

MARITAL VIOLENCE AMONG PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN DAKSHINA KANNADA: A SOCIO-LEVEL ANALYSIS OF NATURE, FACTORS AND CONSEQUENCES.

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Abstract

This study investigates the nature and contributing factors of Marital violence against professional women in the D.K.district. Using a socio-level perspective, this research seeks to understand the forces that perpetuate marital violence on women, emphasizing the lived experiences of 300 married professional women who have encountered such abuse. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, supplemented with secondary data from books, reports, NCRB statistics, previous studies. This study adopted a correlational design to explore patterns among victims across various professions, religions, and living conditions.

The findings revealed that most respondents were middle-aged (41–60 years) and highly educated, with teachers forming the largest occupational group. The majority resided in urban areas and lived in independent houses. Controlling behavior, manipulative tendencies and extramarital affairs of the husband emerged as the most common contributing factors to marital violence. Emotional consequences such as shame (37.2%), anxiety and confusion were common. Post-disclosure responses indicated that 50.67% of victims had not informed their families and only 13.67% received active support. Additionally, 40.5% reported that confronting their abusers led to increased aggression, suggesting limited behavioral changes. Although 19.4% of respondents reported physical injuries, the majority endured psychological and emotional abuse.

Key words: *Marital violence, professional women, emotional consequences, controlling behavior, gender inequality, women empowerment.*

Introduction

The Asian Women's Bali Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women 2016 defines Domestic Violence

Against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of

liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.’ Domestic Violence can be described as ‘when one adult in a relationship misuses power to control another.’ It involves establishing control and fear in a relationship through violence and other forms of abuse. (Garg and Kaur R. 2008).¹

Indian society is patriarchal. A society in which prominence is given to male family members is called patriarchal. Consequently, men are considered the head of the family, breadwinners, controllers of family affairs, and the ones in charge of all family members, especially women and children. In Patriarchal society girls and women are treated as second-class citizens, and from childhood, girls are not only socialized into being silent about their experience of ill-treatment and violence, but existing traditional norms teach them to accept, tolerate, and even rationalize Domestic Violence. Women are expected to be submissive, silent, obedient, and patient. They are supposed to suppress their urges, expectations and anger and hide their physical and psychological scars, as they are made to believe that the expression of these will damage their image in the family and society. Violence Against women is a complex, deep-rooted, and socially accepted phenomenon.(Rawat P.S.2014).²

This study offers a comprehensive analysis of the demographic characteristics and lived

experiences of 300 professional women in Dakshina Kannada, with particular emphasis on the prevalence, nature, and consequences of marital violence.

Objective

- 1) To investigate the nature of marital violence on professional women.
- 2) To study the factors related to the marital violence.

Methodology

The present study attempts at the very outset, to understand within the socio-level perspective, the factors or forces that give rise to violence on married professional women within her matrimonial house. Dakshina Kannada district will be the Universe for the study. The study sample is of 300 married, professional women who have experienced marital violence. These 300 cases are narratives. This representative sample is collected with the help of researcher’s personal contacts, women’s helpline, police stations, NGOs, counseling centres, Banking Institutions, Government departments, Educational, and Medical Institutions and professional friends as well. Primary data is collected through interview. This is a correlational study among the women victims in various professions. Keeping in mind the gigantic nature of the problem micro study is planned. The professional women belonging to all the prominent religions and the women victims

who have sought assistance and those who have not, both will be selected to find the causes and impact of seeking assistance and also suffering in silence. Secondary data is collected from referring various books written on the basis of previous studies conducted which provide real views about situation and position of married women in the matrimonial family in general and also the condition of employed married women in their matrimonial families in particular. The crime data of NCRB, Census figures, various survey figures also provided ample evidence to prove that violence against married professional women is rampant in contemporary society.

