

Echoes of Silence: Exploring Domestic Violence Against Women in Jhenaidah District

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Abstract

Violence against women is a common practice in Bangladesh, specially domestic violence and in rural areas. This is a deeply rooted and complex problem with roots in cultural, gendered, and socioeconomic factors. This study aims to find out what is the current scenario of domestic violence against female in rural area of Bangladesh, particularly in Jhenaidah district. This cross sectional study used primary sources of qualitative data to analyze. Among them the final sample was selected 50 household using purposive sampling techniques. The analysis chapter unveils the degree of perception, causes, types, and aftermath of Domestic Violence against Women in Rural Area of Bangladesh in Jhenaidah district. The findings suggest the urgent need for targeted interventions addressing the sociocultural recognition of domestic abuse and providing access to knowledge of legal frameworks, support services, and education.

Keywords: Violence against women, Domestic violence, Rural area, Bangladesh.

Introduction

Bangladesh rectified Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1984, and since then it took 16 years to adopt The Women and Children Repression Prevention (WCRP) Act, 27 years to adopt National Women's Development Policy in 2011, and 28 years to adopt National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children.

According to UNHCR (“What is violence?,” n.d.)“Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, or psychological harm.” And most of the victim of violence are belongs to the

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group of women and girls. Violence is an inherent attribute of human being (Gómez, Verdú, González-Megías, & Méndez, 2016; Magnani, 2011). Women have been experienced violence through many civilizations (Fox, 2002) whether reported or unreported. Among the typology of violence against women, the most common is domestic violence. This stream of violence against women on domestic level drew attention of scholar during 1960s. To be specific research on domestic violence and sexual assault was published a book and article. Books like "The Battered Woman" by Lenore Walker (Walker, 2009) and Susan Brownmiller's "Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape" (Brownmiller, 1993) were foundational texts that shaped the academic discourse on violence against women. This momentum was further popularized by non-governmental organization (Islam & Sultana, 2005; Shawki, 2011). At present violence against women though is a prevalent practice in many societies but it does not go unchallenged, especially in developing and least developed countries like Bangladesh.

There is no denying that violence against women is a popular research concept especially the domestic one with urban focus, but the typology of domestic violence such as type, cause, reason of rural area remains neglected. The study is of great importance because of various reasons; first of all, the domestic violence against women in rural area goes unnoticed due to various socio-economic factors. Such as the low literacy rate among rural area makes the rural people accustomed to the domestic violence against women. For instance scholar stated that "*poor have limited access to Literacy rate ... increased among the rural women in Bangladesh*" (Hossain & Islam, 2012). The second significant factor is the high poverty rate in rural area of Bangladesh. The rural area of Bangladesh is prone to extreme poverty in many shapes and forms (Osmani, 2013). A study highlighted that that rural poverty is fundamentally different from urban poverty, and the rural household is significantly affected by its severity (Imam, Islam, & Hossain, 2018), this poverty manipulates males to be agitated to such extent that most of them resort to violence particularly domestic violence (Schuler, Hashemi, & Badal, 1998; Schuler, Hashemi, Riley, & Akhter, 1996; S. Zaman, 2004). Due to the poverty male counterpart often resort to domestic violence against his spouse as a perpetrator, in addition to that the victim often do not make formal complain because of the financial constrain. Finally, the unique traditional and cultural aspects plays pivotal role in terms of domestic violence's. In Bangladesh's rural area the domestic violence against women is more like a traditional/culturally accepted norm (Kalam, 2014; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). Hence the issue is overlooked by many scholars.

Violence against women have always been a serious problem since the inception of Bangladesh as an independent nation. For instance, according to Bangladesh Mahila Parishad reports, the total number of cases of violence

against women were 3,918 in 2018, but in the first six months of 2019, it alarmingly came to 2,083. 217 women were assaulted in September, the highest in any single month since 2010 (Khatun, 2019). While violence against women is a serious crime, the most practiced one is domestic violence. This is recognized by both scholar and institutions, for example a report by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics revealed that “*almost two-thirds (72.6%) of married women in Bangladesh have experienced one or more forms of violence by their husbands at least once in their life time*”. While earlier studies about violence against women revealed that the systematic and structural aspects of violence against women in Bangladesh. Men-favoring gender relations, discrimination against women, and institutional and governmental biases all contribute to it (H. Zaman, 1999), subsequent studies identified patriarchal structure and early marriage as catalyst for violence against women forcing the manifestation of violence against women even in sexual trafficking (Banarjee, 2020).

