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Factors Affecting the Violence Against Women: Evidence from Rural Bangladesh

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Abstract

The present study investigates the phenomenon of domestic violence perpetrated against women in Bangladesh, and endeavors to identify potential determinants that may underlie its prevalence. By employing a multivariate logistic regression model and utilizing a national representative dataset comprising 5044 households in rural Bangladesh, the present study reveals noteworthy correlations between domestic violence and various factors, including but not limited to women's age, poultry farming, total land ownership, working in rural areas, and women's decision-making authority in agriculture. The age of female individuals is a crucial factor in the occurrence of domestic violence, as there exists a positive correlation between age and the likelihood of experiencing such violence, with older women being more susceptible to it. Nevertheless, the probability of violent behavior decreases after a specific period. The rearing of poultry in farms seems to have a noticeable effect on the incidence of violence, whereas the possession of extensive land holdings reduces the probability of violent occurrences. Men who work in rural areas are more likely to engage in violent behavior, possibly due to economic instability and adherence to traditional gender norms. Research indicates that female individuals who possess decision-making power in the realm of agricultural production tend to experience reduced levels of violence. In general, the aforementioned discoveries illuminate the intricate mechanisms that underlie domestic violence in rural areas of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Women's decision making, Age, Small business, Work in rural areas

JEL classification: O1, O15, I14, I24, I32, I38, J13, J16

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Introduction:

In general, the term violence is used to describe any act committed with the intent to cause physical harm. Violence is a global concept. Everyone is familiar with this word and its effects to some extent. Any individual, male or female, is susceptible to violence at any time. Women are the primary victims of violence in the majority of cases (Adams et al., 2008). In all regions of the globe, women are victims of violence, and it is one of the most serious unresolved problems of our time (Akhmedshina, 2020). Violence against women (VAW) affects more than one-third of the world's female population, which is a significant global health concern and a grave violation of women's human rights. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, location, race, or socioeconomic status. To attain global equality for women and women's empowerment, VAW must be eliminated (Eisenhut et al., 2020).

Husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, stepfathers, siblings, uncles, sons, and other male relatives are typically the perpetrators of domestic violence. In 1993, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defined domestic violence as "Physical, sexual, and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation, and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, and violence related to exploitation"

According to Ellsberg and Heisse's (2005) analysis of 80 population-based surveys conducted in over 50 countries, a significant proportion of women who have ever been married or have had a partner have reported experiencing at least one instance of physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner. The prevalence rates of such violence ranged from 10% to 60%. Globally, it has been reported that up to 38% of homicides against women are perpetrated by their intimate partners (World Health Organization, 2021).

In the context of Bangladeshi society, there exists a historical perception that men are endowed with a sense of superiority, which consequently affords them certain privileges commonly referred to as "male privilege." To clarify, a patriarchal society exhibits a preference for male dominance over females through various means such as socioeconomic and political frameworks, legal systems, cultural conventions, customary practices, and ceremonial observances, among other elements (Dalal et al., 2009). Gender inequality engenders asymmetrical power dynamics between males and females, which are deeply rooted in patriarchal customs (Das et al., 2015; Bhattacharyya, 2009; 2013a, b; 2014; Pillai, 2001). Due to women's inferior status in Bangladesh, exorbitant demands for dowries even after weddings sometimes result in domestic violence, marital problems, suicides, and the murder of brides by in-laws and husbands (BBS, 2013; Nasrin, 2011). The implementation of social isolation and distancing measures amid the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in economic detriment. Existing social protection system has failed to serve the disadvantaged group, due to a lack of support and mistargeting and more focus should be given to employment generation and human capital development (Hasan & Khan, 2016). Lack of protection from the health-related shocks was another intriguing factor for vulnerability as well as root cause of poverty (Hasan, *et. al.* 2014).

According to Malik and Naeem (2020), there is an escalation in the likelihood of violence against women, as well as their abuse, exploitation, and neglect. A predominant factor contributing to the widespread occurrence of violence against women in Bangladesh is the existence of a culture of impunity, which is characterized by a lack of accountability and insufficient legal protection (Akter, 2021). Additionally, it was contended that the exacerbation of violence against women was intensified by the turmoil within households stemming from the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the human

rights organization (Ain O Salish Kendra, 2022), 190 women were reportedly murdered by their husbands between January and November of 2022. The socioeconomic status of women in Bangladesh has been historically characterized by subjugation, which can be attributed to the patriarchal social norms prevalent in the country. The historical prevalence of male dominance has resulted in gender-biased socialization, perpetuating stereotypes and contributing to the perceived inferiority of women in comparison to men. Despite a reported increase in female literacy rates according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics' 2016 the literacy rate for females remained lower than that of males, with figures of 69.9 percent and 75.62 percent respectively. This illustrates the enduring presence of gender-based discrimination and inequality in domains that are considered essential, such as education. Deprivation causes incompetence and eventually dependency on males later (Karim et al.,2018).

Cultural norms in Bangladesh encourage women to adopt a passive stance towards their spouse's aggressive conduct, leading to socio-economic reliance on their spouses, which can lead to domestic violence (Dalal et al., 2009). Individuals who have experienced domestic violence often hide their experiences due to feelings of shame, limited options for relocation, potential consequences, and worries about their children (Jeyaseelan et al., 2007; Schuler & Islam, 2008).

Additional factors that contribute to domestic violence in Bangladesh include the deviant behavior and personality traits of husbands. Studies conducted by Dalal et al. (2009), Jayasuriya et al. (2011), Jeyaseelan et al. (2007), Sambisa et al. (2010), and Solomon et al. (2009) have found a positive correlation between the use of alcohol or drugs by husbands and their likelihood to perpetrate domestic violence. Moreover, according to Dalal et al. (2009), instances of spousal violence, whether perpetrated by husbands or wives, and even attempts by wives to protect themselves from domestic violence, can result in further victimization.

