocation, deep wounds, broken bones, and broken teeth are a common form of physical abuse. In the types of abuse women's lower income level and partners, higher secondary education level shows that there is a significant difference.

The common form of abuse underwent by women in this study is verbal abuse. Nearly half 41.5 percent of respondents underwent severe and uncontrollable verbal abuse like teasing them in front of all, use filthy language, unnecessarily comment about her family members and comment on her physical features, etc. This is supported by Abbas Bhuiya (2003) revealed that 66.8% of the women were verbally abused by their partner than other types of abuse. The ANOVA value shows that there is a significant difference in the type of verbal abuse based on women's lesser income level, young age at the time of marriage (18-20) years and the age difference between husband and wife (6-10) years shows a significant difference. Among husbands, demographic variables lower education level of partner (higher secondary level), partner occupation like coolie, and driver abuse their wife verbally when compare to other groups. Due to low education and fewer salary husbands show their stress and anger in the way of abuse.

Another form of common abuse is economic abuse. Majority 34.5 percent of respondents face severe and uncontrollable economic abuse like not providing basic needs to the partner and ordering partner to cook food with minimum groceries, not paying fees for children. The ANOVA value shows that there is a significant difference in women's educational level (illiterate), some children (three and more), age at marriage (18-20), partners' education level (high school) and partners' occupation as coolie and driver shows the significant difference when compared to other groups. This is supported by (Sherri Dordon, 2018) stated that whenever think about the violence, first thing comes to mind is verbal abuse and physical assault, the financial abuse includes controlling a victims ability to acquire, prevent the victim from working, not access to money and other resources, and they often have to account for spending every penny things, exploiting victims resources like trying to control the money they saved and earned, using their assets without asking them, borrowing money without repaying and make them take in charge are some of the severe economic abuse. Thus, this study shows that physical abuse, verbal abuse, and economic abuse are more commonly seen when compared to sexual abuse. The study also determines that the level of abuse is highly negatively correlated with self-esteem (-.211\*\*) and mental health (-.185\*\*). Self-esteem is highly positively correlated with mental health. Higher the self-esteem lower is the abuse frequency and higher the mental health, lower is the abuse frequency. Higher self-esteem higher is mental health and vice versa.

The causative factor for partner violence varies but few common causative factors create violence among the partners. In this study majority of the respondents, 13.5 percent of them said that ego is the causative factor for the partner violence, 12.5 percent of the respondents said that controlling behavior is the causative factor for partner violence and another 12.5 percent of the respondents said that alcoholic habit of a husband is the causative factor for partner violence. And another 50 percent have mentioned that dowry demand, extramarital affair, in-law torture, and another 20 percent have mentioned that multiple factors are causes for partner violence. Meanwhile; men's controlling behavior has a higher percentage of partner violence (Simister, 2008). Similarly (Dalal, & Lindqvist, (2012b) stated that along with working status, low economic if the husbands are having controlling behavior there is a possibility for vulnerability. Tulshi Kumar Das (2015) stated that dowry practice, illiteracy, cultural practice, an extramarital affair,

and drug addiction are the causes and contexts of violence. Thus, various studies have also proven that these are the factors influence partner violence.

The study finds that the respondents' triggering point for partner violence is when their life is under a helpless situation where the husband and family members do not bring any solution rather than finding faults. Whereas nearly half of the respondent's 46.5 percent have believed that male is superior and women are inferior is the cultural belief that influence partner violence. The belief of male superiority is deeply rooted in the minds of men and even after modernization and westernization, this belief is not changed in the minds of men. The study also reveals that 30.5 percent of respondents felt painful when partner consume alcohol and shows inconsistent behavior like anger, using filthy language, and abuse their wives physically are the reason for violence.

The study reported by Mahima (2009) conducted a case study with 12 women to analyze their experiences living with alcohol-dependent husband. The finding shows that wives who found out about their husbands drinking were not worried initially, but when they came to know it is a daily habit they were not tolerable .due to this alcohol dependency they are not fulfilling their role as a husband and create a problem for everything and abuse their wife. Meanwhile, (Ramadugu, 2015; Wagman et al.2016; Markowitz, 2000) determined that alcohol consumption by males was risk factors for women experiencing intimate partner violence. According to WHO, Solid connections have been found between liquor utilize and the happen occurrence of partner violence in numerous nations. Confirmation proposes that liquor utilizes expands the event and seriousness of abusive behavior

In different ways to minimize partner violence the majority of 38 percent of respondents said counseling before marriage may help the partners to reduce partner violence. It also helps couples to better understand each other and to know about their rights, mutual respect, dignity, etc. Whereas 38.5 percent of respondents recommend strict punishable law is the kind of support to avoid violence and 25.5 percent 23 percent of respondents said that education to understand and lead a happy life and create welfare association for couples helps to minimize the violence. The study also finds that 36.5 percent feel that technical support by referring the women to the

protection officer will help the women to get out of the suffering temporarily. The findings also show that more than half 71.5 percent of respondents described that the ideal partner has to balance both spouses and in-laws, respect, and support womanhood. So that there is less chance for violence.

