

Assessing Current Situation of Domestic Violence against Women

A Study in Hasandaha, Morang

✍️ Krishna P Pandey
Gyanendra Shrestha

Abstract

Nepal like many other countries represents a multicultural characteristics having patriarchal social structure. Recognizing the need to effectively reduce the incidences of violence against women, Nepal ratified the CEDAW in 1991. But the incidences of DVAW have been repeatedly reported and the challenge to the human rights of the Nepalese women has been added. The heterogeneity of Nepalese society and social interaction among the different caste/ethnic groups make the issue of DVAW more complicated that eventually requires sociological study. The people of Hasandaha, Morang, represent the caste/ethnic heterogeneity and could be the representation of Nepalese villages. The women of that village are also suffering from multiple forms of violence against them. Physical assault, sexual abuse to psychological torture is among the forms of violence that they aspire to escape from. Rigid caste norms and patriarchal values constrict the freedom of movement among the women of Hasandaha village. These women express that the government, NGOs and civil society should have decisive roles with regard to the elimination of domestic violence against women. For this, effective mobilization of local communities, awareness generation among them and changes in the state's attitude towards DVAW only as of private concern are key to reduce the incidences of DVAW in Hasandaha village of Morang district, Nepal.

Keywords: domestic violence, gender based violence, autonomy, perpetrators, untouchability, sexual violence, freedom

1. Introduction

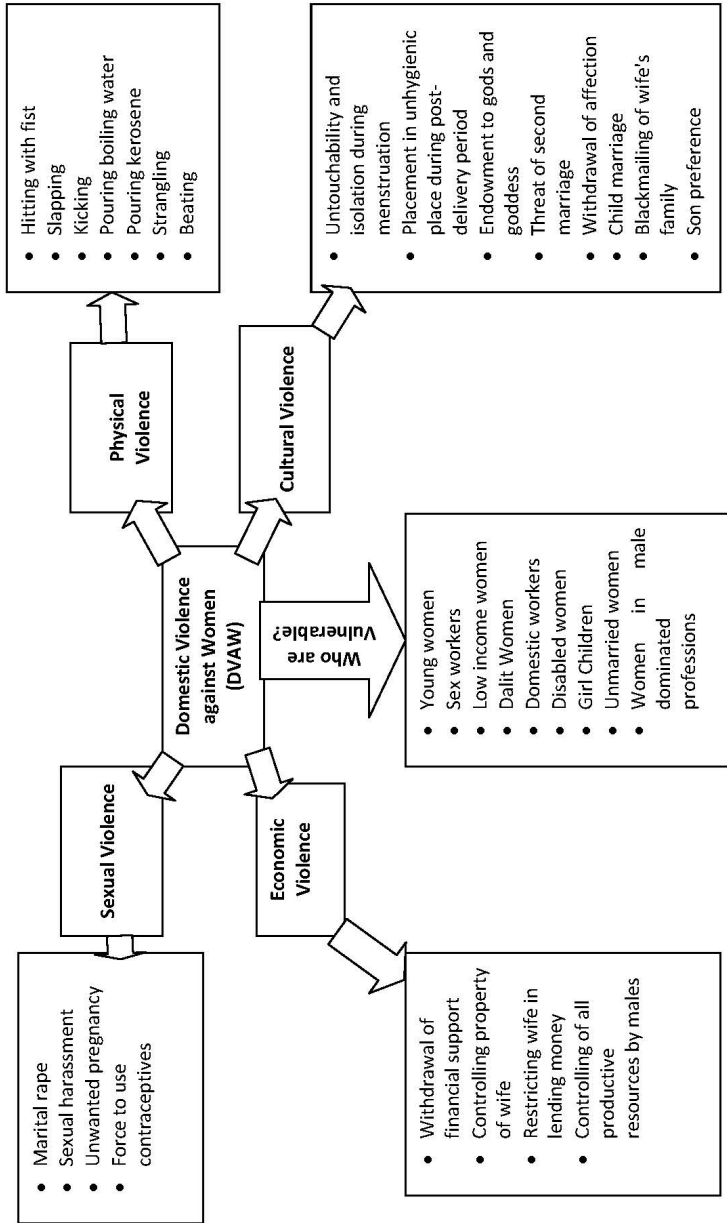
Domestic violence against women (hereafter, DVAW) is a social and public health problem as well as a human right abuse with a high prevalence worldwide. For individuals all over the world, home is a safe heaven, yet it is at home that many people, all over the world, are subjected to heinous crimes of terror and violence and even death at the hands of family members who are supposed to love and protect them. They are victimized

physically, sexually and psychologically. However, when the abuse is in inside home, it is condoned by a large part of the society, state and law enforcement machinery.