Early marriage is another significant cause of domestic violence, particularly in Africa and South Asia. This type of sexual abuse involves forcing young females into early marriage and sexual relationships. However, financial considerations play a big part in many weddings since families thought skipping the dowry requirement may aid them (Khatun & Rahman 2012). Women are subjected to mistreatment by their husbands and in-laws due to their incapacity to bear a male child. In a significant number of instances, women encounter instances of degradation, verbal mistreatment, psychological or physical maltreatment, coerced repeated pregnancies until the birth of a male offspring, or the dissolution of marriage or remarriage by their spouse (Naved et al., 2005).

Numerous studies have demonstrated that domestic violence incurs both quantifiable and non-quantifiable expenses. The household and national levels are evaluated for the economic cost, which includes the loss of working days and earnings. Direct and indirect costs, including hidden expenses, can be associated with economic expenditures. The category of economic expenses encompasses various costs such as medical health expenditures, social assistance costs, relocation costs, lost workday costs, court and other legal process fees, and bribe. The occurrence of social ramifications is also noteworthy, including the social condemnation of victims resulting in feelings of shame and dishonor, rejection from family and society, and deprivation from educational opportunities. Additionally, battered individuals may find themselves in a vulnerable position, unable to disclose their situation due to societal expectations and the increased likelihood of marital dissolution along with intangible consequences, such as pain, suffering, and illness, incur expenses (Sifat, 2020).

Domestic Violence in Bangladesh

Bangladesh exhibits a high prevalence of domestic violence, with approximately 66% of Bangladeshi women having encountered such violence. However, 72.7% of these women have refrained from disclosing their experiences to others. Merely 2.1% of women apprise the local authorities, whereas a mere 1.1% of women are soliciting police intervention. Women from all social classes in Bangladesh are susceptible to mistreatment and mistreatment by their spouses, in-laws, and other relatives. Despite its increasing prevalence, domestic violence was often regarded as a private issue that had been addressed confidentially within the confines of the home (Parvin et al., 2016).

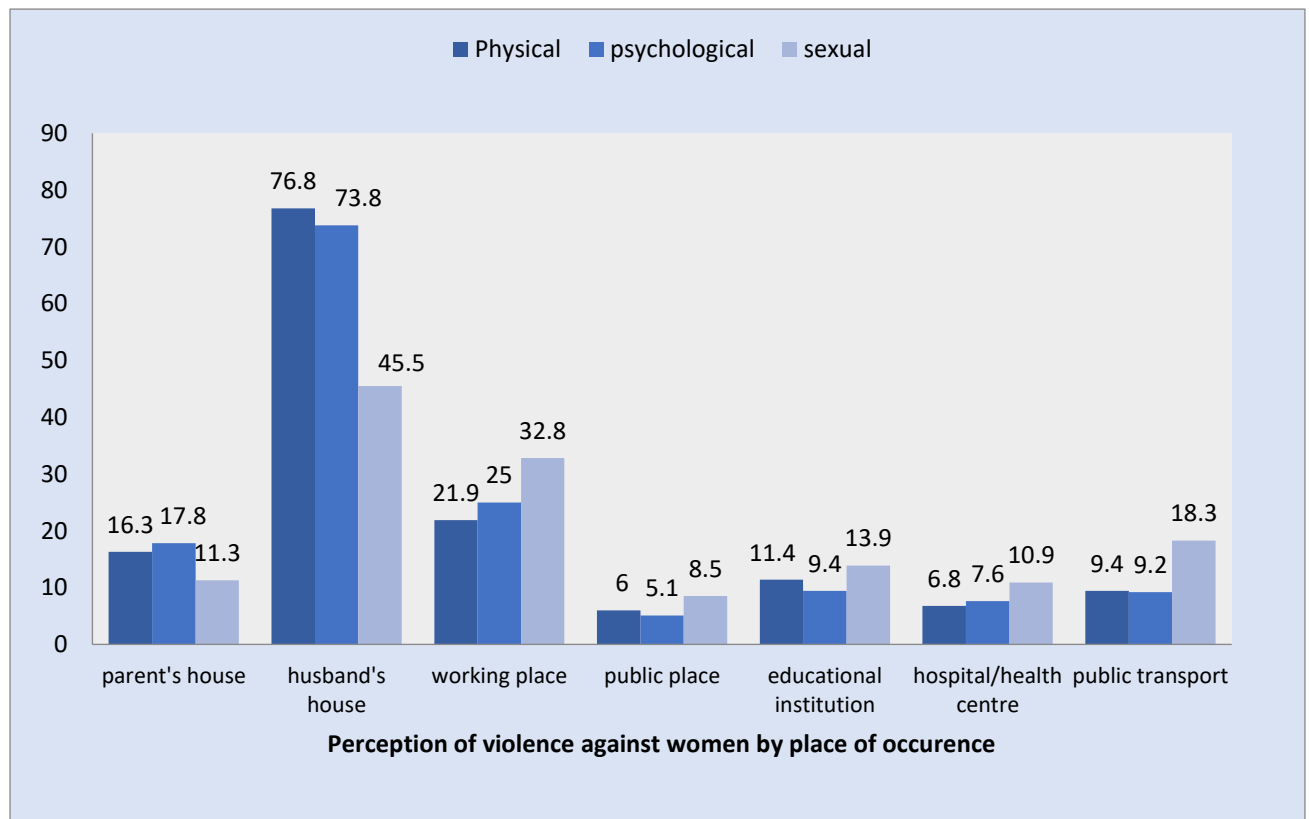


Figure 1: Perception about place where physical, psychological and sexual violence against women takes place by site. Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2015

The aforementioned diagram provides insight into the prevalence of violence against women based on the location of the incident. According to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) in 2015, the domicile of the husband is the most frequently reported location for incidents of physical, psychological, and sexual violence perpetrated against women.

Additionally, the research findings indicate that a significant proportion of married women in Bangladesh, approximately two-third, have encountered domestic violence perpetrated by their partners at some point in their lives. The dominant manifestation of violence that has been experienced is characterized by coercive conduct, coupled with bodily, affective, sexual, and financial maltreatment.

