

# Awareness, Prevalence and Coping of Domestic Violence among Women School Teachers

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### Abstract

*Domestic violence is a normal activity in Indian society, where violence at home is considered part and parcel of life. Women have been imbibed in their minds from childhood not to discuss domestic violence in a public forum as it would bring shame to the family. Domestic violence is interpersonal violence that has shattered the lives of millions of Indian women despite their education and social status. School Teachers in rural India play a predominant role in building the nation by educating the life skills of the young generation. The study aims to find out the Awareness, Prevalence and coping of Domestic violence among the women School Teachers in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu and finds the association between domestic violence and selected socio-demographic variables. It is a descriptive study, and a Self-prepared questionnaire was administered to 80 women school teachers of Private schools. The results reveal that only 2.5 per cent of them have a high level of awareness about domestic violence and 68 per cent are not ready to share with anyone about the violence faced by them in house. It is the least focussed issue in Indian society. The study states that it is the need of the hour of the state and non Government organisations to address this problem as a public health issue to save the physical and mental health of women.*

**Keywords:** Abuse, Family, Health, Prevalence, Teachers, Violence, Women.

### Introduction

World Health Organization (2021) states Violence against women as any behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm. Domestic violence against women is a day to day activity that has not been considered a severe issue in Indian society. In India, 86 per cent of women who suffered from violence have never sought help and 77 per cent have not even mentioned the violence faced by anyone (Radhakrishnan, Sen and Singaravelu, 2020). The violence could be in the forms of physical abuse, emotional, economic, verbal and sexual abuse (Meenakshi, J.R 2017). The roots of domestic violence can be attributed to various cultural, social, economic, and psychological factors. It is necessary that the school teachers should have the awareness of Domestic violence and legal help relating to it. They could discuss it with the students of both the gender with an open mind which could bring enormous positive change in the life of the future generation.

Domestic violence is the top crime faced by Indian women in recent years and victims lack the support provided by the Government to get rid of violence (Dhawan, 2020). Many studies have been made on Domestic violence faced by women and there is not enough research on the violence faced by school teachers. Domestic violence experienced by school teachers would have a major impact on their professional life also. Generally, in Southern and traditionally bounded cities like Madurai, women are not much exposed to share the spousal violence that they are undergoing in their day-to-day life. This study has explored how far they are aware of Domestic violence, the prevalence of various forms of Domestic violence they are being exposed and the coping strategies.

### Review of Literature

According to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Domestic Violence includes verbal, emotional, physical, economic and sexual violence. It also recognizes marital rape and unlawful demand of dowry. National Family Health Survey -4(2017) of Union Health Ministry states that thirty per cent of women in India have faced physical violence from the age of 15. The most common spousal violence is physical violence. There is an assumption in our society that there is a clear relationship between anger and physically violent behaviour. However, anger is a human emotion. Studies have shown that physical violence or abuse is a learnt behaviour and the perpetrator is more often than not going to repeat this behaviour. Physical violence as well as other forms of domestic abuse are measures that are taken by one person to force another person into compliance. Domestic Violence states a pattern of assault and coercive behaviour, which includes physical, sexual, psychological and verbal attacks and coercion used against an intimate partner. In Madurai district, there is a steep increase number of complaints about domestic violence, which shows that women started to approach the support system without hesitation (M.Vandhana,2016).

Ministry of Women and Child Development supports the women affected by violence through One Stop Centre also known as Sakthi Centre, by providing psychological, legal and medical help.

The statistics reveal that out of 377 cases reported in Madurai District between December 2018 and October 2019, 45 per cent of the complaints are related to Domestic Violence. (P.A.Narayani, 2019).In Tamil Nadu, one of the major reasons for violence against women is alcoholic consumption by men.37.6 per cent of the husband's alcoholism leads to quarrels and violence at the house and other prominent reasons are sexual dominance, trivial misunderstandings,money issues and suspicion of an extramarital affair. (Ram, A et al,2019). Tamil Nadu ranks first in India in alcohol sales by volume and alcohol consumption has increased drastically. (Sivasankaran, S 2015)

### Materials and Methods

It is a descriptive study, and the objectives are to find out the level of awareness about Domestic violence, to study the prevalence of Domestic violence at the house and the coping strategies adopted by the respondents. The study area in Madurai District is located in the south of Tamil Nadu and it has rich cultural and historical heritage. The district has a population of 30.4 lakhs and it has a sex ratio of 990 females for 1000 males. The literacy rate is 89.41 per cent and the female literacy rate of 85.15 per cent. The universe of the study is all the married women teachers working in Private schools in Madurai District. Stratified Random sampling was followed where the universe was divided into strata and the samples were drawn from each stratum. 4 Private Higher Secondary Co-Educational schools were selected and data were collected from 20 respondents from each school. A structured questionnaire was administered to collect data and before it pre-test was carried out with 15 respondents to find out the suitability and flexibility of the tool. The duration of the study was July – September 2019.In addition to the primary data, intensive secondary data was collected from the Government of India and various journals.

