

# Experience of Intimate Partner Violence among University level Female Students in Kathmandu

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## Abstract

Intimate partner Violence is one of the most widespread and may take place in any age, family, community, cultural, ethnical or religious group and religions in different forms and disparately impacts their life. Violence against Women (VAW) by their husband is one of the most common forms of violence in our society. Therefore, cross-sectional survey was conducted among female students studying in bachelors and masters level at Baneshwor Campus using structured and semi-structured questionnaires. A total of 215 participants were randomly selected and data were collected from the 1 December 2020 to 30 January 2021. One-thirds of the respondents were married. Married participants reported about their violence experience perpetrated by their husbands. The prevalence of emotional violence 40% was higher than physical 33% and sexual violence 20%. Women with land ownership, employed, members of community groups and those who were married to husbands with the higher level of education were less likely to experience physical violence. Women who did not own land (OR=2.92), unemployed (OR=1.21) were more likely to experience violence than those who owned land and were employed. Similarly, lower level of husband's education (OR=3.35) and unskilled jobs (OR=1.56) were associated with the higher occurrence of violence compared to their husbands having university level of education and government job or working abroad. Women experienced violence by their husband is common among educated girls.

*Keywords:* emotional violence, intimate partner violence, physical violence, sexual violence, survey, university female students

## Introduction

Highly educated Nepalese girl's and women's experience of Violence by their husband is lacking. There are some studies on experience violence,

which have been undertaken in the recent years (Asia Foundation, 2010; Adhikari, & Tamang, 2010; Government of Nepal, 2012 & Puri et al., 2015). However, these studies presented data on the violence experience of rural, poor uneducated female respondents. This gap of information has created difficulties in getting the real picture of the violence among educated girls and women in Nepal. The study by Hawkes et al. (2013) quoted that lack of education is the cause of violence Against Women in Nepal.

Women and girls experience gender-based violence throughout their life from a fetus, infancy, childhood through adolescence, and adulthood to old age. Intimate Partner Violence is one of the most challenging and common forms of violence against women perpetrated by a husband or other intimate partner (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). IPV severely impacts many girls and women in various forms including physical, psychological and sexual regardless of age, religion, ethnicity, culture, economic status, and geography and severely impacts many girls and women; yet this issue is significantly under-reported (Palermo, Peterman & Peterman, 2014).

World Health Organization has defined VAW 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" (Butchart, Garcia-Moreno & Mikton, 2010). The physical violence ranging from slaps punches and kicks to assaults with a weapon and homicide and sexual violence includes forced sex and other forms of sexual coercion (WHO, 2012). The psychological violence has taken in different forms such as prohibiting a woman from seeing her family and friends, ongoing belittlement or humiliation, or intimidation; economic restrictions such as preventing a woman from working, or confiscating her earnings; and other controlling behaviours by an intimate partner (WHO, 2012). Multiple risk factors including early marriage, low level of education, low level of economic status, history of abuse during childhood, alcohol use, drug abuse, unequal power relations and conflicting marital relationship have been found to be associated with the VAW (Speizer & Pearson, 2012; Gass, Stein, William & Seedat, 2001).

Violence Against Women, particularly by a husband is one of the major violence in South Asia. Research findings indicated that poverty, low level of education, unemployment, alcohol consumption, witnessing violence in childhood, acceptance of violence, quarrelling between partners, work

stress were the key factors associated with perpetrations of intimate partner violence (Jewkes,2002; Adhikari & Tamang, 2010; Fulu, et al.2013; Ellsberg, et al.2015).

World Health Organization's global and regional estimate of VAW showed that 30 % of all women who have been in a relationship have experienced physical and sexual violence by their intimate partner. According to Fulu, (2013), the lifetime prevalence of violence among ever-partnered women was ranged from 25 %t to 68 % in Asia-Pacific region. Similarly analysis of the South Asian countries' Demographic Health Surveys data revealed that 43%of women experienced intimate partner violence (Solotaroff & Pandey, 2014).

