

SUMMARY

In order to know about the alcoholic habit and its relation to domestic violence among the rural people, an empirical study was conducted in the villages of Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. For this purpose, 242 rural married women were directly interviewed with a structured interview schedule. The schedule contained questions on personal profile and background of the women and their husbands, alcoholic habits, problems, stated reasons for drinking and coping mechanisms, and domestic violence in its three modes, viz. psychological, physical and sexual violence. The collected data were analyzed with percentage, mean, analysis of variance, correlation and regression. The findings of the study are summarized below.

Personal Profile and Socioeconomic Background

The minimum age for this sample is 20 and the maximum age is 65. The mean age is around 35. More than one-third of the respondents are up to the age of 30. Nearly two-fifths of them belong to the age group of 31 – 40 and one-fifth of them belong to the age group of 41 – 50. Few of the respondents are above the age of 50. The vast majority of the respondents are Hindus and only very few are Christians. Half of the respondents belong to scheduled caste. More than one-fourth of them belong to the Nadar caste. Others include Konars and Thevars.

While 16.9% of the respondents are illiterate, more than one-fourth of them (have studied only up to primary school level. Nearly one-third of them have studied

up to middle school level. Around one-fourth of the respondents have studied high school and above. While one-fifth of them are housewives, the vast majority of the employed respondents are working as coolies. They constitute more than three-fifths of the sample (76.9%). Thus these rural women are either housewives or coolies. Around half of the respondents are earning up to Rs.2000 per month. Three out of ten are earning more than Rs.2000. The maximum income for the sample is Rs.8000 per month. The mean monthly income is around Rs.1800.

The vast majority of the respondents are living in nuclear families while some (12.8%) are living in joint families. As for family size, around two-thirds of the respondents have up to 4 members in the family. Nearly one-third of the respondents have more than 4 members in the family. The minimum family size is 2 and at the maximum the respondents have 7 members in the family. The mean family size for the sample is 4. While two-fifths of the respondents have their family income up to Rs.10000 per month, half of the respondents have it between Rs.10000 and Rs. 20000. Few of the respondents have more than Rs. 20000. The minimum family income is Rs.2000 and the maximum is Rs.35000. The mean family income for the sample is around Rs.13000.

While 16.1% of the husbands are aged up to 30, 45.9% are aged between 31 and 40; 22.3% of them are aged between 41 and 50, and 15.7% are above the age of 50. The minimum age of the husbands is 23 and the maximum is 67. The mean age of the husband for the sample is 40. While 13.6% of the husbands are illiterate, more than one-fourth of them have studied only up to primary school level. Three out of

ten have studied up to middle school level. Nearly one-fourth of them have had high school education and only 5% of them are graduates.

Nearly two-thirds of the husbands (64.5%) are working as coolies. Other occupations include farmers, masons, small business, private employees and painters. One-fifth of the husbands have their monthly income up to Rs.5000, and 45.5% are earning between Rs.5001 and Rs.10000. More than one fourth of them are earning between Rs.10001 and Rs.15000. The minimum income of the husbands is Rs.1000 and the maximum is Rs.27000 per month. The mean income of the husband for the sample is around Rs.9500 per month.

As far as these rural women respondents are concerned, the minimum age at marriage has been observed as 14 and the maximum is 30. For the husbands, the minimum age at marriage is 17 and the maximum goes up to 37. The mean age at marriage for the women is around 20 whereas for their husbands it is around 25. The age difference between the spouses ranges from 0 to 15 and the mean value of age difference is more than 4 years. As for the length of marriage, the minimum is one year and the maximum is 44 years. The mean value for duration of marriage is around 15 years. More than three-fourths of the respondents had their marriage as arranged by their parents. More than one-fifth of these rural women have married their lovers. In the case of love marriages, very few were done with the consent of parents. In the case of more than one-third of the respondents, the respondent married a relative.