Domestic violence against women is not a new subject matter for the developing countries like Nepal. Different development programs have been launched to liberate Nepalese women from violence but, still, they are downtrodden and at the bottom of the development mainstream. Having been deprived of all sources and means, women's conditions are more painful. Most of the cases of domestic violence are of types of gender violence by men at women or girls. Women are the main victim because they have lower status and less power in society than men (Acharya, 1997). In Nepal, violence against women is one of the major factors responsible for the poor health of women, livelihood, insecurity, and inadequate social mobilization. The magnitude of gender-based violence in Nepal is very high. Several research projects in Nepal have indicated that 66 percent of women have endured verbal abuse, 33 percent emotional abuse, while 77 percent of the perpetrators were family members (UNICEF, 2001). This indicates that even the home is not a safe place for women. Social relationships formed on unequal power sharing place women in a subordinate position, giving many women few rights in the family, community and society in general. In addition, in the context of political conflict, women have often become the target of violence. Because women are made the objects of revenge, there has been an increase in sexual assault and sexual harassment. Thus, gender-based violence is a serious issue that requires a comprehensive solution.

Morang District as well is no more exception in this regard. This district has one sub-metropolitan city and 65 VDCs. Even though the door of development in Nepal has opened from eastern part of Nepal, there are still many more problems existed in rural/urban areas.

Conceptual Framework on Domestic Violence against Women



How is DVAW defined?

Likewise other forms of crime, domestic violence is not a problem of Nepal only, it is spread beyond the South Asian regions and is prevalent all over the world. Also it is not a very new phenomenon; it is as old as the origin of the family, though its nature has changed as per place and period of time. As in the market, the resourceful person dominates to the resource less ones in family, which ultimately results into the violation of the rights of the weaker one and therefore a violence. However, due to the lack of reporting of these kinds of matters in the public and also being considered from the very beginning as something that is “private” and “non-interferable matter” was not defined as crime and therefore was not addressed by the procedures of the law. Now a days with the increasing trend of reporting against the violence that occurs within the domain of domestic sphere it is clearly reflected that like other acts of crime, domestic violence is a universal phenomenon prevailing everywhere from the past till to date, may it be developed countries or the developing ones.

DVAW as a Gender Based Violence

To define domestic violence is also as difficult as to define the crime, it does not always involve physical assault; it may take the form of emotional as well as physical and sexual abuse, such as punching, hitting, slapping, throwing object, pulling hair, twisting limbs, choking and other forms of physical assault, using weapons, threatening to injure or otherwise harm the victim or the children, damaging property for example, furniture or pets to frighten the partner, sexual abuse or assault and depriving a partner of basic needs, food, money, outside contact with friends or relatives, putting her down in public, humiliating her and making her feel worthless. As per UNICEF in the Reference Kit on ‘Violence Against Women and Girls in South Asia’ (2001), gender-based violence is “any act of commission or omission by individuals or the state, in private or public life, which brings harm, suffering or threat to girls and women, and reflects systematic discrimination – including harmful traditional practices and denial of human rights because of gender.” Gender based violence is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace. Failures to protect and promote women’s rights and freedom are a matter of great concern to all nations, and should be addressed effectively. In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income,

class and culture. Violence against women has been an effective tool in the hands of men through which they can exploit women and establish their supremacy.

At the intergovernmental level, one significant event was the United Nations meeting on violence in the family held in Vienna in 1986. The UN Publication, *Violence against Women in the Family* (UN, 1986) notes that the UN General Assembly in 29th November 1985, recognizing the importance of violence in the home was a milestone, approved the resolution advocating “concerted and multidisciplinary action” both within and outside the United Nations system, to deal with the problem. It also urged governments to adopt specific criminal legislation to obtain an equitable and human response from judicial systems regarding the victimization of women. The resolution marked the recognition by intergovernmental bodies that violence against women is an issue affecting all countries and all cultures and should be a priority for national and international action.

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993) is the first international human rights instrument to exclusively and explicitly address the issue of violence against women. It affirms that the phenomenon violates, impairs or nullifies women’s human rights and their exercise of fundamental freedoms. The Declaration provides a definition of gender-based abuse, calling it “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”.

This has been also reflected in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW provides a working forum for the process of eradicating gender-based violence and promoting gender equity in the international community and at every level of national life.

2. Why is DVAW Research Problem?

Women who are abused have poorer mental and physical health, more injuries, and a greater need for medical resources than non-abused women. The WHO multi-country study on Women’s health and Domestic violence against Women (2005) found that abused women in Brazil, Japan, and Peru are almost twice as likely as non-abused women to report their current health status as poor or very poor.

