要約

本論文では、高等教育と経済的豊かさは家庭内暴力（DV）の発生に反比例するという仮説を考察する。その理由は、従来それらがDV発生を緩和する効果があると考えられているからである。本研究は、バングラデシュにおける女性に対するDVと関わりに、その事実、原因、結果、および対策を探求する目的である。体験に関するこの研究は、バングラデシュにおいてある注目される大都市であるラジャシャヒ市で行った実地調査に基づく。本研究では、データ収集の実地調査技法を用いた。本研究のテーマは、DVの性質とタイプ、受身発生要因、原因、結果およびDV対策のための新法施行の必要性に、見る視点を示す。家族関係を適切に代表する無作為抽出法を適用し、合計94人の女性回答者を選びました。回答者には印刷したアンケートを渡し、面接の際に出題を記録した。その後、収集データを整理、分析、統合して本研究の結論を導いた。さらに、数人の回答者については、詳細な調査を行い、実地調査のデータを補足した。

性差の観点から見えると、バングラデシュは男性優位の社会であり、そのためとして多くの社会経済的、宗教的、法的および歴史的要因がある。本研究において、男性優位はバングラデシュに存在する男性間の社会的不平等を指す。多くの局面の中でも、男性優位は、家族の問題と収入を得る仕事への女性の参加が少ないかまたは無いことに現れている。本研究は、教育を受けた女性がDVについて十分な知識を持たせていないことを示す。家庭内での性の地位を基にしても、女性はすべての自由を得ることができない。女性は、自分が働くために得た収入された自由に使えない。その結果、女性は収入を得た仕事に就いても男性に依存する。その結果、バングラデシュの性差の解合を示す。これらの結果は男性優位に対するDVに関連することは、本研究で示す通りである。本研究はさらに、DV発生が既婚女性に対して非常に高く、その主因は心理的、文化的、経済的、社会的要因であることを示す。具体的な要因として、暴力、精神的虐待、心理的圧迫、怒りの発現、欲求不満、男女差異意識の次元。バングラデシュにおける一般的的な結婚挙式制度が起こされる。結論として本研究は、DVに関する女性の意思向上、女性教育の向上、女性の地位向上、DV対策法の施行、國家経済への女性参加の拡大、DV問題解決策として勧める。

Summary

This paper examines the hypothesis that higher education and economic prosperity are inversely related to domestic violence, as these factors are conventionally believed to have an ameliorating impact on the incidence of domestic violence (DV). It is an attempt to explore the facts, causes, consequences, and measures of combating domestic violence (DV) against women in Bangladesh. Empirically, the present study is an extract of field-based research conducted in a less-focused metropolitan city, Rajshahi, Bangladesh. The study followed the methodological technique of field survey for collecting data. The focus of data for this study primarily on the nature and types of domestic violence, frequency of violence, the causes and consequences of domestic violence, and the need to enact a new law for combating DV. A total of 94 female respondents were selected through a random sampling method with adequate representative value. The respondents were supplied with printed questionnaires on which information was recorded during interviews. Subsequently, collected data were collated, analyzed and synthesized in order to derive conclusions regarding the study. In addition, a few in-depth case studies on some selected respondents were carried out to supplement the field data.

From a gender perspective, Bangladesh society is dominated by males, due to a plethora of socio-economic, religious, legal and historical factors. By “male domination”, the study refers to the social inequalities that exist between men and women in Bangladesh. In many areas, male domination is demonstrated through the low or lack of participation of women in the decision-making process in family matters and income-generating activities. The study reveals that even educated women in Bangladesh do not have enough knowledge about domestic violence. Although they can enjoy some status in the family, they cannot enjoy all of their freedoms. Women cannot spend their earnings from jobs independently. Consequently, women remain dependent even after their engagement in income-generating activities, which reflects the extent to which society in Bangladesh is male dominated. This domination has a linkage with domestic violence against women, as shown in the study. The study further shows that the incidence of DV is very high among married women, and it is mostly caused by psychological, cultural, economic and social factors. Some of the specific factors include miscommunication, aggression, anger, frustration, lack of respect for equality between men and women and the prevailing dowry system in the country. Finally, the study recommends that increasing awareness of women about DV, educating more women, empowering women, enforcing DV laws, and ensuring larger participation of women in the national economy can reduce the problem of DV.
1. Introduction: Purpose of the Study

