

## EXPLORING FACTORS BEHIND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST NYISHI WOMEN IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH, NORTHEAST INDIA

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**Abstract:** Violence against women has become a global concern because this specific issue affects the life of women adversely. Domestic violence is most persistent form of violence against women. It is a severe violation of human rights. Many factors viz. demographic, economic, and psychological may be responsible for domestic violence to occur but social factors hold leading magnitude in this regard. Nyishi society is facing the trouble of increase in domestic violence because this issue is still unacknowledged and went underreported. This exploratory study was conducted to probe the factors, especially the socio-economic factors, behind domestic violence. Interview schedule was employed as a means to gather pertaining to data. A representative sample of (N=60) was collected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. 34 (57%) of Nyishi women indicated that they have faced physical violence and a huge majority i.e., 43 (72%) has faced psychological violence. The results suggest that Nyishi women are more prone to bear and face domestic violence due to economic dependence.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, Nyishi, women, Arunachal Pradesh, socio-economic

**Introduction:** Violence against women continues to be a universal epidemic that kills, tortures, and disfigures women physically, psychologically, sexually, and economically. It is one of the most pervasive of human rights violations, denying women and girls' equality, security, dignity, self-worth, and their right to enjoy basic freedoms. Violence against women is present in every country, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, education, income, ethnicity, and age (UNICEF, 2000).

It is one of the most systematic and widespread human rights abuses in the world. It is directed against a woman and affects women excessively. Such gender-based violence against women is a form of discrimination and deeply rooted in power imbalances and structural relationships of inequality between men and women. It harms families, impoverishes communities and reinforces other forms of inequality and violence throughout societies (United Nations, 2007). In addition to causing injury, violence increases women's long-term risk of a number of other health problems, including persistent pain, physical disability, drug and alcohol abuse, and depression (Ellsberg, 2005; Srinivasan, 2011).

Gender relations that presume men to be superior to women and given the women subordinate status become a cause of violence against women. Patriarchy is considered as main reason of violence against women. Women are peripheral and marginal in the management of family matters. Much of gender violence is considered normal and enjoys social sanction. Demonstration of violence includes physical aggression, such as blows of varying intensity, burns, attempted hanging, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, embarrassment, intimidation, blackmail, economic or

emotional threats, and control over speech and actions. In extreme, but not unknown cases, death is the result (Saravanan, 2000).

Violence Against women is now widely recognized as a serious human rights abuse as increasingly as an important public health problem with substantial consequences for women's physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health. Women are also debilitated by restricting their access to food and medical care, carrying out dowry deaths and honour killings, and pressurize them to have sex through rape and/or sexual harassment. Men who hurt women can be intimate partners, family members, or other men. The subset of violence by intimate partners is usually referred to as "domestic violence," although the term is not always obviously defined.

UN Beijing World Conference on women explicitly recognizes that violence against women creates an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development, and peace at the national level and violates the human rights of women at the individual level. It is clearly based on the unequal power relations between men and women, underlying which is the patriarchal social structure that is constructed, reinforced and perpetuated by socio-political institutions put in place by men and which thereby ensure that men, by asset of their gender, have power and control over women and children (UN, 2000).

All these forms affect women but "domestic violence" is one of the most widespread forms of violence against women, and it imposes a massive burden for women throughout the world. It can be physical, psychological and sexual. It occurs in all countries and transcends social, economic, religious, and cultural groups. "Domestic violence," "wife abuse," "spouse abuse," and "intimate partner violence," is

terms often used interchangeably. The word "domestic" identifies an intimate relationship that exists between two individuals, whether they are married or cohabiting (Mahapatra, 2008).

Domestic violence term is used for the people who are bonded through law, blood or personal relationship. It is defined as a violent behaviour in any relationship by one or both partners to keep power and control over another. It is also known as domestic abuse, child abuse, and intimate partner violence (IPV). The various instances of domestic violence include physical aggression like hitting, biting, restraining etc, or threats like sexual abuse, controlling or authoritarian, emotional abuse, stalking or passive/covert abuse (like neglect). It may or may not form a crime, depending on local rigorosity and extent of specific acts (Domestic Violence & Its Effects, 2010).