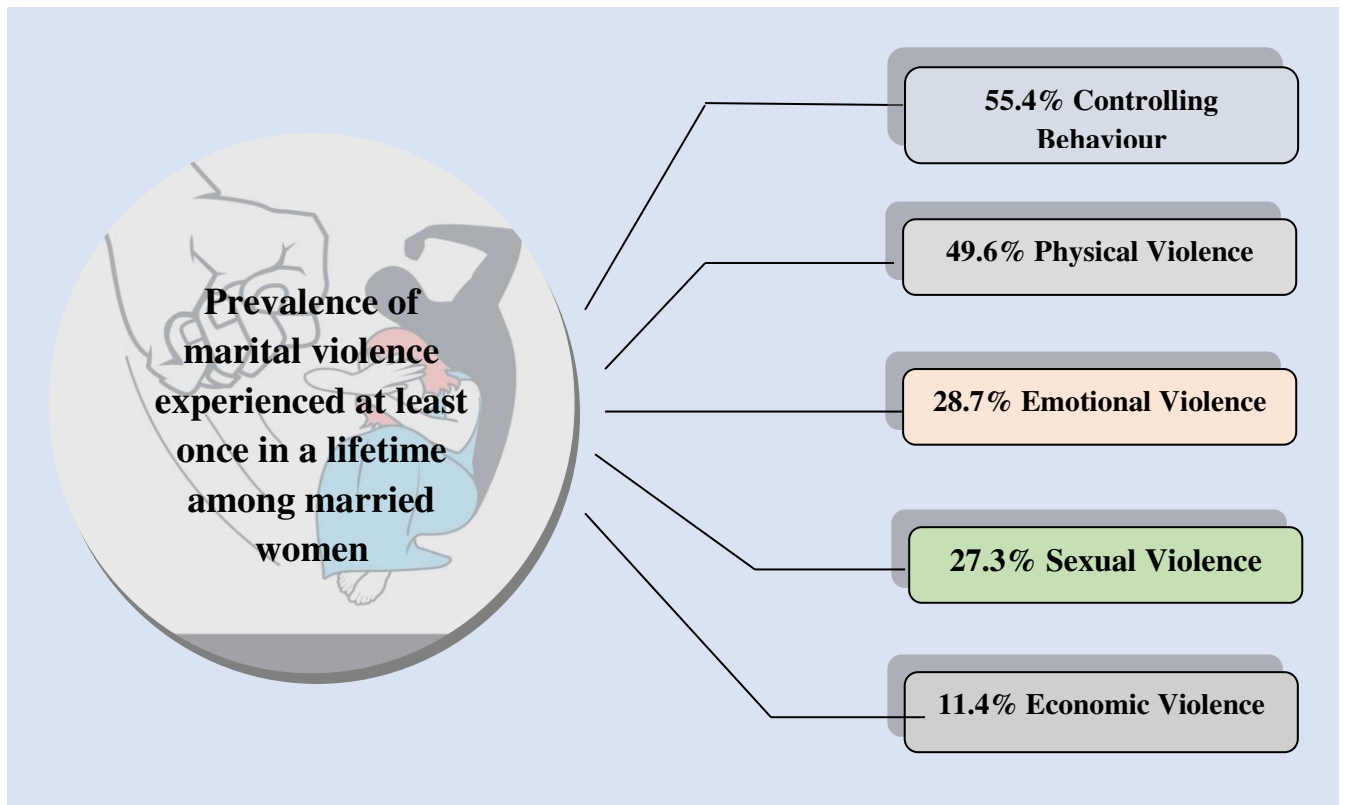


Figure 2: Types of violence in Bangladesh

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 2015

Factors Perpetuating Domestic Violence

Education and Age of Bride

In the context of Bangladesh, it has been observed that education, irrespective of gender, serves as a protective factor against incidents of domestic violence. According to Bates et al. (2004), possessing a minimum of six years of education can serve as a safeguard for women. Simultaneously, as per Naved and Persson's (2005) findings, the educational attainment of a husband serves as a safeguard against domestic violence solely in rural regions, provided that the husband has received education that surpasses the secondary level.

As per the definition provided by UNICEF, child marriage is the act of entering into a marital union before attaining the age of 18. Bangladesh ranks fourth globally in terms of child marriage prevalence, trailing behind Niger, the Central African Republic, and Chad. According to a survey conducted by UNICEF in 2020, a significant proportion of girls in Bangladesh, specifically 15% of them, entered into marriage prior to reaching the age of 15. Additionally, the survey revealed that a majority of girls, approximately 51%, were married before attaining the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2020).

According to a study conducted by Rahman et al. (2020), among a sample of 14,557 currently married women in Bangladesh, those who are younger and have lower levels of education are at a significantly higher risk of experiencing violence from their intimate partners. Specifically, the study found that this

group of women had a 13.57 percent higher likelihood of encountering such violence compared to their counterparts who are older and have higher levels of education.

Lack of awareness about legal rights

A significant proportion of individuals belonging to the lower socio-economic strata in Bangladesh lack awareness regarding their legal entitlements. Furthermore, approximately fifty percent of this demographic, particularly women, choose not to voice instances of infringement upon their rights. Merely a minor proportion of transgressions are reported to the relevant authorities, such as law enforcement or the judiciary. Females are exposed to diverse types of mistreatments; however, they frequently exhibit reluctance (in their capacity as sufferers) to bring their grievances to the attention of the judicial system owing to inadequate comprehension of the law and procedural complexities (Paul & Islam, 2015).

Exposure to violence

According to Flood and Pease (2009), the effects of childhood exposure to violence are more pronounced in boys, who exhibit a greater propensity to both endorse and engage in violent behaviour during adulthood. In the context of Bangladesh, it was observed that men who had been exposed to instances of father-to-mother abuse were found to exhibit a significantly higher likelihood of engaging in physical or sexual abuse themselves. The aforementioned group of individuals exhibited a 1.34-fold increase in the likelihood of endorsing the notion that spousal maltreatment is justifiable (Islam, et al., 2017).