Most of the intimate partner violence cases remains unreported, and the cases are settled without legal intervention due to social pressure on victims (Asia Foundation, 2010). Despite these challenges, some of the empirical evidence on violence against women presented that about 50% of Nepalese women experienced violence at some point of time; 75% of them were from intimate partners and 60 %of the victims never expressed their experiences to others (Government of Nepal, 2012). Likewise, another study on the prevalence and determinant of sexual violence against young married women by husband revealed that 46% of young married women experienced sexual violence by their husband in their life, and 31% experienced sexual abuse within the last 12 months of the study (Puri, Frost, Tamang, Lamichhane, & Shah, 2012).

Importance of research on IPV has been getting attention in Nepal. It is believed that the problem is prevalent largely among rural, poor and uneducated females. However, the level of education was not found to be significant determinant of violence against women and violence transcend both educated and uneducated women (Puri, Frost, Tamang, Lamichhane, & Shah, 2012).Therefore, this paper aims to provide evidence based information on the prevalence violence Against Women among university level female students in Nepal.

## **Methodology**

**Study area:** The Cross-sectional study was carried out in among the sample students studying at Bachelor's and Master's level at Baneshwor Campus. About 1500 female students from different parts of the country with different

socio-economic status in Bachelor's and Master's level in 2020/21 academic year. Considering the higher representation of the educated Nepalese female population Baneshwor campus was selected.

**Sample Size:** The sample population was selected irrespective of the age, ethnic group, and religion, place of residence, socio-economic status and marital status. The study sample size was estimated by using the government's estimation of violence against women 48%(Government of Nepal, 2000) as a proportion at 95 % confidence interval, 5 % margin of error and 30 % non-response rate. A final sample size was 300 female students.

### **Data collection tools**

Over the course of questionnaire development various international and national surveys questionnaires on VAW was taken as reference (WHO, 2005; Ministry of Health, 2011). This study further included some questions relevant to the context. The survey questionnaire was tested among 10 female students studying at a different Campus in Kathmandu. Questionnaire was finalized by incorporating the feedbacks from pilot testing of the tools, opinions of survey experts and the mentor. The finalized English version of the questionnaire was translated into the Nepali Language. The final version of the questionnaire comprised of 7 sections with structured and semi-structured questions. The questionnaire had clear instructions and informed consent script for the participants. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the information.

### **Data analysis**

Descriptive statistics was used to describe the background characteristics of respondents and their partner. Logistic regression technique was used to identify the factors associated with the likelihood of experiencing physical and emotional violence. Place of residence, land ownership, employment, member of community groups, husband's education and types of work were taken as independent variables. Land ownership, employment was dichotomized for analysis and the place of residence was taken as rural and urban. Husband's education was grouped into four categories; primary, secondary higher education and others. Similarly, the types of works that husband involved were, not employed, labour/farming, government, business and other.

Emotional and physical violence were analyzed as dependent variable. The physical violence was measured by six items and emotional violence by five items. The respondents exposed to such violent behaviour within past 12 months or earlier were listed. The respective reference categories composed of the participants with urban residence, having own land, employed, husband's primary schooling and husband's type of the work.

Different independent variables and violence exposure (%) and frequency of acts were used to indicate the prevalence of various forms of violence. To explore explanatory risk factors, intimate partner violence (experienced intimate partner violence or did not experience intimate partner violence) was modeled with binary logistic regression as a function of each independent variables. The risk factors were estimated with their 95 %confidence interval by binary logistic regression analysis.

## Results

### Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

The majority of the sample students (62 %) were from rural areas of Nepal, over half (53%) of them were living in a rented room in Kathmandu, 21% lived in their home, and 33% were married. About 11% of them had solely /jointly land ownership in their original address, and 36% were currently employed - partially or fully (Those students studying in the morning shifts can have time to work for full time). About three-fourth of the employed participants mentioned that their alaries were insufficient to cover their expenses; therefore, they depended on their family members for financial support. Only 38% were involved with community group/organisations (e.g. civic/ political union, social work/ charitable organisations, economic/ micro finance, women's organisation, religious organisations, sports/arts/ crafts), where 12% reported that they were prevented from participating in any community group activities (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of university female students by their background characteristics

| Respondents Characteristics | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Education</b>            |           |         |
| Bachelor                    | 80        | 37.2    |
| Master                      | 135       | 62.8    |