In Bangladesh, the use of the term “domestic violence” (DV) has only recently come into usage. Although it is a worldwide concern, people have little understanding of this problem in Bangladesh. It has yet to draw attention from the government, researchers and policymakers. In Bangladesh, DV is increasingly becoming a serious social problem. A large number of women in the country, especially in the rural areas, are victims of DV. The most common forms of violence include beating by husband, pressure to give a dowry (dowry: a marriage gift, in cash or in any other kind, given by the brides’ parents to the grooms), acid-throwing, mental torture for giving birth to female children, forced abortions, torture for being barren, rape, and violence against female children, such as scolding, beating, molestation and rape.

In Bangladesh, studies on DV are very scarce. Moreover, women are not willing to disclose their family matters to others. They feel unsafe due to the fear of torture inflicted on them by their husbands. They are extremely shy about discussing these matters. Against this backdrop, conducting any field-based research on DV in the country is a very challenging and difficult task. Major studies on this issue have been conducted by Akanda, Latifa and Shamim: 1984 Jahan: 1994 Zaman: 1999 Hossain and Imam: 2001 Mannan: 2002 Islam: 2003 and Ahmed: 2004. Most of these works took a macro approach towards this issue. In contrast, the current study emphasizes micro-level issues based on the survey of a ward in a northern city, Rajshahi, in Bangladesh.

To mitigate this social problem, an elaborate research scheme should be pursued, focusing on the categories of DV, such as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and so on. It was observed that no such field survey has been carried out in this area previously. As a result, the conditions regarding DV in this area have remained unexplored for a long period. Most of the research is capital based, which signifies a research gap in this issue in Bangladesh, because it does not reflect the realities in other parts of the country. In this context, this research may be helpful for gaining wider understanding of different aspects of DV, such as its causes and consequences in Bangladesh. It may provide for more analysis and information on gender-related issues—the status and rights of women and the legal framework. It may sensitize women to their rights, capability and positions in society. This research is an attempt in this direction. DV is a major social concern for both the rural and urban areas of Bangladesh. The problem and its solution can be drawn by data-compiling and data-analysis, with subsequent theoretical support of women’s rights and law. The special concentration of this study is on identifying the various socio-economic, cultural, religious, and social backgrounds and aspects of women that contribute to DV against housewives and young women.

The major issues addressed by the study are as follows:
1. Investigating the nature and types of DV
2. Exploring the extent and frequency of violence
3. Finding out the causes and consequences of DV
4. Assessing the measures taken by victims to overcome the problem of DV
5. Demystifying a victim’s self-imposed silence and how it becoming a social issue and
6. Identifying the measures to be taken to reduce DV

2. Methods of the Study

The field survey was conducted in Rajshahi, which is one of the six metropolitan cities in Bangladesh. This city was selected because no significant research on DV has been carried out previously in this area. Apart from violence against women, the other main social problems are poverty, drug addiction, the presence of slums, the abject economic conditions of women, and so on.

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information. The primary source mainly comprises interviews with respondents in Rajshahi City Ward No. 14, sector No. 3. The interviewees were selected randomly. The total population of the area is 5000. Of this population, 662 were male and 595 were female adults. The population of the study was 595 and the sample size was 94, with 54 married and 40 unmarried persons. A detailed questionnaire was constructed to collect data on the socio-economic background of the respondents, the nature and type of DV, the causes and consequences of violence, the perception of the respondents about DV, and the socio-cultural and religious backgrounds to the domestic violence against women (DVAW). The questionnaire considered a number of issues, such as age, level of education, religion, occupation, and feelings before and after violence against the respondents.

As a method of collecting information, a consistent questionnaire was prepared after the required pre-test.
The data for the present study were collected through personal interviews with the respondents. Four types of questionnaire-building strategies were followed. These included: 1) semi-structured questionnaires: pre-tested by interviewing a few of the respondents in the study area 2) open-ended questionnaires 3) close-ended questionnaires; and 4) free space. Seven days were needed for the construction and a model test, 31 days for conducting the personal interviews, and 3 days for the case studies.