While more than one-third of the respondents have own land, few less than two-thirds of the respondents do not have any land. The vast majority of the respondents have own house while 16.5% of them do not have own house. Around one-fourth of the respondents have jewels. Nearly half of the respondents are having savings, while a few more than half of the respondents do not have any savings. While more than one-fourth of the respondents are saving money through chit funds and 12.8% are saving through banks. Other modes include life insurance scheme and post office. Only 2.1% are saving through self help groups. For one-third of the respondents the reason for not saving money is insufficient income. Other reasons include having to spend on children's education, medical expenses and spending on husband's drinking are the reasons. More than one-fourth of the respondents have stated that as they do not have permanent job, they could not save.

Four out of five respondents have concrete roofs in the house and 17.4% of the respondents have cement sheet as roof. Most of the respondents have brick walls. More than one-third of the respondents have mud walls. Three out of five respondents have cement flooring and three out of ten have tiled floor. Three out of five respondents are living in two-room houses while nearly one-third of them are living in three-room houses. 7.8% of the respondents are living in single-room houses. All the respondents have electricity in the house. 16.1% of the respondents do not have drinking water facility. 21.5% of the respondents do not have bathroom facility. More than two-fifths of the respondents (44.2%) do not have toilet facility in the house. Only 14% of the respondents possess fridge in the house. All the respondents have mixer while 88.4% of the respondents have grinder. Except for a

negligible few all the respondents have television. It is noteworthy that grinder, mixer and television were provided by the government under free schemes. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents possess motorcycles like moped, scooter and bike. None of the respondents has any heavy vehicle. Almost all the respondents have phones.

Alcoholism: Behavior, Problems and Coping

More than two-fifths of the respondents have stated that their husbands developed their drinking habit before marriage. Nearly three-fifths of the respondents have stated that their husbands developed drinking habit after marriage. The minimum duration of drinking habit is 1 year and the maximum duration goes as high as 50 years. The mean duration of drinking habit of the husband for the sample is around 14 years. Nearly one-third of the husbands are drinking daily. More than one-fourth of the respondents are drinking on a weekly basis. Occasional drinkers amount to more than two-fifths of the sample. Seven out of ten (69%) drink in the company of friends. Most of the husbands drink at the liquor shop itself. More than one-fourth of the husbands bring liquor to home and drink or meet with others at some rendezvous and have drinks.

More than two-fifths of the respondents engage in verbal abuse in the family after drinking. Nearly one-third of the husbands develop problems with neighbors. One out of five develops problems with relatives. One-fifth of the husbands develop problems at the workplace. Three-fifths of the respondents engage in family quarrels after drinking. Some of the husbands involve in accidents after consuming liquor.

One-fifth of the respondents abstain from work because of drinking habit. Very few of the husbands had problems with police because of their drinking. One out of ten husbands sometimes falls unconscious at public places after consuming drinks and this happens always for a few of them.

Husbands do not provide money for family expenses for 15.7% of the respondents. Some of the husbands seize money from the respondents for their drinking expenses. In few cases, the husband's drinking habit has led to indebtedness. More than two-fifths of the respondents state that they have fear about future life because of husband's drinking habit. More than one-third of the respondents state that they hesitate to attend social functions because of husband's drinking habit. In more than one-third of the cases, the children have the feeling of shame because of their father's drinking habit. More than one-fourth of the respondents state that their children witness domestic violence arising out of husband's alcoholism. While 8.7% of the respondents have lost property because of husband's alcoholism, 14.9% of them have lost jewels.

In most of the cases, the stated reasons for consuming alcohol are body pain and work fatigue. In the case of nearly one-third of the sample, the husbands drink for pleasure. One out of five husbands drinks because of compulsion by friends. In the case of nearly one-fourth of the respondents, the husbands have declared that they cannot live without drinking.

Some of the respondents get support from family members in dealing with alcoholic husbands while few are supported by friends and neighbors. Some of the respondents have sought police help in dealing with the alcoholic husband, while the vast majority of the respondents did not seek any help from the police in dealing with the alcoholic husband. As for the reason for not seeking police help, more than half of the respondents state that violence by their husbands was normal and not to such an extent that would warrant for police intervention. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents would not go to police for fear of marital separation. It would be shameful to make such family matters public for more than two-fifths of the respondents. More than one-fourth of the respondents have expected threats of consequences if they would seek police help. Some of the respondents would not seek police help for fear of losing children. More than one-fifth of the respondents do not think that their problem could be solved by police intervention. For nearly two-fifths of the respondents, going to police station implies making the issue public and thereby bringing dishonor to the family.

