

## Socio-economic Status of Women Influences of Domestic Violence: A Sociological Analysis at Urban Area in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

From the early stages women are confined at some definite work, position and role which generally differ to men in society. Their status is seen as below than men in patriarchal social structure like Bangladesh. Today the situation is more or less remaining same to some extent in their family roles and responsibilities that causes to domestic violence. The article mainly focuses on the socio-economic status of women and different forms of domestic violence at urban area in Dhaka city. The study shows the lower position of women at different levels and also high rate of verbal and psychological violence to women in their married life. Still dependency on men was found high in the urban area and most women were found not engaged in productive economic activities. The total respondent's 150 married women living with their husband were interviewed to collect primary data in Dhaka city.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, Socio-economic status, Demographic characteristics, Culture, Respondents.

### 1. Introduction

Violence against women is a deeply entrenched problem in most societies because attitudes and practices that support violence are institutionalized in custom and law at all levels of society- marriage and family, home, community and state (Johnson et al., 2008). Domestic violence against women is no longer a new phenomenon in developing country like Bangladesh. In every day many women silently are facing such heinous sufferings. Patriarchy is more common in Bangladesh as women's status is showed by marital condition (Zaman, 1999). Inequality between men and women is seen in every phases but mostly unequal power relations is practiced to retain patriarchal existence in society (Jahan, 1983). Violence knows no place or area; it can spread its dark spot on every society. Among other factors women's vulnerability to domestic assigned to their socio-economic positions (Weaver et al., 2009), particularly in patriarchal culture where they are comparatively deprived (Barnett, 2000). According to Centre for Policy Dialogue CPD. (2009) report shows that there are different forms of domestic violence: 1) physical, 2) psychological, 3) economic and 4) sexual abuse. 1) Physical violence are seen like hitting, punching, kicking and forced abortion; 2) Psychological violence are seen like restricting mobility, physical threat etc.; 3) Sexual violence are seen like marital rape, refusal to have sex, forced abortion and 4) Economic violence are seen like stopping food, forcing to earn, dowry demand stopping maintenance for children.

The socio-economic status of women plays a significant role on women violence in Bangladesh. Socio-economic status means education, income, employment status of an individual in a society. The education, income, employment opportunity is responsible to discriminative position of women in Bangladesh. The social and economic status is closely related with the domestic violence of women in Bangladesh. According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) report in 2013 around 50% of total population of Bangladesh is women. Women's gross enrolment in primary level is 87.8%, at secondary level it was 63.2% and at tertiary level it was 4.4% for women as against 13.3% for men. Women's participation in labor force is still low because only 35.98% among the total labor force are women. According to BBS (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics) study report on violence against women (VAW) survey 2011, published in (2013)

found that 85% of women in Bangladesh have no freedom to earn money of their own selves. Only 15% women get the freedom to earn with their own willing and those who earn only 24% have own control on their earnings. It may vary but not at expected level found in society. The woman who lives in a rural as well as in urban area has similar chance to be victimized by domestic violence (WHO, 1997). In urban areas sufferings of women cannot always come out because there is a little access to know what is happening to other's house. Urban families living in urban areas are not closely connected to each other (UNICEF, 2000). So there is a little opportunity to be informed about all real pictures of violence that happen in urban family. The study tries to find out a picture in the urban area about socio-economic status of women and related forms of violence they face at their life. In this article the main objective is to find out the situation of married women in different sections mainly in education, economic activities, freedom of movement, household decision making, control on income etc. The article also tries to know the forms of domestic violence in the selected urban area in Dhaka city. It also tries to figure out the major causes of domestic violence in their life.

