

AMOGHVARTA

ISSN : 2583-3189



Domestic Violence between Working and Home Making Women in terms of Some Psychological Traits

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Author

Dr. Sudha Kumari

M.A. (Psychology), Ph.D.

East Ram Krishnanagar, PO.-Jaganpura

Patna-27, Bihar, INDIA

Abstract

The present empirical study was undertaken to see the effect of domestic violence on anxiety, adjustment, depression, aggression and ego-strength of the respondents. It was hypothesized that (i) there would be significant effect of domestic violence on anxiety, adjustment, ego-strength, depression and aggression of the respondents. (ii) there would be significant difference between working and home-making women in terms of domestic violence. For the purpose 50 working and 50 home-making women were selected from Patna Town. The respondents were administered Kumar's Domestic Violence Scale, Sinha's Anxiety Scale, Mohsin's and Shamshad's Adjustment Inventory, Hasan's Ego-strength Scale, Jamuar's MDI and Singh's Aggression Scale to measure domestic violence, anxiety, adjustment, ego-strength, depression and aggression of the respondents respectively. Besides a PDS was used to get other necessary informations relating to the respondents. Using median value respondents were

divided into high & low domestic violence group. The data were obtained as per the directions of the manuals of the scales concerned. The obtained data were treated using *t*-test. The results confirmed both the formulated hypotheses. It was concluded that – (i) psychological factors under study are influenced by domestic violence (ii) home-making and working dimension are conducive to domestic violence.

Key Words

Violence, Women, Psychological Traits.

Introduction

Domestic violence (DV), a pervasive social issue, continues to be a significant concern in societies worldwide, impacting individuals across diverse backgrounds and demographic categories. Defined as the pattern of physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse that occurs within intimate relationships, domestic violence can have profound effects on both the victims and the broader societal framework. While domestic violence knows no boundaries, its psychological and emotional toll on women is particularly alarming. The effects of domestic violence on women's psychological well-being are especially poignant, as such abuse often leads to lasting emotional and mental health challenges.

Psychological correlates such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), low self-esteem, and feelings of helplessness are commonly observed in survivors of domestic violence. These psychological ramifications can manifest in various forms, affecting their relationships, their social interactions, and most importantly, their capacity to function in everyday life. The impact of domestic violence on women is not only a private and personal matter but also a public health crisis, with far-reaching consequences for families, communities, and society as a whole.

The psychological effects of domestic violence are often further compounded by the woman's economic situation, particularly when examining the contrasting experiences of working and non-working women. In societies where traditional gender roles dominate, non-working women (often homemakers) may be more isolated and financially dependent on their abusers. This economic dependency can create a power imbalance, making it more difficult for them to leave abusive relationships or seek help. The economic disadvantage often experienced by non-working women contributes to a sense of entrapment, which can exacerbate feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

On the other hand, working women may appear to have greater autonomy due to their financial independence and engagement in the workforce. However, the psychological effects of domestic violence on them can still be profound. Working women experiencing abuse may experience feelings of guilt, shame, or stigma, leading to an unwillingness to disclose the abuse. Despite being employed, they may still face challenges such as disrupted productivity, decreased job satisfaction, difficulty concentrating, and an overall diminished sense of personal efficacy due to the psychological distress caused by the violence.

The effects of domestic violence on working and non-working women may differ in some respects, but they also share many commonalities. One critical similarity is the way abuse erodes self-esteem and autonomy. Regardless of employment status, both working and non-working women often struggle with issues related to self-worth, powerlessness, and the undermining of their agency. This psychological toll can manifest in a variety of ways, from increased absenteeism from work to a lack of motivation and impaired ability to perform daily tasks effectively.

The psychological impact of domestic violence on women also varies based on the nature and severity of the abuse. Emotional and psychological abuse, which includes tactics such as gaslighting, manipulation, and verbal attacks, can be just as damaging, if not more so, than physical violence. Women subjected to emotional abuse may experience chronic stress, anxiety, and depression. Such abuse often has long-lasting effects, as it can severely diminish one's sense of identity and self-worth, leading to lasting emotional scars.