Despite the significance of domestic violence against women in rural area of Bangladesh due to social, economic and cultural characteristics, the typology of domestic violence such as type, cause, reason of rural area remains neglected.

Thus the study enters the field of domestic violence against women with a question; what is the current scenario of domestic violence against women in rural areas of Bangladesh, specifically Jhenaidah district?

In according the research question the objective of the study is;

- To identify the types of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district
- To identify the causes of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district
- To identify the catalyst of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district
- To identify the outcome/aftermath of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district

The structure of this document is as follows: An overview of the literature on the domestic violence against women is given in chapter II; the research methodology is presented in chapter III; the analysis are discussed in chapter IV; followed by the Findings in chapter V, finally the conclusions and policy implications are presented in chapter VI.

Methodology

This is a cross sectional study aiming to find out the current scenario of domestic violence against women in rural areas of Bangladesh, particularly in Jhenaidah district. This study used primary sources of qualitative data to analyze. The data collection method was qualitative. The initial population matching the criteria was 50 respondents. Among them the final sample was selected 50 household using purposive sampling techniques. The data was collected over the duration of 15 days. After the data collection the data was organized and cleaned using Microsoft Office and Microsoft Excel program. The content analysis was applied to find out the scenario of domestic violence against women in rural areas of Bangladesh, particularly in Jhenaidah district.

Analysis

The analysis chapter unveils the degree of perception, causes, types, and aftermath of domestic violence against women in rural area of Bangladesh in Jhenaidah district. Each analysis is presented with graphical illustration along with description.

Figure 1: Perception towards domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district

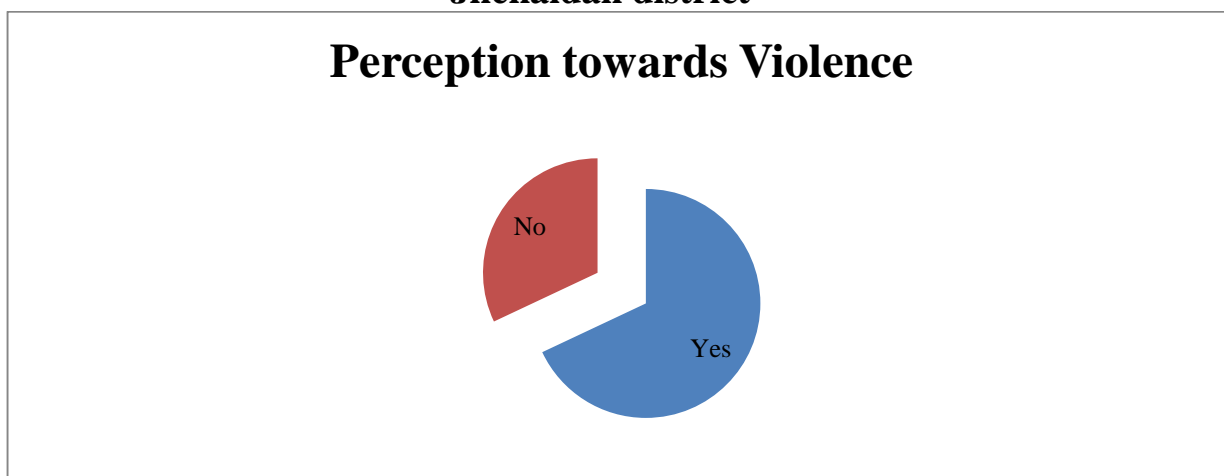


Figure 1 indicates that out of the 50 household , 34 respondents believes that the abuse the experienced was domestic violence, on the contrary 16 respondent does not consider that abuse as domestic violence.