Polygamy

Polygamy, which is entrenched in gender norms that are discriminatory, constitutes an additional risk factor for domestic violence. According to Khan's (2005) study conducted in Bangladesh, the primary reason behind the torture of the first wife was the desire to have an additional wife.

Socio Economic Status of Women

Research has indicated that women residing in economically disadvantaged households face a higher likelihood of experiencing both physical and psychological domestic violence from their spouses, as compared to women residing in affluent households. According to Leonhäuser and Parveen's (2004) study, a significant proportion of women residing in rural areas, specifically 82%, exhibit a relatively low degree of empowerment. The structural limitations faced by women residing in rural regions render them more vulnerable to domestic violence in comparison to women living in urban areas, as evidenced by studies conducted by Koenig et al (2003). According to a study conducted by Khan et al. (2017), a survey was administered to female victims of domestic violence in Bangladesh. The findings indicated that out of a total of 1143 victims, a majority (56.26%) belonged to the lower socioeconomic strata. Furthermore, it is worth noting that violence perpetrated against women and girls carries a significant economic burden. Research has shown that the global economy incurs an annual cost of \$1.5 trillion due to the consequences of violence against women. These consequences include expenses related to healthcare and law enforcement, as well as the loss of wages resulting from victims' inability to work (Scotland, 2022).

Dowry

According to Naved and Persson's (2005) study, dowry was found to be a requirement in 53% of marriages in rural Bangladesh and 14% in urban areas. Since the early 1970s, the issue of dowry demands has been identified as a significant contributor to the prevalence of violence against women and instances of suicide among women in Bangladesh (Jahan, 1994). Bates et al. (2004) discovered that non-payment of dowry may result in dowry-related fatalities. Additionally, their research revealed that women who received dowry payments were 1.5 times more prone to report incidents of domestic violence in the preceding year compared to those who did not receive any dowry.

Son Preference

The celebration of the birth of a male child in South Asian culture is rooted in the belief that sons serve as custodians of the family, responsible for securing its future through the provision of economic stability and the perpetuation of the male lineage. According to a survey conducted in 2006 by Promoting Human Rights Education in Bangladesh, a majority of Bangladeshi families, specifically 93%, expressed a preference for having a male child, whom they considered a valuable addition to their household and nation. In contrast, 96% of the same families viewed women as a source of difficulties. Alim and Rashid (2005) found that despite variations in ethnicity, religious affiliation, educational attainment, and economic status, a significant proportion of families in Bangladesh expressed a preference for a male child as their firstborn. According to a study conducted by Johnson and Das (2008), there exists a positive correlation between men who exhibit a preference for male offspring and their likelihood to report instances of domestic violence towards their wives, as compared to men who express no such preference and desire an equal number of male and female children.

Acceptability of violence

Khodarahimi (2014) asserts that men residing in rural areas often have a childhood marked by physical abuse and neglect, which is further compounded by the societal normalization of violence. Consequently, these men tend to resort to violent means to resolve conflicts, particularly when it comes to their partners. According to a report published in 2004 by the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS), a majority of men, specifically 55 percent, rationalized the act of domestic violence against their wives. Additionally, 49 percent of men believed that it was permissible for them to physically assault their wives if they left the house without informing their husbands, while 28 percent of men considered it acceptable to resort to violence if their wives disagreed with them.

Financial Inclusion

The intricate and multifaceted relationship between financial inclusion of women and intimate partner violence is being brought to light. According to McDougal et al. (2019), financial inclusion is correlated with decreased levels of violence. However, the interplay between national context and gender norms also plays a role in shaping this association. The efficacy of economic autonomy initiatives may be limited in the absence of comprehensive societal transformation and backing. There is evidence to suggest that the incidence of domestic violence perpetrated against women in households that borrow from microcredit institutions tends to decline as the length of the women's membership with the microcredit organization increases. (Hasan & Malek, 2017).

Role of agriculture and policy

Violence against women affects their health and agricultural productivity. Peterman, Palermo, and Bredenkamp (2011) discovered that women who suffer violence have lower agricultural productivity due to absenteeism, motivation, and resource access. Poverty and hunger might worsen. Kishor and Johnson (2004) showed that agricultural women, especially in low-income nations, often experience physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Domestic, communal, and market conditions can limit women's agricultural participation and well-being. Violence against women may include land grabbing, denial of productive resources, or mobility restrictions. In Bangladesh, agricultural policies in last decades put special emphasis on women involvement in agriculture and recognized their contribution (

Religious Rigidity

An assessment of the scholarly literature pertaining to the relationship between religion and violence indicates that these phenomena are not exclusive to religion, but rather represent diverse manifestations of broader psychological mechanisms. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that scholars studying religion and violence do not frequently prioritize supernaturalism as a research topic. However, existing studies indicate that supernatural beliefs are linked to decreased levels of aggression and violence. There is little support for the notion that something uniquely religious causes violence (Wright and Khoo, 2019).

Natural Disasters

The ramifications of natural disasters extend beyond the tangible impacts of physical and financial harm. According to Gearhart et al. (2018), natural calamities can aggravate pre-existing risk factors associated with domestic violence by intensifying feelings of hopelessness and accentuating the sense of losing authority over the safety and welfare of one's family. The occurrence of gender-based violence has been observed to escalate in the aftermath of climate-related calamities, regardless of the economic status of the affected nations. Nguyen (2019) reported a threefold increase in incidents of sexual violence against women, specifically intimate partner violence, in the year subsequent to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 in United States. According to Hasan, MM (2014b) research on the aftermath of a cyclone in Bangladesh, there was a notable increase in the vulnerability of meal consumption frequencies among rural households that are marginalized, with a rise of approximately 9% to 14% which may have an effect on intra-household power dynamics. The phenomenon of climate change, particularly in the cases of *Sidr* and *Aila*, has resulted in severe consequences for both the sustenance and economic activities of individuals, as well as the allocation of resources within households (Hasan, MM. 2015).