## 2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Feminist approach is comparatively new in sociological perspective. Many contemporary feminist theorists opined that women's subordination is as part as overall exploitation and injustice are seen as inherent. Contemporary feminists viewed that women are not only deprived because of their gender identity or being female but because of their socioeconomic status also. So for being lower position in society they face violence. Some radical feminist theorists viewed that oppression of women is as inevitable in all male-dominated societies whether it is capitalist or socialist or communist societies (L. Feuer 1989, Tuchman 1992, R Tucker 1978: 734-759). According to socialist feminist theory patriarchal structure and lack of value to women cause exploitation and violence. According to the theorists violence exist in society as the result of economic exploitation. So in the study we tried to relate the socio-economic status as the scenario of exploitative pattern which related to domestic violence in patriarchal structure found in society. On the other hand women get less value to their different roles as well as in their domestic work. In the study the factors like women's education, income, occupation, age at marriage etc. will verify where it is related to violence. The theoretical approach as women are not always evaluated in many cases is tried to link in the study as women don't get the highest opportunity at different levels of their status. Women's status is related to domestic violence as they are exploited in society as well as in their husband's family.

## 3. Review of Literature

Bhuiya et al., 2003 described in their study was done in a rural area of Bangladesh in December 2000. In their study 19 key informants helped to find out 10 closest neighboring ever married women. From their study it was found that 50.5% women were battered by husbands and 2.1% by other family members. They found that women's position of being related with micro credit societies are closely related to violence. The paper also focuses on community based steps by increasing awareness on human rights. They also focused on legal and psychological impacts to remove domestic violence against women.

Bhattacharya et al., 2009 in their study shows that there is a relationship between employment statuses of women to marital violence. They collected data from rural Uttar Pradesh. They explained how the participation in work and ownership of property decrease the rate in marital violence. They tried to establish a clear effective relationship especially between employment status and spousal violence in their study.

Chatha et al., 2014 examined in their study about the relationship between women's socio-economic status and exposure to domestic violence in urban Lahore, Pakistan. They collected data through household survey on married women in 2012. Their study found a positive relationship between women's socio-economic status and domestic violence. They found the domestic violence is related with women's age, educational qualification and economic situation. The findings of their study emphasized on the importance of women's education and better employment facilities to decrease the threats of domestic violence.

Khatun and Rahman, 2012 provided a discussion on the patriarchal role on the violence against women. They referred that Women are seen as dependent on men and it accelerate the rate of domestic violence to them. According to them generally the violence occurred for not fulfilling the demand of something charged to them and for daily household matters. They mainly focused on the socio-legal concerns of domestic violence in Bangladesh. They recommended some prevention strategy with reference to the national law and international human rights of the state.

Koenig et al., 1999 provided in their study that they tried to explore individual and community level determinants of violence. They done a cross-sectional survey of 10,368 reproductive aged women lived in two rural areas in Bangladesh. In their study 42% reported that they faced physical violence by their husband or other members. Their findings focused on the importance on both individual and community level factors related with domestic violence. It is also mentioned that the effects of definite individual and community level factors on the risk of domestic violence may differ by the women's status and gender relationship.

Koenig et al., 2003 described that they studied two rural areas of Bangladesh. They found in their study that better education, socioeconomic status, joint family residence create a lower risk of domestic violence. They found that in more culturally conservative areas higher individual-level women's autonomy and participation in credit groups and savings has a significant relation with violence. On the other hand, less culturally conservative areas individual-level women's status indicators were not related with violence and community-level measures were strongly related with risk of violence.

Sarker et al., 2013 in their study referred domestic violence as a general issue. They reported that 50% to 70% of women were abused by their male partners. In the context of Bangladesh patriarchal social structure and culture of acceptance are major causes for domestic violence. They showed that the legal and institutional mechanisms are sometimes not effective to protect the right of sufferers. They recommend some short, medium and long run steps to prevent domestic violence.

Waghmode et al., 2011 provided in their study that subordinate status of women is the main reason of violence on women in India. They emphasize on physical, psychological and sexual abuse in women. They referred that it is not a recent concern but deeply rooted over the years. According to their study government and voluntary organizations cannot only keep an effective role if a man is away from the fight. They used secondary data to analyze statistical explanation on domestic violence in India.

Yount and Carrera , 2006 studied on 2074 married women to know about domestic violence and wife abuse. They found household living standard and fewer years of schooling than husband, cause physical and psychological violence on women. They found a positive relationship between marital resources and domestic violence in Cambodia.