These respondents follow different types of coping during the times of violence by the alcoholic husband depending upon the situation. They follow almost all types of coping at some or other time. Thus while coping, they do something at one time that may be even contrary to what they had done on an earlier occasion. Almost all the respondents have engaged in self distraction, i.e. diverting one's mind from the issue and involving in something else such as watching movie or serial. Nine out of ten respondents have tried active coping, i.e. they have tried to take some action to make the situation better. Three-fourths of the respondents have followed

the strategy of denial, i.e. deceiving oneself that it has not happened. Proportion of respondents resorting to substance use, i.e. using drugs to feel better, is less. Nearly nine out of ten respondents comforted themselves by getting emotional support from others. Except for a few, all have used instrumental support, i.e. seeking advice or help from others. More than four-fifths have resorted to behavioral disengagement, i.e. just giving up trying to deal with or cope. Except for a few, all have used venting, i.e. expressing one's negative feelings about the situation. Four out of five have used positive reframing, i.e. seeing things in a different light and expecting good from the bad. Four out of five have engaged in planning, by thinking about strategies and steps to take. More than half of the respondents have used humor, i.e. making fun of the situation. Nearly nine out of ten have used the mechanism of acceptance, i.e. taking the adverse situation as inevitable reality and learning to live with it. Seven out of ten have used religion to cope with the situation, by praying or meditating. More than half of the respondents have engaged in self blame, i.e. criticizing or blaming oneself for what has happened.

More than one-third of the respondents are so docile that in their opinion domestic violence is acceptable in all circumstances. For some of the respondents, it is acceptable in certain circumstances, for example when the concerned woman is foul-mouthed. Domestic violence is unacceptable, but the offending husband should not be punished by law, according to one-third of the respondents. Only 12% of the respondents state that domestic violence is unacceptable and the offender should be punished by law.

Psychological Violence

One-third of the respondents have been experiencing low level of psychological violence and a few more than that have been experiencing moderate level of it. More than one-fourth of the respondents have been experiencing high level of psychological violence.

Psychological violence does not vary significantly for variation in age, caste, occupation, income, family type or family income. Education has a role to play. Experiencing of psychological violence is greater for the illiterate and primary educated respondents than the higher educated groups of respondents. Family size makes a difference in psychological violence. Psychological violence is greater among the respondents having small families than those with larger families.

Age of the husband does not have a bearing on psychological violence. Neither does husband's occupation, nor does his income. Educational level of the husband makes a difference in psychological violence. When the husbands are graduates, psychological violence is less. It is found to be more among primary and illiterate husbands.

Type of marriage does not have any bearing on psychological violence, but relationship with husband before marriage has. Marriage between relatives makes psychological violence less compared to marriage between non-relatives. Psychological violence is found to increase as frequency of drinking increases. The more frequent one drinks, the more psychological violence he inflicts.

Family size, family income, husband's income, self's age at marriage and age difference between the spouses are not significantly correlated with psychological violence. The respondents' age, education, income, husband's age, husband's education, duration of marriage, duration of drinking habit and frequency of drinking do have significant correlations with psychological violence. When age of the respondents increases, psychological violence also increases. The negative correlation for education shows that when educational level of the respondents increases, psychological violence decreases. When the income of the respondents increases, psychological violence also increases. The higher earning respondents experience more of psychological violence than others. Husband's age is positively correlated with psychological violence. This means the respondents with aged husbands experience more of psychological violence. Just as the educational level of the respondents, husband's educational level is also negatively correlated with psychological violence. When the husbands are more educated, psychological violence is less. Duration of marriage is positively correlated with psychological violence. Among those who have been married for a longer time, psychological violence is found to be higher. The same is the case for the variable duration of drinking. The longer the duration of drinking, the greater is the psychological violence. These two variables should be seen along with age of the respondent as well as age of the husband. All these four variables are temporal – age and years. Simply put, among the older persons, psychological violence is found to be greater compared to younger persons. It has also been found that frequency of drinking is positively correlated with psychological violence. The more frequently the husband

drinks, the greater is the psychological violence. When the correlated variables are tested for their independent and combine effect, it is found that only frequency of drinking has independent effect. That is, the most important variable in predicting psychological violence is frequency of drinking.