Existing Laws in Bangladesh Against Domestic Violence

Prior to 2010, the legislative framework in Bangladesh was insufficient in effectively addressing the diverse manifestations of domestic violence, resulting in limited and ambiguous legal recourse for victims. The Women and Children Repression Prevention Act of 2000, which pertains to violence against women and children, has been deemed inadequate in addressing cases of domestic violence. The *Nari O Shishu Nirjatan Daman* tribunal has jurisdiction over cases of domestic violence only if it is associated with dowry demands. Prior to 2010, individuals who had experienced instances of physical violence within their family that were not associated with dowry demands were required to seek recourse through criminal courts operating under the Penal Code of 1860. The Acts of 1860 and 2000 pertain to offenses that are discernible and non-compoundable. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980 is

a widely accepted solution among women, as it criminalizes the act of demanding dowry, regardless of whether violence is perpetrated or not.

Table 1: Laws used by VAW survivors in Bangladesh including domestic violence, before the 2010 DVPP Act was implemented.

Year	Laws	Sections
1860	Bangladesh Penal Code	Sections 312, 313, 314, 326A, 366, 366A, 366B, 372, 373, 375, 498, 509 Offences related to marriage, acid attacks, kidnapping, procurement, importation, prostitution, rape, insulting modesty and so forth.
1869, 1939, 1946, 1961 and 1985	Personal laws: The Divorce Act, The Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act; The Hindu Married Women’s Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Act; The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance and The Family Courts Ordinance	Marriage, dissolution of marriage, dowry, inheritance, polygamy, dowry and maintenance
1980	Dowry Prohibition Act	Demand For Dowry
2000	Women and Children Repression Prevention Act	Kidnapping, prostitution, rape, torture for dowry
2002	Acid Violence Prevention Act	Violence through acid attacks
2010	Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act	Domestic violence (physical, psychological, sexual and economic)

Source: Plan International, 2016.

The Domestic Violence (Prevention Protection) Act of 2010 and its corresponding Domestic Violence (Prevention Protection) Rules of 2013 comprehensively address all forms of domestic violence, irrespective of the underlying motivation. The legislation delineates multiple manifestations of aggression. The provision enables individuals to seek legal recourse for psychological and economic maltreatment, in addition to physical and sexual aggression. The Act offers a variety of remedies, such as safeguarding measures, lodging arrangements, and monetary recompense. The primary objective of the DVPP Act is to guarantee a salubrious familial milieu. All infractions falling under this legislation are categorized as compoundable, thereby enabling the possibility of reaching a settlement. The efficacy of the DVPP Act is attributed to the amalgamation of both civil and criminal law elements. The introductory statement of the Act emphasizes the responsibilities of Bangladesh as a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) to safeguard women and children against domestic violence.

Gaps and Challenges in DVPP 2010 Act:

- The DVPP Act implicitly emphasizes the continuity of the marital relationship as a prerequisite for the Court to extend its jurisdiction over the matter. In numerous instances, courts have abstained from engaging with allegations of domestic violence that are presented to them in cases where the spouses have undergone a divorce. As a result, it is feasible for perpetrators of domestic violence and their legal representatives to readily initiate divorce proceedings, thereby evading any repercussions under the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act.
- In the event that violence is perpetrated subsequent to the termination of a legal proceeding, the court lacks jurisdiction until such time as a fresh case is commenced. This impedes the survivors and hinders their continued access to the court.
- The violation of the protection order as outlined in Section 14 or any of its stipulations is the sole basis for incurring penal repercussions or a community service mandate. The absence of a definitive resolution regarding the consequences of a violation of a residential or compensation mandate is apparent.
- The DVPP Act does not provide a prescribed procedure for the enforcement of a sentence that may be imposed under Section 30 in the event of a direct violation of a protection order.

Rational of the Study

Notwithstanding the increasing attention towards the matter of domestic violence in Bangladesh, there exists a dearth of research pertaining to rural regions. The lack of dependable data regarding the magnitude of this issue has hindered efforts to effectively tackle the various ramifications stemming from domestic violence. The available studies have been conducted on a limited sample size of the population. This study utilized a sample of rural women from various regions of Bangladesh to gain insight into the prevalence, types, and perpetuating factors of domestic violence in rural areas of the country. Furthermore, the majority of extant research has concentrated on instances of physical, psychological, and sexual violence. There is a dearth of research on the extent of economic impact. The present study will also examine the phenomenon of economic violence and the presence of women decision making in agricultural production. This study is expected to assist policymakers in directing their attention towards the necessary policy development for the sector.

This research aims to investigate the characteristics and consequences of domestic violence against women residing in rural regions of Bangladesh. It will focus on ascertaining the socio-economic status of women and determining the underlying factors and types of violence. It will also propose potential strategies to alleviate instances of violence against women in rural regions.

Data and Methods

The analysis in this study utilizes a secondary dataset. The present study employs data from the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS) 2015, which is a rural representative survey data sourced from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). IFPRI employed a rigorous statistical approach to determine the aggregate sample size of 6500 households distributed across

325 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). The survey team employed a two-stage stratified sampling approach to choose the primary sampling units (PSUs) and households. The sampling frame utilized for household selection was based on the 2001 population census of Bangladesh. Subsequently, the sampling weights were modified in accordance with the 2011 population census. The survey comprises a module that examines instances of violence against women and controlling behavior, with female members of the household serving as respondents. The research has incorporated an analysis of variables related to violent behavior in conjunction with additional socio-economic factors.

The study employed a multivariate logistic regression model to conduct the regression analysis, given that the dependent variable was binary in nature, with a value of 1 indicating the presence of violence and a value of 0 indicating its absence. The findings presented the odds ratio along with the level of statistical significance and the confidence interval.

Results: Descriptive Analysis

The analysis is delineated into two segments. The initial section of the analysis comprises an explanation of violence categorized by division, encompassing verbal aggression, physical aggression, controlling behaviour, and economic aggression. The subsequent section employs logistic regression analysis to assess the occurrence of violence against women and other contributing factors.

