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Married women's view about domestic violence: A qualitative study of Kandaghat block of district Solan

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Abstract

Violence within home is widespread and affects women throughout the society across all religious, class and caste boundaries. Domestic violence refers to any act of violence in the house. It includes differential treatment of girls, wife beating and abuse, torture of daughters-in-law and neglect of widowed women in the family. Domestic violence is one of the crimes against women which is linked to their disadvantageous position in the society. Therefore, domestic violence is recognized as the significant barriers of the empowerment of women, with consequences of women's health, their health-seeking behaviour and their adoption of small family norm. However, an attempt has been made by the researcher to study married women's view about the domestic violence against them. The present study has been conducted in the developmental block Kandaghat of district Solan in Himachal Pradesh, India. The content analysis shows that the most of the married women are likely to agree with reason I in the study for justifying the violence. Again domestic violence is more among women belonging to low educational qualification. The more such views were recorded by the ever married women of the region who agree with one specific reason for justifying the domestic violence against them.

Keywords: Violence, age group, domestic violence, educational level.

Introduction: Violence against women is a serious problem in India. Overall, one-third of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence and about 1 in 10 has experienced sexual violence. In total, 35 percent women have experienced physical or sexual violence. This figure translates into millions of women who have suffered, and continue to suffer, at the hands of husbands and other family members. Physical, sexual and psychological violence strikes women in epidemic proportions worldwide. It crosses every social and economic class, every religion, race and ethnicity. From domestic abuse to rape as a weapon of war, violence against women is a gross violation of their human rights. Not only does it threaten women's health and their social and economic well-being, violence also thwarts global efforts to reduce poverty. Violence is, however, preventable. Although no silver bullet will eliminate it, a combination of efforts that address income, education, health, laws and infrastructure can significantly reduce violence and its tragic consequences. First and foremost, abusive behavior towards women must be viewed as unacceptable. Communities need to have an important role in defining solutions to violence and providing support to victims. And men must be engaged in the process too, as agents of change standing alongside women to end violence. If the world does not address the issue, it stands to suppress the enormous potential of women and girls. When they feel safe, when they are empowered, women and girls can be game-changers: The catalyst for the next great innovation, the leaders of a more just world. The driving force behind stronger economies (icrw.org) [4].

Violence against Women: The phrase 'violence against women' is a technical term used to collectively refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. The United Nations General Assembly defines 'Violence against Women' as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.' The **1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women** noted that this violence could be perpetrated by assailants of gender, family members and even the 'State' itself and states that "*violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led*

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to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women, and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men” (unhchr.ch)^[12]. Article 2 of the UN Declaration clarifies and lists some forms of violence as, “Violence against women should encompass, but not be limited to, acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family and the community. These acts include spousal battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry related violence, rape, including marital rape, and traditional practices harmful to women, such as female genital mutilation. They also include non-spousal violence, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in educational institutions, trafficking of women, forced prostitution, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state as rape in war.”

The World Health Organization reports that violence against women puts an undue burden on health care services with women who have suffered violence being more likely to need health services and at higher cost, compared to women who have not suffered violence. Several studies have shown a link between poor treatment of women and international violence. These studies show that one of the best predictors of inter and intra-national violence is the maltreatment of women in the society (who.int)^[15]. For example, when police officers misuse their power as agents of the state to physically and sexually harass and assault victims, the survivors, including women, feel much less able to report the violence. It is standard procedure for police to force entry into the victim’s home even after the victim’s numerous requests for them to go away. Government agencies often disregard the victim’s right to freedom of association with their perpetrator. Shelter workers are often reduced themselves contributing to violence against women by exploiting their vulnerability in exchange for a paying job. But, instead of all this Worldwide Governments and Organizations are actively working to combat violence against women through a variety of programs. A United Nations resolution designated **25th November as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** (un.org)^[13].

