

Inter-spousal violence in young married couples in India: Differentials in love and arranged marriages

By

Kabir Pal

International Institute for Population Sciences

Background

Domestic violence is a global phenomenon, cutting across caste, class, culture, religion and ethnic boundaries. The ubiquity of the spousal violence can be gauged from the fact that it has been documented in different cultures and societies all over the world. A considerable research has documented the widespread prevalence of spousal violence in India but little is known about the differentials in love and arranged marriages. Domestic violence, also known as spousal violence, occurs when one person in an intimate relationship or marriage tries to dominate and control the other person. Domestic violence that includes physical, sexual and emotional violence is called domestic violence. Since times immemorial, domestic violence has been an intrinsic part of the society we are living in. The contributing factors could be the desire to gain control over another family member, the desire to exploit someone for personal benefits, the flare to be in a commanding position all the time showcasing one's supremacy so on and so forth. Concerned that violence against women is an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace. The United Nations General Assembly in 1998 called for increased research into the 'causes, nature, seriousness and consequences' of violence against women, reflecting a recognition that such violence represents a fundamental violation of women's health and human rights. Since then, studies across India have documented the widespread prevalence of domestic violence, encompassing an array of physical, sexual and/or psychological acts inflicted by intimate male partners. But the association of type of marriage with domestic violence was hardly addressed. Violence against women is one of the most significant, yet little understood and acknowledged factor instrumental in the phenomenon of marginalization of women in the development processes. Domestic violence is not simply a legal problem; it is very much a social and psychological problem and has to be tackled adequately by bringing about fundamental changes in the social system and in the attitudes of people towards women and children.

Data and Methods

The study is based on secondary data of Youth in India: Situation and Needs conducted in 2006-2007 in six states of India by Population Council, New Delhi (India) and International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai (India) under the stewardship of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The Youth Study focused on married and unmarried young women and unmarried young men aged 15–24 in both rural and urban settings. Married men in

the age group 15-29 were also interviewed in the survey. The present study examined the association between the types of marriage i.e. arrange or love marriage and the domestic violence such as physical, emotional and sexual. The married men of age 15-29 and married women of age 15-24 years are taken for the present study. Multivariate estimates have been used to establish the statistical association.

Results

The result reveals that the percentage of physical and emotional violence among the young married couples is higher in love marriages. The percentage of physical violence in love marriage is 32% compared to 24.3% in arranged marriages

Type of marriage	Type of violence					
	Physical	N	Sexual	N	Emotional	N
Arrange	24.3	20050	26.2	20063	6.6	19962
Love	32.3	1145	19.4	1142	9.6	1141

where as the emotional violence is 9.6% for love marriage and 6.6% for arranged marriage. A contrast has been seen in the result of sexual violence where compared to arranged marriage the percentage of violence is less in love marriages i.e. 19.4 than arranged marriage which is 26.2. The result from the multivariate analysis controlling the confounding factors shows that women in “love” marriages were almost one and half time as likely to experience physical violence such as being slapped, punched, kicked, tried to choke etc. than those in more traditional arranged marriages, highlighting the adverse impact of flouting social norms. Similar results are seen for the emotional violence which is 1.5 times more likely to happen in love marriages than arrange marriage. But the likelihood of sexual violence is found low in love marriages i.e. 16 percent less likely to be happened compared to arrange marriages. It was also found that with increasing age the likelihood of physical and emotional violence is increasing and the likelihood of females experiencing any type of violence physical, sexual or emotional is high.

Conclusion

The present study perhaps for the first time investigates the inter-spousal violence in young married couple in India showing differentials in love and arranged marriages. Another novelty of the study is that it uses data from a more recent, rich and contextual household survey conducted in 2006-07. The discussions about the choice to go for either love or arranged marriage have been going from a very long time. The perspectives about the type of marriage differ globally relying upon the culture they manifest. The present study shows the differentials in the love and arranged marriage pertaining to spousal violence. The high percentage of couples experiencing the spousal violence is from the love marriages. Results also show that with increasing age the likelihood of spousal violence increases and females are major sufferers. India is a country where the majority is inclined toward the arranged marriages (results are not given here) and the love marriages are gradually been accepted.

Table2: Logistic regression analysis showing the odds ratio of experiencing different type of violence by socio-economic characteristics

Socio-economic characteristics	Exp(B)		
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Emotional violence
TYPE OF MARRIAGE			
Arrange®			
Love	1.665**	.835**	1.561**
AGE	1.094**	.994	1.058**
SEX			
Male®			
Female	1.378**	2.541**	2.381**
RESIDENCE			
Urban®			
Rural	1.011	1.053*	1.039
RELIGION			
Hindu®			
Muslim	1.066	1.139*	.970
others	1.004	.789**	1.111
CASTE			
SC®			
ST/VJNT	.797**	1.026	.815
OBC	.738**	.955	.836*
General	.613**	.780**	.675**
DK/No caste	.641	.692	.805
EDUCATION			
No formal schooling®			
1-7 years	.908*	.804**	.960
8-11 years	.700**	.654**	.762**
12 and above	.423**	.459**	.558**
TYPE OF FAMILY			
Nuclear®			
Non Nuclear	.768**	1.137**	.793**
WEALTH INDEX			
Poorest®			
Poor	.927*	.803**	.843*
Middle	.763**	.722**	.733**
Richer	.611**	.598**	.700**
Richest	.480**	.695**	.605**

Note: ** p <= 0.01, *p<= 0.05, ® = Reference category