A significant proportion of women in Bangladesh report having experienced controlling behaviour, comprising 85% of all reported incidents of violence. The subordination of women is demonstrated through their isolation from sources of support, limitations on their ability to pursue personal gain, and regulation of their daily behaviour within the family unit. Economic violence is a noteworthy manifestation of violence, constituting 75% of the total violence determined by factors such as economic autonomy, obstruction of employment opportunities, access to household commodities, and disregard of women's desires and requirements. The consequences of this situation may potentially compromise the financial stability and self-reliance of women. The phenomenon of economic violence has the potential to coerce women into resorting to soliciting for financial assistance or subjecting them to a rigid budgetary allocation, thereby rendering it a gender-specific concern. Additionally, a significant proportion of women residing in rural areas, specifically 36%, reported experiencing verbal violence. This instance exemplifies a form of covert aggression that is frequently disregarded. The act of humiliation can have a detrimental impact on the self-confidence and self-esteem of women, ultimately resulting in feelings of insecurity. Physical violence represents the utmost degree of violence. In addition, it was found that a notable 11% of women residing in rural areas reported instances of physical violence, with battering being the predominant form of such violence. This form of aggression leads to the development of depressive symptoms, post-traumatic stress disorder, and anxiety-related conditions.

There exist variations in the prevalence rates of domestic violence against women within different administrative regions. The use of tables facilitates the comparison of violent activities among various divisions in Bangladesh. The Rangpur division has the highest proportion of violence against women, while the Chittagong division has the lowest percentage. Physical violence constitutes a relatively small proportion of the overall incidence of violence in Bangladesh, with a prevalence rate of approximately 11%. The Rajshahi division exhibits the highest prevalence rate (97%) of various forms

of violence. The Rangpur Division exhibited the most substantial proportion (47%) of verbal aggression, with the Dhaka Division following closely behind at 45%.

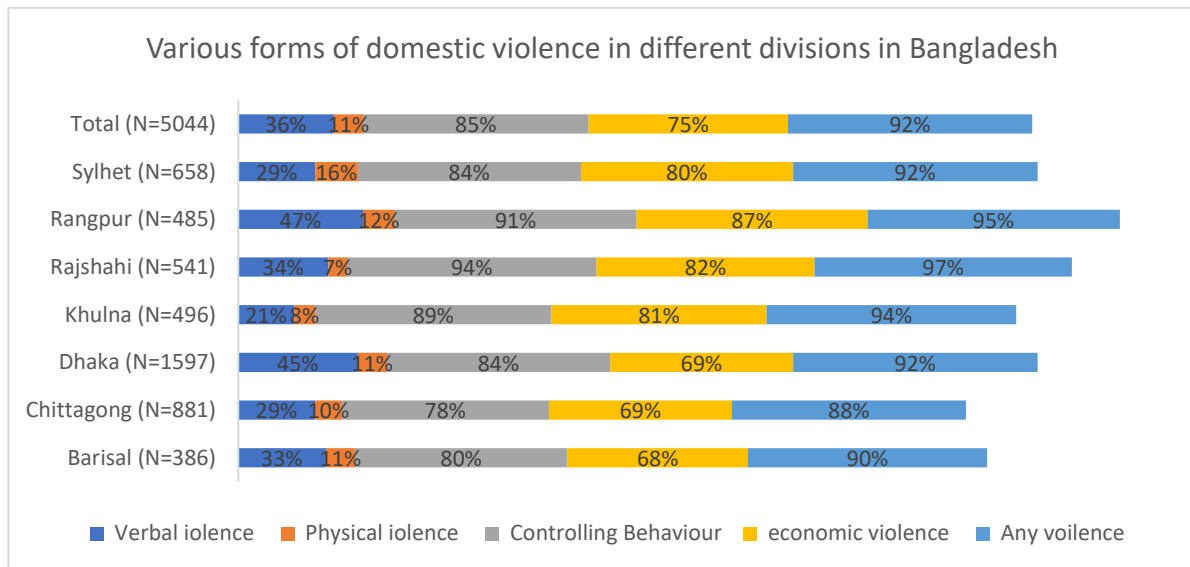


Figure 2: Various forms of domestic violence in different divisions in Bangladesh
Source: Authors calculation based on BIHS 2015 dataset.

The Sylhet division exhibits the highest incidence of physical violence, with a rate of 16%. Economic violence ranks as the second most prevalent type of violence among all categories, with a prevalence rate of 87%. However, the prevalence of economic violence among women in the Barisal, Chittagong, and Dhaka Divisions is comparatively lower, with rates of 68%, 69%, and 69% respectively. The observed variations may be attributed to factors such as income status, employment prospects, duration of marriage, and other social variables.

There exists a significant level of correlation among the various forms of violence perpetrated against women. The study indicates that there exists a correlation coefficient of 0.44 between verbal violence and physical violence, 0.18 between verbal violence and controlling behaviour, and 0.12 between verbal violence and economic violence. The correlation coefficient between physical violence and controlling behaviour is 0.09, while the correlation coefficient between physical violence and economic violence is 0.08. There exists a positive correlation of 0.33 between controlling behaviour and economic violence in Bangladesh.

Table 2: Pairwise correlations

	Verbal violence	Physical violence	Controlling Behavior	economic violence
Verbal violence	1			
Physical violence	0.4364	1		
Controlling Behavior	0.1792	0.0865	1	
economic violence	0.1183	0.0768	0.3382	1

Source: Source: Authors calculation based on BIHS 2015 dataset.

