

Intimate Partner Violence in Tribal Population of Jharkhand

Indrani Dutta¹, Atima Bharti²

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ABSTRACT

Background: Intimate partner violence is seen at each and every level in the society. Psychological violence is the most prevalent form of intimate partner violence. The present study has been done to assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence among the tribal population of Jharkhand.

Materials and methods: It is a prospective cross-sectional study carried out at the outpatient department at a tertiary care teaching hospital in Jharkhand from July 2021 to December 2021. Participants of this study were tribal women, aged 16–55 years coming for health checkups at the Outpatient Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. Data from participants who gave consent for the study were collected by interview using a questionnaire and subsequently interpreted.

Results: A total of 360 women consented to participate in this study. The prevalence of intimate partner violence in this study was found to be 38.88%. Physical violence was present in 51.43% of victims, 8.57% reported partner-controlling behavior, 20% experienced psychological abuse, and 34.29% were subjected to sexual abuse.

Conclusion: Intimate partner violence is the most overlooked and sensitive problem that needs attention and immediate redressal at all levels.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Physical violence, Psychological abuse, Sexual abuse.

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INTRODUCTION

Intimate partner violence is described as physical, sexual, or psychological harassment inflicted by an intimate partner.

As per Miller and McCaw B prevalence is higher among young girls, minority groups, and those with disabilities.¹ Psychological violence is estimated to be the most common subtype of intimate partner violence in the United States and Europe as seen in the study by Dokkedahl et al.²

While talking about Indian standards lifetime physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence is 29.3%.³ As per the study by Jyotirmay et al.,⁴ 70.3% of tribal women in Siliguri, West Bengal, India, had experienced domestic violence.

Trevillion et al. thought that emotional violence was the most common form of intimate partner violence.⁵

Intimate partner violence is seen at each and every level be it individual, in the community, or in society.⁶

It has been seen that victims of intimate partner violence belong to low socioeconomic strata with little or no education. Many of them are drug addicts with little or no financial independence. Most of them are dependent on their partner for each and every basic need. Women from ethnic minority especially tribals even if subjected to abusive behavior, were bound by societal norms and patriarchy refused to stand up against intimate partner violence.⁷

Gulati and Kelly BD⁸ found that women who were victims of intimate partner violence often fell ill mentally, had increased suicidal tendencies, were depressed, and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder.

In India, the protection of women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005 also includes economic abuse under the definition of domestic violence.⁹

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, by the World Economic Forum, India ranks 112 among the 153 countries considered.¹⁰

^{1,2}Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India

Corresponding Author: Indrani Dutta, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi, Jharkhand, India, Phone: +91 7909009192, e-mail: indranidoc@gmail.com

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According to the National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, in the year 2018, 31.9% of cases of intimate partner violence were due to cruelty by husband or relatives.¹¹

The present study was done to assess the prevalence of intimate partner violence among the tribal population of Jharkhand.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To determine the prevalence of intimate partner violence among the tribal population of Jharkhand.
- To analyze factors associated with intimate partner violence among the study sample.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The above study is a prospective cross-sectional in nature carried out at the Outpatient Department, Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi from July 2021 to December 2021.

The study population was tribal women, aged 16–55 years coming for health checkup at the Outpatient Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Rajendra Institute of Medical

Sciences, Ranchi. The prevalence of Intimate partner violence is 36.9% according to National Family Health Survey 4 [NFHS-4]. Taking into account the design effect of 2, and 10% nonresponse, the final sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula, and the final sample size of 360 was calculated. Data from participants who gave consent for the study were collected by interview using a questionnaire which was translated to participants verbally in their local language. Since it was a questionnaire-based study ethical clearance was not required as per the institutional ethics committee. Care was taken at the interview level to respect the modesty of the participant. The collected data were entered into a Microsoft Excel data sheet after being reviewed for consistency and completeness. The IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 20.0 is used for the data analysis as per the data type. Quantitative data was expressed in percentages and proportions whereas quantitative data in mean standard deviation. Appropriate parametric and non-parametric tests of significance were applied depending on the normality of the data (Table 1).

RESULTS

A total of 360 women participated in this study. The prevalence of intimate partner violence in this study was found to be 38.88% (140/360). Most of the victims (61.4%) were from the age-group 16–35 years and the rest (38.57%) belonged to the 36–55 years age-group.

