



Socio-Demographic details of women in domestic violent relationship: A descriptive study

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Abstract

Objective: Domestic violence is the most common form of violence against women. This study aims to identify the socio-demographic details of women in a domestic violent relationships.

Method: The present study is a descriptive study. It includes ever-married women victims who were in a violent relationships with their husbands. The study excludes domestic violence toward men, the elderly, and children; violence in unmarried relationships and between same-sex relationships because such experiences are unique and different from the experiences of domestic violence toward women victims. Purposive sampling is used for the study. An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted with six women from Churachandpur, Manipur. Only women above 18 years old who can give informed consent were included in the study.

Result: From the socio-demographic details of the participants, it was found that the women victims were aged between 32- 52 years old. Five out of the six (83.3%) women were literate. While four of them were employed, two were home makers. All the women had children with their batterers.

Discussion: Understanding the socio-demographic details of victims of domestic violence play an essential role in giving insight into the determinants of domestic violence toward women. Thus, identifying these factors can help in proper interventions of domestic violence toward women. However, the present study is narrowed to a few participants and therefore lacks generalizability.

Keywords: Socio-Demographic Factors, Domestic Violence, Women

Introduction

Violence against women is a major human right violation and a major public health issue. Intimate partner violence (IPV) or domestic violence is a sub-type of interpersonal violence experienced by women perpetrated by their male partners. The World Health Organization defines Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as “behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical

aggression, sexual coercion, and psychological abuse and controlling behaviours” (Violence against Women, n.d.) Djikanovic et al., 2012). The global estimates of intimate partner violence perpetrated by men against women indicate that 30% of ever-partnered women (about one in three) worldwide have experienced physical and or sexual violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives (Schiavo, 2014). WHO states that interpersonal violence perpetrated by men towards their intimate women partners is the most common form of violence experienced globally by women (Daher, 2003). Domestic violence is a serious and severe human right and public health concern affecting women across all cultures, races, socio-economic statuses, and ages (Pan et al., 2006; Chaudhary, 2013; & Kumar, 2017). Kumar (2017) also noted that the most common type of violence against women worldwide is domestic violence, which can take any form, such as physical abuse, psychological/ emotional abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, etc. What sets out domestic violence different from other forms of violence is that it happened within the framework of the house, which makes reporting the incident and accessing legal aid and other support services difficult. Domestic violence remains as something that can be settled and resolved within the four walls of the house. Some amount of violence and abuse is culturally accepted and even considered normal as part of the wears and tears of marriage. Domestic violence, in particular, continues to be frighteningly familiar and to be taken as “normal” within too many societies (Garcia- Moreno et al., 2005).

Independent India, after framing the Constitution, is trying the best it can for promoting equality between the sexes. Implementing various legislations brings a ray of new hope for women, but in reality, accessing legal services still remains a myth to millions of women. Woman’s well-being is subordinated to the preservation of the welfare of the “family”. Often domestic violence does not always result in visible physical injuries, which puts the victim at a disadvantage position when help is to be sought legally, where evidence plays a vital role in the conviction. The mere absence of physical symptoms, however, does not imply the absence of domestic violence. Sometimes it is not possible to record the emotional, social and financial abuse. In this gap, legal support and service fail to address the problem effectively. The prevalence of domestic violence is undeniable; however, it is a highly complex phenomenon to detect. Even today, various forms of violence against women are prevalent around the world. According to the National Family Health Survey- 4 (Ministry of health and family welfare, 2017), almost one-third of ever-married women (31%) have ever experienced spousal physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their current husband or most recent husband. In 2006, World Health Organization (WHO) worldwide study found that 30% to 60% of women had been victims of domestic violence while the range of lifetime prevalence of physical or sexual violence, or both, by an intimate partner was between 15% and 71% (Garcia-Moreno et al., 2005)

