

# Domestic Violence against Women and Its Determinants in Some Selected Areas of Bangladesh

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## ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is a health, legal, economic, educational, developmental and above all a human rights issue. Violence against women and girls continues to be a global epidemic that kills, tortures, and maims-physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. Women are suffering from multiple forms of violence including domestic violence, rape, dowry deaths, sexual harassment, suicide, forced marriage, trafficking and other psychological and financial oppression. It needs to take proper initiatives to prevent these types of drastic violence from the familial environment. The empowerment level is in better position of some women but those women faced torture by both husband as well as family members irrespective of all determinants of violence. Most of women face more torture by their husbands and family members for dowry, their physical illness, low status of parents in the society. These preventing initiatives will have to start from domestic level. In this study, it was explored that husband's and familial torture according to the respondents educational level as well as its empowments. Consequently, it needs to work for bringing positive change of man in our patriarchal society and it would be possible to bring the normal position for disadvantaged women, positive mentality should growup reducing violence.

## Keywords

women; domestic violence; determinants; percentage distribution; regression

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women are often in great danger in the place where they should be safest within their families. For many, 'home' is where they face a regime of terror and violence at the hands of somebody close to them-somebody should be able to trust. Those victimized suffer physically and psychologically. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or

protect themselves. Although physically a man and a woman shares the same space but their living standard is different from one to another. It is argued that domestic violence involves the very four critical elements that constitute torture: it causes severe physical and or mental pain, it is intentionally inflicted, for specified purposes and with some form of official involvement, whether active or passive. Women are suffering from multiple forms of violence including domestic violence, rape, dowry deaths, sexual harassment, suicide, forced marriage, trafficking and other psychological and financial oppression. Violence against women is continued from the very ancient time and become explore now a day a serious problem in Bangladesh. From the very long time women themselves were unaware of their legal rights and in many cases agreed with other relatives to keep quiet about such incidents to keep the family intact and avoid exposing the family and themselves to shame and dishonor. Presently women are slightly aware about their own rights and that is why they sometimes come clean about the violence against themselves. Women should be safest in parent's homes from birth to marriage and that should be more sharpened in husband's shelter. But unfortunately and typically, in patriarchal Bangladeshi families women's statuses are determined by their marital statuses through the husbands (Zaman, 1999). They are expected to give up any self-fulfilling ambitions and be submissive to the husband's needs from the day they are married (Blanchet, 2001). Danger is arisen when they are facing torture from the side of their husband and that become very harmful. Zuniga (1995) reported that, empowerment for women involves reclaiming the right to make decisions about their own lives and to influence social change through their ability to gain control over crucial natural and cultural resources. Longwe (2001) described that an essential step in women's empowerment, which involves awareness and understanding of the difference between sex roles and gender roles and that gender roles are socially created and therefore, can

be changed to promote equality. Thus, awareness building about women's situation, discrimination, rights and opportunities is a step towards greater gender equality (Karl, 1995). Hashemi and Schuler's (1993) study provided an important starting place for the development of a theoretical model of women's empowerment in rural Bangladesh. Amin et al. (1998) showed the concept of women's empowerment into three components each measured separately like, inter-spouse consultation index, which seeks to represent the extent to which husbands consult their wives in household affairs, individual autonomy indexes which represents women's self-reported autonomy of physical movement outside the house and in matters of spending money and the authority index, which reports on actual decision-making power. A number of studies have shown that women may be empowered in one area of life while not in others (Malhotra and Mather 1997, Kishor 1995 and 2000, Hashemi et al. 1996 and Beegle et al. 1998). Chandrasekaran et al. (2007) found that domestic violence levels comparable to other studies from around the world. They recommended highlighting the need for additional training among health care providers in voluntary HIV counseling and testing (VCT) centers in screening for domestic violence, detection of signs of physical abuse and provisions and referrals for women suffering from domestic partner violence. In another study of married women in rural Maharashtra, Jain et al. (2004) found that almost half of the respondents said they had been slapped, hit, kicked or beaten by their husbands at some time 24% reported being kicked, 44% during pregnancy; 12% were specifically threatened by their husbands with having kerosene oil poured on them to set them on fire; and 30% of assaults required medical care. In an investigation, Jain et al. (2004) found that having low income was highly correlated with domestic violence. This finding is consistent with a large body of research suggesting that the stressors of poverty may put a significant burden on families and these tensions can erupt into violence. (Koenig et al., 2006). In another study, Jain et al. (2004) a related finding, however, a woman's employment, contribution to household budget and access to savings were not found to be protective against domestic violence. This is consistent with findings from another study in Bangladesh, which found that in culturally conservative areas, higher status of women vis-à-vis that of their husband predisposed women to domestic violence. In a research, Burazeri et al. (2005) showed that an inverse relationship between a woman's educational attainment and domestic violence. They also found that the risk of spousal violence is high, and more empowered women are at greater risk. Hashemi et al. (1996) reported that women's empowerment can only be achieved by increasing women's consciousness about gender and class relations, and organizing them to engage in grassroots struggles for women's rights. Mahanta (2008) found that to prevent different types of violence against women it needs to take proper initiatives from the domestic environment which would help to examine the present situation of domestic violence originated from husband to other family members and this violence against women would be reduced without human intervention if the spousal relationship is become strongest.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Materials**