Several studies have shown that both male and female are victimized due

to DVAW. But the cases of reporting are very less for women. When males become victimized, they promptly report but the case is just opposite for females. They do not dare to report due to various other causes and even due to fear of marital breakup. This also reflects the confirmation of problem of women in the society that makes it the concern of research. Due to Domestic violence, women are deprived from developmental opportunities i.e., education, economic activity, health facilities, basic human rights etc. Even children are vulnerable due to this problem. Therefore the detail research on this area was realized to find the root causes of the domestic violence against women. Violence against women is not only a violation of women's human rights but a major public health problem and significant cause of women's ill-health. Further researches are needed in both developing and developed countries to investigate the content and consequences of violence against women (UNDP, 1998). Domestic violence against women is the present problem of the world. The women cover more than half of the population of the world. So without improving the situation of the women nation cannot get better progress. The large numbers of the women have been victimized of the domestic violence. Women are habituated to bear the domestic violence in the male-dominated society. They have no power to stand against it but the only option is to accept violence against them. Nepal is no more exception in this regard. Government has not established such a precise place, where a woman can report her problem. National Human Rights commission, Police stations and District Administrative Offices are some of the places, where women in Nepal report their cases. However, government has made an action plan against domestic violence against women in 2010, the case filing in rural area has become impossible in recent days due to lack of elected representative in VDC. Morang District is the second largest district of Nepal. People of diverse caste/ethnic background are living in this district. The case of DVAW can be hidden in rural areas. Poverty, illiteracy, lack of job opportunity, lack of family planning practices, lack of women's education, liberty and excessive use of alcohol and drugs are the leading causes of domestic violence which can easily be seen in rural setting of Nepal. Keeping this as a research problem Hasandaha VDC has been selected purposively for the research area. This study has addressed following research questions.

1. What are the roots of the domestic violence?
2. What types of domestic violence are occurring in the study area?

3. What are the solutions to prevent domestic violence?

3. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to identify the situation of Domestic Violence against Women in the study area. The Specific objectives of the study are:

- To find the types and causes of Domestic Violence Against women,
- To suggest preventive measures to reduce the incidence of DVAW,

4. Previous Studies on DVAW

In a situation analysis conducted by SAATHI in 1997 on violence against women in Nepal revealed that 93 percent were exposed to mental and emotional torture, 82 percent were beaten, 30 percent were raped, 28 percent were forced into prostitution, and 64 percent reported polygamy.

A study done by Adhikari and Mabuhang in 2004 in Banke district, among 235 women and adolescent girls revealed that overwhelming majority of the women reported that they were often abused with verbal curse, followed by mental torture (85.2 percent) and harassments because they only gave birth to daughters. Reasons behind underreporting are to save family prestige, and privacy, fear of husband and mother in-law, love and affection with husband and family members, fear of breaking family relation and fear of traditional socio-cultural values. This report shows that the situation of domestic violence at Nepalese community is high.

In the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), the issue of legal provisions to ensure women's rights and institutional legal provision to prevent Violence against women was raised and Constitution does not allow any kind of discrimination based on sex, caste, creed or color. There are still dozens of discriminatory provisions against women in the forms of denied access to and control over resources, restricted mobility, low representation in decision-making positions in civil services, politics and public sectors, lack of opportunities for advancement and the attendant problems resulting in longer working hours, illiteracy, poor health, high maternal mortality rates, increasing number of trafficking of women and girls, violence against women and girls, witch-hunting and so on. 11th amendment in the Civil Code in 2002 did broaden women's property rights but they cannot still sell, rent or otherwise transfer property without the consent of her spouse and sons. Little or no access to land restricts women's ability to obtain credit, be financially independent and move

out of violent relationships and homes. With the continuous efforts and pressure of women's right activists and other civil society institutions, the government has passed a Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act 2062 (2005) in the year 2006, realizing the need of comprehensive, effective and human right sensitive law but that bill has not seriously act due to the political instability. The latest amendment 2006 has brought a landmark provision relating to equal rights to women and it guarantees women's human rights.

Deuba (1997), in her article on 'Violence Against Women: Focus on Domestic Violence' has noted a very serious societal problem because women from all classes and ages experience it but hesitate to report though it is life threatening for many of them and have grave consequences not only on their physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well being but also on the families of victims and survivors. All the above evidences proved that the domestic violence against women is the major hidden social problem in our society.

DVAW in Nepal

Historically, violence against women has been in existence and a widespread and deep-rooted social and family problem in Nepal. Generally, violence is a tool of terror and its use can be seen to male assumptions about privileged access and ownership (Gill and Rehman: 2004). The interim constitution of Nepal (2006) has provided equal rights to all citizens of Nepal but it is an irony that women are still in pathetic condition. At home, girls are physically weak, they should not act as boy, they are protected by men, and they are made dependent on men. It is stated that around the world, at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Different forms of violence are faced by women since before birth, childhood, adolescence and reproductive age to old age.

