

# Awareness Regarding Domestic Violence among Reproductive Age Women

\*Gayatri Rana<sup>1</sup>, Rajan Shrestha<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assoc. Professor & HoD, Department of Community Health Nursing, School of Nursing, Chitwan Medical College, Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal

<sup>2</sup> Sr.Med. Lab.Technologist, National Reference Laboratory Chitwan, Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Violence is a significant public health, human rights and human development problem. The objective was to find out awareness regarding domestic violence among reproductive-age women.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional research design was adopted and a total of 100 reproductive-age women were selected by purposive sampling technique in Devchuli municipality -1, Nawalparasi from 27 July to 31 July 2015.

**Results:** There was a significant association between the level of awareness regarding domestic violence and caste: Dalit ( $p=0.002$ ) and religion ( $p=0.019$ ). Hinduism were 3.165 (OR) & 4.210 (AOR) times more likely to have awareness regarding domestic violence than Non-Hinduism, at {OR ( $p=0.023$ ) & AOR ( $p=0.136$ ) respectively}. Significant with level of education ( $p=0.005$ ), reproductive age women who had basic level education were 1.111 (OR) & 1.319 (AOR) times more likely and who had secondary level were 0.867 & 0.921 times less likely to have awareness regarding domestic violence than women with non formal education, which was statistically not significant {OR ( $p=0.869$ ) & AOR ( $p=0.750$ ) and significant at OR ( $p=0.014$ ) & AOR ( $p=0.021$ ) respectively}; significant with family income ( $p=0.023$ ), reproductive age women who had family income sufficient to eat for >1 year and surplus were 2.627 (OR) & 2.494 (AOR) times more likely to have awareness regarding domestic violence than sufficient to eat up to 1 year, at {OR ( $p=0.024$ ) & AOR ( $p=0.218$ ) respectively}; and significant with not involved in woman group/organization/political party ( $p<0.001$ ), reproductive age women who had not involved in woman group/organization/political party were 7.667 (OR) & 6.958 (AOR) times more likely to have awareness regarding domestic violence than who involved, which was statistically significant {OR ( $p<0.001$ ) & AOR ( $p=0.021$ ) respectively}.

**Conclusion:** There is a significant association between level of awareness and caste, religion, level of education, family income and not involved in woman group/organization/political party.

**Keywords:** Awareness, Domestic violence, Reproductive age women

## \*Corresponding Author:

Ms. Gayatri Rana

Email: gayatrirana005@gmail.com

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women (VAW) and girls is one of the most critical problem violations among human.<sup>1</sup> According to United Nations violence VAW is “any act of gender-based violence (GBV) that may cause different harms like physical/sexual/mental hurt or distress for women as well as fear of that acts, cruelty/uninformed withdrawal of freedom, whether going on civic or in personal life”.<sup>2</sup>

Globally, 4,70,000 murders occur per year lots of people suffer from violence-related injuries.<sup>3</sup> The South East Asian Region has the highest incidences of GBV in the world which withdraw female from the use of their right and freedom.<sup>4</sup> WHO stated that 35% female had violence (physical or sexual) by husband in life. Globally, 38% of murders of women are by their male partner. Women aged 15-49 years experienced intimate partner physical or sexual violence once in their life.<sup>5</sup> According to Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC), (2,202) domestic violence (DV) cases, (222) polygamy cases, (242) rape cases, (94) attempted rape cases, (37) sexual abuse cases, (7) attempted trafficking and (34) witchcraft charges. In 2016, 2,910 VAW cases were reported.<sup>6</sup> More than 30% of hospital emergency-room admissions are women who have been abused. DV happens in all families and mostly injuries happen to women in Nepal.<sup>7</sup> According to Nepal Police Crime Investigation Department (2016/2017), 11, 629 DV cases were reported. Out of this, Settlement (59%) of cases, (29%) under settlement and 17 cases gone for court.<sup>8</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education and health criteria.<sup>9</sup> Sexual violence within married is also common in Nepal. Government of Nepal has recognized it as violence and made a law that acknowledges forced sex by a husband to his wife is a marital rape and made provision of jail sentences from three to six months depending on the type of sexual violence.<sup>10</sup>