Domestic Violence against Women: Domestic violence that is any act of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, inflicted against a woman by a person intimately connected to her through marriage, family relation, or acquaintanceship is universal and has its root in the socio-cultural set up of the society. The perpetrators of domestic violence have often been found to be the males and the victims, their sexual partners. Internationally, one in three women have been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in their lifetime by a member of her own family (Heise *et al.* 1999) ^[3]. Violence with in home is widespread and affects women throughout the society – in wealthy urban households as much as the poorest rural households, across all religious, class and caste boundaries. Domestic violence refers to any act of violence in the house. It includes differential treatment of girls, wife beating and abuse, torture of daughters-in-law and neglect of widowed women in the family. Domestic violence is generally part of a pattern of abusive behaviour and control rather than an isolated act of physical aggression. Physical violence in intimate relationships is almost always accompanied by psychological abuse and, in 1/3rd to over 1/2 of cases, by sexual abuse (Kumar, S. and Dhiman, R. K., 2013) ^[7].

Figure A shows the distinct forms of violence against women and girls in different stages of life ranging from discrimination at one end to overt physical and sexual violence at the other. The domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviors by one or both partners in an intimate relationship, such as marriage, dating, family, or cohabitation. It is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, and intimate partner violence (IPV). Women are more likely to be victimized by someone that they are intimate with, commonly called ‘Intimate Partner Violence’ or (IPV). Keats, C. (2009) ^[5] found that domestic violence is an emotive and complex issue and it will be critical that schools are able to draw upon the expertise of qualified staff (other than teachers) who are best able to deliver specific advice and knowledge. An increase in education on domestic violence and abuse may also lead to an increase in students disclosing violence in their homes. It will be important that appropriate training and support is provided for school staff to be able to deal with this.

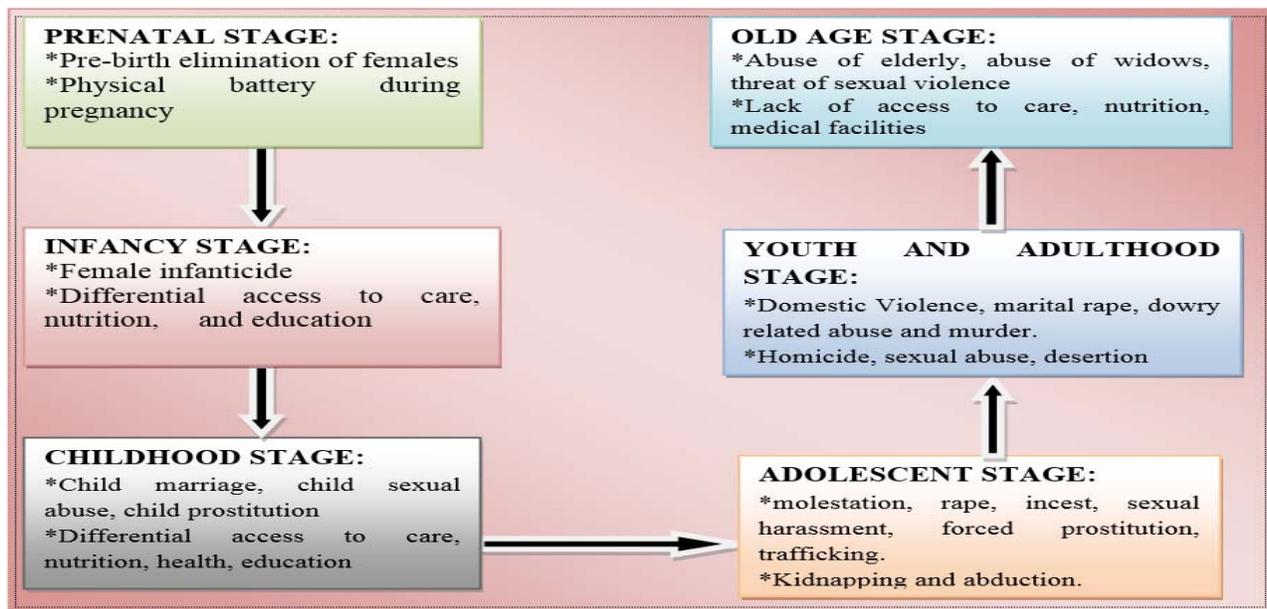


Fig A: Domestic Violence against Women in Different Stage in Life Cycle.

Domestic violence tends to repeat itself down the generations. Today's announcement from the government is a welcome and important opportunity to break this cycle of abuse and ensure future generations are better equipped to resist the misery that domestic violence inflicts on all those caught up in it.