|                                                      |     |      |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|
| <b>Place of Residence</b>                            |     |      |
| Rural                                                | 140 | 65.1 |
| Urban                                                | 75  | 34.9 |
| <b>Marital Status</b>                                |     |      |
| Unmarried                                            | 144 | 66.7 |
| Married                                              | 71  | 33.2 |
| <b>Employment (Including part-time or full time)</b> |     |      |
| Yes                                                  | 77  | 35.9 |
| No                                                   | 138 | 64.1 |
| <b>Living Arrangement</b>                            |     |      |
| Rented room                                          | 114 | 53.0 |
| Friend's or relative's house                         | 22  | 10.2 |
| Hostel                                               | 33  | 15.4 |
| Home                                                 | 46  | 21.4 |

*Source: Field Survey, 2001*

### **Respondent's husband's characteristics**

Overall characteristics of the married respondent's husbands are presented in Table 2. Fifty-Nine % of the respondent's husbands were of the age between 25 and 34 years. A smaller proportion of them were in the younger (20-24) and the older (45-49) age groups 6.5% and 8% respectively. A majority (71.5%) respondent's husbands completed higher (university) education. More than one-third (37%) of the respondent's husbands were government employee/ foreign workers, and about one-fifth (19%) of them were involved in daily labour/ farming. Similarly, 4% were not involved in any income generating activities.

About 4% of the respondent's husband consumed alcohol daily, and one-quarter of the respondents reported that their husbands consumed alcohol once a month. The majority of the respondents reported that their husbands (57%) were non-alcoholic. Similarly, about one-fourth (24%) respondents suspected that their husbands may have an extra-marital relation, and 5% were sure about their husband's extra-marital relations. Among these married respondents, one-fifth reported that sometime they quarreled with their husbands.

**Table 2. Distribution of the respondent's husbands by their background characteristics**

| <b>Husband's Characteristics</b>                                      | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| <b>Age</b>                                                            |                  |                |
| 20-24                                                                 | 8                | 6.5            |
| 25-29                                                                 | 37               | 30.1           |
| 30-34                                                                 | 36               | 29.3           |
| 35-39                                                                 | 20               | 16.3           |
| 40-44                                                                 | 12               | 9.8            |
| 45-49                                                                 | 10               | 8.1            |
| <b>Education</b>                                                      |                  |                |
| Primary                                                               | 17               | 13.8           |
| Secondary                                                             | 12               | 9.8            |
| Higher education                                                      | 88               | 71.5           |
| Others                                                                | 6                | 4.9            |
| <b>Types of Work</b>                                                  |                  |                |
| Not employed                                                          | 5                | 4.1            |
| Labour/farming                                                        | 23               | 18.7           |
| Government/Foreign worker                                             | 45               | 36.6           |
| Business                                                              | 30               | 24.4           |
| Other                                                                 | 20               | 16.3           |
| <b>Drinking Habit of husband</b>                                      |                  |                |
| Daily                                                                 | 5                | 4.1            |
| 1-2 Times in a week                                                   | 16               | 13.0           |
| Once in a month                                                       | 30               | 24.4           |
| Never                                                                 | 70               | 56.9           |
| Don't know                                                            | 2                | 1.6            |
| <b>Extra- marital Relation</b>                                        |                  |                |
| Yes                                                                   | 6                | 4.9            |
| No                                                                    | 81               | 65.9           |
| May be                                                                | 36               | 29.3           |
| <b>Frequency of Quarrelling between Respondents and their Husband</b> |                  |                |
| <b>Frequency of Quarrelling between Respondents and their Husband</b> |                  |                |
| Never                                                                 | 98               | 79.7           |
| Sometime or often                                                     | 25               | 20.3           |

Source: Field Survey,2001

### Prevalence of violence

Table 3 elucidates proportion of the respondents victimised by their husbands at any point of their life and within 12 months before the interview. Respondents mentioned that commonly occurring forms of emotional violence were being insulted or made feel bad (31%), did things to scare or intimidate on purpose (7%) and belittled or humiliated in front of other people (1.6%). Being slapped or thrown something, pushed or shoved or pulled, hit or with something else that hurt and kicked or dragged or beaten; 22.0%, 3.3%, 7.3% and 0.8% respectively were some common forms of physical violence. Regarding two forms of sexual violence usually occurring were forced to have sexual intercourse without consent to (20.3%) and followed by had sexual intercourse when did not want to because they were afraid of what their partner might do if they refused (11.4%).

