

Studying the Role of Education in Eliminating Violence against Women

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Abstract

The study was conducted with the main objective of analyzing the role of education in eliminating violence against women, and to identifying the nature and forms of violence against women prevailing in the society. The study was delimited to the rural areas of Tehsil Ahmadpur East of district Bahawalpur. The population of the study consisted of married women of 18-60 years age group. Snowball convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. The data was collected by administering self-prepared inventory which was filled as the incident occurred and reported by the informer after cross verification from the locality. The data was collected from both of the population cohorts i.e. urban and rural. The researchers collected data from victims of violence with different levels of education starting from illiteracy to the Masters' level qualification. The collected data were analyzed in terms of percentage according to the qualification of the respondents and were presented in graphical form. The study concluded that violence against women exists in different forms including pushing and soaking, twisting their arms, pulling hair, hit by thrown things on them for injuring or torturing, closing their mouth with hands or some other thing causing suffocation, and beating with wooden stick or iron rod and/ or something like this. The study also concludes that illiterate women had ever experienced one or the other form of physical violence. The occurrence of violence appeared negatively related with level of education of the women. The results demonstrated a significant decrease in physical violence against women with increasing the level of education. Therefore, female education seems necessary for eliminating violence against women and guaranteeing their basic human rights.

Keywords: violence against women; human rights; literacy; socialization; physical violence; domestic violence.

1. Introduction

Pakistan is one of the developing countries of South Asian Region having a 58 percent literacy rate and where the overall literacy rate for women is as low as 42% including those being Quranic literate. The literacy rate for rural women lowers to 29% depicting their miserable conditions and social status (Government of Pakistan 2012). However, Articles 37-B and C of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (1973) assures education for all citizens of the country by asserting that “The state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within the minimum possible period; make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

Similarly, more or less all of the educational policies and plans of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan formulated by various governments have expressed the commitment of the respective governments to education –All Pakistan Educational Conference of 1947 suggested strategic measures for providing free and compulsory primary education; the Commission on National Education of 1959 targeted compulsory and universal primary education as well as compulsory religious education by 1974; the New Education Policy of 1970 targeted universal enrolment up to Class 5; the 1972–1980 Education Policy and the National Education Policy of 1979 and of 1992 recapped free primary education; the National Education Policy 1998–2010 targeted free education up to secondary level; and the National Education Policy of 2009 presented feasible strategies for development of education in the country by providing quality education, social justice and promoting democratic attitudes among the masses.

In spite of all commitments and concerns the prevailing illiteracy rate (42%) in the country is high and it emerges as major problem. Illiteracy is said to be the mother of social problems. Currently Pakistan is facing different social problems including poverty, gender violence and human rights, peace and harmony, unemployment (Hussain et al., 2008) and others.

Among others, gender violence and violence of human rights appear to be the main social problems in Pakistan. Usually, the media reports bring these social problems on to the surface from all parts of the country now-a-days and affirm their existence. Apparently, the gender violence starts from the home at early ages of the babies as the survey of Coleman (2004) demonstrated that, “the country’s skewed sex ratio of 108 men to 100 women is a reflection, in part of higher female infant mortality and the overall more privileged treatment of boys.” Discussing this fact Hussain, et. al. (2008) asserted by inferring that parents preferred their male babies over their female babies and looked after them in a better by providing best environment at home, better food & nutrition, education and medication. Obviously, one can say that it is violence of human rights and violence against females (by deriving them from their basic human rights) by parents even in infancy. Akhtar (2006) viewed violence against women as an un-reported and/ or underreported social problem in Pakistan. In conventional family system women are not encouraged to report violence incidents due to the social stigma, norms and taboos. Although, such incidents are under-reported or un-reported domestic violence is a reality which exists more or less in all parts and all sub-cultures of the country.

Heise (1994) listed different causes of violence against women. These are cultural causes –gender specific socialization, cultural context and gender roles, expectation and

relationship, belief in male domination, social values affirming male proprietary over women and girls, male lead family, custom of marriage and dowry, and accepting violence for conflict resolution; economic causes -women are economically dependent, limited access of women to cash, discrimination in property rights and inheritance, limited or no exposure to outer world, and limited access to education and training, particularly higher and technical vocational education; legal causes -legal status of women, marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance, legal literacy, and unawareness about existing laws in practice; and political causes –less participation in policies, media and other emerging professions, compromises over domestic violence, and family taboos.