Manifestations of Domestic Violence

Physical Abuse: hitting, slapping, kicking, punching, burning, choking.

Mental Abuse: threats, dictating, what a women can and cannot do, verbally abusing, humiliating the women or her parents, not allowing the women to leave the house or visit her natal house.

Sexual Abuse: rape, unwanted touching, forcing sexual acts, refusal to practice safe sex.

Economic or Property Abuse: stealing or destroying personal belongings, demanding money, withholding basic needs like food and clothing, not allowing the women to work. The impact of domestic violence in the sphere of total violence against women can be understood through the example that 40–70% of murders of women are committed by their husband or boyfriend. Studies have shown that violence is not always perpetrated as a form of physical violence but can also be psychological and verbal. In unmarried relationships this is commonly called dating violence, whereas in the context of marriage it is called domestic violence. Violence against women in lesbian relationships is about as common as violence against women in heterosexual relationships.

Review of Related Literature: The researcher revisited the related literature in order to find the gap and relationship in studies in the interested field. In view of the prevalence as well as the pervasiveness of domestic violence, many researchers in the past have attempted to assess the situation besides exploring its possible cause and subsequent consequences for society in general and women in particular. Murthy *et al.* (2004) ^[11] is of the view that numbers of family members, type of marriage and husband's education besides menstrual problems have significant influence on domestic violence. While many researchers come out with findings that lifestyle of men such as smoking, alcoholism and drugs promote men to commit domestic violence (Leonard, 1992 and McKenry *et al.*, 1995) ^[8, 10], some are of the view that masculinity and domestic violence are closely interlinked. Studies have also revealed that sons of violent parents (Martin *et al.*, 2002) ^[9], men raised in patriarchal family structure that encourages traditional gender role (Fagot *et al.*, 1998) ^[11] are more likely to abuse their intimate partners. Another study among Uttar Pradesh men by Gerstein (2000) ^[2] is of the view that low educational level and poverty are important reasons for domestic violence. Many studies are of the view that violence by intimate partner most likely undermines the sexual and reproductive health of the women. This extensive violence has significant harmful effects like unwanted pregnancy (Khan *et al.*, 1996) ^[6] besides large-scale mental health impacts (UNICEF, 2000) ^[14].

Very limited studies were found which concerned with the women's view about domestic violence as justified with specific reasons. Therefore, in the present paper, a qualitative attempt has been made to study in depth the view of ever-married women about domestic violence as justified with some

specific reasons or situations in one particular block of Solan district in Himachal Pradesh.

Need and Significance of the Study: The present study is concerned with the domestic violence against women in Kandaghat block of district Solan of Himachal Pradesh. This block is well known for its tomatoes, mushrooms and ginger not in Himachal but other areas also. The reputed educational institutions like Jay Pee University of Information Technology and Bahra University are also present in this block. In the block 'BALIKA GAURAV DIVAS' is celebrated to honour the women. According to H. P. Govt. statistics, there are 36026 women in Govt. sector in which 34604 are working on non gazetted posts, 2400 are teachers 1500 are health workers and 1200 are doctors. But, beyond these factors women in H. P. are daily exploited and domestic violence exists not only in villages but city areas also. In order to develop effective intervention programme and policy, it is vital to know the attitude and perception of the women towards the issue in-depth. Most of the studies conducted in the past reflect the regional picture that might not be a true picture of a particular region. In view of the above discussion, it seems essential and significant to understand the women's viewpoint in the particular block Kandaghat of district Solan regarding the domestic violence.

Objectives of the Study: With the above background, this study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To study the Panchayat – wise view of married women of block Kandaghat about agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them.
2. To study the ever married women's view about agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them with respect to their age group.
3. To examine the ever married women's view about agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them with respect to their educational level.

Materials and Methods

Type of Study: Community based qualitative study.

Place of Study: The present study of married women view about domestic violence against women was undertaken in a community development block, Kandaghat of district Solan of Himachal Pradesh, India.

Duration of the Study: Ten months, 05.04.2014 to 10.02.2015

Methodology of the Study: The present qualitative study was based on the descriptive research method. Descriptive research studies are designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of any phenomena. The researcher collected and provided the type of information of what exists with respect of variables or conditions in a situation. The researcher preferred and used the method keeping in view the objectives and nature of the study.