The study identifies top five rankings given by the respondents for the pleasant relationship those are trustworthy, involving women in a family discussion, communication, free from alcohol, treat and respect wife and in-laws. Kristen Gravningen et.al (2017) in their descriptive study on the reasons for marriage and cohabitation in Britain show that there are more similarities than differences in the reasons reported for a breakdown of the relationship. The findings show, that breakdown of a relationship is due to 30.3 % arguments, 15.7% different interests, 23.6% reported unfaithfulness and 24.8% lack of respect. An open-ended question asked to the respondents about the steps to minimize domestic violence based on their personal experience. The common answer given by the respondents is awareness by the government about the women rights, strict and severe punishment for men involving in violence, best counseling, better understanding between partners, women empowerment, separate counseling for men how to treat and respect women before marriage, closing of alcohol shop, men balancing both wife and in-laws are few suggestions to minimize the violence between husband and wife. Thus this study paves way to identify the factors influencing partner violence, women level of abuse, self-esteem and their mental health.

This study suggests few important aspects that age at marriage should be above 20 years of age. Providing life skills for women and men before entering in to marital life through the community development programme and by conducting programmes in colleges for the students might help in minimizing the partner violence. The age difference between the partners has to be 1-5 years of age gap for better understanding and to minimize controlling behavior. Both in rural and urban areas the government can provide awareness programme and free counseling to strengthen the mental health of women. Every three months the counselors, health professionals and women organizations conduct free campaign for married women to know about their family issues and provide solutions to overcome the problem.



## **Social Worker Role**

- To be available to the Partner Violence victims all the time and create the trust in them that they will get a satisfactory solution to all their ongoing abuses.
- To assist the partner violence affected individuals by creating a comfortable, conducive, and communicable ambiance to completely allow them to ventilate their feelings and empathically involve in understanding the issue, to arrive at a clear understanding of the case.
- To deepen the understanding of the DV act and its effect on the victim by continuously updating knowledge covering all areas of Acts, governing laws, governing bodies, Authorities involved in resolving partner violence cases.
- To have contacts and good link with all related agencies like Police Station, Lawyers, NGO's, and other related agencies and organizations which provide support solutions for partner violence victims.
- To protect the interest of victims' children, by providing them the required support in terms of counseling, shelter if required, and working out a promising future for them.
- To create and deliver awareness through all possible means to curb partner violence. Includes community programs, counseling sessions, social media groups, etc.
- To conduct educative programs in schools, colleges and corporates on gender equality and its importance in happy living, which when understood can eradicate partner violence to a greater extent
- To assist victims to avail of free legal aid, provide psychosocial care in hospitals, and support from the Police station as and when needed.
- To possess and develop enough skill sets to engage the whole family and link the experiences of all family members like the victim, perpetrator and the children so as provide the most appropriate solutions
- To provide the necessary supports to strengthen the mother-child relationship to children affected immensely by viewing the parent's violence and also provide necessary parenting skill support to affected mothers.

## **5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the learnings and observations throughout the journey of this research the following are recommendation to head towards eradicating Partner violence in our society.

**Recommendations are for three distinct groups of people**

- **General Recommendation**
- **Group –I – Partner Violence victims and their family**
- **Group –II - Newly Married and engaged partners about to get married**
- **Group –III – New generation, school, and college students**