Results

Figure 1 : Age group of the respondents (n=300)

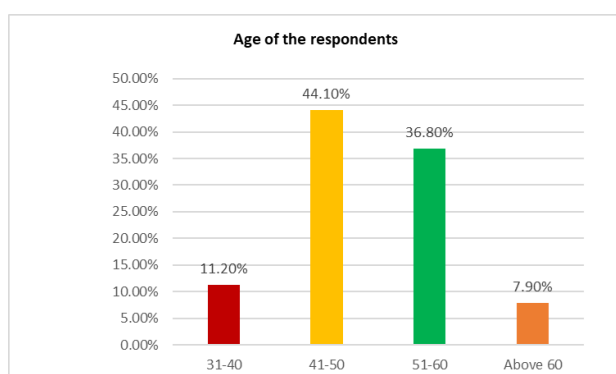


Figure 4.1 illustrates the age distribution of 300 professional women surveyed in Dakshina Kannada, highlighting a pronounced concentration in the middle-aged categories. The largest segment of respondents was within the 41–50 years age group (44.1%), followed by those aged 51–

60 years (36.8%). Collectively, these two groups comprised over 80% of the total sample, suggesting that the study predominantly reflects the experiences and perspectives of women in their mid-to-late careers. In contrast, younger professionals aged 31–40 years represented only 11.2% of the sample, while those above 60 years constituted 7.9%.

Figure 2: Education of the respondents (n=300)

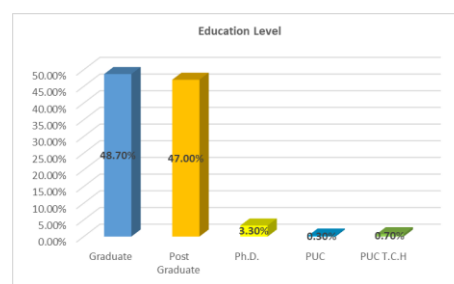


Figure 2 illustrates the educational profile of the respondents in this study, highlighting a notably high level of academic achievement among professional women in Dakshina Kannada. Nearly half of the participants (48.7%) had a graduate degree, whereas a nearly equivalent proportion (47.0%) had completed postgraduate studies. Collectively, these two groups represent 95.7% of the sample, indicating that the vast majority of respondents were highly educated. A small minority have attained a Ph.D. (3.3%), further underscoring the advanced educational background of this group. Only a negligible fraction reported pre-university (PUC, 0.3%) or technical

(T.C.H, 0.7%) qualifications as their highest level of education.

Figure-3 : Marital status of the Respondents (n=300)

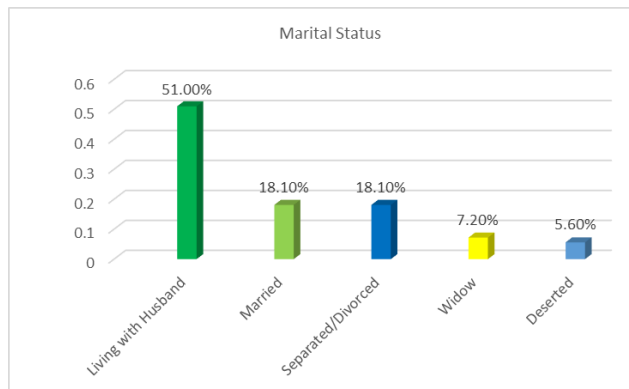


Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of marital status among professional women surveyed in D.K., highlighting a diverse array of marital experiences. A majority of respondents (51%) currently cohabiting with their husbands, indicating that they were in ongoing marital relationships. Nevertheless, a notable segment of the sample encountered marital disruption: 18.1% were either separated or divorced, 7.2% were widowed and 5.6% were deserted by their husbands.