The fourth international conference on women (1995) and the CEDAW (1979) insist that all forms of discrimination and violence against women should be removed from the world. But the government of Nepal has not been made such effective mechanisms to solve the problem timely. The time has passed so long but still violence remains in the same position as before. It may be due to lack of responsible program towards women especially in the rural areas of Nepal. Similarly there is not such institution in the rural part of Nepal where a woman can report herself to solve the problem. Therefore it seems that immediate action should to be taken and

instituted in rural areas to eradicate all forms of violence against women to provide them better physical and mental health and environment to work. Nepalese women carry triple role in the society. As production workers they contribute directly to subsistence and income. As mother and wife they care for the family members and children and as community worker they give all their leisure hours and labor to society (Acharya, 1997). A vicious circle of threat to their 'purity' and physical harm restricts the mobility of women. The first step toward the empowerment will have to be guaranteed (SAATHI and Asia Foundation, 1997). All form of violence appears to be higher in lower economic status and more cases appear against women who lack financial resources and have no alternative protection. Victims are mostly below the age 25 and those who lack self confidence. Police reaction to female victims of violence in our culture does not require professional counseling but needs only supportive persons who can listen to them sympathetically and help them to face the psychological and social issue legally (Aujha, 1998).

CEDAW and the Violence against Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) held on 1979 was the first of its kind to compel member states of UN to take steps towards gender equality and against the discrimination of women. It is the first international human rights instrument that exclusively addresses the issue of violence against women. It defines the right of the women to be free from discrimination and sets the core principles to protect this right. The convention establishes an agenda for national action to end discrimination and provides the basis for achieving equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in political and public life as well as education, health and employment. CEDAW provides a working forum for the process of eradicating gender based violence and promoting gender equity in the international community and at every level of national life. Nepal is also a member of this convention. So the state should take every legal measure necessary to protect women from all forms of abuse including domestic violence that inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. Furthermore it holds states responsible for addressing the private acts of domestic violence and acknowledges this is reviewing their laws and policies.

5. Study Area and Sample Population

In this study, Hasandaha village of Morang, Nepal has been selected as the study area, which is situated in eastern Inner Terai of the country. In this study descriptive research design has been applied. Total 200 households were selected from the community. The married women of age cohort 15-49 years having at least one under five year child were asked the structured questionnaire in order to obtain the information. In total, 200 households were interviewed gradually. Non-probability purposive sampling technique has been used in this study.

Closed and semi structured questionnaire was developed for interview and pre-test was conducted in order to minimize the errors before the field visit. The questionnaire has been developed based on the research objectives in such a way that the information could be obtained to fulfil the research objective perfectly. The questionnaire was administered with the help of a local female assistant to the women of reproductive age cohorts. The local female assistant was hired to facilitate the communication in local language as well as to minimize the gender based biasness during interview.

Ethical Issues

Data has been collected with verbal consent of the respondents. Following ethical issues were fully maintained:

- All the information belonging to the respondents are kept confidential except for this research purpose.
- Right to privacy of the respondents is maintained.
- No information is published, which violates the autonomy of the respondents.
- The researcher has followed the norms of justice, human dignity and cultural sensitivity of the respondents.

6. Discussions

Physical Violence and its Causes

Physical violence is the main focus in this study that further includes the perpetrators in the family who physically assault to their females. It also focuses on types of physical assaults a female has to face in home and the possible causes for the assaults. It is estimated that globally 20-50percent physical violence are observed. Among all the respondents 155 reported that physical violence occurred in their home within the last one year. Seventy seven percent respondents face battering from their husbands and

the rest of the respondents reply that they face such events from other family members of their family. The result depicts that three out of four married women get battered from their better halves. Furthermore, it can be concluded that a married woman in a family is not secured even from her husband. The situation of VDC is worse than in an Asian country which is not more than 50percent.

While analyzing the reasons behind such kinds of physical assaults all the causes they expressed are divided in to two causes: major and minor. These two categories of causes are divided on the basis of the intensity of reaction that was reflected by husband or other members of the family. The study reveals that 68.3percent respondents were beaten due to the causes related to disobedience, not giving birth to son, dowry related, disobedience of sex request by husband, doubt on external affairs and advice given to husband not to use alcohol. Similarly, 31.6percent respondents were beaten because of listening to others' comments, husband's extra marital affairs, minor mistakes, not allowing talking to others, not receiving financial support from maternal side, giving suggestion to husband for son birth and not giving birth to many children. The result depicts that a woman should remain obedient in all aspects as husband expects otherwise she has to face any sorts of violence. The causes which are listed above as major might also create other violence.

Response on any kinds of physical assaults immediately by women is considered worst to solve the problem due to patriarchal society. The general practice of the society to get resolve the conflict by the community itself is, first, to ask the women whether she responded in the same way to the assaulters or not. Of the 155 respondents who were beaten by their husband and other family members, 10 percent reported that they reacted during beating and 90 percent respondents who did not express any responses. This situation concludes that women are knowledgeable and even living together in such a worse situation. The reacted respondents also reported that they tried to resolve the situation locally before seeking permanent solution from legal and community side. This can also be analyzed on the basis of economic activities of female which is not satisfactory because they have to depend with husband throughout the life. This has become a part of culture in South Asia.