Sampling: The present study was carried out on 54 women of one developmental block of district Solan of Himachal Pradesh. The multistage sampling method was used by the investigator. At the first stage the four Panchayats (Jadhana, Kanair, Srinagar and Syri,) from 24 Panchayats of the Block Kandaghat, District Solan were selected randomly. Then, two villages per Panchayat were selected by systematic random

sampling method and eight villages in total were taken to select the sample. 6 to 7 women from each village were selected conveniently by the researcher. Eighteen women from the selected villages were included in the sample by their age group (20-30, 30-40 and 40-50 years). 18-18 women having low, average and high educational level were included. The care was taken in respect of age and educational qualification of married women to get the required sample. The break – up of the total sample is given in Figure B as follows.

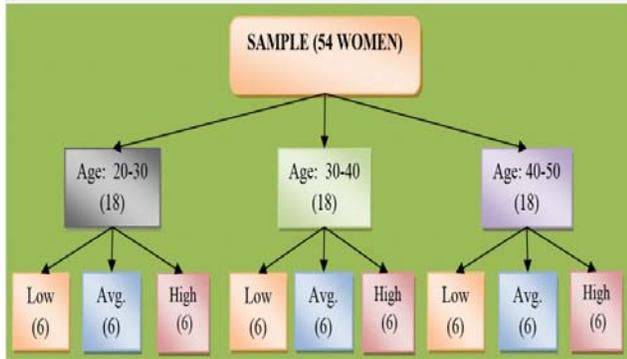


Fig B: The break-up of the Stage-wise Selected Sample.

Definitions of Technical Terms: The technical terms used in the study along with their definitions are given as follows.

Age Group: The age Group refers to the age of selected women for the interview in the study. The three groups were made as: Age (20-30), Age (30-40) and Age (40-50) years.

Table 1: Panchayat – Wise Percentage Scores of Ever Married Women Agree With Specific Reasons for Justifying the Violence against Them

Panchayat of Block Kandaghat	Husband Suspects Wife Unfaithful (I)	Wife Shows Disrespect for in-laws (II)	Wife Goes out Without Telling Husband (III)	Wife Neglect House/Children (IV)	Agree with at Least One Reason (V)
Jadhana	37.5%	18.4%	23.9%	14.3%	29.8%
Kanair	41.2%	17.8%	27.2%	19.7%	23.7%
Syri	32.9%	13.2%	26.8%	21.3%	22.8%
Srinagar	28.7%	22.4%	31.5%	24.5%	26.4%

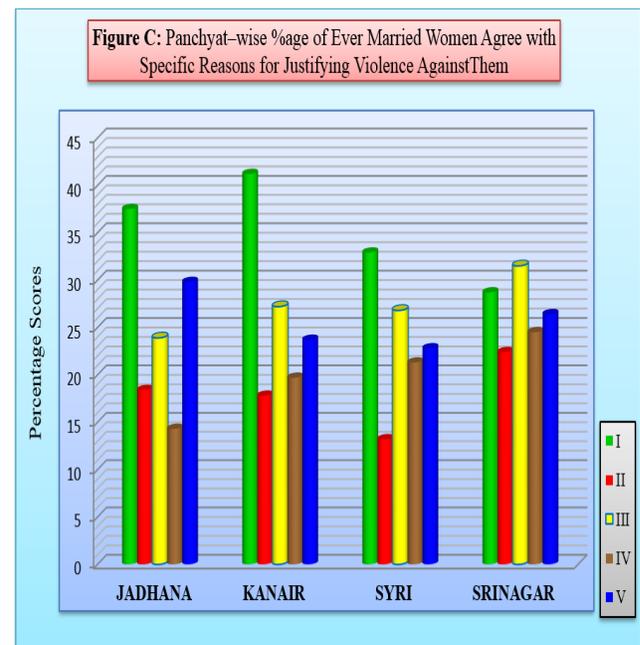
From the Table 1 it is clear that the highest 41.2% ever married women of Kanair Panchayat reported that ‘husband suspects wife unfaithful’, view I is the main cause of domestic violence against them and this view is lowest with 28.7% women of Srinagar Panchayat of block Kandaghat of district Solan. Women of Srinagar Panchayat highly reported the reason II ‘wife shows disrespect for in-laws’ with 22.4% for their domestic violence and least reported by the women of Syri Panchayat with 13.2%. 31.5% women of Srinagar Panchayat reported highly the reason III ‘wife goes out without telling husband’ and 23.9% women of Jadhana Panchayat reported this of domestic violence against them as least. The reason IV ‘wife neglect house/children’ is highly recorded by the 24.5% women of Srinagar Panchayat and 14.3% as lowest by the ever married women of Jadhana Panchyat. 29.8% married women of Jadhana Panchyat agreed highly with at least one reason for the justifying domestic violence against them. These situations become clearer with the comparison of all the four reasons shown in the Figure C as follows. Hence, objective no. 1 ‘to study the Panchayat-wise view of married women of block Kandaghat about agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them’ is achieved by the researcher.

