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A Descriptive Study of Abused Women in Chandigarh

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women in India has been a major issue in the media recently, specifically with rape cases, the news has been flooding with numerous cases of men violating women in one or the other form, and a large number of cases go unreported. Many women “protected” by their lawfully wedded husband in the eye of the society are being abused behind the closed doors of the houses. To measure the degree of abuse that women in Chandigarh are going through, this study was conducted. The present investigation aims to gain insight into the status of abused women with and without children in Chandigarh. The study was conducted on 100 abused women out of which 50 were with children and 50 were without children. Socio-demographic profile of the abused women was assessed. The results showed that majority of abused women with children were from nuclear family, whereas joint family structure was adopted by majority of women without children. Majority of women without children were employed, than their counterparts with children, who preferred to be homemakers. Separation rate was higher amongst abused women without children. Majority of the sample population experienced abuse in an arranged marriage. Majority of the sample population was a victim of physical abuse and emotional abuse.

KEYWORDS: Violence, Abused Women, Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse

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INTRODUCTION

Gender based violence against women has been acknowledged worldwide as a violation of basic human rights. Increasing research has shown the health burdens, intergenerational effects and demographic effects of such violence. Marital violence has been recognized globally as a grave public health concern with devastating consequences affecting the physical, reproductive, sexual and psychological health of women. Violence not only causes physical injury, it also undermines the social, economic, psychological, spiritual and emotional well-being of the victim, the perpetrator and the society as a whole. Domestic violence is a major contributor to the ill health of women. It has serious consequences on women's mental and physical health, including their reproductive and sexual health. These include injuries, gynecological problems, temporary or permanent disabilities, depression and suicide, amongst others. With the alarming increase in the rate of abused women in India, several studies have paid attention on the effect of conflict amongst parents on children, physical health of abused women, psychological health of women etc. Gender based violence is defined by the United States as any act violence that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, girls, men and boys as well as threats of such acts, coercion, or the arbitrary deprivation of liberty.

This study focuses on domestic violence, one of the most common forms of gender based violence against women. Majority of the available information consists of qualitative studies on a very small sample size. The only large scale indicator of domestic violence against women in India is provided by the Government of India through National Family Health Survey¹. According to the recent National Family Health Survey in India¹, thirty one percent of ever married women have experienced physical, sexual or emotional spousal violence. The most common type of spousal violence is physical violence (27%), followed by emotional violence (13%), six percent of ever married women have experienced sexual violence. Although in Punjab, 20 percent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence from their current husband or, if not currently married, from their most recent husband. Eight percent report spousal emotional violence. Few ever-married women (1%) have ever initiated violence against their husband. In Haryana, 32 percent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence from their current husband or, if not currently married, from their most recent husband. Thirteen percent report spousal emotional violence. Few ever-married women (4%) have ever initiated violence against their husband. In a study Nandi and Das² revealed that domestic violence was prevalent among 55.63% of cases in their whole married life and experienced by 40.07% of subjects in their preceding one year life. In a population-based study on domestic violence against women in eastern India, on 1718 women and 1715 men, the results in another study by Babu and Kar³ revealed that the overall

prevalence of physical, psychological, sexual and any form of violence among women of Eastern India were 16%, 52%, 25% and 56% respectively.

Keeping these factors in mind the present study was taken up with the following objectives:

Objectives

1. To assess the degree to which women in Chandigarh are subjected to abuse.
2. To study the prevalence and causes of abuse against women in Chandigarh

METHOD

The present study was conducted on 100 abused women (50 with children & 50 without children). The respondents were selected randomly. Care was taken to see that the abused women were married and also that sample included women with and without children. It was taken care that the respondent belonged to middle class income group. None of the respondents were divorced or widowed.

Statistical Analysis: Percentages

RESULTS

The percentage distribution of abused women with children and without children, according to their demographic variables has been given as under:

Table 1: Age and Educational Qualification of Abused Women

Variable	Categories	Abused Women With Children		Abused Women Without Children	
		Frequency (N=50)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (N=50)	Percentage (%)
Education	Post graduate	15	30	10	20
	Graduate	16	32	32	64
	12 th	8	16	4	8
	10 th -<10 th	7	14	4	8
	Illiterate	4	8	0	0

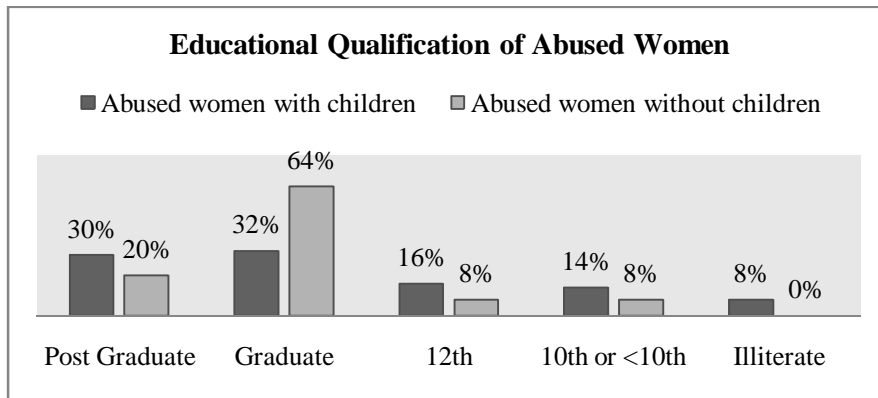


Figure 1: Educational qualification of abused women with and without children

Table 1 shows that, both groups of abused women with and without children were mostly Graduates and Post-Graduates, whereas, few were below Graduate level.