Among the respondents physically assaulted by their husbands, 82 percent of them re-established their communication within a week. It was reported that only 18 percent of them re-started their communication after a week.

This data helps prove the Nepali proverb 'Logne Swasni Ko Jhagada: Paral Ko Aago'. The consequences might be seen to children's schooling, health, employment and other welfare as well.

Expulsion from Home

Many women in Nepal are victim of expel from home due to inferior situation at residence as a consequence of physical violence. This situation is not easily solved. Generally the situation moves up to divorce and male enters into second marriage. The study shows that 20 percent respondents were temporarily left the home due to physical violence. Also it was noted that 19 percent female household head were also expelled from their family. Similarly, 58 percent respondents living in joint family were reported that they forced to live in another's home for a short period. It can be concluded from the result that male head of the household and the joint family structure are the prominent indicators that make female to leave home when the intensity of quarrel among family members is very high. Almost 71 percent respondents reported that husbands involved as major perpetrators in expelling women from home and followed by 19 percent and 10 percent by Mother/Father in Laws and by other family members respectively. It can be concluded from the result that the situation of female remains very unfortunate when she is driven out by husband.

Seeking Legal Treatment

It has been a long history of solving any sort of problems at home at first and then, if not solved, consulting with community in Nepal. Decision made by the community is considered to be acceptable to every one as in the form of court order. It is blamed everywhere that such kinds of decisions are male biased which is due to patriarchal society. Having suffered from physical violence, male dominated society controls women not to seek legal treatment. It is said that if a woman goes for remedy by law that breaks down her family life from that home. Female cannot stay economically sustained and independently due to social structure so female would not like to stay alone and cannot break down marital relationship. This is the reason why all the cases are not reported for legal rights (72 percent). Of the total informants who were suffering from physical violence, about 28 percent reported the case aspiring legal action against perpetrator. It depicts that 3 out of 10 cases go for legal action and majority of the case remain unchecked.

When the case of physical assault is very intense and has not solved by their own family members, female goes to other places for legal rights,

whatever she gets the results. Although the government of Nepal has not deployed any particular place to report the case of violence, this research tries to find where the respondents seek legal action against physical assault.

Those who reported among them 34 percent of respondents tried to solve their problem by gathering community people followed by 23 percent of the informants visited the police office to report the violence. Similarly, about 30 percent of the respondents look for the solution of violence from their maternal home. Moreover, 13 percent of the informants reported to the VDCs to search remedies locally. Due to the social, cultural norms and values domestic violence against women is considered as a family matter. Social practices show that very few cases were reported for legal procedure to address the problems. This implies that the government institutions available and existed now in the rural areas of Nepal are not capable of judging violence cases promptly in favor of female victim. The deep rooted case of violence from the rural areas can not be solved promptly until there is particular place to report it.

Discrimination and its Major Causes

Concept of ideal family assumes no discrimination among any member of family. Discrimination between daughter and daughter in-law has been experienced more common in Nepalese society in different aspects such as movement, food item intake, clothing etc. This creates mental deprivation to women as well as low nutritional status. Nepal has committed to abolish all forms of discrimination in various international conferences such as CEDAW, ICPD in 1994 and the Beijing Conference in 1995. This study seeks to know discrimination between daughter and daughter in-law and type of cause they find with them. Considering the fact, 58.5 percent of the respondents were discriminated by father/mother in-law between daughter and daughter in-law and followed by 41.5 percent do not get discrimination. This shows that six out of ten Nepalese women are discriminated by father/mother in-law in home. The result can be explained by the influence of joint family where father/mother-in law resides. After analyzing that there is discrimination or not between daughter and daughter in law the research further tries to get the areas where the respondents feel discrimination.

When asked about the areas of discrimination, about 32 percent of the respondents replied that they are discriminated in food and 23 percent are discriminated in term of cloths. Similarly 16 percent and 10 percent respondents reported that they are discriminated while they participate

in public sphere and exercise freedom of movement, which imply the patriarchy community practices. Work load discrimination is nearly same as compared with cloth.

False Accusation

Nepalese women are getting different false charges from family members especially from their husband, mother/father in-law and other family members when they fail to pay proper respect and recognition to the elder members of the family. This is a kind of psychological violence. The personal development of women cannot be possible from the home where a female get such charges.

The finding shows that about 38.5 percent of the respondents replied that their husbands charge them for false accusation. Similarly mother/father in law charges false accusation by 29 percent. Only 11 percent false accusation is charged by other family members. The highest frequency of false accusation is by husbands. The result depicts that there are three to four women out of 10 who face psychological torture in home.