Women with low education, partner having history of mother being abused by husband, abuse at childhood, and habits of accepting violence, male right, and

women’s inferior status had chances to experience partner violence.<sup>2</sup> Eighty percent of violence related death are due to suicide and homicide. Out of killed by violence, (56%) die by self, (33%) injuries caused by other person, and (11%) war or combined violence.<sup>11</sup> Exposure to violence can have substance abuse; HIV; heart problems and cancer; and crime & additional violence, mental problems and suicide.<sup>3</sup> About 61.3% female did not know laws related to GBV and 13% (knew laws of DV). Dalit/minority ethnic groups, less education, married, less personal independence/mobility, less social network, lower socio-economic status were less aware regarding laws of GBV.<sup>12</sup>

Women can have depression, mental disorders, suicide attempts, chronic pain syndromes, unwanted pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and STIs. Violence prevention strategies tackle low levels of education, harsh and conflicting parenting, poverty, unemployment and social rules that violence, reducing alcohol availability, taxation and pricing; reducing access to guns and knives; and promoting women empowerment for their lives.<sup>11</sup> In practice policy makers at national and district level, the health education, justice and social welfare sectors, women’s organizations, NGOs, INGOs, UN agencies, media, communities all have a key role in tackling and removing violence against women, especially at domestic level.

## METHODS

Descriptive, cross sectional research design was conducted to identify awareness regarding domestic violence among reproductive age women of Devchuli municipality-1, Punarbas, Nawalparasi. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 100 reproductive age women. Data was collected from 27 July to 31 July, 2015. In a day, approximately 18-20 respondents were interviewed and about 20-25 minutes was taken to collect data from each respondent. Semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Ethical approval from Institutional Review Committee, Chitwan Medical College Bharatpur, Chitwan (CMC-IRC-2073/074-02) was

taken for the study. Written consent was obtained from each respondent's guardian (who were <18 years) and respondent ( $\geq 18$  years) before data collection. Confidentiality was assured and maintained. Data was entered in statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20 and analyzed and interpreted in terms of descriptive (Frequency, percentage, median & quartile) and inferential statistics (Chi-square).

## RESULTS

Out of 100 reproductive age women, 34% were in age group 20-24 years, 89% were married. Out of married, 93.3% were living with spouse. Seventy one percent were Janajati, 76% believed in Hinduism, 97% had non-formal occupation, 65% were literate. Out of literate, 49.2% had basic education. Thirty nine percent had family income sufficient to eat for >6 up to 12 months, 28% were involved in woman group/organization/political party and only 5% were involved in domestic violence (DV) related awareness programme. Regarding meaning of DV, 91% answered violence that is related through intimacy, blood, or law perpetrated by family members, 95% answered hitting/slapping as different forms of physical violence, 90% answered threatening as different forms of psychological violence, 91% answered force for sexual relationship without women's consent/will

as different forms of sexual violence, 93% answered denying access to basic needs as different forms of economic violence, 43% answered psychological in type of violence mainly occur in community, 91% answered married women is extremely high risk people for DV, 75% answered mother in law as main perpetrators of DV, 85% answered poverty as causes of DV among women, 96% answered injuries/wound as identification of women suffering from DV, 93% answered reporting in the area police office as immediate management for abused women, 97% answered counseling for survivor as long term management for abused women, 93% answered offender is liable for compensation for all types of damages and injuries, 97% answered family members as main responsible person for minimizing DV and 95% answered radio as source of information regarding DV. The findings of the study are presented in following tables. Physical and psychological health problems regarding domestic violence (Table 1), Prevention and legal act regarding domestic violence (Table 2), Level of awareness regarding domestic violence (Table 3), Association between level of awareness regarding domestic violence and selected variables (Table 4), Bivariate and multivariate analysis of awareness regarding domestic violence and selected variables (Table 5).

**Table 1:** Physical and Psychological Health Problems regarding Domestic Violence n = 100

Health problems	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Immediate physical health problems to women suffering from domestic violence**</b>		
Injuries	98	98
Wound	90	90
Fracture	80	80
Bleeding	89	89
Swollen body parts	59	59
Bruises	80	80
Urinary tract infection	22	22
Weakness	65	65
<b>Long term physical health problems to women suffering from domestic violence**</b>		
Headache	93	93
Chest pain	65	65
Bodyache	94	94