Table 3. Experience of intimate partner violence (IPV) by the married female university students

| Types of Violence*                                                                                           | Frequency | Percent     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>Emotional Violence</b>                                                                                    | <b>49</b> | <b>39.8</b> |
| Insulted you made you feel bad                                                                               | 38        | 30.9        |
| Belittled or humiliated you in front of other people                                                         | 2         | 1.6         |
| Did things to scare or intimidate you on purpose                                                             | 9         | 7.3         |
| Never commit emotional violence                                                                              | 74        | 60.2        |
| Any type of emotional violence in the past 12 months                                                         | 41        | 33.3        |
| <b>Physical Violence</b>                                                                                     | <b>41</b> | <b>33.3</b> |
| Ever slapped or thrown something                                                                             | 27        | 22.0        |
| Ever pushed or shoved or pulled hair                                                                         | 4         | 3.3         |
| Ever hit or with something else that hurt                                                                    | 9         | 7.3         |
| Ever kicked or dragged or beaten                                                                             | 1         | 0.8         |
| Never commit physical violence                                                                               | 82        | 66.7        |
| Any type of physical violence in the past 12 months                                                          | 32        | 26.0        |
| <b>Sexual Violence</b>                                                                                       | <b>25</b> | <b>20.3</b> |
| Ever been forced to have sexual intercourse when did not want to                                             | 25        | 20.3        |
| Ever been had sexual intercourse when did not want to because you were afraid of what he might do if refused | 14        | 11.4        |

Source: Field Survey, 2001



### Factors associated with violence

Binary logistic regression was used to study the association between independent background variables with emotional and physical violence experience of the participants. Table 4 shows that land ownership and husband's higher level of education were significantly associated with the experiencing low level of emotional and physical violence. Respondents who did not have land ownership (OR=1.46, 95%CI = 0.63-

3.38), and not employed (OR = 1.74, 95%CI = 0.95-3.17) were more likely to experience emotional violence. On the other hand, married respondents who were member of community organizations (OR = 0.83, 95%CI = 0.46-1.51), whose husband had higher education (OR = 0.38, 95%CI = 0.14-0.99), government/ foreign employed (OR = 0.47, 95%CI = 0.19-1.12) were less likely to experience emotional violence.

Similarly, Table 4. shows that rural (OR = 1.55, 9%CI = 0.83- 2.89), married respondents who do not have own land (OR = 2.92, CI = 1.24-6.85), not employed (OR = 1.21, CI = 0.65- 2.27) were more likely to experience physical than urban, women with own land and employed respondents. Respondents whose husband have secondary level education experienced the higher level of physical violence (OR = 3.35, CI = 1.02-10.96) compared to other background variables. Moreover, respondents whose husband worked as a labour worker or involve in agriculture were more likely to experience physical violence by their husband compared to those respondents whose husband were government/foreign employed.

Table 4. Binary logistic regression analyses for the factor associated with ever experienced emotional and physical violence by a husband.

| Variable                   | Emotional Violence |           |      | Physical Violence |           |       |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-----------|------|-------------------|-----------|-------|
|                            | OR                 | 95% CI    | P    | OR                | 95% CI    | P     |
| <b>Place of Residence</b>  |                    |           |      |                   |           |       |
| Urban                      | Reference          |           |      |                   |           |       |
| Rural                      | 0.99               | 0.54-1.76 | .940 | 1.55              | 0.83-2.89 | 0.170 |
| <b>Employment</b>          |                    |           |      |                   |           |       |
| Yes                        | Reference          |           |      |                   |           |       |
| No                         | 1.74               | 0.95-3.17 | .072 | 1.21              | 0.65-2.27 | 0.544 |
| <b>Husband's Education</b> |                    |           |      |                   |           |       |