Untouchability and its Reasons

In Nepalese community father/mother in-law and other members impose fake charges to their daughter in-law in case of different situation with/out proper reasons, in such a moment they frequently deny food items cooked by her. This type of question was asked to the respondents to know the actual practice in their families. Majority of the respondents (90 percent) were shared that their family members take food cooked by them and followed by 10 percent respondents faced such behavior in their family. This kind of practice helps develop psychological pressure to the female in the areas in which they charge them. This is normally taken in a situation of un-acceptance of daughter-in-law.

Though the situation of untouched food items prepared by female is very less, the study aimed to seek the reasons on it. Fifty percent respondents reported that family members do not take food cooked by them due to their inter-caste marriage and followed by same percentage of the respondents reported that their marriage was not recognized by family members. This result also indicates that the marriage of offspring is mainly the concern of their parents. If parents deny not having marriage of their concern, the early sign is the denial of food items cooked by the bride. Therefore marriage is the social cause which is responsible for violence in rural areas.

Movement, Participation and Decision Making

Females are always deprived from taking part in meetings in community

and they are also not asked for advice at the time of selling or buying things/property. Over burden of household chores and limited access to employment opportunities are some of the reasons which always restrict female not to get participation in community activities. Finding out the reasons on above mentioned areas, many relevant questions were asked to the respondents in this study. All the respondents were asked whether they were taking part in community meetings or not. About 15 percent of the respondents participated in the community meetings by themselves followed by 49.5 percent of the respondents reported that their husbands participated in the events. Similarly, 32.5 percent of the respondents said that their father/mother in laws were involved to participate in the community functions. Only one out of 10 women is participating on her own decision. This is equated with the violation of the universal slogan of right to movement for female.

Women, who take part in the community meetings, should seek permission from the other eldest member of the family. They have not such right of participation without getting permission. The scenario also indicates the freedom for movement. Among the respondents who participated in the community gatherings, 23.3 percent of respondents mentioned that they participated in the gatherings only having sought permission from their husbands followed by 70 percent of respondents who participated from their own decision. And, the rest of the respondents (6.6 percent) participated in the events when their mother/father in laws permitted. The result also indicates that there is restriction on freedom of movement for them.

Rural people produce different items such as vegetables, pigeon and chicken for meat and they sell such items in the Haat/Hatia (local weekly market) and buy some goods for their family. This is the common practice all over the country. Women should always seek permission from others when they go for selling and buying goods for the family. Scolds and verbal abuse are to be faced if they do not get permission each time. The permission with respondents was not sought in practice while buying and selling goods, out of the total respondents, 52.5 percent did not ask during selling and buying goods followed by 19 percent respondents who consulted only rarely. It can be concluded that there are five women who are free in selling/buying but rest of them have to take permission to do so. The result might be due to structure of family that they have.

Economic dependency is one of the major factors that contribute to

domestic violence against women. Women are economically dependent on men as a result they are compelled to tolerate the violence. Due to the dependency of women for economic support on men or their family they have no other option but to meekly follow men. This study also asked one question to know who supported pocket money for managing daily expenses. Most of the respondents (63 percent) seem dependent on their husband. This statement also proves that our society is dominated by the patriarchal system. Only 28.5 percent respondents can manage pocket money themselves. This is also due to the limited access to economy and resources for the female which is more common in rural areas of Nepal.

Support for Food

Generally a woman in a family always takes food after feeding to all their family members. Its proportion seems more in that family in which woman's occupation is housewife. After taking food by all the members, they do not ask her whether food remained for her or not. Husband is considered the first person that he should ask to his wife whether she took food or not. This kind of practice degrades her health especially at the time of pregnancy and child birth.

All the respondents were asked a question on the priority on feeding to know the actual practice of discrimination in food within family. About 75.5 percent of respondents replied that they take food after all the members, followed by 15 percent of respondents replied that they take food with all family members and 3.5 percent of the respondents take their meal together with their husband. This also indicates that why Nepalese women have problem of malnutrition at the time of pregnancy. It is also found that 63.5 percent women were not asked for food taken or not, which shows a higher percentage of food discrimination. 36.5 percent of the respondents reported that they have asked for food. Among those who asked for food, 70 percent of the respondents were asked by their husband and rest of them was asked by other family members.

Violation of Health Rights

Current Interim Plan (2010/11-2012/13) of Nepal incorporates health as a human right of the people. Many international conferences, convention and consensus documents have advocated for providing health services to women who are in need and are vulnerable. Each female during pregnancy and after delivery needs special support from family members (home), community and the state as a whole. A woman deprived from antenatal check up, nutritious food during and after child birth, enough

rest etc are considered here as a violation of her health rights. This study has considered all these issues to know the situation of women in the study area.