Health problems	Frequency	Percentage
Lower abdominal pain	61	61
Asthma	35	35
Unwanted pregnancy	61	61
Utero- vaginal prolapsed	43	43
Fertility problems	46	46
STIs and HIV/AIDS	49	49
Permanent disability	48	48
Homicide	73	73
Deaths	74	74
<b>Psychological health problems of women suffering from domestic violence**</b>		
Fearfulness	96	96
Eating problems	56	56
Sleeping problems	77	77
Substance abuse (alcohol/smoking)	70	70
Decrease self esteem	51	51
Depression	88	88
Social withdrawal	60	60
Decrease routine activities	48	48
Suicidal attempts	55	55
Suicide	48	48
<b>Health problems occur to pregnant women due to domestic violence**</b>		
Vaginal bleeding / miscarriage	98	98
Premature birth	50	50
Congenital abnormality	75	75
Low birth weight	55	55
Still birth	84	84

\*\* Multiple response

**Table 2:** Prevention and Legal Act regarding Domestic Violence n = 100

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Prevention of domestic violence against women **</b>		
Education	96	96
Information	86	86
Community based awareness programme	82	82
Media involvement in awareness raising programme	55	55
Income generating activities	53	53
Implementing property right	50	50
Implementation of domestic violence legal act	77	77
Re-integration	60	60

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Presence of any legal act regarding domestic violence against women</b>		
Yes*	91	91
No	9	9
<b>If yes, complaint for an offence should be filed within (n = 91)</b>		
30 days	48	52.74
60 days	20	21.97
90 days*	11	12.1
120 days	12	13.2
<b>If yes, maximum punishment for the offender according to the domestic violence act (n = 91)</b>		
3 month imprisonment or Rs 2, 500- 10, 000 fine; or both	14	15.4
6 month imprisonment or Rs 3, 000- 25, 000 fine; or both*	28	30.76
9 month imprisonment or Rs 4, 000-15, 000 fine; or both	13	14.28
12 month imprisonment or Rs 5, 000- 20, 000ss fine; or both	36	39.56
** Multiple response	* Correct response	

**Table 3:** Level of Awareness regarding Domestic Violence n = 100

Level of awareness	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	50	50
Good	50	50

Median score = 98.50;  $Q_1 - Q_3 = 73-121$ ; minimum score = 40; maximum score = 141

**Table 4:** Association between Level of Awareness regarding Domestic Violence and Selected Variables n = 100

Variables	Level of Awareness		$\chi^2$	p-value
	Poor (%)	Good (%)		
<b>Age (yrs)</b>				
15-24	19 (38.8%)	30 (61.2%)	5.220	0.156
25-34	15 (65.2%)	8 (34.8%)		
35-44	10 (58.8%)	7 (41.2%)		
45-49	6 (54.5%)	5 (45.5%)		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Married	44 (49.4%)	45 (50.6%)	0.102	0.749
Unmarried	6 (54.5%)	5 (45.5%)		

Variables	Level of Awareness		$\chi^2$	p-value
	Poor (%)	Good (%)		
<b>If married, marital status</b>				
Living together	41 (49.4%)	42 (50.6%)		1.000 <sup>e</sup>
Others*	3 (50%)	3 (50%)		
<b>Caste</b>				
Brahman/Chhetri	9 (90%)	1 (10%)		7.111
Janajati	37 (52.1%)	34 (47.9%)		
Dalit	4 (21.1%)	15 (78.9%)		
<b>Religion</b>				
Hinduism	33 (43.4%)	43 (56.6%)	5.482	0.019
Non Hinduism	17 (70.8%)	7 (29.2%)		
<b>Occupation</b>				
Formal	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)		1.000 <sup>e</sup>
Informal	48 (49.5%)	49 (50.5%)		
<b>Educational status</b>				
Illiterate	17 (48.6%)	18 (51.4%)	0.044	0.834
Literate	33 (50.8%)	32 (49.2%)		
<b>Level of education</b>				
Non formal	6 (40%)	9 (60%)		10.587
Basic	12 (37.5%)	20 (62.5%)		
Secondary and above	15 (83.3%)	3 (16.7%)		
<b>Family income</b>				
Sufficient to eat up to 1 year	37 (58.7%)	26 (41.3%)	5.191	0.023
Sufficient to eat for >1 year and surplus	13 (35.1%)	24 (64.9%)		
<b>Involved in woman group/organization/political party</b>				
No	27 (37.5%)	45 (62.5%)	16.071	<0.001
Yes	23 (82.1%)	5 (17.9%)		
<b>Involved in domestic violence awareness programme</b>				
No	48 (50.5%)	47 (49.5%)		1.000 <sup>e</sup>
Yes	2 (40%)	3 (60%)		
Significance level at 0.05	e Fisher Exact		*Others- separated, widow	
Non Hinduism- Buddhism, Christianity, Islam				