2. Literature Review

Violence against women is found in almost all parts of the world but vary in frequency and occurrences. Different studies indicated different types of violence and their effects on the victim. Majority of studies have been conducted on women's mental and socio-psychological health.

Monemi and Pena (2003) conducted a study to investigating the impact of violence against mothers on mortality risks for their children before 5 years of age in Nicaragua. The study demonstrated prevalence of domestic violence among 61% mothers in Nicaragua. Similarly, Mazza and Dennerstein (2001) conducted an observational, longitudinal study as part of the Melbourne Women's Midlife Health Project (MWMHP) over nine years. The study revealed that in overall, 28.5% of the Australian women reported having had experienced some kind of domestic violence including physical, sexual or emotional violence over their lifespan.

Likewise, a cross sectional study in primary health care was conducted by Richardson (2002) and it aimed at identifying domestic violence. It was conducted in London and measured the prevalence of domestic violence among women attending general practice by testing association between experience of domestic violence and demographic factors. The study revealed diversified but alarming results. According to the results, in overall, 41% of the women reported that they had ever experienced physical violence from their respective partners or earlier partners; whereas, 28% affirmed domestic violence inflicted upon them. Similarly, 21% women reported ever having injuries like bruises or more serious injuries, from violence. Domestic violence during pregnancy was reported by 15% of the respondents who had ever been pregnant; of these, 25% women reported that this violence was worse than when they were not pregnant and 29% stated that it had caused a miscarriage. However, the proportion of physical violence was greater than domestic violence.

The study of Bates et al. (2004) was conducted to determining socio economic factors associated with domestic violence in rural Bangladesh. The survey demonstrated that 67% of the women had ever experienced domestic violence of which 35% reported it happened during the past year. Interestingly, the participant women strongly supported education of their daughters desired more education and income to empower themselves and minimizing the danger of domestic violence. According to Haq (2000) HRCP (1998) reported 80% women associated to physical violence in Pakistani rural Punjab. The studies, particularly that of Richardson (2002) indicates that mostly the violence is caused by the intimate partner and results in (Heise and Moreno, 2002) psychological disorders including mental stress and anxiety, physical illness, eating and sleeping disorders, loss

of self-esteem and hope for life, phobias and risky sexual behaviors. It indicates an alarming situation and calls for strategic measures to check the violence against women.

Many studies have been conducted on different aspects of women violence by different researchers and social reformers. The studies conducted by Richardson (2002); and Kishor and Kiersten (2004) revealed that domestic violence against women frequently continues even in the state of pregnancy having serious effects on physical and mental health of women. According to Akhtar, (2006) domestic violence negatively affects reproductive health of women along with causing mental stress and physical illness. Campbell (2002); and Monemi and Pena (2003) affirmed abortion and miscarriages due to high level of violence, and physical and psychological abuse by husband during accidental pregnancy. Bullock and McFarlane (1989) explored the frequency of miscarriage among violence victim and non-victim women, and found violence victim women to be two times more likely than non-victim women to have miscarriage or abortion, and four times more likely to give birth to a low weight baby.

However, this situation can be changed by creating awareness about basic human rights and empowering women through education. Education can bring about social change in the country by opening avenues of socio-economic empowerment for women. Educated women can decide better about their life and participate in social enterprises for development. Jejeebhoy (1998) found that “secondary education has a stronger effect than primary education in reducing rates of violence and enhancing women's ability to leave an abusive relationship.” The respondents of the study of Lisa, Bates, Schuler and Ruth (2004) rightly supported education of their daughters by desiring more education and income to empower themselves and minimizing the danger of domestic violence.

Akhtar (2006) analyzed relationship between literacy and women empowerment through a survey in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The study demonstrated physical violence against women to be very common. More than a quarter of the respondent women had experienced physical violence; and most commonly they were slapped. The study further presented significant relationship between level of education/ literacy and physical violence; as/and illiteracy appeared to be associated with increased risk of domestic violence.