Figure-4 : Religion of the respondents (n=302)

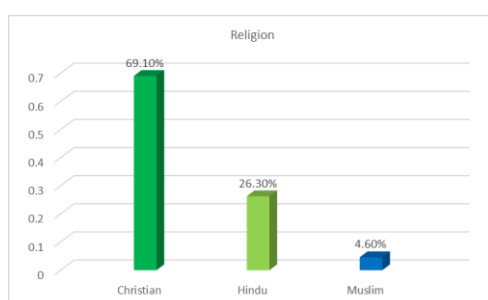


Figure 4 The predominance of Christian respondents could influence the cultural

context of marital relationships and the ways in which the religious composition of the professional women surveyed in Dakshina Kannada is predominantly Christian, with 69.1% of the respondents identifying as such. Hindus represent the second largest group at 26.3%, while Muslims constitute a minority at 4.6%.

Figure 5 : Location of the Professional women (n=300)



Figure 5: The majority of the respondents (61.2%) resided in urban areas, indicating a substantial urban representation within the sample. Suburban residents constituted 24.3% of the sample, while only 14.5% originated from rural areas.

Figure 6: Professional Background of Respondents (n=300)

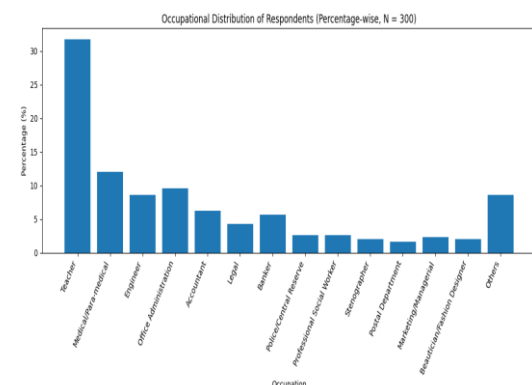
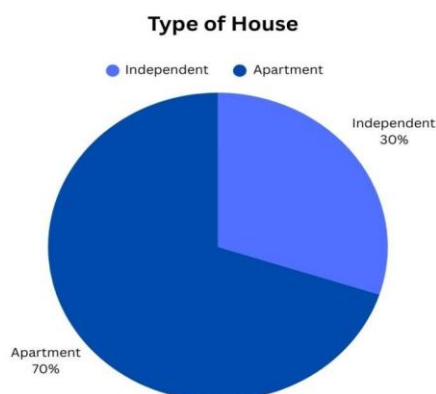


Figure 6: The professional distribution of respondents in this study underscores a diverse yet distinctly skilled and educated workforce among professional women in Dakshina Kannada. The largest single group comprised teachers, representing 31.78% of the sample, indicating their strong presence in the education sector, followed by medical and para-medical professionals (12%), office administration (9.6%), engineering (8.6%), and other professions also contribute substantially, indicating wide occupational diversity among the respondents.

Figure 7: Type of Housing Among professional Women Respondents (n=300)



According to figure 7, out of 300 professional women, a significant majority of professional women in D.K. live in independent houses. This marked preference for independent housing may reflect cultural values, socio-economic status, or the availability of such dwellings in the region. Independent houses generally offer greater privacy, space and autonomy, which may be valued by families within this demographic.

Figure 8: Contributing factors of marital violence on professional Women Respondents (n=300)

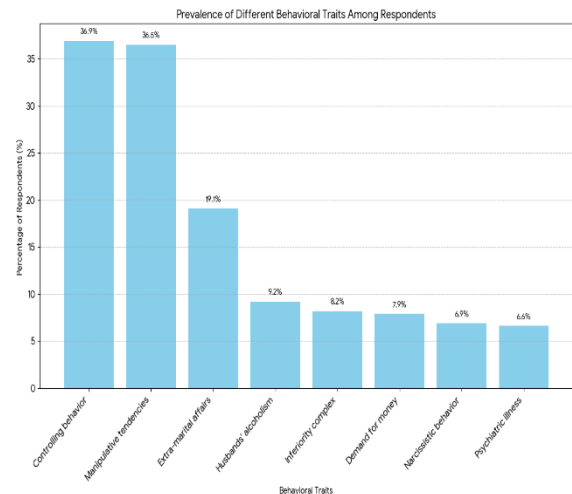


Figure 8 concerning the reported contributing factors to marital violence among professional women in Dakshina Kannada reveals a complex interplay of personal, behavioral, and relational issues. The most frequently cited factors included controlling behavior, noted in various forms by nearly 36.9% of respondents, manipulative tendencies (36.5%), and extra-marital affairs of the husband (19.1%). Other significant factors included manipulative nature (14.5%), authoritative or authoritarian attitudes (4.6%–2.3%), inferiority complex (8.2%), narcissistic behavior (6.9%), psychiatric illness (6.6%), and demand for money (7.9%). Additionally, 9.2% of respondents reported their husbands' alcoholism.