### **General Recommendation**

- Focused intensive emphasis on Humanity and its importance in a social set up, which will eradicate gender inequality, thereby minimizing partner violence. To be done through mass media repeated communications and mandatory training programs.
- Inducing a deep understanding that marriage is a decision between two individuals and they should be left free to take decisions without the influence of Parents and family members. To be achieved through community programs and training programs specific to parents & family members and married couples.
- It's observed that the counselors in most instances were unable to reunite the partners, one of the reasons may be the ineffectiveness of the counseling methodology. So a focused training on how to counsel can be provided to the counselors.
- To have a strict legal protection system, this should also include exposing all involved in violence against women. This may be achieved by exposing them through a separate channel or mass media regularly available to their own society/community.
- Domestic Violence Act has to be changed from civil to criminal procedure. Because of fear that there is severe punishment, there is a possibility of minimizing violence.
- To have a strict vigilance team to monitor the proceedings of partner violence case, as it was observed that in most instances all officials involved in the case fault in attending to the case on time. Vigilance might help in getting to the case on time and help the victim to get proper support and solution in a short duration, rather than waiting for months and years together as the case is currently.
- To create and focus more on robust partner violence preventive methods, which will minimize and eradicate partner violence in the future. To be achieved through sharing

real-time case studies in the form of movies, documentaries, magazines, radio, and tv shows.

- Legal support, in reality DV case is considered for hearing only after criminal and civil cases are done in the court on regular basis. DV cases have a separate court hearing do DV cases set up in all district as priority must be emphasized.

### **Group I – Partner Violence victims and their family**

- To create and exercise a mandatory psychometric test specifically designed to understand the intensity of the partner violence incident and arrive at a scientific stance to understand if the partners can re-look at continuing their relationship, and the key factors influencing their separation.
- To share similar real-time case studies on partner violence instances and its implications in the same community to the couples. This may encourage them to rethink and relook at their problem and visualize the implications. This may be included as one of the mandatory steps by the authorities to all couples who come up with a partner violence case. Which may impact their decisions
- To educate parents and family members the huge gap in lifestyle, generation gaps, and the decision-making ability of modern youth. And an emphasis on allowing youths to live their own life rather than influencing their life, which has been noticed as one of the major factors for influencing differences of opinion between partners.

### **Group –II - Newly Married and engaged partners about to get married**

- To enhance problem-solving skills and individual bias fewer decision-making skills to the married couple, this will help them to be in control at times of distress and stressful situation which may arise from time to time. To be achieved through community programs and training sessions.
- To extend a goal-setting session whereby both arrive at the prioritized goals of married life and have a mutually accepted agreement certificate. The session will have to bring out all possible stimuli that will trigger partner violence and ways to handle it. This

certificate with the trigger points and possible solutions will enable the couples to make decisions that will eradicate partner violence in a big way.

### **Group –III – New generation, school, and college students**

- The education system includes a substantial portion of the study on the importance of humanity and the importance of individual human rights.
- To allow the students to experience simulated problems and steps to arrive at win-win solutions. The habit of a win-win situation may influence them in the future to eradicate gender inequality.

### **5.3. CONCLUSION**

The beautiful and perfect world filled with people who have distinct individual characteristics, due to the humongous number of variables and changing constants that each goes through in their upbringing. In the process, each individual is conditioned to a particular belief system and way of living based on various factors like geographical location, culture, religion, caste, creed, and many more man made divisions. All these factors have always challenged the human relationship-building process due to the strong perceived and imbibed indifference we have built.

However, the universal belief of mankind is marriage one of the key divine factors which united individuals of the world and built happy families. But it's saddening to note that over a decade the idea of marriage and happy family has constantly been diminishing causing acute social concern for women victimized by partner violence.

This study "Intimate partner violence – causative factors, self-esteem and mental health of women" conducted in Coimbatore as the choice of location and the cases researched people across different walk of life, has allowed having a clear understanding of the factors and implications of partner violence on women in our society.

At the outset, the rapid increase in intimate partner violence is not something new. It is there in all the ages and periods; the only thing is that the modern age has allowed women to express and seek support to curb partner violence. Partner violence instances and their impact on women's life in Coimbatore are extremely painful. It has extremely affected the whole family, children, and the overall morale of the women, leaving her helpless and directionless, despite the compensation and maintenance grants. So, if the law can make in-roads to rejoin the couples in making a happy family rather than breaking a family, it would be a boon to the women. As a major portion of women in this study has expressed that given a chance to re-live their marital journey, they are aware of what to correct and how to stay away from influences that lead to separation.

Though the issue is continuing to intensify and a burning social concern, it's observed that individuals' belief systems, rapidly changing social environment, and many more such highly influencing factors have taken mankind far away from being human. If humanity living in harmony becomes every individual's belief and value system then there is a bigger scope to minimize partner violence. I believe in years to come, the need for humanity and togetherness for a happy living will replace partner violence with partner intimacy.