Evidently, education plays a central role in empowering women and making them capable of getting rid of violence –domestic or any other kind. Haq (2000) supported education of women by asserting that educated women having employment and paid for their services out of home, play a deciding role. Therefore, education of women is quite necessary to eliminate violence against them and guarantee their basic human rights.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to analyzing the role of education in eliminating violence against women, and to identify the nature and forms of violence against women prevailing in the society.

4. Research Methodology

It was a descriptive study which used survey approach for data collection. The study was delimited to the rural areas of Tehsil Ahmadpur East of district Bahawalpur. Since it dealt with social issue ‘violence against women’ in the male dominated society, therefore, it took three years in data collection. As the researchers belong to the same cultural context,

therefore, they had a benefit in data collection. However, they borrowed services of social informers about the incidents of violence.

The population of the study consisted of married women of 18-60 years age group. Snowball convenient sampling technique was used for data collection. The data was collected by administering self-prepared inventory which was filled as the incident occurred and reported by the informer after cross verification from the locality. The data was collected from both of the population cohorts i.e. urban and rural. However, data collection process was easy in rural set up than in urban areas. The researchers collected data from victims of violence with different levels of education starting from illiteracy to the Masters' level qualification. Qualification-wise respondents are given below:

Table 1: Sample of the study

Qualification	No. of Incidents Reported by the Informers	No. Responses	Percentage
Illiterate Women	122	71	58
Literate Women (having qualification up to 8 th grade)	101	61	60
Women having their Matriculation Qualification	56	42	75
Women having their Intermediate Qualification	44	28	64
Women with Bachelor Degree Qualification	38	22	58
Women with Masters' Degree Qualification	26	18	69
Total	387	242	63

The data were collected only from the victim women reported by the informers; who compromised for their children, property, social norms and values, and/ or dignity of their parents and residing with their spouse. Victim women who filed their cases to police stations and/ or courts were not approached and excluded. The collected data were analyzed in terms of percentage according to the qualification of the respondents and is presented in graphical form in the next section.

However, the researchers observed ethical considerations of data collection and ensured confidentiality of the data. They collected data from the respondents by getting their consent after developing repo as incidents were reported by the informers.

5. Presentation of Data Analysis and Results of the Study

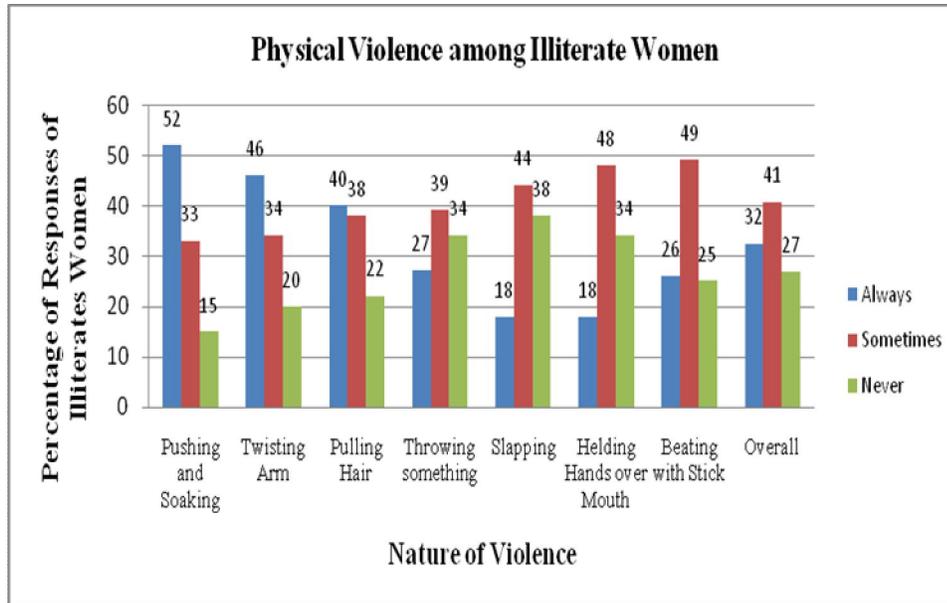


Figure 1: Physical Violence among Illiterate Women

Figure 1 demonstrates status of physical violence among illiterate women. According to the figure, in overall 32% of the respondents reported that they ever faced physical violence in their lifespan with 41% having had experienced its sometimes. The victims reported ever prevalence physical violence against them in different forms including pushing and soaking (52%), twisting their arms (46%), pulling hair (40%), throwing something on women for inflicting injury or torturing (27%), closing mouth with hands or some other thing causing suffocation (18%), and beating with wooden stick or iron rod or something like this (26%). However, in overall 27% of the women did not report any kind of physical violence.