In most populous countries of the world The Republic of India is the second, and is ranked 130<sup>th</sup> out of the 155 countries on the Gender Development Index (GDI) in 2014 and 135<sup>th</sup> out of 147 on the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) (UNDP HDR, 2015).

Nyishi society in Arunachal Pradesh is a true example of manifesting this violence where there are deep-seated beliefs based on culture and traditions, norms and social institutions that legitimize and therefore perpetuate violence against Nyishi women. Nyishi women are considered as personal properties of men and men control every aspect of lives of Nyishi women including their behaviour and movements. Men have the right to make decisions, and Nyishi women have to follow their decisions in family, tribe, community, and society.

**Research Objectives:** The objectives of this research are following:

- To determine the level of domestic violence against Nyishi women.
- To explore the social factors those continue domestic violence against Nyishi women.
- To identify the economic factors those perpetuate domestic violence against Nyishi women.

**Methods:** This research was conducted in order to explore socio-economic factors of domestic violence against Nyishi women. The target population was the married Nyishi women of Kurung Kumey district. In social research, surveys are one of the most frequently used methods of data gathering (May, 1997). Survey method was used for this research and data were collected through an uncomplicated and short interview schedule from the respondents on the variables studied.

Target population of this research was married Nyishi women of age group 15-49. The opinions and characteristics of a population can be explained through the use of a representative sample (May,

1997). 60 female respondents were selected through purposive and snowball sampling technique. Respondents are selected on the basis of inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling technique is used when we select respondents according to our purpose. We select those respondents purposefully who serve our goals of research. Purposive sampling technique was used because sampling frame of Nyishi women who were the victims of domestic violence was not available. Interview schedule was used as a data collection tool.

**Findings and Discussion:** The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics was in the form of frequencies, percentages. The Special Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-15.0) was used to aid in analysis of this data.

**Demographic information:** In this study, only married Nyishi women were included. Respondents who were belonging to the age group of 15-22 were 6.7%, the respondent from age group 23-29 were 23.3%, from 30-36 the percentage of respondents were 34.4% and the highest percentage from the age group of 37-49 which was 35.6%. Percentage of illiterate respondent was 42.2% and the respondents who had primary-middle education were 21.1%. Matric-intermediate 25.6% and B.A-M.A was 11.1% frequencies were shown.

Nyishi women who were housewives 74.4%, teaching 10 % and the Nyishi women who were domestic worker and do domestic work in other houses were 8.9% and who working in agriculture were 6.7%. The percentage of respondents who earn from 5000-6000 were 48.9%, who earn 6000-15000 were 14.4%, who earn 15000-20000 were 11.1% and respondents earning 25000-30000 were 25.6%. About 50% respondents were from nuclear family and 50% were from joint family.

**Violence Experience:** Violence is defined in the WHO's World Report on Violence and Health as: "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation" (Dalal, 2008). A huge majority i.e., 83.3% respondents were strongly agreed with the statement that they experience violence in their marital life.

These findings support the view that women's status determines the level of violence against married Nyishi women. 63.3% respondents said that they have faced violence within last 1 year. These findings follow similar studies which indicate that Nyishi women are suffering due to violence within household and this violence is badly affecting their abilities.

**Physical Violence:** Most studies investigated that socio-cultural factors are associated with domestic violence against women (Mahapatra, 2008). More

than half i.e., 34 (57%) of respondents in current study indicated that their husband slapped or thrown something at them which could hurt them.

These findings appear to confirm that prevalence of domestic violence against women is caused by socio-economic issues. Survey recorded that 38% percent of respondents faced the physical violence and their husbands threatened to use or actually used a machete, knife or weapon against them.

