

Impact Of Law Against Domestic Violence (DV) On Reproductive Health Of Abuse Victims In India

Vaishali Patil MMH, MA (Edu), MBS
patilva@oregonstate.edu



Oregon State
University



Domestic violence in India

- Rigid patriarchal society with gender inequity visible in all areas
- 2 in 5 (37%) married women have experienced some form of physical and /or sexual violence.
- 1 in 4 (25%) married women have experienced any form of violence in the preceding 12 months.
- 2 in 5 women who have experienced physical or sexual violence report having multiple injuries
- Rates vary from 60% in Bihar to 6% in Himachal Pradesh with an average rate of 37.5% across the country
- Domestic violence has immediate and long-term health effects.

The ‘Protection of Women Against Domestic Violence Act’ (PWDVA) passed in 2005, came into effect in October 2006.

- Domestic violence (DV), is defined by the PWDVA as physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, and economic abuse against women by a partner or family member residing in a joint family.



What is Sexual & Reproductive Health?

A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of reproductive disease or infirmity.

➤ Reproductive health deals with the reproductive processes, and system and requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence (WHO).

Reproductive health of women in India

- **27%** of 20–24-year-old women were married before the legal age of 18 (2018).
- Nearly **21%** pregnancies were either unwanted or mistimed (2008).
- **50%** of maternal deaths among girls aged 15-19 years due to unsafe abortion (2008)
- Contraceptive prevalence rate is **54.4%** (2019)
- Maternal mortality ratio high at **145 per 100,000** live births (2017)
- Only **21%** of pregnant women utilized full ANC (ranging from **2.3–65.9%** across states) (2013)
- About 79% of all births are in healthcare facility (2016)
- About 65% of mothers had sought postnatal care within first two days delivery (2016)



Data

Domestic violence has been linked to various reproductive health issues:

- unwanted pregnancy,
- unsafe abortions,
- injury during pregnancy and childbirth
- may be even death.

Survey	Women selected	Sample selected for DV module	Final analytical sample	States covered
NFHS 3 (2005-2006)	124,088	83,703	69,438	29
NFHS 4 (2015-2016)	625,014	79,729	66,013	29 + 7 (Union Territories)



Domestic violence



Violation of Reproductive Health Rights

- Unwanted pregnancy
- Poor pregnancy outcomes
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Difficulty in use of contraceptives



Violation of Bodily Rights

- Damage to bodily integrity
- Damage to psychological health
- Unable to secure against violent assault
- Limited choices of reproduction



Violation of Social Rights

- Denial of legal capacity and decision-making
- Low self-esteem & confidence
- Restricted mobility
- Restricted use of healthcare services
- Lack of access to justice



Violence leading to violation of health and human rights

Conceptual Framework

	NFHS3 (2005-06)	NFHS4 (2015-16)	Outcomes	NFHS3 (OLS)	NFHS4 (OLS)
	Any DV (N(W%))	Any DV (N(W %))		Percentage point change (SE%)	
Current contraception			Contraception		
Not using	10,522 (45.84)	9,696 (44.12)	No method used	Reference	
Female sterilization	9,230 (38.48)	7,669 (41.01)	Female sterilization	1.9*** (0.4)	1.5*** (0.4)
Male sterilization	245 (1.01)	78 (0.29)	Male sterilization	0.0 (0.0)	-0.1 (0.0)
Other modern methods	2,572 (7.75)	2,253 (9.45)	Other methods	1.0** (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)
Traditional methods	1,885 (6.92)	1,272 (5.15)			
Suffered from any STIs	3,707 (16.55)	3,663 (16.14)	Any STIs	5.8*** (0.0)	5.8*** (0.0)
Adolescent pregnancy	13,805 (66.23)	8,861 (49.11)	Adult pregnancy	-2.5*** (0.0)	-1.8*** (0.0)
Prenatal care (none)	2,663 (30.70)	1,578 (19.74)	Prenatal care (none)	2.9*** (0.0)	-0.0 (0.0)
Antenatal visits			Antenatal visits		
None	2,663 (30.88)	1,579 (19.86)	Appropriate	Reference	
Less	6,732 (62.20)	3,842 (45.07)	None	23.2*** (0.3)	-0.0 (0.4)
Appropriate	1,052 (6.92)	2,538 (35.08)	Less	0.4*** (0.0)	2.8*** (0.7)
Unwanted pregnancy	432 (28.67)	180 (16.46)	Unwanted pregnancy	5.2*** (0.0)	4.6** (0.0)
Terminated pregnancy	776 (12.72)	703 (13.74)	Terminated pregnancy	-2.2** (0.0)	-2.6** (0.0)



Results

- The prevalence of DV was 39.8% in 2005-06 and 33.3% in 2015-16.
- In 2005 38.5% of victims were sterilized versus 1% having partner sterilized.
- In 2015 41% of victims were sterilized and only 0.29% had partner sterilized.
- There was no difference in prevalence of victims experiencing STI between NFHS3 (16.5%) and NFHS4 (16.2%).
- About 29% did not want pregnancy in 2005 versus 16.5% in 2015
- About 13% had terminated pregnancy in 2005 versus about 14% in 2015
- About 66% had first birth before 20 years in 2005 versus 49% in 2015.
- Number of women receiving prenatal care improved so did the number of antenatal visits

Conclusion

- There was a mixed effect on reproductive health outcomes related to DV post law.
- There is a need for stringent measures against DV to improve sexual and reproductive health of women in India.

THANK YOU



**Oregon State
University**