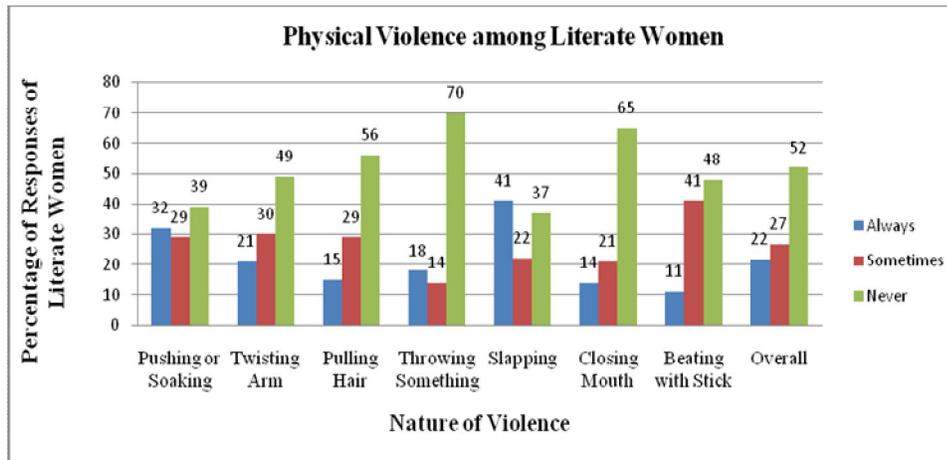


Figure-2: Physical Violence among Literate Women

Literacy is said to empower the women by developing confidence among them. The figure 2 presents prevalence of physical violence among literate women (having qualification up to 8th grade) of Tehsil Ahmadpur East, Bahawalpur. According to the overall data presented in the figure, 22% of the literate women had ever experienced physical violence, and 27% faced it occasionally. There appears variation among the frequency of occurrences of violence incidents and their forms. The ever experienced forms of violence were slapping which appeared to be more prevailing form of violence among 41% of women. Similarly, 32% of the women reported ever prevalence of pushing and/or or soaking; 21% constantly experienced twisting arms; 15% regularly faced pulling hair; 18% were ever hit by throwing something for hurting them; 14% always were closed their mouth with some stuff or putting hands or pillow over it; and 11% were ever beaten with wooden stick or things like this. Nonetheless, in overall the majority (52%) of the literate women had experienced none of the form of physical violence.