**Table 5:** Bivariate and Multivariate Analysis of Awareness regarding Domestic Violence and Selected Variables n = 100

Variables	Unadjusted OR (95% CI)	p-value	AOR (95% CI)	p-value
<b>Caste</b>				
Brahman/Chhetri	1		1	
Janajati	8.270 (0.995-68.750)	0.051	3.257 (0.289-36.753)	0.340
Dalit	33.750 (3.245-351.052)	0.003	62.446 (2.317-1682.842)	0.014
<b>Religion</b>				
Hinduism	3.165 (1.176-8.518)	0.023	4.210 (0.637-27.814)	0.136
Non Hinduism	1		1	
<b>Level of education</b>				
Non formal	1		1	
Basic	1.111 (0.316-3.904)	0.869	1.319 (0.240-7.237)	0.750
Secondary and above	0.133 (0.027-0.669)	0.014	0.079 (0.009-0.681)	0.021
<b>Family income</b>				
Sufficient to eat up to 1 year	1		1	
Sufficient to eat for >1 year and surplus	2.627 (1.133-6.091)	0.024	2.494 (0.582-10.684)	0.218
<b>Involved in woman group/organization/political party</b>				
No	7.667 (2.608-22.540)	<0.001	6.958 (1.332-36.340)	0.021
Yes	1		1	
Significance level at 0.05	1-Reference group	Non Hinduism- Buddhism, Christianity, Islam		

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that 74% reproductive age women answered husband as main perpetrators of domestic violence (DV) which is inconsistent with WHO (2017) showed that 35% female had violence (physical or sexual) by husband in life.<sup>2</sup>

The recent study shows that 91% answered there is legal act regarding DV against women. Fifty percent of reproductive age women had good level of awareness regarding DV. Level of awareness regarding DV is significantly associated with caste of the respondents: Dalit (p=0.002), level of education: basic education (p=0.005), and not involved in

woman group/organization/political party (p=<0.001) and family income sufficient to eat for >1 year and surplus (p=0.023), there is no significant association between the marital status and occupation with level of awareness regarding DV which contradicts with the studies performed by Government of Nepal Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (2012) revealed that 61.3% female did not know laws related to Gender Based Violence (GBV) and 13% (knew law of DV). Dalit/minority ethnic groups, less education, married, less personal independence/mobility, less social network, lower socio-economic status were less aware regarding laws of GBV.<sup>12</sup> The findings are

inconsistent with one more study of Paudel, Thakuri, Paudel & Acharya (2016) revealed that 92.1% women had high knowledge of DV. Almost all (97.3%) more than equal to secondary level education, (82.9%) unmarried and others (95.7%) married, (96.3%) employed and (89.04%) unemployed had high knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

In the present study, among those who are aware of presence of legal act regarding DV against women, only 30.76% answered maximum punishment for the offender according to the DV act is 6 month imprisonment or Rs 3,000- 25, 000 fine; or both. And 12.1% answered complaint for an offence should be filed within 90 days. Similarly with the findings of Government of Nepal Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (2012) showed that women who knew the laws regarding GBV couldn't answered component of law.<sup>12</sup>

The present study shows that level of awareness regarding DV is significantly associated with religion: Hinduism ( $p=0.019$ ). Similarly in the findings of Paudel, Thakuri, Paudel & Acharya (2016) revealed that Hinduism had high level of knowledge i.e., 91.1%.<sup>13</sup>

Limitation was, setting was only one area i.e., Punarbas of Devchuli municipality-1, Nawalparasi. Implications are, it would be for Devchuli municipality to plan awareness programme regarding DV for women. Findings would provide baseline data for future study. Based on the findings, it is recommended that it is crucial to perform further research with different design, sampling technique & size involving urban & rural to generalize in Nepal.

## CONCLUSION

Half of reproductive age women have good awareness regarding domestic violence. There is significant association between level of awareness and caste, religion, level of education, family income and not involved in woman group/organization/political party. To improve awareness level in women, they should be involved in woman group/organization/political party/awareness programme. Lack of education as well as its low level, and less involvement in different

awareness programme/women group can led women in tolerate violence in their lifetime.

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