Table 2: Type of Family of Abused Women

Variable	Categories	Abused Women With Children		Abused Women Without Children	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of family	Nuclear	29	58	24	48
	Joint	21	42	26	52

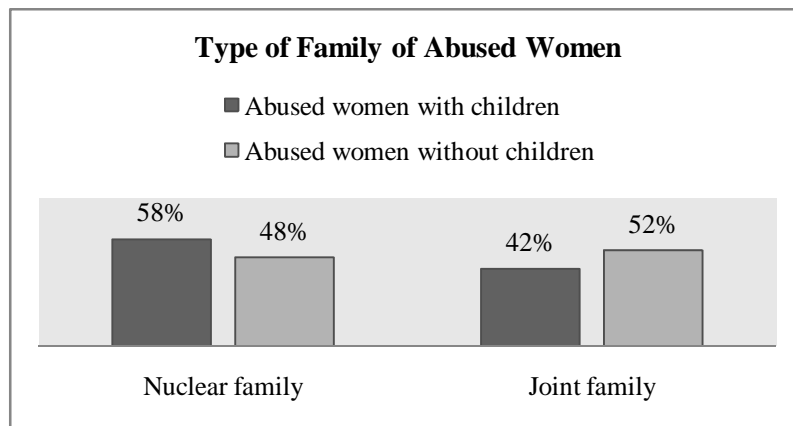


Figure 2: Type of family of abused women with and without children

The results in Table 2 reveal that, majority of abused women with children belonged to nuclear family, whereas abused women without children lived in a joint family structure

Table 3: Marital Status of Abused Women

Variable	Categories	Abused Women With Children		Abused Women Without Children	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Marital status	Married	42	84	23	46
	Divorce	0	0	0	0
	Remarried	4	8	0	0
	Separated	2	4	27	54
	Widowed	2	4	0	0

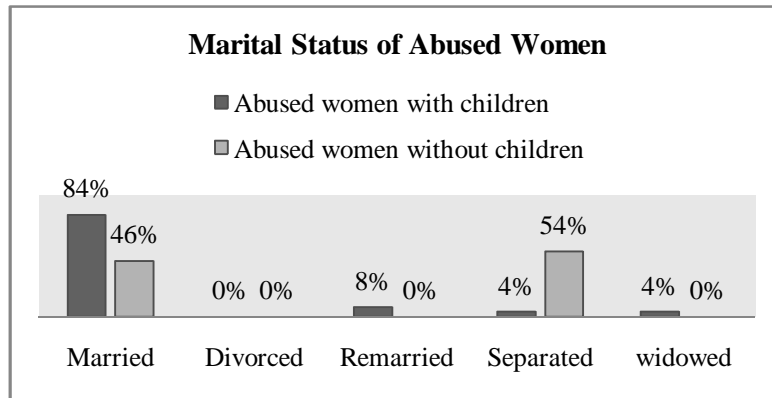


Figure 3: Marital status of abused women with and without children

The results in Table 3, show that, a large proportion (84%) of women with children were married in an abused relationship, contradictory to 54% of the women without children, who were separated.

Table 4: Type of Marriage of Abused Women

Variable	Categories	Abused Women With Children		Abused Women Without Children	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of marriage	Arrange	36	72	29	58
	Love	14	28	21	42

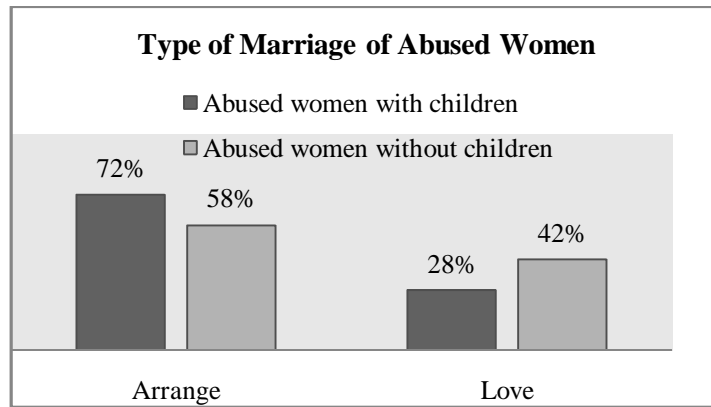


Figure 4: Type of marriage of abused women with and without children

The results in Table 4 show that, majority of abused women with children (72%) and abused women without children (58%) had an arrange marriage, whereas 28% and 42% of abused women with and without children had love marriage.