Among the victims, 69.29% were illiterate, 23.57% had primary school education, and 7.14% had education above primary school; 55% of partners were illiterate, 32.86% with primary school education, and 12.14% were above primary school.

Further, 49.29% of victims were unemployed, 33.57% were in unskilled jobs, and 17.14% were in skilled jobs; 61.42% of victims had a monthly income less than Rs. 3,000 and the rest 38.57% had an income above Rs. 3,000.

48.57% were married, 30% were in live in relation, and 21.43% were separated.

21.43% of victims and 63.57% of the partners had associated addiction history.

38.57% were abused due to a lack of male child.

54.29% of victims had no child.

41.43% of partners had co-wives.

47.86% of victims had married before 18 years.

Physical violence was present in 51.43% of victims, 8.57% reported partner-controlling behavior, 20% experienced psychological abuse, and 34.29% were subjected to sexual abuse.

Also, 33.57% of victims had witnessed parenteral violence.

DISCUSSION

Intimate partner violence is a universally overlooked public health issue. Exposure to violence leads to compromised mental health conditions thereafter increasing vulnerability to partner violence.

The study involved 360 tribal women of reproductive age who came to our center and participated in this study.

Out of 360 participants, 140 reported intimate partner violence in some form or the other. Hence prevalence was found to be 38.88%. As per data presented by Women UN (2019), 35% of women worldwide have experienced some sort of intimate partner violence in their lifetime.¹² As per the WHO report on Violence

Table 1: Sociodemographic factors

Demographic factors	Present	Absent
1. Age (years)		
a. 16–35	86 (61.4%)	148 (67.27%)
b. 36–55	54 (38.57%)	72 (32.73%)
2. Education of participant		
a. Illiterate	97 (69.29%)	113 (51.36%)
b. Primary school	33 (23.57%)	41 (18.64%)
c. Above primary school	10 (7.14%)	66 (30%)
3. Education of partner		
a. Illiterate	77 (55%)	113 (51.36%)
b. Primary school	46 (32.86%)	43 (19.55%)
c. Above primary school	17 (12.14%)	64 (29.09%)
4. Occupation of participant		
a. Unemployed	69 (49.29%)	113 (51.36%)
b. Unskilled job	47 (33.57%)	80 (36.36%)
c. Skilled job	24 (17.14%)	27 (12.27%)
5. Monthly income (Rs)		
a. <3000	86 (61.42%)	148 (67.27%)
b. >3000	54 (38.57%)	72 (37.72%)
6. Marital status		
a. Married	68 (48.57%)	102 (46.36%)
b. Separated	30 (21.43%)	78 (21.67%)
c. Live in	42 (30%)	40 (18.18%)
7. Addiction history of participant	30 (21.43%)	12 (5.45%)
8. Addiction history of partner	89 (63.57%)	56 (25.45%)
9. Abuse due to lack of male child	54 (38.57%)	101 (45.9%)
10. Parity		
a. 0	76 (54.29%)	53 (24.09%)
b. 1	32 (22.86%)	114 (51.81%)
c. >= 2	32 (22.86%)	53 (24.09%)
11. No. of co-wives		
a. None	82 (58.57%)	140 (63.64%)
b. >=1	58 (41.43%)	40 (18.18%)
12. Age at first marriage (years)		
a. <18	67 (47.86%)	140 (63.64%)
b. >18	73 (52.14%)	80 (36.36%)
13. Type of violence		
a. Partner controlling behavior	12 (8.57%)	
b. Sexual abuse	48 (34.29%)	
c. Psychological abuse	28 (20%)	
d. Physical violence	72 (51.43%)	
14. Witnessed parenteral violence	47 (33.57%)	80 (36.36%)

Against Women (2017),¹³ one-third of women in a relationship have experienced intimate partner violence.

Most of the victims (61.4%) were from the age-group 16–35 years and the rest (38.57%) belonged to the 36–55 years age-group. According to WHO,¹⁴ except for Japan and Ethiopia, young women in the age-group 15–19 years were more prone to confrontation and fall prey to intimate partner violence. As per a study done by Rahman et al.¹⁵ on Bangladeshi women, it was seen that all forms of violence were inversely related to age.

In this study 69.29% of victims were illiterate, 23.57% with primary school education, and 7.14% had education above

primary school. Also, 55% of partners were illiterate, 32.86% with primary school education, and 12.14% were above primary school.

In this current study women and their partners who had an education above primary school had a very low prevalence of intimate partner violence. This might be attributed to the fact that education broadens perspective and leads to better interpersonal relationships.