Education Level: The education level is concerned with the education of the selected women in the study. The women studied up to Senior Secondary level were treated as Low level, the Average level of education of women belongs to education up to Graduation and the higher education like post-graduation, master of philosophy and other higher level education is treated as higher level in the study.

Tool: The in depth interview method is used to collect the requisite data in the field. The study is focused on the four basic reasons of domestic violence against women, viz., (I) husband suspects wife, (II) wife shows disrespect for in-laws, (III) wife goes out without telling husband and (IV) wife neglect house/children, from which women (V) agree at least one reason for the violence selected in the study. The view of married women regarding the domestic violence against them is recorded in the form of four basic reasons each comprised of five simple interview items excluding the conversation made for establishing the required rapport with the interviewee. The items were selected after taking the expertise view and administered to the target population personally and perfect rapport was maintained during the process.

Analysis: All the views of married women tabulated categorically and the simple percentage technique is used.

Results of the Study: The data is analyzed and results were formed by the researcher with respect to age of married women and their educational level. The Panchayat – wise percentage scores of ever married women who agree with specific reasons for justifying the violence against them is given in the Table 1 as follows.



The Table 2 shows the age – wise percentage scores of view of ever married women of block Kandaghat of district Solan of Himachal Pradesh who agree with selected specific reasons for justifying the violence against them.

38.7% married women of age 30-40 years were reported agree with the reason I ‘husband suspects wife unfaithful’ for justifying the domestic violence against them and 42.8% married women of the same age level were recorded the reason II ‘wife shows disrespect for in-laws’ justifying for the domestic violence. The reason III ‘wife goes out without

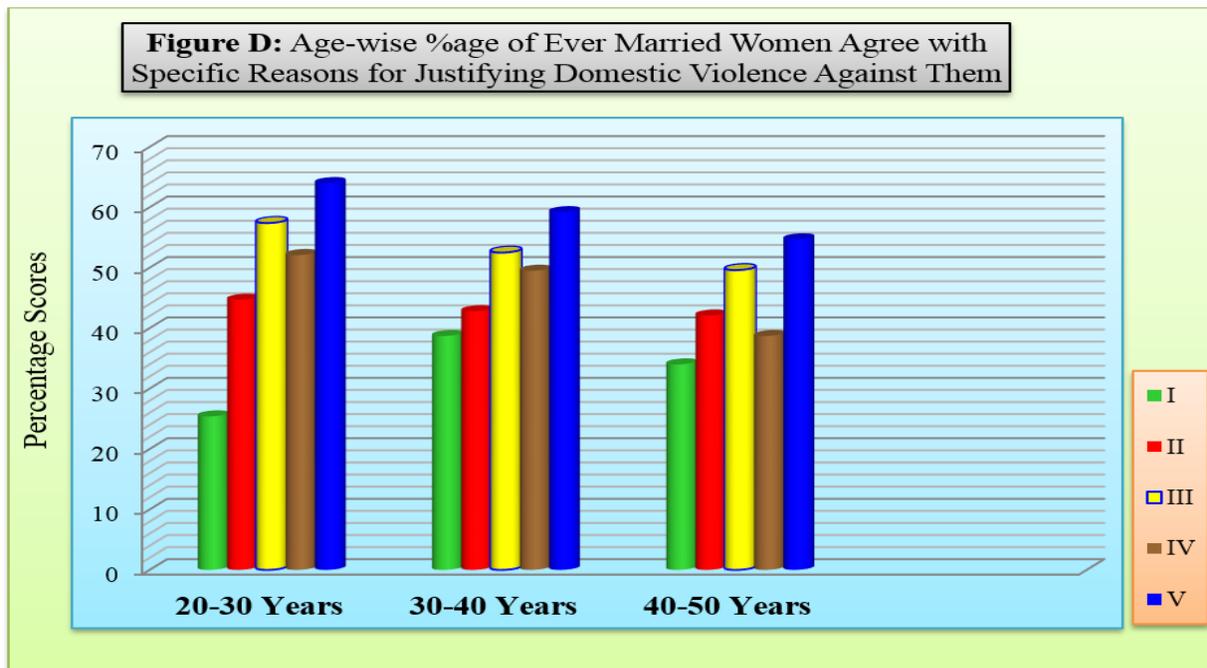
telling husband’ is reported highly by the 57.4% ever married women of the age group 20-30 years and agreed with at least one reason justifying the violence against them. The 52.5% married women of the age group 30-40 years and 49.6% ever married women of the age group 40-50 years viewed the reason III for the domestic violence as shown in Figure D as follows. The reason I ‘husband suspects wife unfaithful’ was minimum recorded by the 25.4% married women of the age group 20-30 years.