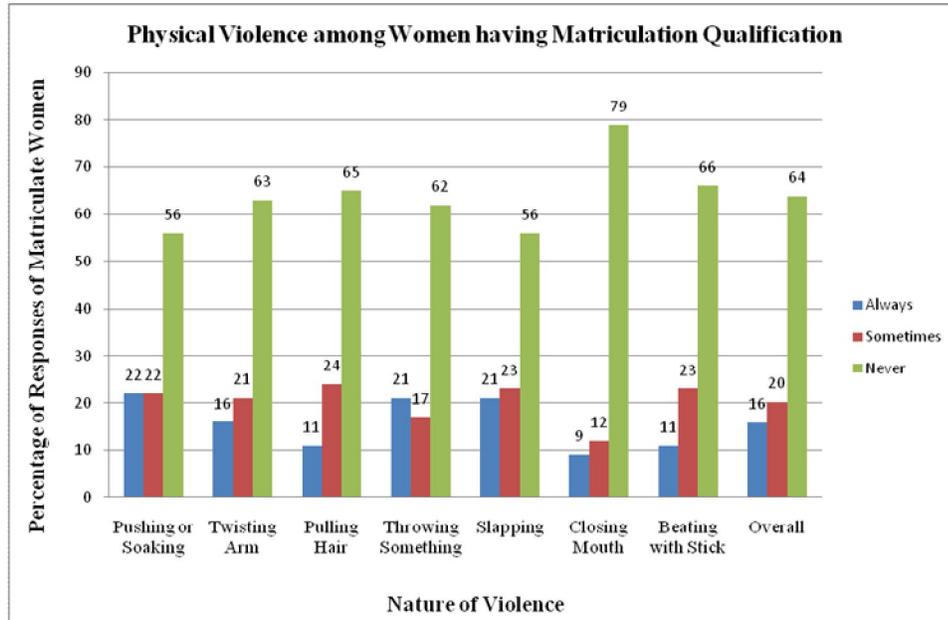


Figure 3: Physical Violence among Women with Matric Qualification

Matriculation is the first step towards further education. After graduating the matriculation level of education one is desired to take social responsibilities with confidence having life skills and skills for earning livelihood. The data given in figure-3 indicates occurrences of physical violence among women having passed their matriculation examination/ or secondary school certificate examination. The figure presents that in overall 16% of the matriculate women had ever experienced the physical violence whereas 20% had experienced it sometimes during their lifetime. Similarly, the percentage of women who always experienced physical violence ranges 9% (closing their mouth with hands or some other stuff) to 22% (pushing or soaking them wildly going through 11% beating with wooden stick and pulling hair respectively, 16% twisting arms and 21% throwing something on them for hurting them seriously. However, in overall, 64% of the matriculate never reported any form of physical violence.

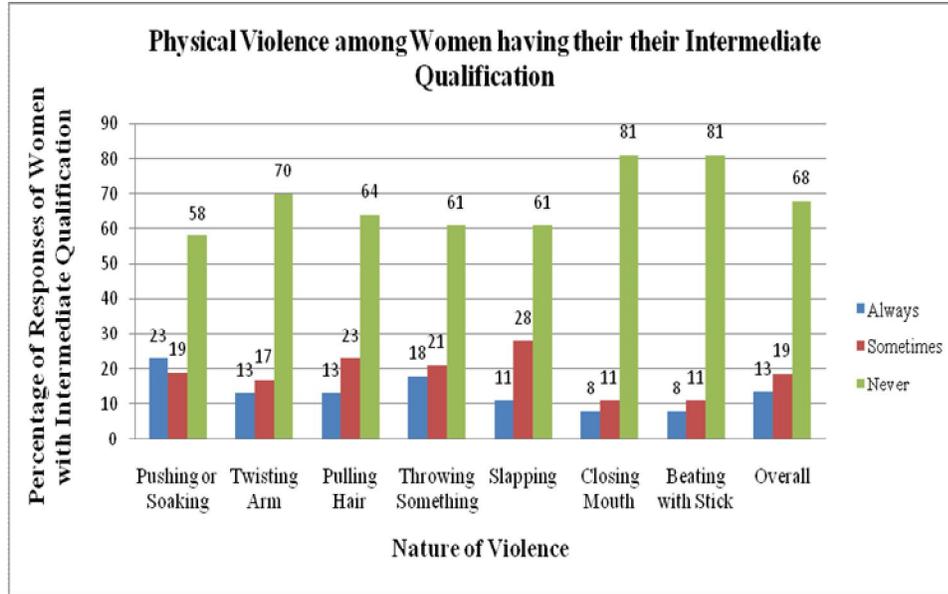


Figure-4: Physical Violence among Women with Intermediate Qualification

Figure 4 portrays occurrence of physical violence among women having their intermediate qualification. According to the data given in the figure, in overall 13% of the respondent women reported that they ever had experienced some form of physical violence in their lifespan with 19% having had experienced its sometimes. The victim women reported ever prevalence physical violence against them in different forms including pushing and soaking (23%), twisting their arms, and pulling hair (13% each), hit by thrown something on them for injuring or torturing (18%), closing their mouth with hands or some other thing causing suffocation (8%), and beating with wooden stick or rod or something like this (8%). However, in overall 68% of the women with intermediate qualification did not report any kind of physical violence.