Table 1: Frequency of Changes in Abuser's Behavior After Violence Was Addressed (n=180)

| Variables | Yes | Percentage |
|---|-----|------------|
| Abuser became more aggressive | 123 | 41.0% |
| Abuser cooled down | 19 | 6.3% |
| Became unsupportive, negligent & Indifferent | 13 | 4.3% |
| Never stopped his mischievous controlling behavior | 8 | 2.6% |
| All sorts of vulgar words and allegations | 2 | 0.6% |
| And his drinking habit worsened | 2 | 0.6% |
| As there was fault on his part, not ready to accept | 2 | 0.6% |
| But agreed to come for counselling | 2 | 0.6% |

Table 1 reveals that following the confrontation of violence, the most prevalent change observed was an increase in the aggressiveness of the abuser, as reported by 41% of the respondents. A significantly smaller fraction (6.3%) indicated that the abuser exhibited a "cooling down" effect, implying that positive behavioral changes

were infrequent. 4.3% became unsupportive, negligent & indifferent towards the respondent and 2.6% continued their mischievous and controlling behavior towards wife and children. Other adverse changes, such as becoming unsupportive, negligent, adamant or persisting in problematic behaviors, were noted in a minor segment (1–2%). Only 2% agreed to come for counselling in order to sort out the family conflict issue.

Table 2: Family Support and Actions Following Disclosure of Marital Violence Among Professional Women Respondents (n=300)

| Family Support and Actions | Yes (n) | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|---------|------------|
| They were not informed | 152 | 50.67% |
| Expressed their inability | 66 | 22.0% |
| Shocked | 37 | 12.33% |
| Came to my rescue & supported me | 41 | 13.67% |
| Indifferent | 4 | 1.33% |
| Total | 300 | 100% |

Table 2 indicates that the predominant variable from families following the disclosure of marital violence was a lack of awareness (50.67%), suggesting that a substantial majority of women did not communicate their experiences to their families, potentially due to fear, stigma, or a lack of trust. Among those who informed their families, the next most common

variable was the families' expression of inability to assist (22.0%), while a smaller proportion reported that their families were shocked (12.33%). Only a minimal number of respondents indicated that their families intervened in or provided support (13.67%) whereas 1.3% were indifferent about the violence could be due to their irresponsibility or also due to their health conditions or financial inabilities.

Table 3: Frequency of Experiencing Abuse Among Professional Women Respondents (n=300)

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Everyday | 80 | 26.64 % |
| Uncertain/Can't Say/Depends on Situation | 108 | 37.52 % |
| Depending on situation but his hostile nature is ever present | 38 | 12.5% |
| Can't guess or predict/It depends on his mood and situation | 7 | 2.3% |
| Every now and then/Once in a while | 14 | 4.61% |
| Whenever he got angry/anger shoot up | 12 | 3.95% |
| Not observed any frequency as such | 20 | 6.58% |
| Once a week | 1 | 0.33% |
| Other (unique/rare Variables) | 20 | 6.58% |
| Total | 300 | 100% |

In Table 3, the data indicated that 26.6% of respondents reported experiencing abuse on a daily basis, rendering daily abuse the most prevalent pattern. However, a substantial

proportion of women (exceeding 50%) characterized the frequency of abuse as uncertain, unpredictable, or contingent upon the situation or the abuser's mood. Specifically, 28.9% provided variables categorized as "uncertain, 12.5% as "depending on the situation," and 7.6% as "uncertain/can't say/depends on situation," underscoring the irregular and unstable nature of abuse in numerous relationships due to which the victims life becomes miserable with the constant fear of abuse.