Violence during Pregnancy and Child Birth

This study tried to explore whether Nepalese women in the rural areas are getting help in pregnancy and childbirth or not and also from which members of the family they get support. 100 percent of the respondents had got at least one child. Pregnancy is a kind of special time in which a female needs help, especially from husband and then from the other family members. Antenatal care, Delivery care and the Post natal care are the special periods which are completed by various types of medical as well as other types of counseling. It also helps reduce Infant and child mortality as well as maternal mortality when each pregnancy is well supported by these facilities. A question was asked them than who supported her in antenatal and postnatal period. 35 percent of the respondents have supported during pregnancy from their husbands whereas after pregnancy only about 25.5 percent of the respondents get support from their husbands.

This also indicates that most of the males feel that the supportive role to wife goes to the family members (42 percent) after childbirth. But the international organization advocates for the role of male in safeguarding maternal health. Increase in male involvement in pregnancy and childbirth helps to reduce maternal and child death rate (UNFPA, 2007). In addition, still about 27.5 percent women are not getting any support from any members while this percentage reduced to 11.5 percent after childbirth.

Nutritious Food and Maternity Care

Nutritious food is essential for giving birth a healthy baby and protections of mother's health. Asian countries have great problems of malnutrition. Pregnancy is a special situation in which a female needs more than normal food. The deprivation of such foods results the high infants and maternal death. The figure below shows about 76 percent of the respondents is provided nutritious food sometimes during pregnancy and after child birth. This shows that more than half of women are not getting nutritious food during pregnancy and after childbirth regularly. Similarly, 10 percent of the respondents are not getting any nutritious food even if they had knowledge about the necessity of nutritious food. It can be concluded from the result that rural women are not very much safe and the birth given by them might have various kinds of illnesses due to the lack of essential quantity and quality of food during and after child birth.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence occurs throughout the world. Millions of people are affected by this type of violence which is driven by a range of social, economic and political context that results gender inequality. Marital rape, a type of sexual violence, is defined as the sexual intercourse between husband and wife without the consent of wife. This study also asked one question to know the sexual abuse in rural settings.

Seventy nine percent respondents are facing the sexual violence. In addition to sexual violence, 27 percent respondents reported that they were forced for sex while they deny sexual relation. Only two out of 10 women have sex relation with consensus. This is critical situation of sexual violence. This indicates that the prevalence of marital rape is very high in Nepalese community despite the fact that none of the cases has been reported. About 24 percent of the respondents informed that their husbands were forced them to have sex in male headed family but the percentage is seen higher in female headed family where forced sex is 32 percent.

Mitigation of DVAW

Domestic Violence is widely stretched in all caste/ethnic groups as well as in all people of different occupation and educational status. Only the difference is the intensity of the cases. Therefore, a question can be raised that how could it be solved? A question was asked with respondents to identify the potential solution of mitigating domestic violence against women in the study area. About 39 percent women suggested that the government should create awareness to couple and educate women. Similarly 12 percent stressed on the counseling to the victims and 9 percent respondents suggested for family meditation. But less proportion of respondents (4 percent) replied to provide free legal service by government. It can be concluded from the respondents' response that an integrated works towards female from government and all other stakeholders in terms of policy and legal provision, institution, employment opportunity, counseling, free legal provision and increase paralegal literacy etc can be the best options to mitigate DVAW. They also suggested incorporating these views in making policies and program towards women.

Knowledge on Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act 2066 (2009 AD)

A woman should always be aware about her health and social well being from the behaviors expressed towards her by diverse people at home, society and the nation as a whole. Harmful sexual activities, marital rape,

physical assault, expulsion from home and discrimination in food etc are few of the examples of violence against women, which are also condemned by international community. Moreover, a woman is independent to seek legal solution in terms of jurisdiction if violence exists. The government of Nepal has endorsed laws on DVAW to stop it and also has brought in execution its rules, regulations along with national strategies. A question was asked to respondents whether they knew about the legal provision of the country or not. About 91.5 percent of the respondents reported that they were unaware on the Act of domestic violence against women which was promulgated by the Government of Nepal on 14th Baisakh 2066 (27 April, 2009). Only 8.5 percent of the respondents know about the Act. This shows that the government's commitment of IEC policy, right to be informed and to get information is not being executed properly. As a result very few percentages of women are known about the current Act endorsed by Constitutional assembly. Unless women of Nepal remain quite unaware about the laws the violence remains as it is.

7. Conclusion

This study showed that all respondents were from rural community, followers of Hinduism, agriculture and housewife background. Husbands and wives are two wheels of a cart. This slogan is essential to run family smoothly but the women living in the Hasandaha village are not feeling so. The DVAW cases are under reporting due to fear from the society as if it made public it would create difficulties in marital life.