|                           |           |           |      |      |             |       |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|------|------|-------------|-------|
| Primary school            | Reference |           |      |      |             |       |
| <b>Secondary school</b>   | 1.84      | 0.57-5.92 | .307 | 3.35 | 1.02- 10.96 | 0.045 |
| Higher education          | 0.38      | 0.14-0.99 | .049 | 0.65 | 0.24- 1.78  | 0.400 |
| Others                    | 0.62      | 0.11-3.59 | .594 | 0.25 | 0.02- 2.62  | 0.250 |
| <b>Types of Work</b>      |           |           |      |      |             |       |
| Not employed              | Reference |           |      |      |             |       |
| Labour/farming            | 0.74      | 0.08-6.49 | .782 | 0.56 | 0.06-4.65   | 0.591 |
| Government/Foreign worker | 0.57      | 0.06-4.81 | .609 | 0.33 | 0.40- 2.63  | 0.291 |
| Business                  | 0.43      | 0.05-3.65 | .438 | 0.37 | 0.04-2.96   | 0.346 |
| Other                     | 1.04      | 0.11-9.65 | .973 | 0.72 | 0.81-6.32   | 0.763 |

Source: Field Survey, 2001

## Discussion

This study found that experience of IPV among women who were more educated than their husband; particularly higher educated women having the husband with secondary school level education was higher. A similar level of husband's and wife's education has protective effects on IPV. The experience of violence among female university students was similar to the violence against young married rural women by their husband in Nepal (Lamichhene, Puri, Tamang, & Dulal, 2011). This study concludes that about one-third of university level female students have experienced violence by their intimate partner in Nepal. The data shows that educated women were open to discuss GBV issues. VAW was the prevalent problem in Nepal and educated women had also experienced all forms of violence in their life time as well as within past 12 months of the interview by their husband.

Prevalence of the physical 33.3% and sexual violence 20.3% among educated women was almost similar to the violence experienced by the disable women in Nepal (Puri, Mishra, & Hawkes, 2015) and intimate partner violence among general and urban population in Kathmandu (Oshrio, Poudyal, Poudel, & Jimba, 2011). This finding suggests that all Nepalese women are vulnerable and have greater risk of violence. Emotional violence was one of the common forms of violence, and one-third of women had experienced emotional violence in the past 12 months. This study found that about one-fifth of educated women had experienced some forms of sexual abuse in their life. Similarly, findings

on physical or sexual violence against women of childbearing age within marriage in Nepal, based on nationally representative data set reported 14% of women experienced sexual violence by their husband (Pandey, 2014). Whereas the similar type of study conducted in rural part of Nepal (Achham, Gulmi, Rupendehi, & Ilam) showed that about three in five married women experienced any forms of sexual violence in their life (Watts, & Zimmerman, 2002). The result of the studies on the experience of IPV was mixed for rural/urban, educated/uneducated women. However, all Nepalese women are at the risk of IPV. It may also be due the existing similar cultural, religious norms and values among all Nepalese women.

Moreover, this study concludes that access to wealth (i.e. land ownership or cash from employment) had a protective effect on the experience of all types of violence from their husband compared to those who did not have, similar findings were from some studies (Pandey, 2014; Oduro, Deere, &

Catanzarite, 2015). For example; a study conducted in Nicaragua and Tanzania on women's landownership and relationship with violence against women documented that when women owned land they gained power and were less likely to experience violence (Grabe, Grose, & Dutt, 2015). Finding of this study also shows that respondents who were involved in civic/political union, social work/charitable organizations, economic/micro finance, women's organization, religious organizations, sports/arts/crafts were less likely to experience all three types of violence than those who were not involved. Probable reasons could be those women were open on the GBV matters, aware of the violence act upon them and tried to establish their basic rights within a husband-wife relationship. Husband's higher level of education was a positive factor for the lower level of VAW.

## **Conclusion**

This study found that intimate partner violence is prevalent among married university female students in Nepal. Emotional violence was the commonly occurring form of violence. However, physical violence was high for the women living in rural residence and with no employment.

Moreover, this study highlights that urban residence; employment and land ownership of the women were important variables for the low level of VAW among women. Similarly, husband's higher level of education and government employment were the positive factors for low prevalence

of VAW. This study also finds that similar level of educational and employment status between husband and wife associated with the lower level of VAW. Findings of the study revealed that education only is not the factor to prevent IPV in Nepal. The educational programmes (courses) should be designed in a way that the graduates get employment easily hence to improve financial security for women reducing prevalence of VAW.

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