Women's education is bound to serve as a guard against physical abuse from intimate partners since education increases social and economic empowerment as well as autonomy. The higher a woman gets educated, she becomes more conscious about her dignity and she is more vocal about her rights. An educated woman does not accept any form of partner violence. George et al.¹⁶ in their study on married women of Puducherry, discovered a significant association between women's literacy and domestic violence. As per Indian Standards, domestic violence is highest in Karnataka (44%), Bihar (40%), Manipur (39%) Telangana (36%), and Tamil Nadu (38%).³ These are also the states where literacy levels are indirectly associated with intimate partner violence.

Low education level has been worldwide seen as a risk factor for intimate partner violence.¹⁷⁻²⁰

Low level of education which is an aftermath of socioeconomic disadvantage and lack of social support pushing women to take care of household and children exclusively. A study on Latinas²¹ found that victims of intimate partner violence were young and socioeconomically compromised.

According to Solomon et al.,²² a strong correlation has been observed between a spouse's education level and inter-partner violence: women who had male partners who had only completed elementary school or middle school had odds of 1.7 and 1.99, respectively, for experiencing greater rates of violence.

In this study, 49.29% of victims were unemployed, 33.57% were in unskilled jobs, and 17.14% were in skilled jobs. Most of the unskilled women workers belonged to lower socioeconomic classes, where financial constraints led to intimate partner violence.

The study by Dalal²³ reported that working women had higher probabilities of intimate partner violence than nonworking women, which was not in accordance with our study. The above-mentioned study also pointed out the fact that women who worked irregularly were more likely to be physically abused than the women in regular jobs who worked all year round.

According to the NFHS-4 report (2015–16), women from families with the lowest wealth index experienced more physical, sexual, and emotional violence than women from higher-wealth families. This is again well supported by our study findings where 61.42% of victims had monthly income less than Rs. 3,000, rest 38.57% had income of more than 3,000 per month.

In our study 48.57% of victims were married, 30% were in live-in relation, and 21.43% were separated; 41.43% of partners had co-wives. As per Bernards et al.²⁴ and a study on the Caribbean and Latin America, intimate partner violence happens less to married compared to divorced or separated.

Tribal married women are taken for granted as the property of the husband, and women have seen physical violence as part and parcel of their culture. Separated women had lower rates of intimate partner violence as compared to married and live-in relationships. The above percentages are findings of our study and may vary in other ethnic groups. As per the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) and ICF data (2015–2016),²⁵ physical and sexual violence was more common in women who had been widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted.

Moreover, 21.43% of victims and 63.57% of the partners had associated addiction history in our study. According to Sullivan et al.,²⁶ victims of Intimate partner violence tend to smoke greater quantities of cigarettes.

As per Alhusen et al., women who experienced perinatal Intimate partner violence were twice as likely to be cigarette smokers as compared to women without a history of Intimate partner violence.²⁷

In this study, 38.57% were abused due to the lack of a male child. In the current study, women who had male children had lower odds of encountering any type of domestic violence than women who did not have any male children. The presence of a male child is seen to have greater importance in tribal patriarchal societies. In our study hence violence was directly proportionate among women who did not have a male child. Also, Sarkar²⁸ discovered that the majority of the females expressed that the lack of a male child was the primary cause of marital violence. Addiction to alcohol, low income, lower literacy, and gender bias emerged as risk factors in our study which was consistent with the study by Devineni et al.²⁹

Also, 33.57% of victims in our study had witnessed parenteral violence.

Physical violence was present in 51.43% of victims, 8.57% reported partner-controlling behavior, 20% experienced psychological abuse, and 34.29% were subjected to sexual abuse. We did not find any good studies to support our findings. As per the study by Devineni et al., maternal deaths and cases of severe morbidity were due to the direct result of intimate partner violence (%).²⁹

Limitation

No exact type of intimate partner violence could be correlated with parameters like marital status, parity, education, employment, income, age, parity, or presence of a male child. This may be attributed to the low education level or self-realization of basic human rights of the cross-section of the study population. Sadly, most of them were in denial state of their being abused in some of the other forms.

CONCLUSION

Intimate partner violence is an issue that has been always overlooked and held back behind closed doors. Hence it's the need of the hour to come forward involving healthcare workers, social activists, and society in general to address this problem and take concrete steps to attend to and solve this problem.

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