

## **The Causes of Domestic Violence and Its Impact on Rural Women Victims**

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### **Introduction**

Domestic violence is physical or psychological abuse of power that leaves one's spouse, partner or other family member within the household feeling physically hurt, sad, depressed, despairing and fearful. It is just one amongst many forms of violence against women and is also recognized as the most pervasive major social issue in the world today. It brutalizes women from the cradle to grave. It also attacks and undervalues the dignity of women while leaving them vulnerable and fearful.

Existing studies have revealed the following features in relation to domestic violence against women. Domestic violence is a significant feature in rural communities where there is a higher reported incidence of domestic violence than in metropolitan settings. The overwhelming majority of victims of domestic violence in rural areas are women with most perpetrators being male. It is evident that domestic violence against women is a significant feature in rural communities. So this study attempts to find out the causes and the impact of it on rural women victims fulfilling a vacuum relating to this research area. This study will be of relevance to every individual in every level of society including women, policy makers, and local bodies involved in development processes.

### **Objectives of the study**

The purpose of this study is two fold. First, it tries to identify the causes of domestic violence against rural women. Second, it attempts to understand the impact of it on women victims.

### **Research methodology**

A total number of 16 households afflicted with domestic violence in a rural village in Mawanella Divisional Secretariat area has been considered as the research sample of this small scale, in-depth study. The method of data collection is qualitative and the information has been collected through informal interviews and the case study method. The obtained data has

been analyzed manually through the method of thematization.

### **Findings of the study**

This study reveals that 90% of the rural women encounter numerous gender based oppressions and are victimized throughout their lives in different stages. 75% of the women in the age group 30-50 years are victimized by their spouses. Wife -beating is the major harassment that they encounter in addition to verbal abusing, torturing, marital rape, insult and harming their asses.

According to research findings, 50% of the victims are illiterate or less educated and belong to poor households. The particular aspects of rural life which include conservative community expectations of behavior, strict cultural ties and community pressure to preserve tradition, lack of access to safe alternative accommodations, women's pessimistic attitudes towards womanhood, lack of understanding of individual rights, fear of deportation are the major causes of domestic violence against rural women. Poor economical status, pregnancy, disability and rigid religious beliefs are recognized as minor causes of it. The study also reveals that domestic violence occurs directly and indirectly in the forms of physical, mental or verbal abuse ranging from assaulting to rape and murder.

The findings of the study indicate that violence has a huge impact on rural women victims. It affects their mental, emotional and physical health and even results in death. It also prevents or restricts women's participation in day to day activities, in family life, cultural activities and in the work force. Fear of violence restricts their movement and behavior, isolates them from friends and family and forces them into destitution. The abused suffer from deprivation, anxiety, psychosomatic sympathy, sexual dysfunctions and reproductive disorders.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

Several important insights emerged from this study. On the basis of the data analysis the researcher draws the following conclusions.

- The major causes of domestic violence against rural women are specific factors related to rural living
- Violence is high among the women from less educated, unemployed or underemployed households
- That women are victimized mainly by males while a few women are victimized by both women and men is an important revelation of the study.

This study brings some comprehensive recommendations for addressing and responding to this problem. This can be done through prevention, treatment and support. Prevention has long term aspects and support and treatment can be either short term or long term. These measures include:

1. Supporting abused women materially and spiritually through anger management trainings, awareness programmes and adequate religious guidance
2. Providing medical treatment to the injured
3. Developing a policy frame work to reduce and prevent violent behavior
4. Developing a public health approach to this specific problem
5. Revising the existing laws and imposing strict laws
6. Changing the negative attitudes of women of womanhood will be an effective attempt in addressing violent related issues. This can be done by mobilizing them through building their institutional capacities.