This study is designed by purposively selected sampling from three divisions namely Rajshahi, Rangpur and Khulna. The sample size is 500 in which the respondents are taken from 18 villages/mohollas of 10 unions/municipalities from 5 upazilas of four districts under three divisions from July 2010 to January 2011. The unit of analysis is reproductive aged married women. In this sampling design the sample size is 500 of which 250 households from rural areas and 250 households from urban areas. A structured questionnaire was adopted for household-level survey. The reproductive aged (15-49 years) married women who is the prime decision maker of the family was interviewed.

### **2.2 Methods**

The study was performed by several statistical tools and techniques including frequency distribution, contingency table development and analysis, multiple linear regression analysis and logistic regression analysis. The selected socio-economic and demographic variables used in this study. The demographic characteristics included in this study are respondent's age, respondent's age at marriage, etc. This study also includes socio-economic characteristics which are place of residence, respondent's education, husband's age, husband's education, respondent's occupation, religion, torture by both husband and family members etc.

### **2.3 Data analysis**

The data for the percentage of different determinants response and average number were determined. Number of 500 for each data were collected in each character and each experiment was repeated thrice. Means and percentages were calculated for each experiment using Microsoft Excel 2013 software. All material on each page should fit within a rectangle of 18 × 23.5 cm (7" × 9.25"), centered on the page, beginning 1.9 cm (0.75") from the top of the page and ending with 2.54 cm (1") from the bottom. The right and left margins should be 1.9 cm (.75"). The text should be in two 8.45 cm (3.33") columns with a .83 cm (.33") gutter.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.1 Husband's torture**

One-fourth of women faced husband's torture in any kinds. About 15% of the total respondents faced husband's torture for the cause of dowry and about 14% of the total respondents faced husband's torture caused by their own physical illness. Husbands are more often suffering from inferiority complex for their father-in-law's (women parent) lower status in the society and tortured their wives. In this study this proportion was about 10%. At the same time about 9% of the total respondents faced husband's torture due to unwillingness of intercourse. Six percent of the total women faced husband's torture for the reason of their husband's drug addiction. Table 1 represents the nature of torture of the respondents of the study areas.

**Table 1: The nature of husbands' torture to their wives**

Nature of husband's torture	No. (N=500)	Percent (%)
Don't face torture in any kind	375	75.00
Face torture in any kind	125	25.00
Nature of torture	For dowry	77 15.40
	Respondent's physical illness	71 14.20
	Unwillingness about sexual relation	46 9.20
	Low status of parents in society	49 9.80
	For drug addiction of husband	30 6.00

Table 2 represents the intensity of torture faced women by their husbands. Three-fourth of women beyond the victim of husband's torture, 8.20%, 8.80% and 5.00% of women become victimized of one, two and three kinds of torture respectively. It is noticeable that about two percent of women become victimized of five kinds of husband's torture at a time.

**Table 2: The intensity of torture faced women by their husbands**

Sl. No.	No. (N=500)	Percent (%)
0	375	75.00
1	41	8.20
2	44	8.80
3	25	5.00
4	6	1.20
5	9	1.80