#### 4. Methodology

Methodology is an important part of social science research. A successful research depends on rational research methodology. Here we used qualitative analysis including observation and interview method. Since data collection of this study was dominantly qualitative through questionnaire, survey, probability sampling was used to draw sampling unit. Random sampling was selected because of sample were random. It is possible to calculate how representative the sample in a wider population to collect the target sample. The age limits of respondents were 15 to 45 years old and total selected sample were 150 respondents drawn from total target populations at the selected study site. The sample was drawn with help of random sampling. The study area was selected purposively at Dakkhinkhan Union Parishad at Dakkhinkhan Thana in Dhaka city. The area was selected as for easy communication and well known place to the researchers. Interview questionnaire are related to the socio-economic status of women, forms and causes of violence.

#### 5. Result Analysis and Discussion

Result analysis is prepared according to various indicators related to socioeconomic status and forms and causes of violence to the respondents.

##### 5.1 Ages of Respondents

In the context of our society a women at different stages in their life face domestic violence day after day. Sometimes the acuteness is seen on the basis of different age of women. In the research different respondent's age was different within 15-45 years. Younger women face problems economically who are mainly involved in household works. On the other hand those who are less young in age can share about different matters with their husband.

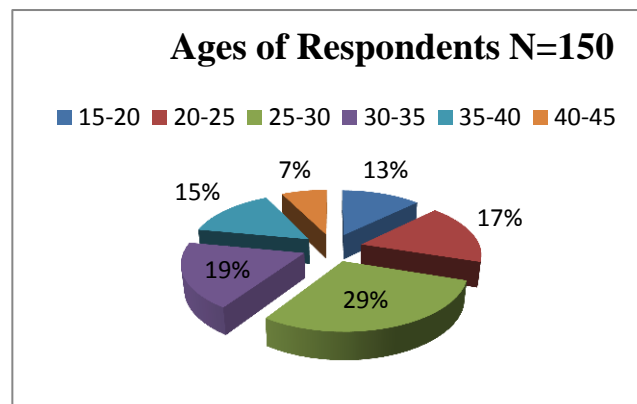


Figure 5.1 Ages of Respondents

The figure 5.1 shows that the average age of respondents. Here about 13 percent women age were the ranges of 15 to 20 years. Another 17 percent of women were the age of 20 to 25 years. Most of the respondents' 29 percent ages were between 25 to 30 years. 19 percent of the respondent's age group was 30 to 35 years. Another 15 percent women were at the 35 to 40 age groups. The rest of the respondents 7 percent age group was 40 to 45 years.

5.2 Educational Status of the Respondents

Bangladesh is a developing country and our society is not moderated. Religion sometimes, play role as curtain for higher education of women. In our society education regarding to women play a major role to determine her status in family of the social position. So it is a major criterion to examine women's status in facing violence. Those who don't get the opportunity to be literate of higher education remain behind to all kinds of progress and this weakness turn their position in lower status. For many reasons women cannot get the opportunity to complete their higher study. It creates a subordinate position and keeps away from empowering them. In many cases it was found that in most families in gender socialization education is seen not only for the developing women's life but for the betterment of their family life in husband's home. The study shows that most of the women did not get the opportunity for their higher study.

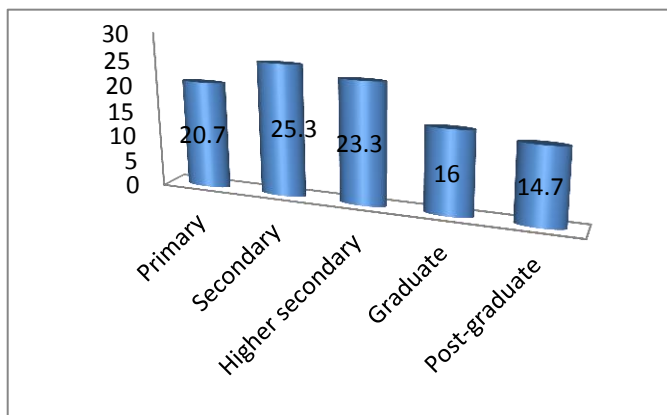


Figure 5.2 Educational Statuses of the Respondents

The figure 5.2 shows that the educational status of the respondents. Here 20.7 percent of the respondents has completed their primary education. Another 25.3 percent respondents completed their secondary education. 23.3 percent respondents completed their higher secondary education. In many cases it was found that most of the families in gender socialization education are seen not only for the developing women's life but also betterment of their conjugal life. The study shows that most of the women did not get the opportunity for their higher study. Only 16 percent women were reported as graduate and 14.7 percent completed their post-graduate level.