The study makes extensive use of secondary sources of information in the form of reports, documents, books, journals, thesis papers, daily newspapers, and others. Data were also collected from six women-related organizations and movements. Moreover, the study was further enriched by interviews with prominent women activists in Bangladesh.

The sensitivity of the research topic often created various forms of psychological barriers among the interviewees. In general, the respondents seemed to be quite hesitant to give their impressions on local violence. It was particularly difficult to talk about sexual harassment. The topic of gender-based violence is also a sensitive issue in a predominantly Muslim country like Bangladesh. Physical violence perpetrated by husbands towards wives or fathers towards daughters is commonly observed in the society. During this research, the respondents sometimes showed a derogatory attitude and simply could not understand the reasons for conducting a study particularly for women. They considered it a waste of time and money to discuss such issues. Some respondents thought that the interview was a way of getting some kind of economic help for them. This is a question of ignorance by the interviewees, as they are not habituated to such interviews with others. Therefore, they discussed problems like water, sanitation, food and lodging, and so on.

Limitations are unavoidable in all research endeavors. This study was confined to only an urban area of a metropolitan city. The number of respondents may appear small, but it clearly represents the survey area. It has relevance for the overall conditions in Bangladesh. Moreover, the victims were hesitant to disclose facts, and some of them did attempt to avoid the issues of violence against them by male members of society. As a result of fear of torture and desire to maintain privacy regarding their family matters. Therefore, sometimes it was very difficult to collect accurate and adequate information from some of the respondents.

### 3. Circumstances of Domestic Violence against Women (DVAW) in Bangladesh

DV knows no boundaries. From rich to poor, every country suffers from this problem. According to a report, globally, 40-70% of all female murder victims are killed by their intimate partners. Half of the women who die from homicides worldwide are killed by their current or former husbands or partners by guns, beatings and burns, among numerous other forms of abuse. The problem of DV is widespread in Bangladesh. Table 1 demonstrates that the number of cases of DV has increased substantially over the years. It is an alarming scenario in Bangladesh. DV has also gradually become an urban phenomenon in recent times. The cases are widely reported in the print and electronic media. This is largely an outcome of the growing activity of civil society organizations, specifically women-related groups in Bangladesh, as well as changes in the outlook of the government due to internal and external pressures. The government has signed various international agreements, such as convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW). The

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Reporting</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases of DV Reported</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>587</td>
<td>1164</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Resource Center, BNWLA, *Reports from 9 leading dailies*

The following case in box 1 is another example of DV against women in Bangladesh.

**Box-1**

“Roushan Ara, a young married woman of 18, was beaten to death by her husband, because she failed to sew two buttons on his shirt.” “Shahida, a bride of 16 was stabbed to death by her husband on their wedding night. The reason for the murder is not known. Police are looking for the killer, who is absconding.” Everyday national dailies carry such stories. In fact, many remain unknown and unreported.

global movements on women rights have implications for Bangladesh. Internally, grassroots groups, women’s NGOs and citizens’ networks create pressure on the government.

A related issue in the discussion of DV in Bangladesh is some people’s questioning of the logic of publishing graphic reports on DV, particularly rape cases which further tarnish the image and status of the victims in society. Some say it also causes mental agony for the readers. One may say that the accusation of sensationalism and making money from other people’s pain has some basis; however, the major offenders, in this respect, are generally the tabloids and some glossy weeklies, which, judging from the graphics and illustrations, seem to cater to readers of “soft porno”. It should be mentioned that the major national daily newspapers are much more restrained in exposing cases of DV in their papers. As reported in various newspapers, there has been a rise in the absolute and proportionate number of female victims of violence over the years 1990-1998. Violence against women, however, takes a dismaying variety of forms (such as physical violence, sexual violence, cultural and traditional violence, emotional violence, economic violence, etc.), from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and “female genital mutilation”. All are violations of the most fundamental human rights. Table 2 shows a year wise comparative picture of different forms of violence in Bangladesh.

