Prevalence and pattern of intergenerational violence among women and girls in rural Karnataka, India

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“Violence against women and girls continues unabated in every continent, country and culture. It takes a devastating toll on women’s lives, on their families, and on society as a whole. Most societies prohibit such violence — yet the reality is that too often, it is covered up or tacitly condoned.”

Extensive research in the past thirty years has revealed the multidimensional aspects of witnessing inter-parental violence in childhood (Stith et al., 2000), and Intergenerational transmission of violence is considered to be one main process to explain IPV enacted by individuals who witness violence in their family of origin (Black et al., 2010).

Stith et al.(2000) found children who have exposure to violence in their childhood are more likely to enact or experience violence in their adult couple relations.

According to ‘Youth in India: situation and needs’ (2006–2007), one-quarter of young men and young women (24–26%) reported ever witnessing their father beating their mother. In contrast, just 2% of young men and women reported that they had witnessed their mother beating their father.
The study builds on previous findings and evaluations of the Samata (Life Skill based Education based) programme for marginalised adolescent girls between 13 and 16 years conducted by KHPT, between year 2013 to 2017 in Vijayapura.

North Karnataka districts have recorded the highest rates of gender based violence, drop-out rates for adolescent girls belonging to rural and marginalised communities (Javalkar, 2014). It had the highest rates of child marriage, HIV prevalence and violent social traditions such as the Devadasi system (women are ritually dedicated to sex work by families, following puberty) (Becker et al., 2012).

In this context the overarching objective of the study was to understand the long-term effects of life skills education on negotiating violence in the young adult years.

As a part of the study, we also closely examined the prevalence and pattern of transmission of intergenerational violence and this presentation is focused on this latter issue.
A mixed-method study was conducted using cross sectional quantitative survey and through qualitative methodology using concept cards, IDIs and FGD between April to October 2021.

This suggests that qualitative research has a secondary place to quantitative research.

Data collection- Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) with quantitative survey and audio recordings for qualitative study.

Data has been analysed using STATA 14 (quantitative) and NVIVO (Qualitative).

Ethical clearance on the interview guidelines was taken for the study.
### PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

#### Background Characteristics of respondents (N=698)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group of respondent</th>
<th>Caste of respondent</th>
<th>Religion of respondent</th>
<th>Availability of toilet facility</th>
<th>Main source of drinking water</th>
<th>Father's education</th>
<th>Childhood experience of violence</th>
<th>Witnessed spousal violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>SC/ST</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>Own source</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>Ever experienced</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-29</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>Public source</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>Witnessed spousal violence</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>90.4</td>
<td>Community RO</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non schooling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Earning status of respondents**

- Ever done paid work: 45.4
- Never done paid work: 54.6

**Age at marriage**

- Below 15: 22.2
- 16-18: 46.9
- Above 18: 31.0
### Child marriage Indicators among samata girls/women and non-samata girls/women (18-22 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Samata</th>
<th>Non-Samata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child marriage</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage below 18 years</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred age of marriage above 21 years</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Age at marriage by educational level of samata and non-samata girls/women (18-22 years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level of girls/women</th>
<th>Samata</th>
<th>Non samata</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age at marriage</td>
<td>12 or more years</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married after 17 years</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Prevalence of violence among ever partnered women (N=698)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Since age of 15 years</th>
<th>12 months prior to survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical violence</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual violence</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional violence</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling behaviour</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic violence</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and/or sexual</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Physical violence

She has to accept violence because of her children...think about their future. If she goes to her mother’s house their education will be spoiled. People talk about her and say she is not taking care of her husband...this is also tension. So (she thinks)...let him be with her whatever he does.” (Non-samata, married)

Inputs from the qualitative data find that both the victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence tend to internalize gender-based violence at early ages.
Prevalence of physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence, and controlling behaviours by husband/partner since age 15 among ever married/partnered women comparing Samata and Non-Samata (N=380)

- Physical violence: Samata 3.9%, Non-Samata 11.6%
- Sexual violence: Samata 5.1%, Non-Samata 5.6%
- Emotional violence: Samata 6.4%, Non-Samata 15.2%
- Controlling behaviour: Samata 9.0%, Non-Samata 11.6%
- Economic violence: Samata 24.4%, Non-Samata 31.1%
- Any form of violence: Samata 7.7%, Non-Samata 9.3%
- All forms of violence: Samata 28.2%, Non-Samata 36.4%
Intergenerational transmission of intimate partner violence
Witnessed physical violence between parents during childhood

Percent physical violence witnessed by girls/women among parents during the first 15 years of life (N=288)

- Pushed, grabbed, slap or throw: 26.2%
- Kick, bit, hit: 11.3%
- Repeatedly hit at least a few minutes: 5.0%
- Threatened with knife: 33.1%
IPV by witnessing violence and childhood experience of violence