5.3 Respondents Age of Marriage

Constitutional fundamental law of Bangladesh, first women marriage age minimum 18 years. But below 18 years more than 50 per cent women get married. In Bangladesh 64% women are getting married at early stage of her life. So generally the first age at marriage indicates the scenario of family in our society which fosters the rate of violence to women. If a woman gets married earlier she had to be dependent to her husband about her choice. The situation makes her bound in almost very often to live a humiliating life. At early stage of life married women copious economically depends on her husband.

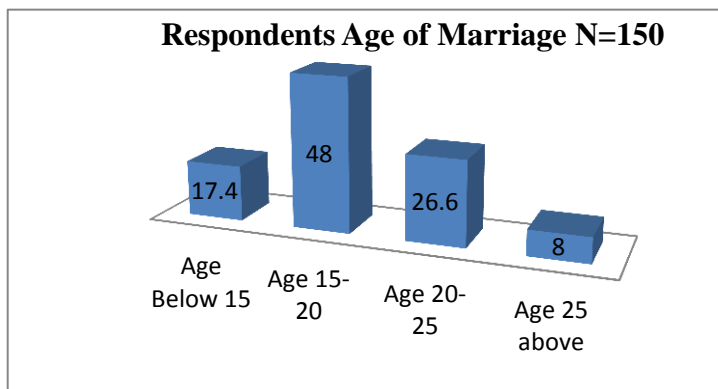


Figure 5.3 Respondents Age of Marriage

The figure 5.3 shows that the respondents age of marriage. Here 17.4 percent of respondent's first age at marriage was

below 15 years where the marriage law of Bangladesh the minimum age of women is 18 years old. Majority of the respondents 48 percent were married between the age limit of 15 to 20 years. As a result they were facing various types of domestic violence. So age limit I mean early marriage is a major threat of domestic violence in Bangladesh. More than 26 percent respondents were married at the age of 20-25 years and only 8 per cent respondents get married above 25 years.

*5.4 Occupational Status of the Respondents*

Women’s economic participation plays a vital role in determining her position. Women who are engaged in well occupational activities are commonly more rewarded than who are not for their participation in family expenditure. Their less dependency makes them less vulnerable in the family. In most of the cases it was found that though they earn for their family but not get any kind of importance as earning member of the family or cannot take part in major decision making. It represents that for social value all women are not able to get the opportunity for involvement in economic sector. Even some respondents think that although having their qualifications family should get the highest priority not the high paid works.

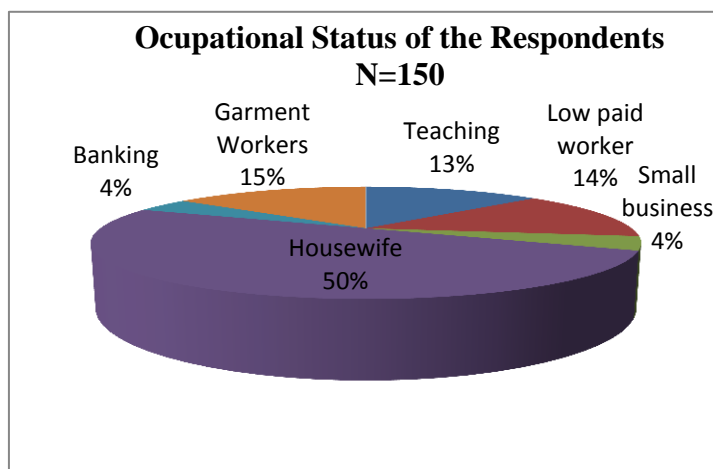


Figure 5.4 Occupational Status of the Respondents

The figure 5.4 shows that the occupational status of the respondents. Here 13.3 percent respondents were engaged with teaching professions because of respondent’s family choice. It is better than any other profession. It is seen as safer and family-friendly work for women. 14.0 women were engaged with low paying works for their lacking of proper education. Only 4.0 percent were related with some small business. Most of the respondents 50.0 percent women did not relate with any paid work. They serve for the family and most of the time they spent in household works. Only 4.0 percent of the respondents were found engaged in banking. Among the respondents 14.7 percent were found as garment workers.