Table 2: Age-Wise %age Scores of Ever Married Women Agree with Specific Reasons for Justifying the Domestic Violence against Them

Age (Years)	Husband Suspects Wife Unfaithful (I)	Wife Shows Disrespect for in-laws (II)	Wife Goes out Without Telling Husband (III)	Wife Neglect House/Children (IV)	Agree with at Least One Reason (V)
20-30	25.4	44.7	57.4	52.1	64.0
30-40	38.7	42.8	52.5	49.5	59.2
40-50	34.0	42.1	49.6	38.7	54.7

It is clear from the same table and Figure that reason I ‘husband suspects wife unfaithful’ was reported as the minimum reason for the domestic violence by the 25.4% ever married women of the age group 20-30 years. The 42.1% women of the age group 40-50 years viewed the reason II ‘wife shows disrespect for in-laws’ as the minimum cause for

domestic violence and the 49.6% women of the same age group recorded the reason III as least cause for the domestic violence against them. Hence, the objective no. 2 ‘to study the ever married women’s view about agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them with respect to their age’ of the study has been achieved by the researcher.



The Table 3 shows the educational level-wise percentage scores of ever married women who agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them.

Table 3: Educational Level-Wise %age Scores of Ever Married Women Agree with Specific Reasons for Justifying the Domestic Violence against Them