The table highlights the fact that physical violence is highly prevalent in the society. It outnumbers other types of violence. Forty-seven percent of women in Bangladesh are reported to have experienced physical violence by their partners (see, UNFPA 2000, the State of the World Population Report, Chapter 3, p. 27, and Table ).

4. Preliminary Observations of this Study

In this study area, data were collected on the basis of the socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of the respondents, type of family, the perception of the respondents about DV, the personal opinion of the respondents, and the causes and consequences of DV.

4.1 Socio-economic and Demographic Background of the Respondents

Data on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents are very important in any research, in order to understand their social position, lifestyles and living standards. In this section, data on age, marriage, religion, education, occupation and income are explained. The distribution of the respondents on the basis of age suggests that the vast majority of the respondents are young and middle-aged 20~30 years old. A large number of respondents (41.49%) belong to the 18-27 age category, whereas (11.07%) are found in the 28-37 age category. This signifies that young people appear to be more willing to disclose their problems.

Table 3: Age of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>41.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-37</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-57</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on the educational background of the respondents show that a sizeable number of people in the study area are educated. Many of them hold Master’s degrees (13.83%) or undergraduate degree (30.85%). Some of them are doctors, lawyers or officers. No one was found to be illiterate. This validates one of the major claims of the study that education does not contribute to the decline of DV. There is no positive relationship between the level of education and the pattern of DV in the area.
A large portion (57.45%) of the respondents is married, while the number of unmarried women is not insignificant. Although the percentage of widows or divorcees is small in number, they are mostly older. The family bond in Bangladesh is like a cluster. It is so strong that women retain their relationship with husbands or male partners regardless of any DV. Generally, in Bangladesh, family is based on a hierarchical structure, where the father heads the house or, in his absence, the eldest son takes the leadership. The mother and sisters have a secondary role. Another aspect is that most of the respondents are Muslims while many man-made religious superstitions prevail especially for women such as fatwa (see, the end note). It was observed that these superstitions play a role that opposite is to good religious teachings.

Men have better access to resources in society. Of the respondents, (57.45%) are dependent, such as housewives and students who have no income and are economically-dependent on their husbands or their fathers. The women who are engaged in jobs like general service (20.21%) or small businesses (15.96%) often face an unfavorable family environment due to the non-cooperation of male partners. This is because of the meager amount they earn, which is not enough to support their family expenses, in most cases. On the other hand, men, as the heads of the households, have better earnings from their income and generally provide financial support for the family. This brings the question of economic dimension of the gender relationship to center stage.

4.2 Types of Family

The type of family is important for understanding the dynamics of DV in Bangladesh. Nowadays, in the urban areas, most families are nuclear. The traditional structure of joint family is on the decline. A large portion (68.09%) of the respondents belongs to nuclear families. Of the respondents, a (28.72%) are in a joint-family (father/mother/sister/brother, grand father/grand mother), and a very low percentage of them are part of an extended family. Some of the joint families comprise the father-in-law or mother-in-law. Living with an uncle, aunt, or some other relative is also included in the extended family. Data regarding the control of the family is an important variable for understanding the gender gap. The study shows that the largest number of households (47.87%) is headed by the father, (32.98%) by the husband, (6.38%) by the father-in-law, (3.19%) by the mother, (4.26%) by the women themselves, and (1.63%) by a brother. Thus, it can be said that women who enjoy a leading role in family are not common in this area.

4.3 Perception of the Respondents about DV

To understand the perception or opinion of the respondents about DV, it is necessary to focus on how much they are aware of themselves and how much they know about DV. Psychological background influences a person’s consciousness and personality. The data show that (68.08%) of women agree to work together with man, while (31.91%) of women are against doing so. When women get married, they lose their freedom of actions substantively, and their privacy as well. This is commonly observed in Bangladesh. Many respondents feel that they need to give their attention to their own life. Of women, (55.32%) want to give more attention to their family after getting married, while only (15.96%) are more interested in their own life after getting married. As a result, we can say that most of the respondents dedicate their own comfort for the sake of the family. Only 16% respondents prefer their own career to family issues.