*5.5 Household Decision Making Power of the Respondents*

Women’s access in family income and household decisions is more important to determine their right in family. But still in urban area in most family women is not the decision-maker in different family-matters. The situation shows that such kind of discrimination makes her weak in status and accelerates to violence. Most of the respondent had to depend on their husband for having no income of their own. From the respondents it was found other household decisions also were taken by their husband as they think that their wives have no rational knowledge on different financial matters. From the study it reveals that some women have the choice to share with their husband about making different economic and social decisions.

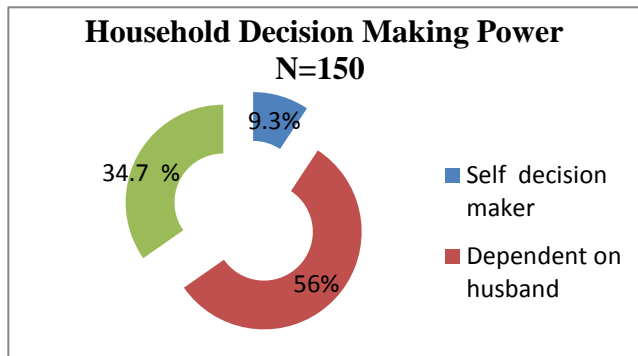


Figure 5.5 Household Decision Making Power of the Respondents

The figure 5.5 shows the distribution of women’s household decision making power in their own family. Here 9.3 percent of the respondents have choice to take own decision on income for different purposes and household works. Most of the respondent that is 56.0 percent women had to depend on their husband for having no income of their own. From the respondents it was found other household decisions also were taken by their husband as they think that their wives have no rational knowledge on different financial matters. From the study it reveals that 34.7 percent women have the choice to share with their husband about different household matters. From the study it reveals that about 14 percent women have the choice to share with their husband.

5.6 Spousal Age Difference Status of the Respondents

Spousal-age difference is also a major indicator that being elder than wife is taken for granted in our society in some cases like responsibilities or decision-making. In most of the families parents try to socialize their children that there should be an age gap among husband and wife. So major decision - maker or owner of the family generally become the husband who dictates all the decision in family and women don’t get the similar opportunity. Early marriage in Bangladesh is a common factor in our social aspect, so spousal age difference is an influencing factor to domestic violence. So day after day through socialization procedure is not changing so fast because of their beliefs, norms and knowledge in patriarchal social structure.

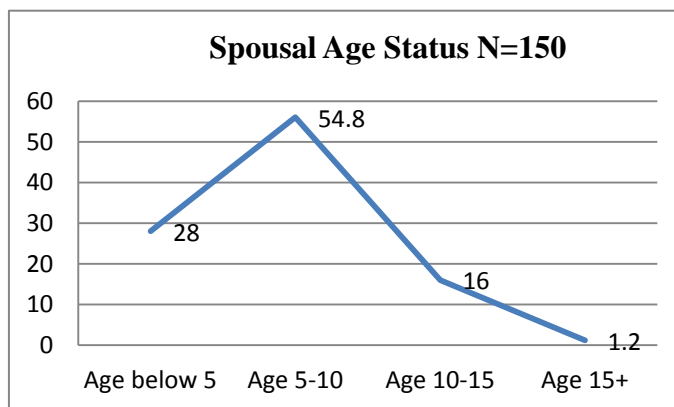


Figure 5.6 Spousal Age Difference Status of Respondents

From the figure 5.6 it is seen that 28 percent women reported that their spousal age difference was below 5 years. 54.8 percent women’s age difference was 5 to 10 years. It is a cultural aspect of gender socialization that there should be an age gap between husband and wife. 16 percent women said that their age difference was 10 to 15 years and 1.2 respondents were found whose spousal age difference above 15 years.