Physical Violence

Nearly three-fourths of the respondents have been experiencing low level of physical violence. While one-fifth of them have moderate level of physical violence, few of the respondents have high level of it.

Age of the respondents makes a significant variation in physical violence. It is noteworthy that the middle age groups, physical violence is higher, particularly in the age group of 41 – 50. As age increases, physical violence also increases. However, attaining peak in the age group of 41 – 50, it steeply falls down after the age of 50.

Caste does not have a bearing on physical violence. While education and income of the respondents do not have significant effect on physical violence, employment of the respondents has. Physical violence is higher among the respondents who are employed; it is less among the housewives.

Family type has a bearing on physical violence. It is higher among the respondents who are living in nuclear families than those who are living in joint families. Family size and family income, however, do not have bearing on physical violence.

As far as husband's age is concerned, physical violence is less among the youngest age group as well as among the oldest age group. It is higher among the middle age groups, particularly among the husbands belonging to the age group of 41 – 50. Thus the finding suggests a curvilinear pattern of relationship between the two variables. Physical violence increases when the age of the alcoholic husband increases up to the age of 50, and thereafter it decreases, just as it has been found in the case of respondent's age.

There are no significant differences in physical violence among the different groups of respondents based on husband's education, occupation or income. As for type of marriage, physical violence is higher among those who had love marriage and it is less among those who had arranged marriage. Relationship with husband before marriage has a bearing on physical violence. It is less among the respondents who were already relatives before marriage and it is higher among those who were not related before marriage. Frequency of drinking has a bearing on physical violence. It is high among the respondents whose husbands are drinking daily. It is less among those with husbands who drink weekly or occasionally.

Physical violence has significant correlations with education, income, family income, duration of drinking habit and frequency of drinking. Age, family size, husband's age, husband's education, husband's income, self's age at marriage, age difference between the spouses and duration of marriage do not have significant correlations with physical violence. Education of the respondents is negatively

correlated with the extent of physical violence. That is, physical violence is higher among the respondents who are illiterate or less educated. Income of the respondents is positively correlated with physical violence. The more a woman earns, the more she undergoes physical violence. Family income, on the other hand, is negatively correlated with physical violence. The more a family earns, the less the wife undergoes physical violence. Duration of drinking habit is positively associated with physical violence. The longer the husband is used to drink, the greater he inflicts physical violence on wife. It should be noted here that age of the husband as such is not correlated with physical violence, but duration of drinking habit is. Frequency of drinking is positively correlated with physical violence. The more frequently the husband drinks, the greater is the physical violence suffered by the wife. Of these variables, family income and frequency of drinking have independent effect on physical violence. That is, when other variables are controlled, these variables have their own effect on physical violence. Of these two variables, frequency of drinking has a greater beta value indicating its far more importance in predicting physical violence.

Sexual Violence

One-third of the respondents have been experiencing low level of sexual abuse by the alcoholic husband. Nearly one-fifth of them are experiencing at moderate level. More than two-fifths of the respondents have been experiencing sexual abuse at a high level.

Sexual violence is more in the young age groups and less in the old age groups. Sexual violence increases as the educational level of the respondents increases. It is the least among the illiterate respondents and it is the highest among the most educated in the sample, viz. who have studied high school and above. Sexual violence does not vary significantly for differences in caste, occupation or income of the respondents, family type, family size or family income.

Husband's age has a role in sexual violence. It is higher when the husbands are younger in age, whereas it is less among the older husbands. Husband's education makes a difference in the level of sexual violence. In the case of illiterate and primary educated husbands, sexual violence is less whereas in the case of higher educated husbands, it is greater. Husband's occupation or income does not have bearing on sexual violence.