**Table 3: Percentage of women tortured by husband for various causes**

Variables	Dowry		Physical illness		Unwillingness of intercourse		Parent's slower status		Husband's drug addiction	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Respondent's age										
<20	10	23.26	7	16.28	3	6.98	5	11.63	1	2.33
20-34	41	16.02	40	15.63	23	8.98	30	11.72	18	7.03
35+	26	12.94	24	11.94	20	9.95	14	6.97	11	5.47
Respondent's education										
Illiterate	13	27.66	4	8.51	3	6.38	1	2.13	10	21.28
Primary	11	16.42	5	7.46	1	1.49	8	11.94	6	8.96
Secondary	41	16.47	37	14.86	23	9.24	25	10.04	8	3.21
Higher secondary	4	6.35	8	12.70	5	7.94	4	6.35	3	4.76
Higher	8	10.81	14	18.92	14	18.92	11	14.86	3	4.05
Husband's age										
20-34	20	19.61	21	20.59	9	8.82	15	14.71	5	4.90
35+	57	14.32	50	12.56	37	9.30	34	8.54	25	6.28
Husband's education										
Illiterate	7	26.92	5	19.23	3	11.54	2	7.69	2	7.69
Primary	21	22.58	14	15.05	4	4.30	11	11.83	10	10.75
Secondary	30	16.95	21	11.86	12	6.78	16	9.04	9	5.08
Higher secondary	4	5.80	9	13.04	8	11.59	7	10.14	3	4.35
Higher	15	11.11	22	16.30	19	14.04	13	9.63	6	4.44
Residence										
Rural	42	16.80	27	10.80	7	2.80	19	7.60	15	6.00
Urban	35	14.00	44	17.60	39	15.60	30	12.00	15	6.00
Family type										
Joint	23	18.40	26	20.80	19	15.20	21	16.80	8	6.40
Single	54	14.40	45	12.00	27	7.20	28	7.47	22	5.87

### 3.2 Husband's torture by socio-demographic variables

Husband's tortures vary according to some socio-demographic variables. Table 3 shows that in all socio-demographic phenomena a larger proportion of women are tortured by husbands for taking dowry from in-law's house and it was about 12% of women tortured by their husbands for the age group up to 34 years. It is noted that as level of education up lift of both husband and respondents the proportion of torture for dowry is decreased but for higher education level of both husband and wife have more torture intensity for dowry than those of secondary level of education. As the husband's age increases torture against women decreases for dowry, physical illness and parents lower status in the society. Again it is seen that rural women faced more torture by their husbands for only dowry than that of urban but for the other kinds of torture the opposite result is shown. Women of joint family proportionally faced more torture for all kinds.

Table 4 represents that as level of education up lift of both husband and respondents the proportion of torture of any one of the whole categories is decreased but at higher education level of both husband and wife have more husbands' torture intensity than those of secondary level of education. Women of joint family and urban women faced more husbands' torture than that of single family and rural residence respectively.

**Table 4: Percentage of women tortured by husband in any kinds of socio-demographic variables**

Variables	Facing torture in any kind	
	No.	Percent (%)
Respondent's age		
Less than 20	11	25.58
20-34	75	29.30
35+	39	19.40
Respondent's education		
Illiterate	15	31.91
Primary	18	26.87
Secondary	61	24.50
Higher secondary	9	14.29
Higher	22	29.73
Husband's age		
Less than 34	34	33.33
35+	91	22.86
Husband's education		
Illiterate	9	34.62
Primary	28	30.11
Secondary	44	24.86
Higher secondary	12	17.39
Higher	32	23.70
Residence		
Rural	56	22.40
Urban	69	27.60
Family type		
Joint	43	34.40
Single	82	21.87

### 3.3 Familial Torture

Bangladeshi people live as in a single family as also in joint family. It is necessary to maintain at least a formal relationship with family members to sustain the stability of family structure. For this reason not only women but also men take part in buildup a good relationship with each other. Table 5 reveals that among the total respondents, 102 (20.40%) were victimized with familial torture in any kind. This domination is clearly visible through women's positions in families and subsequently in the society. Zaman (1999) reported that the domination of women in Bangladeshi family context become apparent to us. Bangladeshi socio-cultural-religious norms and values clearly reflect strong patriarchal views, which support domination of women at every level, starting within the family. Table 5 represents that one-fifth of women are faced familial torture in any kind. About 11% of the total respondents faced familial torture for the cause of dowry and about 12% of the total respondents faced familial Torture caused by women physical illness. Women are more often suffering torture from their family members for their parents' lower status in the society. In this study this proportion was 13.20%. Two percent of the total women faced familial

torture for the reason of their husband or other family member's drug addiction.

**Table 5: The nature of familial torture to women**

Nature of familial torture	No. (N=500)	Percent (%)
Don't face torture in any kind	398	79.60
Face torture in any kind	102	20.40
Nature of torture	For dowry	55
	Respondent's physical illness	57
	Low status of parents in society	66
	For drug addiction of family member	10
		11.00
		11.40
		13.20
		2.00

Table 6 represents the intensity of torture faced women by their family members. Four-fifth of women have had not experienced with the familial torture, and 9.60%, 5.60%, 4.00% and 1.20% of women become victimized of one, two, three and four kinds of torture respectively.