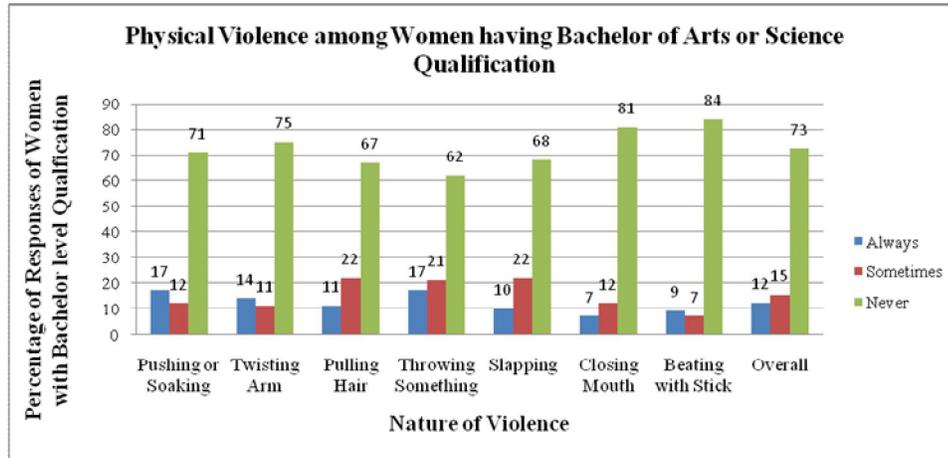


Figure-5: Physical Violence among Women with Bachelor Qualification

Bachelor level of education is considered to be the higher educational level and graduates of this level are expected to play a leading role in the community. The bachelor level graduates have sufficient knowledge about self and surroundings equipped with proper like skills and analytical and/ or logical thinking. Therefore, they appear to be mature and realistic in routine life. They can adjust them in the situations and context even sometimes being odd. The figure 5 presents prevalence of physical violence among women having bachelor degree of Tehsil Ahmadpur East, Bahawalpur. According to the data presented in the figure, 12% of the women who had their bachelor degrees also had ever experienced physical violence, and 15% faced it occasionally. There appears variation among the frequency of occurrences of violence incidents and their forms. The ever experienced forms of violence were pushing or soaking and hitting by thrown things which appeared to be more prevailing form of violence among 17% of women (in each of the area). Similarly, 14% of the women reported ever prevalence of twisting their arms; 11% constantly experienced pulling hair; 10% regularly faced slapping by their spouse; 7% were ever closed their mouth by putting hands or some other stuff over it; and 9% were ever beaten with wooden stick or things like this. However, in overall the majority (73%) of the women having bachelor degrees had experienced none of the form of physical violence.