Table 4: Incidence of Physical Injury Resulting from Marital Abuse Among Professional Women Respondents (n=300)

| Variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|------------|---------------|
| No | 243 | 80.6% |
| Yes | 57 | 19.4% |
| Total | 300 | 100.0% |

Table 4 indicates that 19.4% of professional women in Dakshina Kannada reported sustaining physical injuries as a consequence of marital abuse, whereas the majority (80.6%) did not report such injuries but reported being emotionally, psychologically, sexually and economically abused which is a danger sign for the wellbeing of women and families.

Discussion

The present study of 300 professional women in Dakshina Kannada sought to explore marital violence in the context of a

highly educated workforce, and the socio-demographic profile of the sample offers important vantage points for interpreting the findings. As shown in our results, the age composition is heavily weighted toward mid-to-late career women: 44.1% were aged 41–50 years and 36.8% were aged 51–60 years, together representing over 80% of the sample. This suggests that the experiences captured in the study primarily reflect women in the mature career phase rather than early career phases which could be due to the feeling of exhaustion in their mid-age which is usually menopausal stage. The implications of this study are twofold. First, women in this age band may have had longer duration of marital life and hence potentially longer exposure to marital dynamics (positive or negative). Second, their professional status and tenure may afford them resources or autonomy differently than younger women, which may modify how marital violence is experienced, interpreted, or reported.

Similarly, the sample is highly educated: nearly 95.7% had graduate or postgraduate qualifications, and approximately 3.3% held PhDs. This high level of education is noteworthy, as many prior studies have identified lower formal education as a risk factor for intimate partner violence (IPV) (see, e.g., Ramesh et al., 2015).³ For instance, a national-level Indian study observed that the prevalence of

emotional, physical, and sexual violence declined with increasing educational attainment of women.

In our study, we found major contributing factors such as husband's controlling behavior (30%), manipulative tendencies (22%), extramarital affairs (19.1%), and alcoholism (9.2%). These findings are consistent with several other regional and national studies.

Compare to other study Dasgupta (2022)⁴ found that controlling and manipulative behaviors were among the most common psychological dimensions associated with spousal abuse among urban Indian women, with 32% reporting controlling partners and 15% reporting infidelity as a contributing factor. Similarly, a study by Subramanian and Saminathan (2020)⁵ on professional women in Tamil Nadu reported that alcohol misuse (11%) and extramarital relationships (17%) were significantly associated with increased risk of marital violence.

These comparative findings suggest that results of this study are largely in line with national and international literature, indicating a persistent pattern of non-disclosure, emotional distress, situational unpredictability of abuse, and a limited but significant rate of injury among professional women subjected to marital violence. This highlights the importance of targeted

interventions addressing both psychological and sociocultural barriers in this demographic.

Conclusion

The study concludes that marital violence among professional women in Dakshina Kannada is shaped by diverse personal, behavioral, and socio-relational factors, with controlling behavior, manipulative tendencies, and extramarital affairs being major contributors. Emotional impacts were significant, as substantial proportions of respondents reported feelings of shame, anxiety, and confusion, reflecting a heavy psychological burden. Despite experiencing abuse, many women did not disclose violence to their families, pointing to barriers such as stigma, lack of trust, and perceived inadequacy of family support. Violence manifested in unpredictable and frequent patterns, with over a quarter of the women facing daily abuse and nearly one-fifth suffering physical injuries as a result. Confronting abusers rarely leads to positive change, with most abusers displaying increased aggression or continuing their hostile behaviors. The findings of this study highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions that focus on psychological support, robust family and community networks, and multidimensional strategies to address and prevent marital violence against professional women in the region.

Revolutionary educational measures need to

be inculcated in the school curriculum to mould the mindset of young girls and boys to understand the concept of equality in taking up the family responsibilities as well as supporting each other in marital life .

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