Sexual violence is greater among the respondents who had love marriage and it is less among those who had arranged marriage. There is no significant difference in sexual violence between those who have married a relative and those who have married a non-relative.

Age, education, husband's age, husband's education, duration of marriage, duration of drinking habit and frequency of drinking are significantly correlated with sexual violence. Age is negatively correlated with sexual violence. The younger women suffer more of it than the older women. Those who have studied more are

experiencing more of sexual violence than those who are illiterate or studied less. Just as respondent's age, husband's age is also negatively correlated with sexual violence. The younger husbands inflict more of sexual violence than the older husbands. Again like in the case of respondent's education, husband's education is also positively correlated with sexual violence. Sexual violence is less among the less educated husbands and more among the higher educated husbands. Duration of marriage is negatively associated with sexual violence. The longer the duration of marriage, the less is the extent of sexual violence. Duration of husband's drinking habit is also negatively associated with sexual violence. Those who have been drinking for longer years inflict less sexual violence on their wives than those who have been drinking for fewer years. Frequency of drinking is positively correlated with sexual violence. Frequent drinkers inflict more sexual violence on their wives compared to others. Earlier, in categorical analysis of variance, it was found that frequency of drinking did not have a role in sexual violence. However, in discrete correlation analysis, frequency of drinking has significant correlation with sexual violence. Moreover, this variable again, as in the cases of other two modes of violence, has significant independent effect on sexual violence. The other important predictor of sexual violence is age of the respondents. The younger respondents are more prone to sexual violence.

Domestic Violence

As for the overall domestic violence, more than half of the respondents have low level of it. Nearly one-third of the respondents have moderate level and some of them have high level of it.

Age, caste, income of the respondents, family type, family size and family income do not make significant variation in domestic violence.

Domestic violence varies significantly for different educational groups of the respondents. The overall domestic violence is more prevalent among the illiterate and primary educated respondents. It is found to be relatively less among the respondents who have studied middle school and above. Domestic violence is less among the housewives and it is more among the employed wives.

Husband's age makes a difference in the extent of domestic violence suffered by the wives. In the case of the younger as well as the older husbands, domestic violence is relatively less. It is higher among the respondents whose husbands belong to the age group of 31 – 40. It is still higher for those having their husbands in the age group of 41 – 50. Thus it shows a curvilinear relationship where domestic violence is greater in the middle age groups, particularly 41 – 50. Husband's education, occupation and income do not have bearing on domestic violence.

While type of marriage does not make significant variation in the overall domestic violence, relationship with husband before marriage makes a significant difference in the extent of domestic violence in such a way that in the case of relatives getting married, domestic violence is less. Frequency of drinking makes significant variation in the overall domestic violence. It is less where husbands drink occasionally and higher for those drinking on a weekly basis. It is much higher for those who drink daily.

Education is negatively correlated with domestic violence while the other three are positively correlated. As the educational level of the respondents increases, domestic violence decreases. When the income level of the respondents is higher, domestic violence is also higher. Domestic violence becomes higher when duration of drinking habit becomes longer. The more frequently the alcoholic husband drinks, the more domestic violence the wife suffers. The only variable that has significant independent effect on the overall domestic violence is again frequency of drinking.

Sum up

To reiterate the main findings of the study, the average age of these married rural women sample is around 35. Except for a few Christians, all are Hindus. Scheduled caste respondents constitute half of the sample; others are backward classes. Three-fourths of the respondents are either illiterate or studied up to middle school. While around 20% of the respondents are housewives; among the employed, except for a negligible few, all are coolies. The average income of the respondents is around Rs.1800 per month. The vast majority of the respondents have nuclear families and the average family size is around 4. The average family income is around Rs.13000 per month. The average age of the husbands is around 40 and the age difference between the spouses is around 4 years. Like their wives, most of the husbands are either illiterate or studied up to middle school, and are working as coolies. In the case of income, however, the husbands earn more with Rs.9500 as monthly average. Though both men and women have same level of education, and work as coolies, women are paid considerably less. One-fifth of the respondents had

love marriage. More than one-third of the respondents were already related to their husbands before marriage.