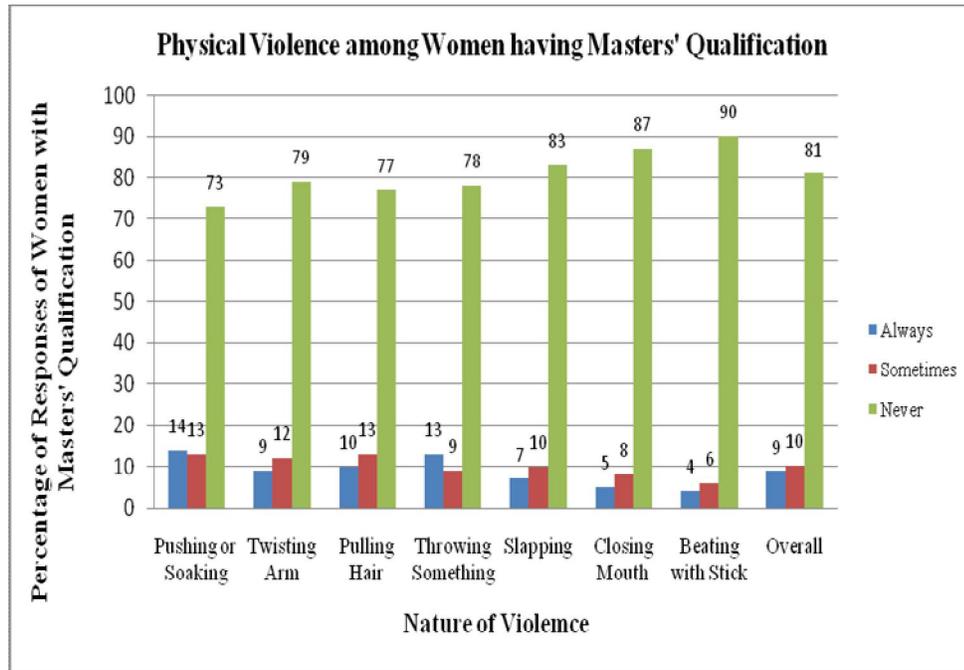


Figure-6: Physical Violence among Women with Masters' Qualification

Figure 6 depicts occurrence of physical violence among women having their Masters' degree. According to the data given in the figure, in overall 9% of the respondent women reported that they ever had experienced some form of physical violence in their life time with 10% having had experienced it sometimes. The victim women reported ever prevalence physical violence against them in different forms including pushing and soaking (14%), twisting their arms, and pulling hair (9% and 10% respectively), hit by

thrown things on them for injuring or torturing (13%), closing their mouth with hands or some other thing causing suffocation (5%), and beating with wooden stick or rod or something like this (4%). However, in overall 81% of the women with Masters' degree did not report any kind of physical violence.

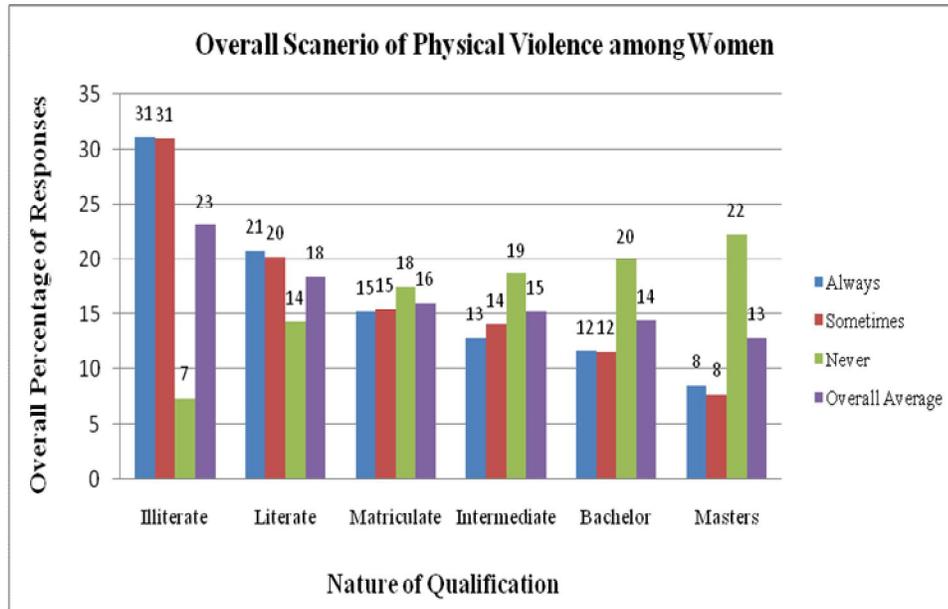


Figure-7: Overall Scenario of Physical Violence among Women

The figure 7 demonstrates over prevalence of physical violence among women. In overall, 31% of the illiterate women reported that they had ever experienced some form of physical violence in their life time; 21% of the literate women ever experienced it. The data presents a declining trend of violence among women as their qualification increases. This declining trend is found as 15%, 13% and 12% of the women with matriculate, intermediate and bachelor level qualification constantly had experienced physical violence. However, the trend was found less among women having masters' qualification as only 8% of the women having this degree ever experienced any of the forms of physical violence.

6. Conclusion and Future Study Directions

It is concluded from the results of the study that violence against women exists in different forms including pushing and soaking, twisting their arms, pulling hair, hit by thrown things on them for injuring or torturing, closing their mouth with hands or some other thing causing suffocation , and beating with wooden stick or iron rod and/ or something like this. The study also concludes that illiterate women had ever experienced one or the other form of physical violence. The occurrence of violence appeared negatively related with level of education of the women. The results demonstrated a significant decrease in physical violence against women with increasing the level of education. Therefore, female education seems necessary for eliminating violence against women and guaranteeing their basic human rights. The researchers recommended a study to evaluate the socio-psychological impact of women violence on the victims and their

children. A study may also be conducted on the cause of violence and the personnel involved in women violence.

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