**Psychological Abuse:** About 43 (72%) of the respondents felt that their husbands insulted them or made them feel bad about themselves. This result is consistent with view that undermining the security of woman, her self-respect or her personality is diminishing her physical or mental capacities (Babur, 2007; Gulcur, 1999).

The findings from previous studies support current study that communication gap, and lacking in problem-solving skills of couples initiate domestic violence. This is consistent with the findings that self-reported past-year and lifetime prevalence of psychological abuse were 81.8% and 83.6%. 81.1% of respondents indicated that the Attitude of husband and in-laws becoming a cause of constant stress.

**Economic Abuse:** Economic abuse includes acts such as the denial of funds, refusal to contribute financially, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc (UNICEF, 2000). About 64% of Nyishi women indicated that husband controls access to health facilities.

These findings provide evidence which support the previous findings that poverty and unemployment are widely seen as contributing factors to domestic violence (European Commission, 2010). 67% of respondents said that their husbands always try to keep them dependents in money matters. Earlier studies support these findings that household economic status was associated with less domestic violence in marriage.

**Social Factors behind Domestic Violence against Nyishi Women:** Social factors are those factors which are external to individual and have palpable effect on individuals (Abercrombie et al., 1994). They are present in society in which we live. They have great impact on our life. These factors are related to our social life. In these factors our societal structure is included. 51% of Nyishi women indicated that gender inequality is responsible for domestic violence against women which confirm previous studies (Dalal, 2008; Adegoke, 2008; Coomeraswamy, 2005). 66% of Nyishi women indicated that husband's work has more value than your work. 37% of respondents consider that cultural norms and traditions are responsible for domestic violence against Nyishi women. These findings support the view that culture is used to justify the violence against women, therefore violence

against women is normalized, tolerated and accepted as social behavior and nobody question on it (Grieff, 2010; Noor, 2004). 29% of Nyishi women were strongly agreed that considering family as a private sphere increases the domestic violence against Nyishi women.

Lisa Gregg Police Report (2005) supports the results of current study. 21% of Nyishi women were agreed that Gender specific socialization makes Nyishi women the victim of domestic violence. These findings of our study support the view that patriarchal structure of our society becoming the cause of domestic violence (Tracy, 2007). About 66% of participants revealed that lack of social support makes Nyishi women vulnerable to domestic violence. These findings are consistent with study of Ngoma (2005). About 78% of participants indicated that if you have strong social support from your paternal family then the attitude of your in-laws or husband was comparatively better.

About 43% indicated that having any knowledge regarding the law of domestic violence against women can save them from violence. About 34% of respondents indicated that improper laws for domestic violence are contributor to increasing domestic violence against women. These findings confirm the view that violence against women continues to have an excessively low priority on the international development agenda and in planning.

**Economic Factors behind Domestic Violence against Nyishi women:** When asked whether economic dependence is the root cause of violence against Nyishi women, 61% indicated strongly agree responses. Only 37% showed satisfaction that husband gives sufficient money for monthly expenditure. About 69% believed that limited access of Nyishi women in both formal and informal sector jobs become a cause of violence against Nyishi women.

**Conclusion:** The findings show that Nyishi women of Kurung Kumey district in Arunachal Pradesh face serious physical and psychological violence from their intimate partners. They are also deprived of right of economic participation and economic independence. Kurung Kumey district like remaining Nyishi society has a traditional setting where cultural restrictions bound Nyishi women. Nyishi women have indicated the extent of psychological abuse they have faced. However, there are numerous social factors which give rise to all sorts of violence.

In conclusion, the results of this study prove that Nyishi women in Nyishi society are facing serious domestic violence within private sphere. Only Nyishi women are not suffering with domestic violence but it also has serious repercussions for other family members. Research findings supported the argument that economic dependence is leading cause of

domestic violence. The study's sample was not diverse in terms of area but it was diverse in terms of social status and experiences. The findings were not

so surprising because Nyishi women have been traditionally deprived in Nyishi society

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