5.7 Monthly Family Income Status of the Respondents

The economic conditions of Bangladesh are not sound for better life. Whole family with 5 or 6 members depends on one’s income. After marriage some father-in-law or mother-in-law not support to do job outside their wife but most educated family encourage for job to solve economic problems. Income indicates the socio-economic status of women in a family. The stratified social class is determined by income, so the respondent’s family status is important to determine her status because women’s status is measured by her family income after marriage.

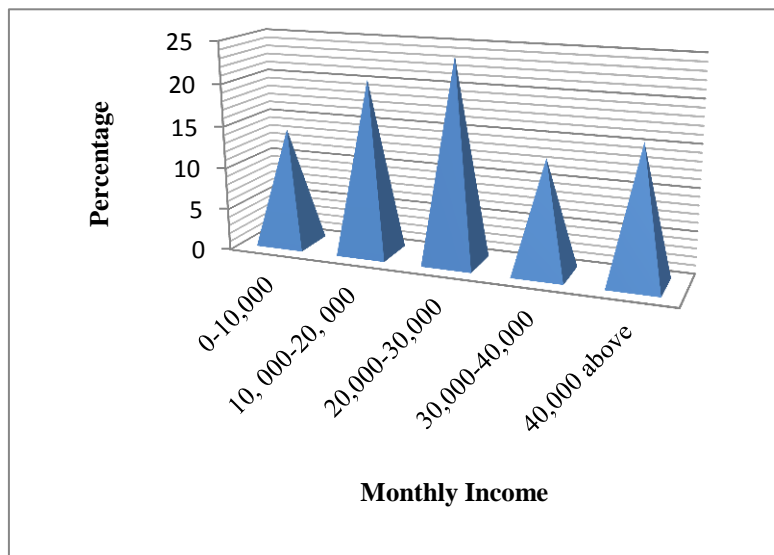


Figure 5.6 Monthly Family Incomes of the Respondents

From the above figure 5.7 it is seen that 14.0 percent respondent’s monthly family income was Taka 10, 000 and 20.7 percent respondent’s family income was at the range of Taka 10,000 to 20,000. Most of the respondent’s monthly family income was within the range of Taka 20,000 to 30,000. Only 13.3 percent respondent’s income was at the range of Taka 30, 000 to 40,000 and 16.0 percent respondent’s family income was above Taka 40,000.

*5.8 Freedom of Movement Status of Respondents*

Women’s status of freedom of movement isn’t accepted like men for patriarchal social norms that women are unsafe without a partner in any place. So men who are the dictator in socio- structured family patters make an obstacle to move freely without other’s consent seen in urban area also.

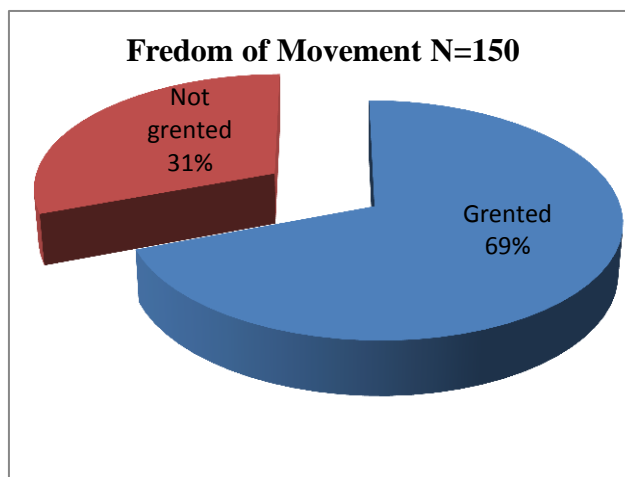


Figure 5.8 Freedom of Movement of the Respondents

From the figure 5.8 it is observed that 69 percent of the respondents have freedom to go out with husband’s permission. In our society women are treated as unsafe without a male partner with them, so for their safety and security they are not allowed to move here and there without husband’s choice. Most of the respondents said that if they want to go for house hold or bring their children they move freely but their husband always are aware of that. Only 30 percent women are not always allowed as their husband doesn’t think it is necessary to go out. So from the data in the area women who are working for their livelihood they usually go out but they are not always taken for granted to move willingly without their husband’s consent.