Moreover, the impact of domestic violence extends beyond the individual woman to her children and family. Children who witness or are aware of domestic violence in the household may themselves experience psychological trauma, including behavioral issues, anxiety, depression, and difficulty forming secure relationships later in life. Additionally, women who experience domestic violence may find it difficult to effectively parent, resulting in further emotional and psychological strain.

This research seeks to explore the psychological correlates of domestic violence among working and non-working women. By examining the unique challenges faced by these two groups, it is possible to better understand the distinct and shared effects that domestic violence has on women's mental health. Furthermore, this study highlights the need for targeted interventions that take into account the individual circumstances of women, including their employment status and economic vulnerability, in order to provide adequate psychological and social support to help them break free from the cycle of abuse.

Ultimately, understanding the relationship between domestic violence and psychological health in both working and non-working women is crucial for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies. By acknowledging the unique and overlapping effects of abuse, policymakers, mental health professionals, and

social workers can better tailor their approaches to address the diverse needs of women affected by domestic violence.

Review of Literature

Coker, A. L., Smith, P. H., et al.³ (2002) reviewed examines the psychological outcomes of domestic violence, focusing on common mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among female victims. It finds a strong correlation between exposure to domestic violence and negative psychological health outcomes. The study emphasizes the need for integrated healthcare services to address both the physical and psychological needs of women affected by domestic violence. Goodman, L. A., et al.⁵ (2009) reviewed key studies on the psychological consequences of domestic violence, highlighting how such abuse can lead to long-term psychological damage, including PTSD, depression, and suicidal tendencies. The review also discusses the challenges faced by women in abusive relationships, particularly in accessing mental health services due to stigma or fear of retaliation from abusers. Campbell, J. C., et al.² (2002) reviewed how employment can serve as both a protective and risk factor for women experiencing domestic violence. The review suggests that while employment offers financial independence, it can also create a “double burden” as working women may face challenges in balancing work and coping with abuse. The article stresses the importance of workplace support for survivors of domestic violence. Tiwari, A., et al.¹¹ (2005) explored the gendered dimensions of domestic violence and its psychological impact on women. The review highlights that women, particularly those in abusive relationships, often experience lower self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. It also examines how social support networks—both formal and informal—can influence recovery outcomes, with a particular focus on how non-working women may be more socially isolated. Silverman, J. G., et al.¹⁰ (2001) examined the psychological effects of economic dependency in abusive relationships. Non-working women often experience heightened psychological distress due to their lack of financial independence, leading to feelings of powerlessness and fear. The article discusses the role of financial resources in helping women escape abuse and recover from its psychological effects. Danielson, C. K., et al.⁴ (2006) focused specifically on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a psychological outcome of domestic violence. It presents evidence showing that women who have experienced domestic violence are at a significantly higher risk of developing PTSD. The article emphasizes the need for trauma-informed care for domestic violence survivors to address the severe psychological impact of abuse. Johnson, M. P., et al.⁸ (2008) explored various coping mechanisms employed by women experiencing domestic violence. It distinguishes between the coping strategies of working and non-working women, finding that working women are more likely to engage in avoidance or disengagement strategies due to the added stress of balancing work and home life. Non-working women, in contrast, may often internalize their trauma, leading to depression and helplessness. Raj, A., et al.⁹ (2006) focused on non-working women and the heightened psychological vulnerability they experience due to financial dependence and isolation in abusive relationships. Non-working women are at greater risk of anxiety, depression, and poor overall mental health, as they often lack access to social support or the resources necessary to escape the cycle of abuse. Hunnicutt, G. L.⁷ (2009) examined how workplace violence intersects with domestic violence, especially for working women. It discusses the impact of domestic violence on work performance, including absenteeism, poor concentration, and decreased productivity. The article suggests that both workplace policies and family support are crucial for addressing the effects of domestic violence on women in the workplace. Hegar, R. L., & Gelles, R. J.⁶ (2000) discussed the indirect psychological effects of domestic violence on women as mothers. It focuses on how domestic violence can interfere with a woman’s ability to parent effectively, impacting both her mental health and that of her children. The review highlights that working and non-working women often experience different levels of stress regarding parenting while coping with abuse. Adams, A. E., et al.¹ (2008) examined the specific psychological consequences of economic abuse, where the abuser controls the victim’s financial resources. Economic abuse is a common form of control, particularly among non-working women. The review argues

that economic abuse exacerbates feelings of dependency, vulnerability, and worthlessness in victims, making it harder for them to escape abusive relationships. It also looks at how working women experience economic abuse differently due to their access to independent income.