After marriage, although notionally both husband and wife are equal partners in the family, our data show the dominance of the husband in family matters. A large number of respondents (34.04%) support the husband as the leader of the family, whereas only (4.26%) support the same role for women. This shows how men dominate the family structure in Bangladesh.

4.4 Respondents’ Opinions on Personal and Family Relationships

There are more factors for understanding dominance of men in Bangladesh society. Difference in age between husband and wife often contributes to the prevalence of DV. In Bangladesh, it is generally seen that the husband is older than the wife by a big margin. This leads to mental disharmony and subservience by the wife to the husband. Data in the studied area show that the age gap between husband and wife ranges from 1-5 years among (46.08%) of the respondents, 6-10 years among (40.42%), and 11-15 years among (9.51%). In some cases, the wife is 16 years
junior to the husband in the studied area. An economically well-off and established man wants to marry a very young woman, as he feels he can control his wife easily. The husband often does not encourage the wife to take on higher studies. The parents’ outlook is an important factor in this regard. In the arranged marriage system, most parents prefer rich and established men for their daughters.

The perception gap is also reflected in the use of contraception. Men dominate the decisions regarding selecting contraceptive methods. It is generally observed that the use of contraceptives is the responsibility of the wife. Of wives (48.15%) use birth control whereas only (14.81%) of husbands use the same. Therefore, it is a common trend that the acceptance of the contraceptive system is only the women’s responsibility. With regard to number of children, (53.70%) of respondents want to have two children, while (22.22%) want more than three. Another strong perception is the preference of a baby boy over a girl child. Daughters need to leave the parental family after marriage thus (38.29%) of respondents want to have at least one boy for maintaining hereditary continuity. Therefore, a kind of negligence towards girl children is seen. Girl children are also neglected due to financial reasons. As men dominate in jobs and income-oriented activities, parents think that a boy child will accrue more financial benefits for a family than a girl child. Thus, gender discrimination starts in the family from the very beginning of a female child’s life.

4.5 Kinds and Situations of the DVAW in the Study Area

In order to analyze DV, it is important to understand the types and diversity of DV against women in the study area. Many women have no idea about DV. In fact, this term has recently become familiar in social science. Due to a lack of understanding of the real meaning of DV, women think of it as a private matter, so they do not want to disclose or discuss this matter with other people. However, (54.26%) of respondents have knowledge about DV, but a large portion (42.55%) of respondents has no clear idea about what it is.

It is important to be aware of the frequency of DV in order to understand its extent and magnitude. Data show that (78.72%) of women have experienced DV within one year. The frequency of DV in the study area referring to psychological violence is higher than physical violence and many of the respondents have faced both. Regarding sexual violence, they have no clear idea about marital-rape; however, many of the respondents did not mention anything about abnormal sexual violence against them. Most of the data demonstrate that contrary to conventional wisdom, psychological factors like communication gaps, mutual respect for each other, as well as socio-economic factors are important features in the cause of DV.

Cultural issues—like the dowry system—and a lack of proper education are also significant factors behind DV. This problem is very severe in Bangladesh because it prevails in different classes of people, regardless of whether they belong to the upper, middle or lower strata of society. The pattern of giving or accepting a dowry has become a common practice in society. Parents of brides are often forced to give a dowry. In the study area, all the married women had experience with a dowry of different sizes. Besides, a good number of unmarried women (28.72%) have also become victims of dowry, due to the fact that their parents could not fulfill the dowry demands from the families of prospective bridegrooms. Thus, the dowry has both pre-marital and post-marital implications for women in Bangladesh. Only (9.57%) of women replied that they do not want to give any dowry when they get married. Regarding the question of who is to blame for DV, data show that most of the respondents (40.43%) were assaulted by family members, such as a husband, father/mother, and then brother/sister. Since a joint family is a common trend in Bangladesh, women encounter such problems from immediate relatives in the family, like an uncle/aunt, etc.

The legal protection mechanism for women who are victims of DV is weak in Bangladesh. There is no specific law on DV to provide legal remedies to this problem. Our data demonstrate that the respondents feel there is a need for such a law in Bangladesh. A vast majority of the respondents (92.55%) strongly recommend DV law to reduce DV in the family. Some of the respondents (6.38%) said that only making a law cannot bring about any changes until or unless the law becomes effective or is enforced.