**Table 6: The intensity of torture faced women by family members**

SI. No.	No. (N=500)	Percent (%)
0	398	79.60
1	48	9.60
2	28	5.60
3	20	4.00
4	6	1.20

Table 7 shows that as age of respondents increases the proportion of familial torture decreases for physical illness and that for the parent's lower status in the society. Women of joint family faced more familial torture than single family for all causes. Rural women faced more familial torture than that of urban for dowry only on the other hand urban women faced more torture than that of rural women for remaining all other causes.

**Table 7: % of women tortured by family members for various cause**

Variables	Dowry		Physical illness		Parent's lower status		Family member's drug addiction	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Respondent's age								
Less than 20	7	16.28	8	18.60	8	18.60	1	2.33
20-34	23	8.98	33	12.89	39	15.23	6	2.34
35+	25	12.43	16	7.96	19	9.45	3	1.49
Respondent's education								
Illiterate	5	10.64	3	6.38	3	6.38	0	0.00
Primary	5	7.46	2	2.99	7	10.45	0	0.00
Secondary	34	13.65	30	12.05	33	13.25	4	1.61
Higher secondary	5	7.94	5	7.94	7	11.11	3	4.76
Higher	6	8.11	17	22.97	16	21.62	3	4.05
Husband's age								
Less than 34	11	9.80	21	20.59	19	18.63	21	20.59
35+	44	11.06	36	9.05	47	11.81	8	2.01
Husband's education								
Illiterate	5	19.23	2	7.69	4	15.38	1	3.45
Primary	8	8.60	7	7.53	11	11.83	1	1.08
Secondary	21	11.86	13	7.34	21	11.86	2	1.13
Higher secondary	6	8.70	11	15.94	6	8.70	1	1.45
Higher	15	11.11	24	17.78	24	17.78	5	3.70
Residence								
Rural	28	11.20	14	5.60	24	9.60	1	0.40
Urban	27	10.80	43	17.20	42	16.80	9	3.60
Family type								
Joint	15	12.00	26	20.80	37	29.60	5	4.00
Single	40	10.67	31	8.27	29	7.73	5	1.33

In Table 8 it is shown the increment of respondent and their husbands' age are varied negatively with the increment of the proportion of torture of any one of the whole categories. Women Of joint family and urban women faced more familial torture than that of single family and rural women respectively.

**Table 8: % of women tortured by family member in any kinds of socio -demographic variables**

Variables	Facing torture in any kind	
	No.	Percent (%)
Respondent's age		
Less than 20	12	27.91
20-34	55	21.48
35+	35	17.41
Respondent's education		
Illiterate	6	12.77
Primary	10	14.93
Secondary	53	21.29
Higher secondary	12	19.05
Higher	21	28.38
Husband's age		
Less than 34	27	26.47
35+	75	18.84
Husband's education		
Illiterate	6	23.08
Primary	15	16.13
Secondary	33	18.64
Higher secondary	13	18.84
Higher	35	25.93
Residence		
Rural	39	15.60
Urban	63	25.20
Family type		
Joint	45	36.00
Single	57	15.20

### 3.4 Determinants of husband's torture

Binary logistic regression analysis is used to see effect of some socio-demographic variables on husband's torture. Table 9 shows the results of logistic regression analysis for determinants of husband torture to their wives. The lower odds of torturing were for the women with husbands aged 35 years or more. In a relative sense, the odds of a woman with a husband aged less than 34 years of being tortured (by her husband) were 0.623 times that of a woman with a husband aged 35 years or more. Woman with a primary, a secondary, a higher secondary and a higher educated husband of being tortured were 0.854, 0.559, 0.300 and 0.372 times respectively that of a woman with an illiterate husband. Women of single family had 0.576 times the odds of being tortured by husbands than women of joint family. Women of urban areas had about twice the odds of being tortured by husbands than that of rural women.