Objectives

- (1) The study intended to compare victim respondents of high and low domestic violence in terms of anxiety, adjustment, ego-strength, depression and aggression respectively.
- (2) The study also intends to compare working and home making women in terms of to be the victim of domestic violence.

Hypotheses

- (i) There will be significant difference between high and low groups of women to be the victim of domestic violence in terms of anxiety, adjustment, ego-strength, depression and aggression.
- (ii) There will be significant difference between working/home making dimensions on domestic violence among the women respondents.

Method of Study

Sample

A sample comprised of 50 working and 50 home making women were selected from Patna Town. The subjects were matched so far as practicable.

Research Tools Used

- (i) A PDS prepared by the researcher herself was administered on the respondents to get the relevant informations about them.
- (ii) Domestic Violence Scale by Kumar was employed to measure the domestic violence of the respondents.
- (iii) Ego-strength Scale by Hassan was used to measure the ego-strength of the respondents.
- (iv) Manifest Anxiety Scale by Sinha D. was used to measure anxiety of the respondents.
- (v) Adjustment Inventory by Mohsin and Shamshad was used to measure adjustment of the respondents.
- (vi) Manifest Depression Inventory by Jamuar Anita was used to measure the depression of the respondents.
- (vii) Manifest Aggression Scale by Singh, R.A. to measure aggression of the respondents.

Results and Discussion

Table 01: t-ratio showing the difference in anxiety, adjustment, ego-strength, depression and aggression between high and low domestic violence respondents

Dimension	Domestic Violence				t-ratio	df	p
	High DV (N=50)		High DV (N=50)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Anxiety	76.14	3.46	68.90	3.25	13.79	98	<.01
Adjustment	91.49	3.62	81.44	3.26	14.56	98	<.01
Ego-strength	17.46	3.39	25.75	3.52	12.01	98	<.01
Depression	70.51	3.27	61.52	3.46	13.42	98	<.01
Aggression	45.48	3.19	37.84	3.29	11.75	98	<.01

The results displayed in table-01 clearly indicated the significant effect of domestic violence on psychological correlates under reference. The high domestic violence victim group suffered from anxiety ($t=13.79$; $df=98$; $P<.01$); depression ($t=13.42$; $df=98$; $P<.01$); and aggression ($t=11.75$; $df=98$; $P<.01$). Further, low domestic violence victim group dominated in respect of adjustment ($t=14.56$; $df=98$; $P<.01$) and ego-strength ($t=12.01$; $df=98$; $P<.01$). The results of the finding is in hypothetical direction. The high degree

of anxiety, depression and aggression in high domestic violence victim group might be interpreted on the ground of lower level of tolerance of anxiety and tensions leading to more anxiety, depression and aggression in high domestic violence victim group than low domestic violence victim group. Similarly finding relating to high ego-strength and adjustment in low domestic violence group might be interpreted on the ground of more confidence, higher level to tolerate anxiety and tensions on the parts of the respondents of low domestic violence group than high domestic violence group. Women who are victims of high domestic violence manifest higher levels of anxiety compared to those experiencing low or no violence because constant exposure to abuse creates a persistent state of fear, insecurity, and hypervigilance. The trauma from physical, emotional, or psychological violence disrupts their sense of safety and control, leading to chronic stress and anxiety disorders. Additionally, repeated violence can erode self-esteem and social support, making it harder to cope and recover emotionally.

Women who are victims of high domestic violence manifest poor adjustment compared to those experiencing low or no violence because chronic exposure to abuse leads to emotional trauma, low self-esteem, and feelings of helplessness. The constant stress and fear disrupt their mental health, social relationships, and coping abilities. They may experience anxiety, depression, and difficulty in managing daily responsibilities, resulting in poor adjustment across emotional, social, and family domains compared to women with safer, supportive environments.

Women who are victims of high domestic violence often manifest poor ego strength compared to those experiencing low or no violence because continuous abuse undermines their self-confidence, sense of control, and emotional resilience. Repeated exposure to violence can lead to feelings of helplessness, low self-worth, and diminished ability to cope with stress. This weakens their ego strength, making it harder to assert themselves, set boundaries, or seek help, perpetuating the cycle of victimization.