4.6 Respondent’s views of the issue on Women’s Freedom

It is difficult to identify how women can enjoy their freedom. Our data clearly reveal that the most important priority for a woman (20.92%) is education and women’s empowerment. Knowledge about equality between men and women is the second most important factor for women (19.71%), as they may feel that the achievement
of economic equality will help lessen DV against women. Another significant point is that a large number of the respondents attach importance to consciousness of their rights, family support, women’s safety, and other aspects.

5. Summary of the Findings

5.1 Socio-economic Findings

The study reveals that a vast majority of the respondents are aged between 18-27 years, indicating the fact that most of the victims of DV are young. They belong predominantly to nuclear families (68.09%) and joint families (28.72%). Some members dwell in extended families. The data suggest that the nuclear family is increasing in urban areas, and both types of families experience this problem. Most of the respondents educated, including having a university education, and are Muslim by religion. Not only illiterate but also literate women face this problem. With regard to marital status, (57.45%) of them are married and (39.36%) are unmarried. A large number of respondents are housewives and they are dependent on their husbands. A distribution of the respondents on the basis of occupation shows that (57.45%) are both housewives and students. Therefore, it can be said that a large percentage of women in the study area are unemployed. More than 45% of women have been working, but the average income of the women is largely inadequate and comparatively lower than that of their husbands. Even though women earn some money, many of them are not able to spend their own money for their own purposes. However, most of the households are found to be economically self-sufficient. Thus, despite being educated, women remain dependent on their husbands. It is also argued that the social and family structures are not favorable for their independence.

5.2 Impact of Family on Women’s Status

The headship of the family rests with the father (47.87%) and the husband (32.98%), and a small percentage goes to the father-in-law and the mother for the same role. No family is headed by women. The respondents show a positive attitude towards women working outside the home. As many as (68.08%) do not want to see their roles merely as housewives. However, their post-marital focus on maintaining the family contradicts such an attitude. In this regard, it should be mentioned that more than half (55.32%) of them think they should concentrate more on the family, and nearly one-third (28.72%) on their husband. A small percentage (15.96%) thinks they should pay more attention to their own career after getting married. The study discovered that respondents are much younger than their husbands, as (40.43 %) of them mentioned that their husbands were 6-10 years senior. Surprisingly, there were no same-age couples. The domination of husbands is well-reflected in such unequal marriages. The respondents think they are subject to more control because of the high age gap. On the question of using birth control contraceptives, women are forced to take such measures, while most of the husbands remain at large.

5.3 Nature of Violence in the Study Area

The respondents are susceptible to violence in their domestic lives, which is clearly revealed by the fact that (57.45%) mentioned their experiences of physical and mental torture at various levels. Of the respondents (27.65%) have had no such experience, while (14.89%) thought it was a private matter and did not want to disclose it. The study demonstrates that (54.26%) of the respondents have knowledge about DV, and (42.55%) have no clear sense about DV. This shows that a large number of respondents have no clear idea about DV because of its hidden nature.

Of the respondents (78.72%) mentioned that they experienced violence from their family members during the last year. The most common types of violence found in the study include physical, sexual, verbal and psychological violence.
Tables 4 and 5 show an alarming picture of the incidence of DV experienced by the respondents in the study area. The study found that a large number of respondents (78.72%) face this problem in different stages of their family life and (18.09%) of respondents have no experience of DV, while (57.44%) have experienced both physical and psychological violence, physical violence was (12.76%) and psychological violence was (29.78%). A quite significant percentage has experience of both sexual and verbal violence. These data show that psychological violence is more significant than physical. During the interview period, the married respondents were asked about sexual violence, but most of them replied that they had no idea about marital rape. Most unmarried respondents have faced verbal violence, mostly from outside the home, although sometimes they faced psychological violence from their parents or close relatives.

An important point is that unlike other countries (UNFPA, 2000, the State of the World Population Report, chapter 3, p. 27) the data in our study show that psychological violence is increasing alarmingly in the city areas and has overtaken physical violence, but all over Bangladesh, including in the rural areas, the scenario is different.