- No Violence by husband/partner
- With physical and/or sexual violence by husband/partner

*Witnessed physical violence among her parents during childhood

- 28.0%
- 55.6%

Physically hit by parents/guardians during her childhood

- 39.7%
- 79.4%

Ever-married/partnered women witnessing violence on her mother and experience of childhood according to the experience of physical and/or sexual violence by her husband/partner (N=698)
Results of Logistic Regression Analysis of the determinants of Intimate partner violence among adolescent girls and women of Intimate partner violence among adolescent girls and women.
Results of Logistic Regression Analysis of the determinants of the childhood experience of violence among adolescent girls and women
Many girls/women expressed their experience of witnessing violence they saw in the previous generations and how they faced it. This, in turn, either made them tolerant of violence in their married life, convincing or rebellious to confront it.

“Children sustain some impact of their parents’ fight. Their education gets disturbed, and they don’t feel good about this. It has some impact on children’s minds. They also feel this is how they have to go through their lives too. Just shut up and tolerate. They usually become silent if they keep witnessing such incidents.” (Non-samata, married)

Some women tried to convince their partners not to drink and resort to violence but to no avail.

“My grandfather always came home drunk and fought with my grandmother. My mother would remind him of his responsibilities and tell him not to drink. But he would drink even more out of anger and start fighting again” (Samata, unmarried)

Among the adversity, there is an opportunity too. Some women raised voices against the violence and did not bear it though they saw their mothers silent in response to intimate partner violence.

“During young age, when there was an argument between parents, mother used to sit quietly. But we have to question if some injustice is happening to us. If we don’t question them, then they’ll continue to repeat. The previous generation was not as smart as the present generation. We know where to go and ask for justice if something untoward happened to us, unlike them (we) are exposed to more knowledge and the outside world.” (Samata, Unmarried)
IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN

Children consider violence among spouses as a normal activity if that happens on a daily basis. It is acceptable among women that domestic violence is normal, only violence outside is to be questioned.

“If a father comes and hits the mother regularly, then the children think that it is normal. If physical abuse happens once in a while, then someone will ask, why they are doing it. But, if it happens on a daily basis, then it becomes normal.” (Non-samata, Unmarried)

Girls perceived that sons follow their fathers when they resort to violence against women whereas daughters internalise and accept it silently like their mother.

“If father hits mother in front of his son like this, a son will also hit in future. Whereas when a daughter sees her father hitting her mother, She feels sad and tries to manage her parents. When her husband hits her in future, she will keep quiet and will feel sad about it”. (Non-samata, Unmarried)

Also, the suffering of mothers experiencing IPV affects their daughters and they live in fear if they too have to face the same in their marital life.

“Mother’s suffering affects her daughter...witnessing father hitting her mother. Daughter also hesitates to go forward in her life. She (fears)...her future husband will do the same as her father.” (Samata, Unmarried)
Girls/women who witnessed parental violence and experienced violence in childhood are more likely to experience physical violence in their marital life too.

More than half of the women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence mentioned that their mother was hit by their father.

Experience of childhood violence had a greater impact on intergenerational transmission of violence than witnessing parental violence in childhood.

Most of them believed that violence to a certain extent is normal and they may have to live with it for a lifetime as a victim.

Some believed in raising voices against intimate partner violence and trying to break the cycle of intergenerational transfer of violence.

The frequency of violence also contributed to understanding the extent of normalisation and internalisation of violence among girls/women and their children.

Girls believed that IPV in front of children affects their mental health. Witnessing violence, boys may repeat violence in their marital life too and girls tend to internalise violence as a victim.

Samata girls/women are less likely to confront intimate partner violence compared to non-samata girls.
IMPLICATIONS

- Research should be conducted to find the association between childhood experience of violence and IPV so as to find whether the perpetrators or the victims resort to violence on children as a response to coping with intimate partner violence.

- Capacity building for children and parent can help deal with spousal violence. Interventions with boys/men can transform their attitudes towards girls/women and help adolescent girls/women lead a life free of violence and abuse.

- Need to develop a model where intervention with all the stakeholders like girls, parents, boys and community leaders are involved for a sustainable solution to address IPV.
SPHOORTHI- Girl leads girl model

ROLE MODEL APPROACH
(Peer-to-Peer Learning)

ECOLOGICAL MODEL

KEY ACTIVITIES

GIRLS
- Life Skill
- Exposure Visits
- Leadership

- Communication
- Tuition Classes
- Samvada

PARENTS
- Outreach
- Counselling
- Exposure Visits

- Couple Workshops
- Samvada
- Monthly Meetings

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES

- Linking to Schemes
- Kitchen Garden
- Theatre
- Library
- Sports

BOYS
- Samvada
- Sports
- Communication
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