A combination of individual, relational, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of becoming a perpetrator of IPV. Understanding these multilevel factors can help identify various opportunities for prevention. The CDC listed low income or education and young age as an individual risk factor for domestic violence (*Risk and Protective Factors/Intimate Partner Violence/Violence Prevention/Injury Center/CDC*, n.d.). Studies revealed that age of the respondent, age at marriage <18 years, women's educational status, employment status, husband's education, duration of the marriage, having male child, marriage registration, and type of marriage (love or arranged) were associated with domestic violence. (Abigail Weitzman 91, 2018;

George et al., 2016). However others study shows that age of the woman at marriage, age difference between the husband and wife, number of children, and the education of the husband were not determinants to whether the woman was subject to domestic violence or not (Ram et al., 2019). There are different determinants and risk factors for domestic violence against women. Therefore, it is necessary to understand from

Method

This study was part of the main study which aim to explore the lived experiences of battered women in a domestic violent relationship. The inclusion criteria included ever married women who have or had been a domestic violent relationship with their partner who were above 18 years. Women with specific health conditions such as HIV-positive women and domestic violence during pregnancy or antenatal periods were excluded. Domestic violence against minor or elder were also excluded since such will have different implications. Domestic violence within same-sex partner or marriage or by other family members were also excluded since the main aim of the study is to identify the socio demographic profiles of women in domestic violence by their present or past husband or partner. Socio demographic data such as age, marital status, educational level, number of children, religion, working status and age of marriage were obtained by questionnaire.

The study was conducted in Churachandpur district of Manipur. The district is mainly inhabited by the Chin-Kuki-Mizo tribes. Purposive sampling technique was employed.

Results

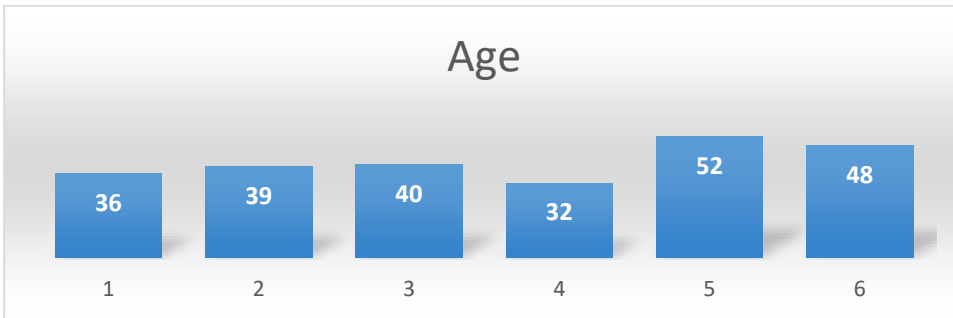
From the analysis of the sample, the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants with domestic violence are presented in Table 1.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Age	36	39	40	32	52	48
Current marital status	Separated	Separated and remarried	Separated	Separated	Separated and remarried	Married
Education	Uneducated	Post Graduate	12th	10th	High School	Graduate
Number of children	5	1	3	4	5	2
Religion	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian	Christian

Occupation	Self Employed	Employed	Home maker	Home maker	Self employed	Employed
Age at the time of marriage	21	23	21	25	16	30

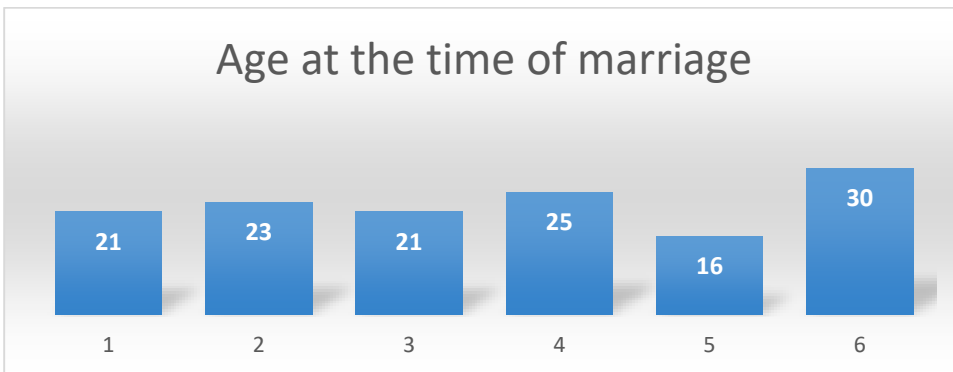
Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

It was observed that the participants in the study were six (6) women between the age of 32 to 52 years old, with the mean age and standard deviation of 41 (7.49) as shown in Graph 1.