This study found that people in the urban areas are educated and economically sound, but women face psychological violence to a great extent making a negative link between these factors.

### Table 6 Types of Assailant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is aggressor?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member of husband</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father/mother</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother/sister</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned table shows that more than half of the victims reported that their husbands had committed violence against them, while others (32.98%) mentioned that members of the husband’s family had done it. Only (11.70%) talked of abuse by father/mother, (9.57%) by brother/sister, and (5.32%) by others. Thus, the study points to an interesting revelation that a large number of the women in the study area experience DV primarily after their marriage.

### 5.4 Causes of DV Revealed by the Study

The respondents identified different causes, which are broadly categorized into four clusters:

a. Economic causes: financial difficulties and lack of employment opportunities for women.

b. Cultural and educational Causes: traditional beliefs, traditions, social practices such as dowry, early marriage, polygamy, influence of religious leaders, silence, lack of consciousness, and lack of knowledge and information.

c. Psychological causes: disagreement, misperception, aggression, anger, frustration, and lack of mutual respect.

d. Social causes: drug addiction, insecurity, family background, and lack of adequate government policy and law.

### Table 7 Causes of Domestic Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of DV in the study area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic causes (poverty, financial difficulties, lack of employment)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and lack of consciousness (dowry, early marriage, polygamy, marriage, fatwa, lack of information, lack of education)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological causes (disagreement, misperception, aggression, angry, frustration, lack of respect for equality between men and women)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social problems (drug addiction, lack of safety, family background)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned table demonstrates that contrary to conventional wisdom, the first and foremost cause of DV is related to psychological elements (33.67%) the second is cultural and a lack of consciousness (26.63%). The third type of cause is related to economic issues, such as women’s limited access to income activities and their financial dependency on men (21.11%), and lastly, social factors were cited by only (18.59%) of respondents. This attests to the fact that economic and educational causes matter less than the psychological and social reasons for committing DV. For instance, in the study area, most of the respondents are highly educated and economically solvent; nevertheless, they resort to DV. Therefore, it can be argued that most of the victims in urban areas are attacked through psychological violence and structural violence, like the dowry system.

### 5.5 Effects of Domestic Violence as Observed in the Study
DV affects women, men and their families in various ways—physically, psychologically and socially. The broad areas of the consequences of DV in the studied area are as follows:

a. **Death:** In extreme cases, DV results in death. It is one of the major sources of death, particularly where the rule of law is not strong.

b. **Health-related Difficulties:** The effects of violence on a victim’s health are far reaching and devastating. Women who are battered may suffer from a variety of medical problems, from depression to chronic pain; they may also be at an increased risk of sexually-transmitted infections, STI, or unplanned pregnancies. Generally, it may cause psychological imbalance (mental depression, etc.), physical damage (disability), and gynecological problems.

c. **Impact on Family:** DV impinges on the fundamental rights of the victims to maintain control over their own lives. Individuals who are abused live in fear and isolation. They do not feel safe even at home. With tremendous courage and strength, they struggle each day to keep themselves and their children safe. In the family, they face problems with adjusting to family members, problems in building and rebuilding relationship, loss of respect, etc.

d. **Social Consequences:** In addition to family life, the batterer isolates the victims from society and friends. Battered women then become embarrassed by the abuse inflicted upon them and withdraw from supporters to avoid embarrassment. Some battered women are abandoned by their religious institutions when separating from abusers, since some religious doctrines prohibit separation or divorce, regardless of the severity of abuse. They are stigmatized, feel shy and remain frightened, lose confidence and face problem of social acceptability, as other members of society generally do not cooperate and accept the victims as fellows in society.

e. **Economic Consequences:** Victims often lose their jobs for several reasons, such as absenteeism and illness resulting from violence. Absences occasioned by court appearances can also jeopardize their livelihood. Victims may have to move houses many times to avoid violence. Moving house is costly and can interfere with continuity of employment. Many victims have had to forgo financial security during divorce proceedings to avoid further abuse. As a result, they are impoverished as they grow older. Major economic effects include financial difficulties, indebtedness when taking loans from people to survive—and, moreover, a violation of rights, social instability, and a loss of trust among members of society.