### Results

Relating to the awareness of domestic violence, only 2.5 per cent of the respondents have a high level of awareness and 62.5 per cent have a low level of awareness. When asked for the low level of

awareness, the respondents stated that they do not have the opportunity to know about the Domestic Violence Act. They might have known it if it is covered in the academic syllabus.

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents on the level of Awareness about Domestic Violence**

Level of Awareness	Percentage
Low	62.5
Medium	35.0
High	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

About the type of domestic violence experienced by the respondents, 58 per cent frequently face verbal violence, 15 per cent face psychological violence, 10 per cent experienced physical violence, 9 per cent suffer from economic violence and 8 per cent faced sexual violence.

**Table 2: Prevalence of Domestic Violence**

Prevalence of Domestic Violence	Percentage
Blames you for his mistakes.	74
Has purposively left you for an important occasion.	26
Refuses to talk with you.	58
Makes contradictory demands on you (ex) assigning work to you at the time of morning rushing hour to work.	30
Criticizes your intelligence	52
Criticizes your physical appearance	35
Threatens to end the relationship if you did not do what he wants.	26
Mention you are not a right pair to him.	30
Use to disagree whatever you says.	35
Takes decision by himself without consulting you	26
Scolds you as an useless person	59
Has screamed at you	65
Harasses over the phone.	48
Uses filthy language to hurt you.	52
Ridicules you in front of others	41
Calls you in a degrading nick names based on your physical appearance and colour complexion	36

He slaps you.	3
Threw objects at you in anger.	22
Has sent you out and locked the house.	2
Beats you in anger.	7
Shook a finger at you while speaking.	15
Pulls your hair.	1
Twists your hand.	2
Makes use of your possessions (money, jewels, property)	48
Forces you to give money.	53
Uses to repay his debt.	40
Scolds you to leave the job.	15
Asks account for your each and every expense.	41
Not provides you money for run the family.	14
Experience forced sex by your partner.	12
Demands sex when you are not interested.	14

Prevalence of domestic violence are in different forms like 52 per cent of the husband uses filthy language to hurt wife, 48 per cent mentions that the respondent is not the right person for him, 36 per cent of the husband calls the respondent in a degrading nicknames based on physical appearance and colour complexion and 22 per cent of the husbands have thrown objects on the respondents.

Regarding coping strategy, 6 per cent of the respondents are indulging in problem and focused emotional engagement and 94 per cent are indulging in problem and focused emotional disengagement on coping with Domestic violence. The application of chi-square reveals the association between age and awareness about domestic violence where respondents in the age group of 40-50 years old have a low level of awareness. As 59 per cent of the respondent's husband has the habit of alcohol consumption, there exists an association between the alcoholic habit of the husband and the level of physical abuse. The study has also revealed no association between the form of marriage and the level of awareness as the women married in the way of both love marriage and arranged marriage suffers from violence. Relating to economic violence, 48 per cent of the respondents state that the husband uses

her jewels and salary and demands account for every expense. 68 per cent of the respondents are not ready to share the violence faced by them with anyone as they think that it would bring shame to the family. The way the respondent's coping with the violence includes sharing with a trustworthy friend, avoiding being with family members, trying to be normal as nothing happened and only a minimum of 2 per cent seek professional support from counsellors.

### Discussion

Domestic Violence has been deep-rooted in the minds of people irrespective of Gender. The respondents are literates and holding a respectable teaching profession. They can discuss the violence against women, causes and consequences and support given by various institutions with the students of both genders. It would bring enormous changes in the mind of the young generation and pave the way for the elimination of violence in their life. The study reveals that the teachers themselves are not much aware of Domestic violence. Women have a strong mindset of not sharing the violence faced by anyone and this attitude has to be changed to save the physical and mental health of women. Alcohol consumption has an association with domestic violence as women are facing physical, mental and sexual abuse at a high level when the husband is inebriated. Economic violence is least discussed as the culture insists the women give the earnings to the husband's family. Even the high earning women do not have economic independence and they depend on men for every basic requirement. Awareness has to be created among the school teachers about Domestic violence and they should have access to the Legal cell. Government should incorporate the violence against women and Healthy Gender relations in the syllabus of Higher Secondary schools. Ministry of School Education, along with Non-Government organisations should provide the necessary support to the school teachers to enhance their physical and mental well being. Counselling centres should be established in schools for the well being of teachers also.

### Conclusion

Domestic Violence is a social evil and it has to be curtailed in Indian society. Though we have strong

legal procedures to handle it, we are not using it due to various cultural reasons. Women living with the husband are respected more though they suffer from violence than the women living separately. To create attitudinal change, gender education should be given to men from a young age and perception of women should be made healthy. Domestic Violence should be handled as a public health issue and a strong network of Government, NGO's, Academicians, Women Associations, Social workers, Advocates, and every responsible citizen should work together to eliminate Domestic violence from society. The present study shows the need to have a massive social change as even the well-educated people have hesitation to address the violence with an open mind and also due to low awareness.

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