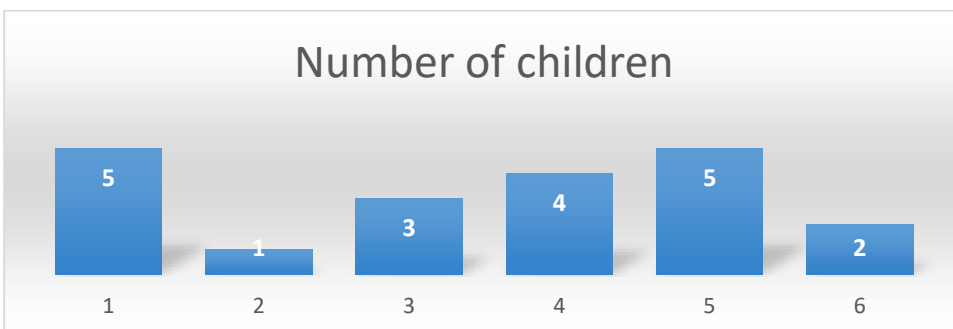
Graph 1: Age of the participants

At the time of marriage, the participants age range from 16 to 30 years, with the mean age and standard deviation of 23 (4.6) as shown in Graph 2.



Graph 2: Age at the time of marriage

Considering the number of children, all the participants have at least one. Two of them with five (5) children as shown in Graph 3.



Graph 3: Number of children

Majority of the women in the study (66.6%) have some form of income, be it self-employed or employed in private companies or organizations. Regarding current marital status, most of the participants declared themselves separated from their abuser husband (50%), however one of them is still married to her husband at the time the study is conducted. All the participants belonged to Christian community and have some form of formal education.

Discussion

Domestic violence is a universal phenomenon impacting the overall well-being of women; however, it is only in recent times that it has emerged as a global issue. From the analysis of the socio-demographic profiles of the participants in the study, we can see that the mean age of the women was 41 years, while other studies of India reveal that the highest level of violence is found in women who are in their 30s years (Kimuna et al., 2013; Nadda et al., 2019). This variation in age could be because of geographical and cultural variations.

The study reveals that all women except one reported as separated from their abuser husband, indicating that women eventually leave their abuser after prolonged endurance of the violence and abuse. Education is expected to be a protective factor against domestic violence. However, the current study participants prove otherwise. In summary, the relationship between education and domestic violence is complex and requires further studies to better understanding these conflicting results.

All the participants having children suggested that perhaps socialization factors are considered more important in the community being studied. Working women were more likely to experience violence than women who were not working, as reported earlier, in line with findings from other studies (Begum et al., 2015). This could be because women are expected to be subservient culturally. Looking at the traditional power structure in patriarchal Indian families where females earning money could be perceived as a threat to conventional male dominance.

The finding in the present study regarding the participants belonging to the Christian community has been contrary to other findings (Doku & Asante, 2015; Kimuna et al., 2013). The result of the current study could be because of the lack of training and education on how to manage domestic violence among the clergy coupled with the culture of silence among abuse victims. The age at the time of marriage also plays an important factor because women who marry at older ages may be more mature and may manage marital conflicts better than their younger counterparts.

It is important to note that the socio-demographic profiles do not represent all women who experience domestic violence. Considering the nature of the phenomenon under study, it can be hypothesized that domestic violence cases are very much underreported. Our study had several limitations. First, the data collected on ever experience of domestic violence were self-reported by respondents and, therefore, subject to recall bias, cultural values and willingness to report domestic violence. Secondly, it was not possible to establish causal relationship between the socio-demographic factors studied and domestic violence. Further, the present study is narrowed to a few participants and therefore lacks generalizability.

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