Figure 2: Types of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah

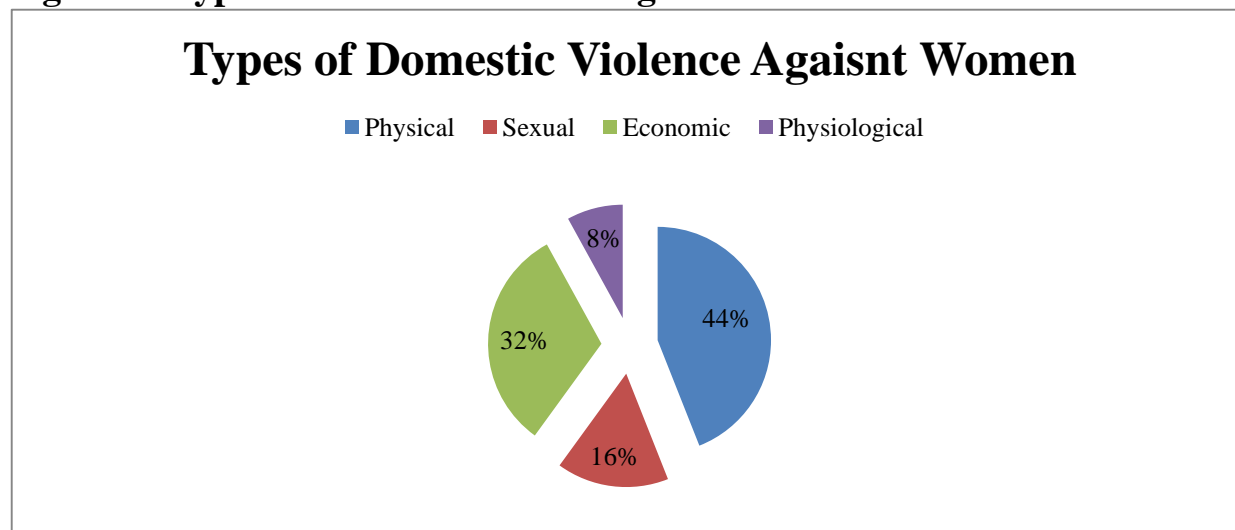


Figure 2 indicates that out of the 50 household, 22 respondents experienced the physical violence against women, followed by 16 respondents who went through economic type of domestic violence, the third majority group of 8 respondents believes that they faced sexual type of domestic violence. Finally, 4 respondents suffered physiological type of domestic violence.