Table 3: Logistic Regression analysis

Logistic regression							
Any violence	Odds ratio	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Sig
Age of women (year)	2.677	.816	3.23	.001	1.472	4.867	***
Age-square women	.985	.005	-3.01	.003	.975	.995	***
Body Mass Index	.929	.076	-0.90	.369	.792	1.09	
Roof-Brick (Yes=1)	.208	.252	-1.29	.195	.019	2.24	
Livestock (number)	1.013	.135	0.10	.923	.781	1.314	
Poultry (number)	1.17	.087	2.10	.036	1.011	1.355	**
Total Land (decimal)	.998	.001	-2.18	.029	.997	1	**
Education HH (year)	1.101	.097	1.09	.275	.927	1.307	
Work in Rural areas (Yes=1)	9.439	5.513	3.84	0	3.004	29.654	***
Max. edu in HH (year)	1.053	.112	0.48	.628	.855	1.296	
HH size	.88	.141	-0.80	.425	.643	1.205	
Total Income HH	1	0	1.41	.158	1	1	
Women Decision in Agriculture (WDAI) Index	.916	.046	-1.76	.079	.83	1.01	*
Constant	0	0	-2.25	.025	0	.267	**
Mean dependent var		0.973	SD dependent var			0.162	
Pseudo r-squared		0.224	Number of obs			670	
Chi-square		37.102	Prob > chi2			0.000	
Akaike crit. (AIC)		156.619	Bayesian crit. (BIC)			219.721	

*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Source: Authors' calculation

A logistic regression analysis is employed to investigate the correlation between predictive variables and domestic violence. The regression analysis data indicates a significant association between domestic violence and various factors, including the age of women, age square women, poultry farming, total land, working at the rural place, and women's decision in agriculture index. The age of female individuals has a notable influence on the occurrence of violent behaviour among women. The study's findings reveal an odds ratio of 2.677 in favor of domestic violence, suggesting a positive correlation between women's age and the incidence of violence. It is possible that mature women exhibit a greater propensity to remain in a committed relationship for an extended duration, potentially heightening their susceptibility to experiencing acts of violence. Moreover, it could potentially elucidate the reasons behind their increased likelihood of encountering domestic violence in comparison to women of younger age groups. Despite their early marriage, their limited level of maturity and education renders them dependent on their significant other. Furthermore, the category of women referred to as "age-square" exhibits an odds ratio of 0.985, suggesting that the likelihood of experiencing violence will initially rise with age, but subsequently decline after a certain duration. The poultry farming industry exhibits a peculiar ratio of 1.17, which appears to have a discernible impact on the incidence of violence against women when compared to other livestock sectors. Poultry farming may entail unpredictability, which could potentially mitigate aggression. There exists an inverse relationship between the incidence of violence and the amount of land owned by a given family. Specifically, families possessing larger land holdings exhibit a decreased likelihood of being targeted by violent acts. The odds ratio is 0.998. The ownership of land confers economic stability and empowerment. Research indicates that women are more likely to experience domestic violence when their partners are employed in rural areas. In this particular instance, the highest value for the odds ratio is 9.439. Rural employees typically encounter inadequate compensation and a lack of defined work frameworks or oversight mechanisms. The patriarchal structure of society endeavors to exert

dominance over women as a means of regulating their day-to-day actions. In situations where women express dissent towards their partners' dominant behaviour, they are often subjected to acts of violence. Women who possess decision-making authority in their agricultural production process are subjected to a lower incidence of violence. The present study reports an odds ratio of 0.916. Females are significantly engaged in agricultural pursuits. Consequently, the capacity of women to make decisions is highly esteemed within the household, leading to a reduction in instances of violence.

Discussion

The physical attribute of a woman is a significant factor in determining the extent of domestic violence. Various research articles have employed age, body height, body mass index, obesity, and skin color as variables in the study of domestic violence, as evidenced by Ferreira et al. (2015) and Ferdos and Rahman (2018). This study employs age and BMI as independent variables in a logistic regression model to illustrate the impact of physical characteristics on incidents of domestic violence. The age of women exhibits a significant positive correlation with the incidence of domestic violence in the initial stages. However, beyond a certain threshold, an escalation in age is observed to have a negative impact on the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. The aforementioned discovery is linked to the research conducted by Schuler et al. in 1996. The author posits that there is an increase in the likelihood of experiencing physical assault within the past year from the age range of 14-19 to 20-29, followed by a subsequent decrease in probability in the subsequent age groups. Furthermore, as per Bates' (2004) findings, there exists an inverse relationship between advancing age and the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence within the previous year, with a decrease of 0.74 times. Bhuiya et al. (2003) reported a similar finding, wherein an increase in the age group was found to significantly decrease the odds ratio. In addition, it has been found that there exists a negative correlation between the age of women and the occurrence of physical and sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) in the previous year (VanderEnde, Sibley, Cheong, Naved, & Yount, 2015). Furthermore, research conducted by Rahman et al. (2020) suggests that women who are younger and have lower levels of education are more likely to experience spousal violence compared to their older and more educated counterparts. According to Ferdos and Rahman's (2018) research, individuals who marry after the age of 18 have a lower likelihood of experiencing physical or sexual intimate partner violence compared to those who marry before the age of 18. Thus, the study yields comparable outcomes to various other scholarly works concerning the influence of age on domestic violence among women. Conversely, the study concludes that an increase in Body Mass Index (BMI) decreases the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. Nevertheless, the outcome lacks statistical significance, indicating that there is no significant correlation between the alteration in BMI and the incidence of domestic violence. Ferdos and Rahman (2018) discovered that women in Bangladesh who are underweight or overweight experience a higher incidence of physical and sexual intimate partner violence compared to those with a normal body mass index. On the contrary, Ferreira et al. (2015) discovered a negative correlation between body mass index (BMI) and domestic violence. Ferdos and Rahman (2018) have reported that Bangladeshi women who experience sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) may be at risk of developing negative psychological consequences. These consequences may manifest in the form of increased energy intake or a more sedentary lifestyle, ultimately resulting in a higher likelihood of obesity. In contradistinction to the antecedent viewpoint, the act of depriving an individual of sustenance may constitute a form of domestic abuse that culminates in undernourishment and a subsequent reduction in body mass index (Ferreira, et al., 2015).

Consequently, a lower body mass index (BMI) may be indicative of a higher incidence of domestic violence, potentially confounding the findings by demonstrating an inverse relationship between BMI and domestic violence. The statistical insignificance of the paper's outcome may be attributed to the presence of contradictory behavior.