**Table 9: Logistic regression of husband's torture by some selected variables**

Variables	Coefficients	Significance	Odds Ratio
Constant	-0.026	0.956	0.975
Husband's age (years)			
Less than 34 <sup>r</sup>	-	-	-
35+	-0.474	0.056	0.623
Husband's education			
Illiterate <sup>r</sup>	-	-	-
Primary	-0.157	0.743	0.854
Secondary	-0.582	0.210	0.559
Higher Secondary	-1.205	0.031	0.300
Higher	-0.989	0.051	0.372
Types of family			
Joint <sup>r</sup>	-	-	-
Single	-0.552	0.017	0.576
Residence			
Rural <sup>r</sup>	-	-	-
Urban	0.656	0.010	1.927

Note: <sup>r</sup> = Reference category

### 3.5 Determinants of familial torture

Another binary logistic regression model is used to see effect of some socio-demographic variables on familial torture. Table 10 shows the results of logistic regression analysis for determinants of familial torture to women. Women of single family were 0.326 times the odds of being tortured by their family member(s) than that of women of joint family. Women of urban areas had 1.753 times the odds of being tortured by their family member(s) than that of rural women.

**Table 10: Logistic regression of familial torture by some selected variables**

Variables	Coefficients	Significance	Odds Ratio
Constant	-0.897	.000	0.408
Residence			
Rural <sup>r</sup>			
Urban	0.561	.016	1.753
Types of family			
Joint <sup>r</sup>			
Single	-1.121	.000	0.326

Note: <sup>r</sup> = Reference category

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The nature of torture of the respondents of the study revealed that One-fourth of women faced husband's torture in any kinds. About 15% of the total respondents faced husband's torture for the cause of dowry and about 14% of the total respondents faced husband's torture caused by their own physical illness. Husbands are more often suffering from inferiority complex for their father-in-law's lower status in the society and tortured their wives. In this study this proportion is about 10%. At the same time about 9% of the total respondents faced husband's torture due to unwillingness of intercourse. Six percent of the total women faced husband's torture for the reason of their husband's drug addiction.

The intensity of husband's torture is represented that three-fourth of women beyond the victim of husband's torture, 8.20%, 8.80% and 5.00% of women become victimized of one, two and three kinds of torture respectively. It is noticeable that about two percent of women become victimized of five kinds of husband's torture at a time. It is elucidated that as level of education up lift of both husband and respondents the proportion of torture for dowry is decreased but for higher education level of both husband and wife have more torture intensity for dowry than those of secondary level of education. As the husband's age increases torture against women decreases for dowry, physical illness and parents lower status in the society. Women of joint family and urban women faced more husbands' torture than that of single family and rural residence respectively. Again the nature of torture of the respondents revealed that one-fifth of women are faced familial torture in any kind. About 11% of the total respondents faced familial torture for the cause of dowry and about 12% of the total respondents faced familial torture caused by women physical illness. Two percent of the total women faced familial torture for the reason of their husband or other family member's drug addiction. Again the intensity of torture faced women by family members is explained that four-fifth of women have had not experienced with the familial torture, and 9.60%, 5.60%, 4.00% and 1.20% of women become victimized of one, two, three and four kinds of torture respectively. The percentage of women tortured by family members in any one of the total kinds of torture according to some socio-demographic variables represented that the increment of respondent and their husbands' age are varied negatively with the increment of the proportion of torture of any one of the whole categories. To examine the effect of some socio-demographic variables on husband's torture binary logistic regression analysis indicates that the lower odds of torturing were for the women with husbands aged 35 years or more. In a relative sense, the odds of a woman with a husband aged less than 34 years of being tortured were 0.623 times that of a woman with a husband aged 35 years or more. Woman with a primary, a secondary, a higher secondary and a higher educated husband of being tortured were 0.854, 0.559, 0.300 and 0.372 times respectively that of a woman with an illiterate husband. Women of single family had 0.576 times the odds of being tortured by husbands than women of joint family. Women of urban areas had about twice the odds of being tortured by husbands than that of rural women. The effect of some socio-demographic variables on familial torture explained that women of single family were 0.326 times the odds of being tortured by their family members than that of women of joint family.

Women of urban areas had 1.753 times the odds of being tortured by their family members than that of rural women. Women do not yet understand about their rights and even those who understand the rights; they hide the torture for the sake of durable spousal bond. Violence against women does not explore and finally this violence interrupts empowerment which is started from the family level and then spread out in the community. So it is suggested to provide effective policy to minimize the gap between men and women and to ensure their rights in every sphere of life.

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## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

SA and MGM designed the experiments, developed the methodology and prepared the manuscript. SA, MEKC, MAI and MGM collected the data and carried out analysis. MEKC and MAI assisted with data analysis and manuscript preparation.

## DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

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