Figure 3: Cause of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district

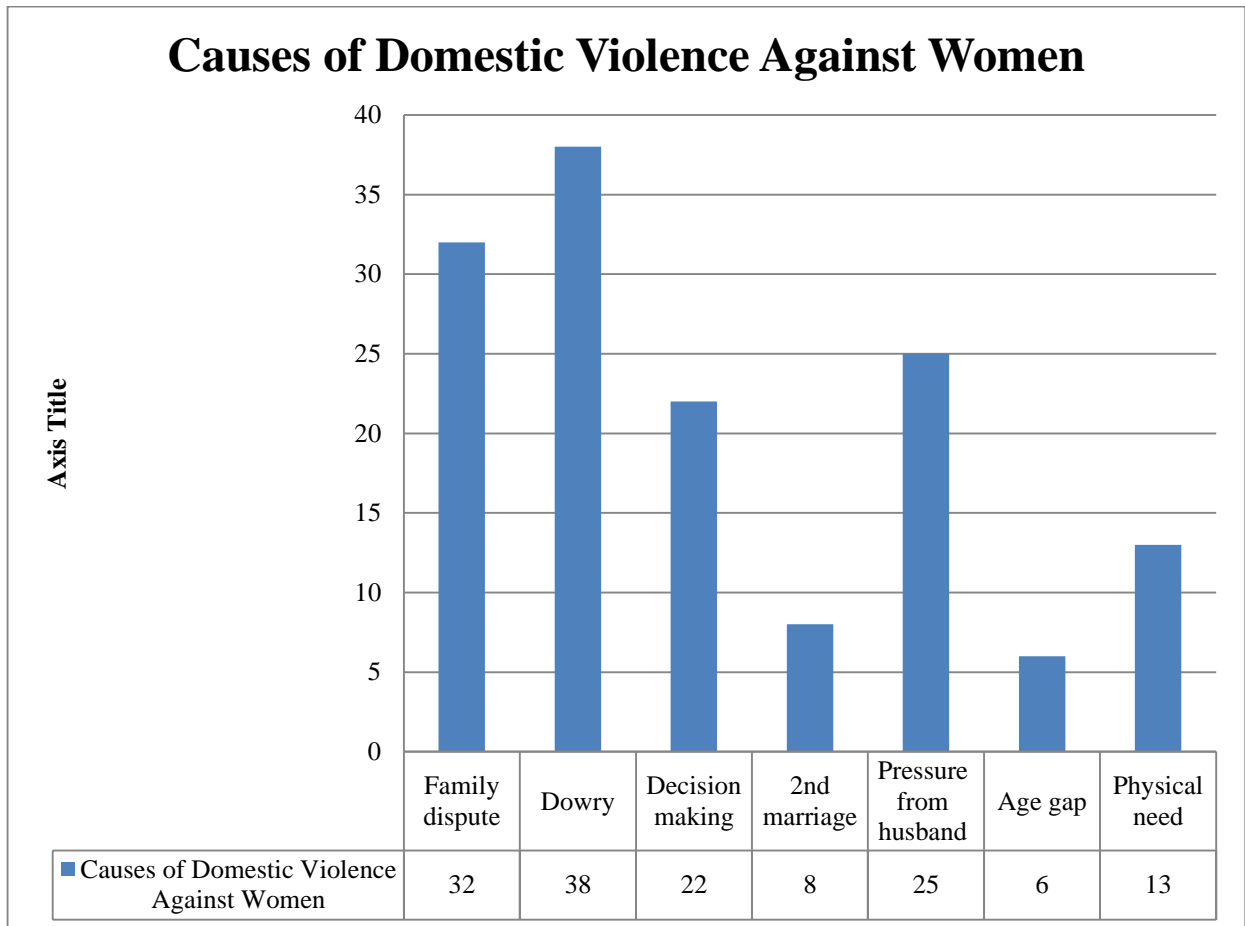


Figure 3: Cause of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district. Figure 3 illustrates that out of the 50 households, 38 respondents reported the dowry as the prime reason for domestic violence, on the other hand, 32 respondents mentioned family dispute as the dominating reason behind domestic violence, while 25 respondents suggested that pressure from husband to the family of bride is a major reason behind domestic violence. Moreover 22 uttered decision making was the reason behind domestic violence, then the inconsistent physical need was identified as the reason by 13 respondents, finally the second marriage was another reason for domestic violence claimed by 8 respondents, followed by age gap supported by 6 respondents as another reason.

Figure 4: Aftermath of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district

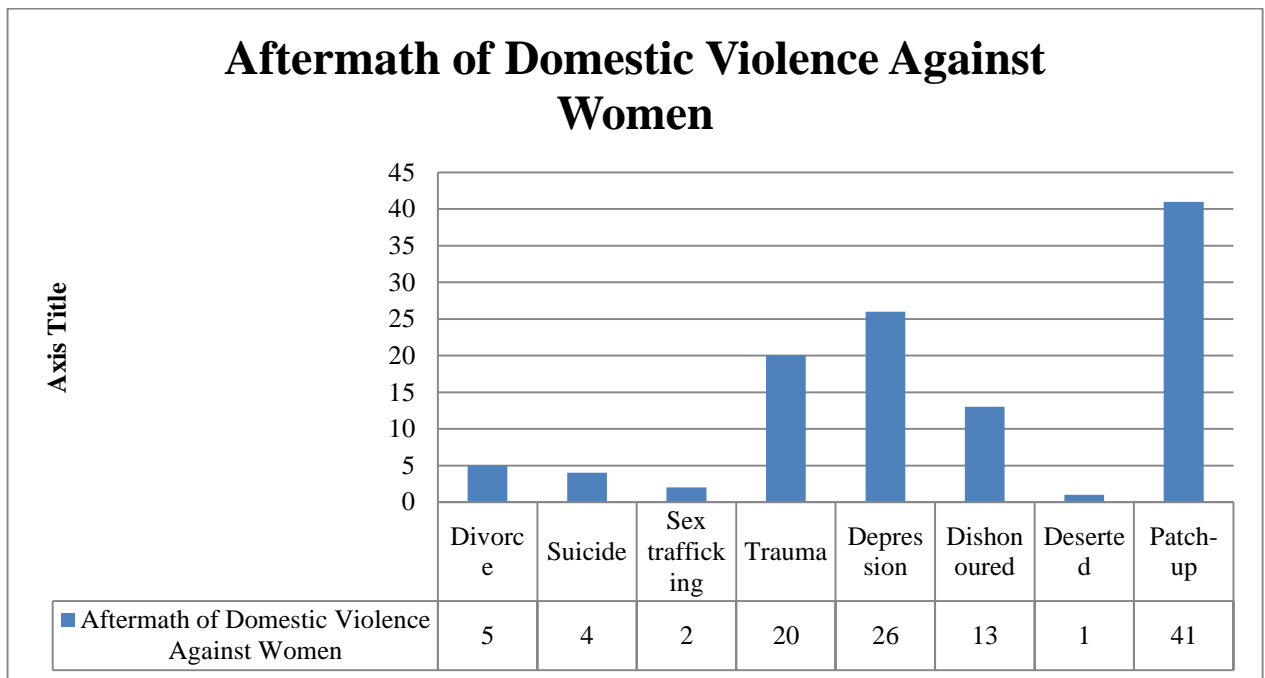


Figure 4: Aftermath of domestic violence against women in Jhenaidah district.