*5.9 Respondents Experience on Various Domestic Violence*

There are many types of violence but most of the respondent’s refer on verbal, psychological, physical, sexual and physical violence in their marital life.

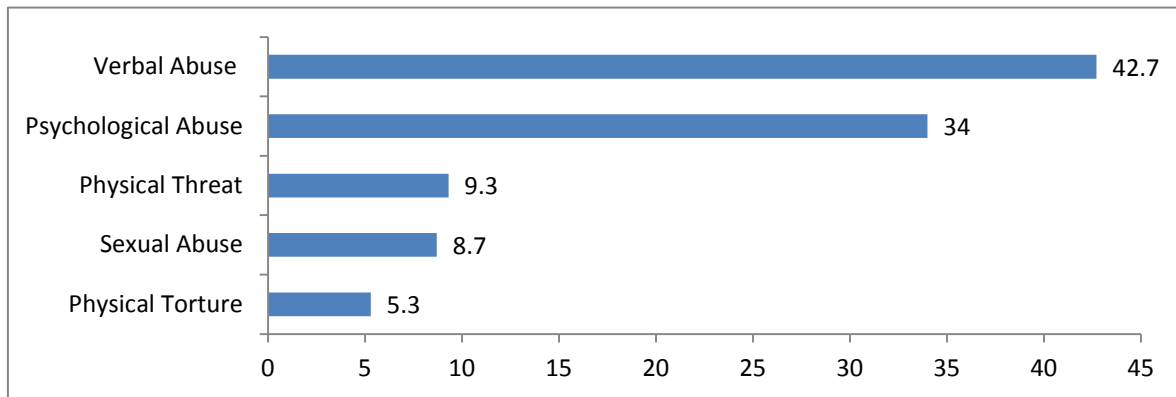


Figure 5.9 Respondents Experience on Various Domestic Violence

The figure 5.9 shows that 42.7 percent were verbally abused at their husband’s home and 34 percent women were psychologically abused by their husband. Among the respondents 9.3 percent said that they faced physical threats from their husband at different times. Many of the respondents think it is justified to husband to make control to her as his wife and 8.7 percent women reported that they sometimes were sexually abused by their husband. As their husband thinks that she has no personal freedom of choice to refuse the relationship. Only 5.3 percent women reported that they were physically tortured by their husband.

5.10 Various Causes of Violence of Respondents

There are many causes to occur violence but it is seen that for day after day causes for violence are deeply rooted in society. Beliefs, status, attitudes, patriarchal family structure plays a major role in determining violence activities to their women.