Three out of five of the husbands drink daily or weekly. In most of the cases, friends are the drinking companions. However, one-third of the husbands drink alone. The important problems arising out of drinking include verbal abuse and quarrel in family and problems with neighbors and at workplace. The vast majority of the husbands, however, provide money for family expenses. In more than one-third of the cases, the respondents and their children are ashamed of the family head's drinking habit. The children having to witness domestic violence is another problem. The important reasons stated for alcoholism are work fatigue and body pain. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents have been so much addicted that they cannot live without drinking. Most of the respondents consider domestic violence as family matter that should not be taken to the public platforms. Only few of these rural women think that domestic violence should be punished by law.

Psychological violence is found more among the aged, illiterate / primary educated women. The same is the case for husbands. This type of violence is found more in small size families. It less where the spouses had already been relatives before marriage. Duration of drinking habit and frequency of drinking intensifies this kind of violence. Of all, frequency of drinking is the most important variable as it has significant independent effect on psychological violence.

Physical violence is found more among the middle age groups, especially in the age group of 41 to 50. This is true for both husband's as well as wife's age. This type of violence is found less among the illiterate / primary educated spouses. It is found more among those who had love marriage, whereas it is found less among those who had married relatives. It is found more in nuclear families where the wives are employed. It should be noted that among the employed, except for a few, all are working as coolies. It is also noteworthy that wife's income is positively related with physical violence, whereas family income is negatively related. In the vast majority of the cases, the other earning member in the family is the husband; and thus increased family income should mean the husband earning more than the wife. Thus, when we say that family income is negatively related with physical violence whereas wife's income is positively related with the same, it can mean that less or no income difference between the spouses can be a contingent factor for physical violence. A post hoc cross tabulation showed this to be true. Length of drinking habit increases physical violence. Most importantly, frequency of drinking has a significant independent role in physical violence.

When psychological violence is found more among the old spouses and physical violence more among the middle aged spouses, sexual violence is found more among the young spouses. Age of husband as well as wife is negatively associated with sexual violence. Education, on the other hand, is positively associated. Though we can state that this type of violence is greater among the more educated, it can be better stated that it is less among the illiterate and less educated, who are generally older people. Here again, like physical violence, love marriage

matters. Sexual violence is found more among those who had love marriage. Length of marriage and length of husband's drinking habit have negative relationship with sexual violence. Both these variables are temporal and indirectly refer to age. Thus it is a duplication of the negative relationship between age and sexual violence. Here also frequency of drinking has a significant independent role. Thus in all types of domestic violence, it is frequency of drinking that counts much.

Domestic violence on women may have various perpetrators within the family, but the most recognized perpetrator is the husband, and among the husbands the drunkard ones. The study reveals that domestic violence is inflicted on the wives by the alcoholic husbands in the three forms, viz. psychological, physical and sexual, in varying degrees. The variations happen according to certain variables. One of the important variables that has been identified with increased domestic violence is the frequency of drinking. If any attempt is made to do away with or reduce domestic violence by the alcoholic husbands, it is better to pay attention to the frequency of drinking. As revealed in one of the cases, the same husband when not drunk is very normal and cordial. Reducing the frequency of drinking will reduce domestic violence. Social workers may work out plans for this. Physical and sexual violence is also found to be relatively more in the cases of love marriage, where the woman is more defenseless as she married against the will of her original family. Special attention should be given for those who enter into love marriage and counseling may be provided at the time of marriage about the possibilities and consequences of drinking, domestic conflicts and violence. Another important finding is that the three forms of violence vary according to the age of the woman and her husband.

Psychological violence is more among the old, physical violence is more among the middle aged and sexual violence is more among the young. Hence, it is recommended that different intervention strategies may be followed for the different age groups. Different programs of counseling and sensitization may be adopted for the different age groups. It is also found in the present study that the affected women do not prefer to complain about their husbands, for they consider it as a shame make such issues public, also they do not think that making complaints will really solve the problem. The important reason is that any such attempt will jeopardize the marriage. These women rather prefer to bear with the violence of their husbands than to live alone and face the ensuing social stigma of being a spouseless woman. Empowerment programs may educate and give strength and means to face and manage the situation.