Table 5: Type of Abuse and Causes of Abused Women

Variables	Categories	Abused Women With Children		Abused Women Without Children	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of Abuse	Physical Abuse	43	86	40	80
	Sexual Abuse	12	24	25	50
	Emotional	46	92	35	70
	Neglect	17	34	20	40
Causes of abuse	Extra-marital affair	15	30	20	40
	Suspicion	24	48	13	26
	Dowry	10	20	20	40
	Alcohol	35	70	15	30
	Other reasons	30	60	32	64

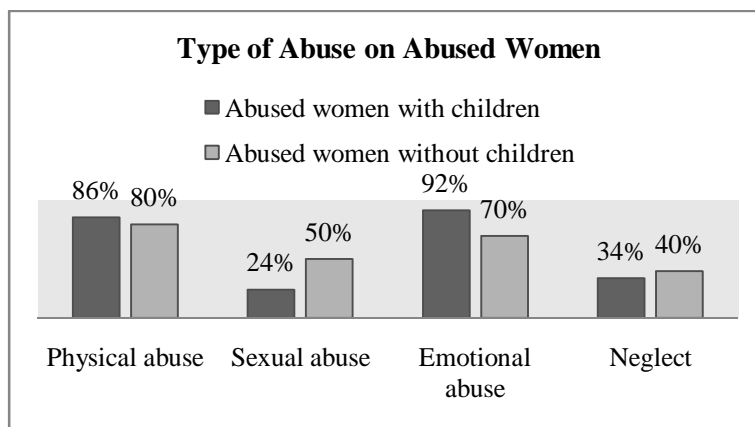


Figure 5: Type of abuse on abused women with and without children

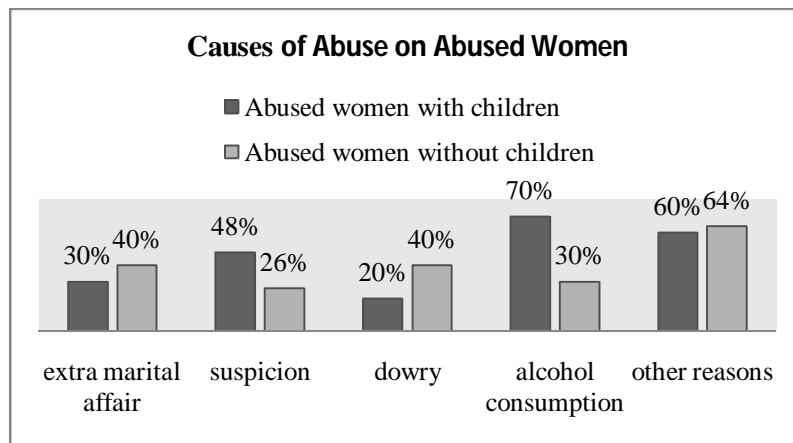


Figure 6: Causes of abuse on abused women with and without children

In Table 5, it was seen that 86% of women with children and 80% of women without children were a victim of physical abuse, 24% of the women with children were sexually exploited, whereas half of the sample population of women without children were sexually abused, 92% and 70% of the abused women with and without children were facing emotional abuse and 34% and 40% of abused women with and without children were neglected by their spouse, all of them faced more than one form of abuse by their husband. It was seen that majority of abuses were caused by consumption of alcohol by the husband, 30% of abused women reported that their husband had an extra marital affair, 48% reported that their husband are suspicious about them of having an extra marital affair, 20% were abused because of dowry, and 60% were abused because the husband or the in-laws wanted a male offspring, mother in-laws did not liked them or the in-laws said that the women was psychologically disturbed, which had been reported under the category of “other reasons” by the women with children. On the other hand, the percentage results of the women without children revealed that, 30% of abuses were after consumption of alcohol by the husband, 40% reported that their husband had an extra marital affair, 26% abused women reported that their husband is suspicious about them of having an extra marital affair, 40% were abused because of dowry, and 64% were abused because the husband or the women had some medical issue for not being able to conceive a child, mother in-law did not like them or the in-laws said that the women was psychologically disturbed, which had been reported under the category of “other reasons” in the socio-demographic profile.

CONCLUSIONS

- Most of the abused women with or without children were Graduates or Post-Graduates.
- Majority of abused women with children were from nuclear family, whereas joint family structure was adopted by majority of women without children.

- Majority of women without children were employed, than their counterparts with children, who preferred to be homemakers.
- Separation rate was higher amongst abused women without children.
- Majority of the sample population experienced abuse in an arrange marriage.
- Majority of the sample population was a victim of physical abuse and emotional abuse.

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