Women who are victims of high domestic violence manifest higher levels of depression compared to those experiencing low or no violence because repeated abuse causes profound emotional trauma, feelings of helplessness, and chronic stress. The violence undermines their self-worth, safety, and sense of control, leading to anxiety, fear, and social isolation. This ongoing psychological strain disrupts normal functioning and often results in symptoms of depression, including sadness, hopelessness, and withdrawal, far more than in women with low or no domestic violence exposure.

Women who are victims of high domestic violence often manifest higher aggression compared to those experiencing low or no violence because repeated abuse can lead to heightened emotional distress, frustration, and feelings of helplessness. Aggression may emerge as a defense mechanism or a way to assert control in an otherwise powerless situation. Chronic exposure to violence can also affect emotional regulation, increasing irritability and reactive behaviors. This aggression reflects the psychological impact of trauma and the struggle to cope with ongoing victimization.

Table 02: t-ratio showing the difference between working and home making dimensions on domestic violence and home making

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	P
Working	50	42.85	3.62	12.63	98	<.01
Home Making	50	52.07	3.81			

The results displayed in table-02 clearly indicated the significant difference between home making women on the domestic violence of the respondents ($t=12.63$; $df=98$; $P<.01$). working women showed superiority over their home making women counterparts in respect of less likely to be the victim of domestic violence. Thus second hypothesis also is confirmed. The finding might be interpreted on the ground of more exposure and stimulating environment availed by the working women as compared to their Non-working women counterparts. Non-working women are more exposed to domestic violence compared to working

women because financial dependence on their partners often limits their ability to leave abusive relationships or seek help. Lack of economic independence can reduce their bargaining power and self-confidence, making them more vulnerable to control and abuse. Additionally, working women may have broader social networks and greater access to resources, support systems, and awareness, which can protect them against domestic violence or enable quicker intervention.

Conclusions

- (1) Women belonging to high domestic violence group excel over their counterpart women in terms of having high anxiety, high depression and with aggression respectively.
- (2) Women belonging to low domestic violence group excel over their counterpart in terms of having high ego-strength and sound adjustment.
- (3) Working women are less likely to be the victim of domestic violence as compared to home making women group.

Bibliography

1. Adams, A. E.; et al. (2008) Economic abuse and its psychological consequences in women: A critical review. *Violence Against Women*, 14(5), 557-573. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801208317426>
2. Campbell, J. C.; et al. (2002) The role of employment in women's recovery from domestic violence. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 7(1), 14-26. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1076-8998.7.1.14>
3. Coker, A. L.; Smith, P. H.; et al. (2002) The impact of domestic violence on women's mental health: A review of literature. *Journal of Women's Health*, 11(6), 453-463. <https://doi.org/10.1089/15246090260457015>
4. Danielson, C. K.; et al. (2006) Post-traumatic stress disorder in domestic violence survivors: A review of psychological impacts. *Psychiatry Research*, 142(1), 47-54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2005.10.012>
5. Goodman, L.A.; et al. (2009) Domestic violence and its impact on women's psychological well-being : An overview of key studies. *American Psychologist*, 64 (7), 599-609. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0016210>
6. Hegar, R. L. & Gelles, R. J. (2000) Effects of domestic violence on parenting and child well-being: A review of the psychological impact. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(2), 485-495. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00485.x>
7. Hunnicutt, G. L. (2009) Workplace violence and domestic violence: The intersection of two stressors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 24(11), 1837-1856. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260509331483>
8. Johnson, M. P.; et al. (2008) The psychological effects of domestic violence on women: A study of coping mechanisms. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 21(2), 200-208. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.20336>
9. Raj, A.; et al. (2006) Domestic violence and mental health in non-working women: A review of psychological consequences. *Journal of Family Violence*, 21(1), 39-47. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-005-9013-5>
10. Silverman, J. G.; et al. (2001) Economic dependency and domestic violence: Exploring the psychological impact on non-working women. *Journal of Family Violence*, 16(3), 275-283. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1010525021110>
11. Tiwari, A.; et al. (2005) Psychological and social consequences of domestic violence: A gender perspective. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60(1), 213-223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.05.002>

---==00==---