Figure 4 illustrates among the respondents, 4 committed suicide and 5 said that their divorce was the result of domestic abuse. For 2 of the interviewees, the result was forced sex trafficking. 20 people experienced mental breakdowns as a serious aftereffect, and 26 respondents reported having depression. In addition, 13 people reported feeling degraded as a result of domestic abuse. One instance of desertion occurred. Positively, 41 respondents said that they were able to mend their relationship in spite of the violence.

Findings

To answer the research question, this section presents several key findings drawing from the previous analysis chapter. All the key findings following each analysis (from Figures 1-4, respectively) are given below;

- The first analysis reveals perception towards domestic violence against women. It indicates that 68% victim of domestic violence from Jhenaidah rural area identified the abuse they experienced as violence, surprisingly the 32% respondents do not consider the abuse they went through as domestic violence's.
- The second analysis exposed the types of domestic violence against women, It illustrated that the types of domestic violence against women can be categorized under 4 spectrum. These are Physical (supported by 44%), Sexual (supported by 16%), Economic (supported by 32%), and physiological (supported by 8%). This analysis suggested that most prevent types of domestic violence against women in rural area are by prevalence are; physical, then economic, then sexual followed by physiological.
- The third analysis disclosed the causes of domestic violence against women. It projected that the causes of domestic violence against

women can be classified under seven tiers. These classification are as follows; age gap (supported by 12%), second marriage (supported by 16%), inconsistent physical need (supported by 26 %), conflict in decision making (supported by 44%), pressure from husband to wife's family (supported by 50%), family dispute (supported by 64%), dowry (supported by 76%). This analysis implied that most prevent causes of domestic violence against women in rural area are by prevalence are; dowry, family dispute, pressure from husband to wife's family, conflict in decision making, inconsistent physical need, second marriage and age gap.

- The fourth analysis reflected the aftermath of domestic violence against women. It pointed out that the aftermath of domestic violence against women can be classified under 8 categories, these are as follows; deserted (supported by 2%), sex trafficking (supported by 4%), suicide need (supported by 8 %), divorced (supported by 10%), dishonored (supported by 26%), trauma (supported by 40%), depression (supported by 52%) Patch up (supported by 82%). This analysis shows that most prevent aftermath of domestic violence against women in rural area are by prevalence are; patch-up, depression, mental breakdown dishonored, divorced, suicide, forced sex trafficking, deserted.

Conclusion

Studies on domestic violence against women in rural Bangladesh, and even the Jhenaidah district specifically, demonstrate that it is a deeply entrenched and complex problem with roots in cultural, gendered, and socioeconomic factors. The findings suggest an essential gap in handling domestic violence in rural areas, where despite progress in national regulations addressing violence against women it is often left behind or normalized, . Important research indicates that there many distinct kinds of domestic violence. The most common is physical abuse, though other forms of abuse include financial, sexual, psychological, and physical abuse. The reasons for violence could be many, but the major ones are the pressure of the husband's family, conflict in the family, and demands of dowry. Further, many victims either fail to identify or characterize their experiences as acts of violence; this means that there is a sort of psychological and cultural barrier that screens off the problem from being identified and addressed. These are exposed to severe outcomes, from mental health problems such as depression and breakdowns to the extreme outcomes of forced sex trafficking, divorce, and even suicide in these countryside settings. Due seem cultural norms against reporting abuse or leaving abusive relationships, economic dependency, or societal pressures, majority of the victims from rural area try to "patch up" despite the violence. The urgent need for targeted interventions addressing the sociocultural recognition of domestic abuse and providing access to

knowledge of legal frameworks, support services, and education was pointed out in this study. Simultaneously, with legislation in place, it is an effort that must be continued at a personal level to bring in change in the deep-rooted cultural norms, reduce dependency on male partners for economic sustenance, and provide access to easy support for victims of domestic abuse in rural Bangladesh.

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