![Effects of Domestic Violence](image)

The above figure shows that the respondents in the study area reported the violence-related cases of death as (10.64%), while (34.04%) of respondents suffer from health-related problems such as physical disability and psychological trauma, (17.02%) from family-related difficulties such as maladjustment, (28.72%) from social consequences such as alienation, and (7.04%) from economic hazards.

### 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In light of the above-mentioned findings of the study, it may be concluded that there are three critical factors for understanding domestic violence in Bangladesh—education, the empowerment of women and awareness regarding DV against women. Women need to understand the different dimensions of DV in order to reduce their suffering. It may be argued that the root of this problem is the dominance of men in society, i.e. patriarchy. Even women who are literate cannot clearly understand what DV is. Their tendency to make this problem largely a private issue hinders its resolution. But it is also true that this tendency is a result of a hostile social atmosphere for women. It brings about the issue of awareness of DV among women which is critically important. Women can protest against DV once they are fully aware of this syndrome in society. In the contemporary world, increased attention to gender problems has been observed at different levels – local, national, regional and global. Actors other than women, such as men, governments and NGOs, have become more sensitive to this problem. Likewise, in Bangladesh, the government, civil society actors and the media are paying close attention to this problem and have started playing a positive role for
its alleviation. This is a positive sign for the future. The critical point is that women are becoming increasingly conscious about their rights and thus becoming serious about the problem of DV and its implications. They are also supported by several NGOs and civil society organizations in Bangladesh.

Although the survey is based on a particular region in Bangladesh, the findings of study result in some recommendations that may be considered in facing and overcoming this deeply rooted problem in society. It is strongly recommended that a domestic violence law be introduced and implemented in Bangladesh. In the study area, most of the respondents expressed the need for introducing a DV law. There are 47 countries in the world that have DV or family violence laws. Bangladesh must have an appropriate DV law in order to reduce DV in society. As a matter of fact, without this law, it is not easy to handle this sensitive matter.

There is a critical psychological dimension to this problem. Generally, it is observed that family batters, whether husbands or any other partners or relatives, show love or repentance after their torture. This makes many women see DV in a low profile way that does not arouse enough reaction or protest from the victims. Besides, they also become habituated to such torture day after day. This is a unique psychological feature in Bangladesh, particularly in the urban and semi-urban areas. Another point is that since women cannot resort directly to a legal system for this kind of violence, they remain helpless. If there were a DV law, the perpetrators might be afraid of punishment and victims could seek legal support from law-enforcing agencies.

In the final analysis, it may be argued that combating DV requires comprehensive and long-term measures. It is particularly emphasized that both civil and criminal remedies are the most critical components in fighting DV through legal process. Another important factor is cooperation by men. In the Bangladesh context, it is a reality that women, after their marriages, are virtually thrown into a new environment where they need to craft and to maintain various types of new relationships. The study also reveals that in most cases, women become victims of their husbands. In such a situation, women need cooperation from their husbands and husbands’ families. Above all, the study has demonstrated clearly that the cases of domestic violence are comprehensively linked to psychological, social, economic, and religious issues.

End note: Fatwa is, originally, a decision made by a Muslim cleric in simple, non-criminal disputes. In Bangladesh today, what is termed as ‘fatwa’ is a misuse of this process, since village mediation bodies (shalish) involves Muslim clerics decide on various matters and the punishments they mete out have ranged from stoning to burning alive. Many women who have fallen victim to so-called fatwa, committed suicide in order to save the family honor. The real fatwa process cannot give a death sentence. Bangladesh High Court recently ruled that a fatwa must be in accordance with law. Though this ruling is being appealed to the Supreme Court by so-called ‘religious groups’, yet it is a proof of how the institution of fatwa has been abused.

References


**Footnotes**

1 Lenore Manderson and Linda Rae Bennett *Violence against Women in Asian Societies* sub-title, Honor and Shame — page no. 9, core themes on Violence against Women. Chapter-10, (2003), simultaneously published in the USA and Canada.