All the respondents indicated that the misunderstanding between father/mother in law and husband, unnecessary doubt on wife, use of alcohol, dowry system, longer staying than permitted in maternal home, not giving birth to a son, unwanted sex, lack of awareness, conflict between educated daughter in law and uneducated mother in law, poverty, polygamy, not earning money by women, joint family, complex social structure/custom/culture, unemployment and patriarchy social structure are causes of violence at the villages. The pressure group formed in this VDC, even in wards could be the best place for solving domestic violence. These types of organizations should be institutionalized and they should also include male members. Moreover, these types of organizations should run training cum awareness program on DVAW for both male and female.

There are many reasons for Domestic Violence against Women. Among them lack of education and ignorance, socio-cultural power relation, lack

of awareness, alcoholic addiction, poverty and economic problems are viewed as main reasons for DVAW. Counseling, Family Mediation, Job opportunities, free legal service help to the victims of Domestic Violence. Women living without any work during whole day made them boring and only constricted in domestic works so that they are becoming the victim of DVAW from their mother/father in law. Moreover, unequal level of education between daughter in law and mother/father in law made them victim. Unequal distribution of nutritious foods during the pregnancy and post delivery period is another challenge among the women of that village. Similarly, the forced sexual activity by the husbands is also reported as a form of violence in the community. The Government have not developed and implemented concrete plan to educate community people on formed/endorsed law, policy and plan of domestic violence against women.

8. Recommendations

For the purpose of reducing violence against women and improving health for women, the following interventions are recommended. The information should be used to make plans for future work and it will also serve as a benchmark for measuring progress on violence. These recommendations are mainly focused on the program implementers.

Policy level

- The Government should establish domestic violence against women unit at each District Development Committee (DDC) to monitor the situation of violence
- The Government should make provision for legal help centers at each VDC level. Free legal service should be provided to the victim of domestic violence.
- The Government/(I)NGOs should formulate and implement the human rights and health rights related program at the community level.
- All INGOs/NGOs who are working for DVAW should develop advocacy and networking mechanism to advocate for policy revision, develop plan and budget for reducing violence in the community.
- Domestic Violence against Women related contents should be included in the school and college curriculum by the Government.
- Training mechanisms should cover contemporary issues of DVAW, human rights etc.
- Current Violence Reporting places such as police station, VDC office party leader should also be targeted in training program so that these

organizations/persons can decide the cases more rationally.

- Government should run different kinds of programs to increase women's job opportunities in rural area. They have to be provided loans without interest in a group which help to uplift economic status of women.

Community level

- Pressure groups should be formed in each ward of VDCs to manage violence against women locally.
- Different awareness raising activities should be organized against violence at the local level.
- Role of mass media needs to be enhanced. Poster, pamphlets, Hording board, radio/FM, TV program could be effective more. It can help to prevent or eliminate domestic violence.
- The alcohol buying and selling activities should be managed properly at local level by formulating policies and procedures by the VDC.
- Training, workshop and interaction meeting should be organized with political leaders, police and social leaders on the DVAV.
- Income generation program should be designed and implemented for women to increase their income.
- Social norms and values should be redefined and punishment system should be developed so that no perpetrators could escape from the punishment.
- Postal hotline system should be initiated at the VDC level to receive complain of victim.
- Local mothers' group, NGO, and CBOs have to do necessary works to prevent or eliminate domestic violence in the study area.

...

References

- Acharya, M. (1997). Gender equality and empowerment of women: A status report submitted to UNFPA Nepal; UNFPA; Kathmandu.
- Adhikari, K. P. and Mabuhang, B. K., (2004). Baseline survey on domestic violence against women in Banke. Kathmandu: The Asia Foundation.
- Asia Foundation. (2000). *Violence against women and girl in Nepal*. Kathmandu: The Asia Foundation.
- Aujha, R., (2001). *Violence against women*. Kathmandu: Rawat Publication.

- Deuba, A. (1997). *Violence against women: focus on domestic violence*. Stri Shakti; Kathmandu.
- Gill, A. and Rehman, G. (2004): Empowerment through activism: responding to domestic violence. In *South Asian Community, Gender and Development*, 12 (1): 75-82. London: Routledge.
- GON. (2007). *The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 (2007), Part three: Fundamental Rights*. Kathmandu: GON
- Rana Deuba, A. (1997). The situational analysis of violence against women and girls in Nepal. Kathmandu: SAATHI/TAF.
- UN. (1986). *Violence against women in the family*. New York: UN.
- UN. (2009). Annual report on Programme of Action, International Conference on Population and Development. Kathmandu: UN.
- World Health Organization. (1998). Progress in Human Reproduction Research. Division of Reproductive Health, UNDP/UNFPA/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, and Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP). Geneva: WHO.
- UNICEF, (2000). *Domestic violence against women and girls*, UNICEF; Italy
- UNICEF. (2001). Reference Kit on Violence Against Women and Girls in South Asia. Kathmandu: UNICEF.
- WHO. (2005). Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women, report. Switzerland: WHO.