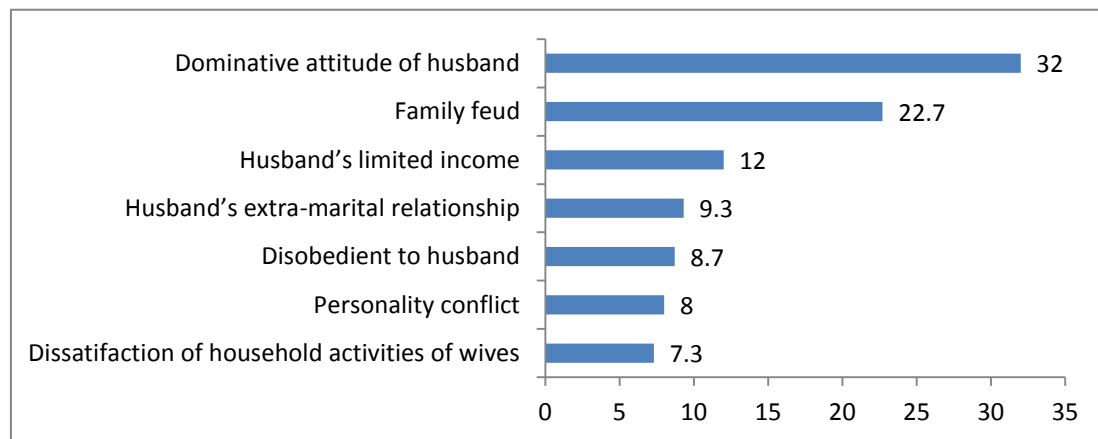


Figure 5.10 Various Causes of Violence of Respondents

The bar graph 5.10 shows that 8.7 percent respondents reported that they faced violence as did not listen to their husband, 32.0 percent violence occurred for dominative attitude of husband and 7.3percent respondents faced violence occurred for dissatisfaction of household works. 12 percent reported that for the limited income of husband they tortured their wives 22.7 percent respondents reported they face violence for family feud 9.3 percent reported husband’s extra-marital relationship as a cause of violence. 8.0 percent reported personality conflict as a cause of violence.

6. Recommendations and Conclusion

The study shows socio-economic status of women influences of domestic violence. Most of the women didn’t get better opportunity for higher education. A major part of women in urban area got married at early stages. Most of the women are not engaged in productive work and the general occupational status make women more prone to be victimized in their life. Most of women are found dependent on their husband and less has their own choice in controlling in income and other decisions. Still most of women have less access freedom in their movement. Among the women respondents in this urban area they report about different violence. So their status is related to violence as they are not evaluated properly in different indicators. They refer many causes which are found through patriarchal structure and systems exist in society. Most of male’s dominative attitude is the example of this structure and system. So the socio-economic status of women in urban area is not reached at expected level and for this urban women also face the domestic violence.



The results show the discriminative picture of socio-economic status of women which relates to violence in their life. The study helps to get an idea about urban women's socio-economic status and violence they faced in their life.

In the context of urban area the problem should be considered not as a personal matter but should take a national issue to come out from its disastrous effects. In a family in urban areas like violence-related occurs should not avoid as only a family matters, it often bring more problem and become a serious threat to the family. Government should provide more psychological centers in urban areas so that women can share their problems easily to get relief. Institutional service should be more public-friendly rather than only service oriented. At the individual level family as an agent of socialization process should take a major effective role against to determine gender roles in their life. The gap between legal rights and implication procedures should be lessens up gradually. The agents who enforce the laws should be more accountable to the authorities. Mass media can play a major role by promoting different programs to make stronger the gender equity slogan in our society. It is not possible to solve the problem alone so the media should be effective to this crisis to women. At the educational level school should take the responsibility to build up their children at 'positive attitude' towards 'girls' and boys' attitude. Women should maintain a strong social networking relationship to their surroundings as they will be able to become more aware to be conscious about this problem. Women should get more freedom to choose their occupational sectors at the family. Women should not confine only general occupations but they should engage in challenging professions.

The study is based on interviewing through questionnaires related to status and violence. It was not possible for respondent's to give more time to researchers and they didn't feel comfortable to inform such matters to others. Goode (1971) argued that the person who don't belong same income, educational achievement and society there is inequality between men and women position, so the unequal relations in different occupational status compared with to their partners commit violence to show power in relationships. The patriarchal family structure accelerates the rate of violence. So we have to reform the existing pattern and improve the status of women in society. In urban areas though there is a better environment for women to come out and opportunity for women to them but the scenario becomes alarming. Women are facing domestic violence only for their lower status than men in our society. Women who belong to a better position in society they are also not keep in far from this disaster. They keep their sufferings in their mind for their self-esteem.

Women in urban area are aware of legal rights but hardly seek help to others. So both private and public efforts of everyone can come out from the 'social crisis.' So to remove the problem from society both government and general people have to change their attitude against strong norms established in our society for a long time. It is more important to change women's social status in society for not being humiliated in their husband's home. Their socio-economic status always remains as an obstacle so it should take a major priority for the total development to us. Women should get their all rights as we can make violence-free society. We should take the necessary steps to remove the violence right now otherwise it will spread like an epidemic in all around of the society. Government in Bangladesh has passed the domestic violence (Prevention and Protection) Act of 2010 which seems to be more effective for our women but only law cannot keep them away from violence. We have to change our traditional social system and ensure their social and economic rights as well. Actually, to remove domestic violence from society different steps should be taken by the government as well as the people of the country.

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