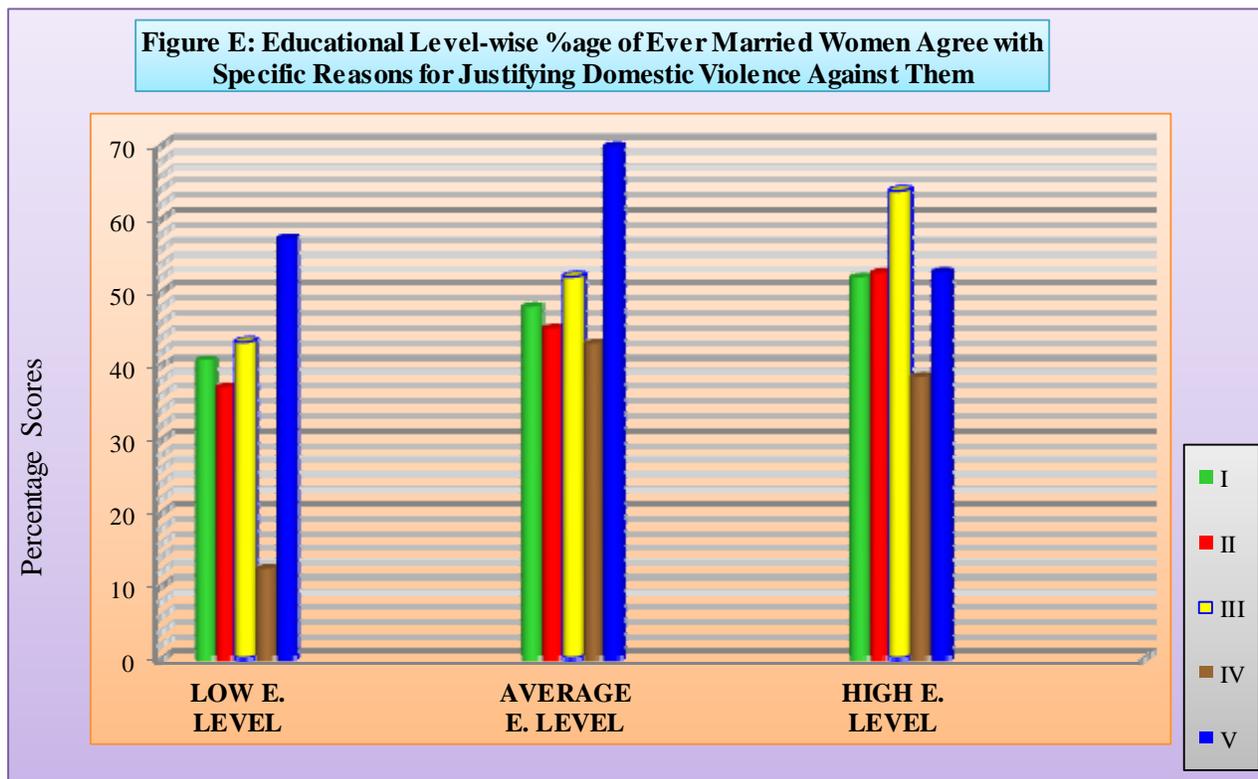
Educational Level	Husband Suspects Wife Unfaithful (I)	Wife Shows Disrespect for in-laws (II)	Wife Goes out Without Telling Husband (III)	Wife Neglect House/Children (IV)	Agree with at Least One Reason (V)
Low E. Level	40.6	36.8	43.1	12.1	57.2
Average E. Level	47.8	44.9	51.8	42.9	69.7
High E. Level	51.7	52.3	63.5	38.2	52.4

It is interpreted from the table 3 that 51.7% women having high educational level reported the reason I ‘husband suspects

wife unfaithful’ for justifying the domestic violence against them. The reason II ‘wife shows disrespect for in-laws’ was

recorded as maximum by 52.3% married women and 63.5% women of high educational level were highly agree with the reason III 'wife goes out without telling husband' for justifying the domestic violence against them.

36.8 % married women of low educational level were reported their minimum view about the reason II 'wife shows disrespect for in-laws' for justify the violence as shown in Figure E.



But, 12.1% married women having low educational level recorded their minimum view about the reason IV 'wife neglect house/children' for justify the domestic violence against them. 69.7% married women of average educational level reported agree with at least one reason for justifying domestic violence against them. Hence, the objective no. 3 'to study the ever married women's view about agree with specific reasons for justifying the domestic violence against them with respect to their educational level' is achieved by the researcher.

Conclusion: Violence against women has serious, social, economic, and health consequences. It not only affects women as individuals, but also their families including children, their entire communities, economic conditions and overall development. The entire community including all government and police officials should publically condemn violence against women and accept it as a grave offence. It is noteworthy to mention in the end that a lot of variables like age, social category of women, work status of women and standard of living besides place of residence contribute significantly to the prevalence of domestic violence. Nevertheless, it is the husbands who are reportedly the perpetrators of violence showing one reason or another. The experience of violence undermines the empowerment women and certainly is a barrier to the socio-economic and demographic development of the country. In the study, the married women of the age group 20-30 years highly reported at least one specific reason for justifying the domestic violence. The married women having average educational level highly reported at least one reason for justifying the domestic violence against them. In view of the prevalence of

the problem, it is suggested to have programmes that take into account involvement of the community and especially the males for effective as well as fruitful amelioration of the issue. It can again be suggested that education of the girls should be encouraged, which will undoubtedly work as deterrent to domestic violence. So, from the above discussion it can be concluded that violence against women is an very important and sensitive issue which needs a careful planning to combat and a strong and concrete action to be enforced on the criminal and culprits so that nobody can think of committing such crimes against women especially and men as well.

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