The socioeconomic status of individuals is a significant determinant in the occurrence of domestic violence. This study employs household size, household income, roof category, and total land area as determinants to assess the extent to which these socioeconomic factors significantly influence domestic violence. The study solely identifies the aggregate quantity of residential land as a significant determinant. An increase in the land decimal system is correlated with a decrease in incidents of domestic violence. Koenig et al. (2003) discovered a comparable outcome, indicating that a negative correlation exists between the extent of land ownership by households and the incidence of physical violence experienced by women. The provision of ample living space may potentially mitigate stress and alleviate feelings of congestion, which in turn may contribute to a reduction in incidents of domestic violence. There is an inverse relationship between domestic violence and the size of households as well as the presence of brick roofs. Although both variables have a potential effect on reducing the likelihood of domestic violence, the outcomes do not demonstrate statistical significance. Ferdos and Rahman (2018) posit that an increase in household size from a group of 5-6 to a group of 7 or more is associated with a reduction in the likelihood of domestic violence. Conversely, Schuler (1996) employed the house roof as the sole proxy variable for economic status, resulting in a negative correlation with domestic violence. Bates et al. (2004) employed a composite measure comprising multiple binary variables, including household size, wall and roof materials, latrine quality, access to electricity, and ownership of television and radio, to ascertain the socio-economic status of individuals. The study revealed that an enhancement in socioeconomic status was associated with a decrease in the likelihood of domestic violence. Consequently, while the household size and roof material are recognized as significant factors in determining domestic violence, their significance is diminished by a lack of other determinative variables to establish a clear association. Finally, it can be observed in this study that there exists a positive correlation between household income and incidents of domestic violence. The data in question exhibits statistical insignificance. Schuler's (1996) case study reveals that an increase in household income resulted in the cessation of domestic violence by the husband. Parveen and Leonhäuser (2005) found that women residing in impoverished households are more susceptible to experiencing physical and psychological spousal violence compared to their counterparts in affluent households. VanderEnde et al. (2015) found through logistic regression analysis that an increase in family income is associated with a decrease in the likelihood of experiencing physical and sexual violence. The logistic model utilized in this paper lacks additional variables pertaining to socio-economic status. As a result, the household income exhibits a proportionate outcome. This finding contrasts with existing literature, which has reported an inverse relationship between household income and the outcome variable. Notably, no prior research has identified a proportionate relationship between these variables.

The research suggests that an increase in the level of education attained by both partners or the entire household is associated with a reduction in the prevalence of domestic violence and the influence of patriarchal attitudes. However, the relation was found insignificant in this study. This relationship is a fundamental discovery that is present in all literature. Education plays a crucial role in fostering individuals' awareness of ethical conduct, particularly in their interpersonal relationships. According to the study conducted by Bates et al. (2004), there exists an inverse relationship between the level

of education attained by women and the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. The likelihood of women obtaining education beyond five years is reduced by approximately fifty percent. Schuler's (1996) study examines the correlation between women's educational attainment and their likelihood of experiencing domestic violence perpetrated by their partners. The findings suggest that women who receive even a minimal level of education are less susceptible to intimate partner violence. Ferdos et al. (2018) posit that an increase in education level from primary to secondary and beyond is associated with a decrease in the likelihood of experiencing physical and sexual intimate partner violence. Additionally, extant literature has demonstrated that individuals with lower levels of education and younger women are more susceptible to experiencing physical and sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) (Naved & Persson, 2005) (Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, & Khorshed Alam Mozumder, 2003). This paper incorporates total household education as a variable, which entails aggregating the education levels of both male and female partners. Although the outcome has lost statistical significance, it is noteworthy that a positive correlation was observed. One possible explanation is an increased level of awareness among female partners. The attainment of higher levels of education fosters an awareness of the inherent entitlements of women as individuals and as spouses. Consequently, individuals vocalize their opposition to mistreatment, which can result in incidents of domestic violence. The assertion is further corroborated by Bhuiya et al. (2003). The study conducted by the author analyzed the impact of the education level of both spouses on the incidence of domestic violence. The findings revealed that an increase in the educational attainment of wives was associated with a higher likelihood of experiencing domestic violence perpetrated by their husbands. On the contrary, an increase in the educational attainment of husbands is associated with a decrease in the incidence of domestic violence against wives. The interpretation of the findings in the two papers provides a sound defense, despite the fact that the perspective on the education of wives differs from previous literature. It is possible that the combination of the educational levels of both spouses may account for the lack of statistical significance observed in this study.

The promotion of women's empowerment is a crucial factor in reducing incidents of domestic violence. Women who are empowered tend to exhibit reduced dependence on their spouses. Consequently, the reduced level of control exerted by husbands over their wives leads to a decline in incidents of domestic violence. The female populace residing in the rural regions of Bangladesh is achieving self-sufficiency by engaging in small-scale entrepreneurial activities, facilitated by means of modest loans or personal savings. Rural women can make a financial contribution to their families by engaging in small-scale entrepreneurship. According to Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley (1996), the benefits of these interventions extend beyond the individual women and also contribute to the economic stability of their families. Multiple scholarly articles reveal that there is a positive correlation between the level of women's empowerment and the incidence of domestic violence. Women who exhibit complete dependence on their husbands may not experience significant losses when subjected to spousal control. On the other hand, women who have attained a certain level of empowerment often experience feelings of insecurity regarding the potential loss of their hard-earned freedoms. Consequently, they may resort to extreme measures to avoid any form of provocation from their spouse (Schuler et al., 1996). This paper examines the role of women entrepreneurship in the Poultry and Livestock industries. The study additionally observes that a rise in the quantity of Poultry and Livestock is positively correlated with an increased likelihood of domestic violence, consistent with prior literature. Work serves as another emblem of female empowerment. Employment can serve as a viable alternative to entrepreneurship for women, as both avenues offer opportunities for financial

gain and increased independence from their spouses. The study reveals that employment in rural regions significantly heightens the likelihood of experiencing domestic violence. The aforementioned result is corroborated by a number of additional scholarly articles. The study conducted by VanderEnde et al. (2015) employs a multivariate model to investigate the correlation between women's work income and physical or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV), revealing a positive association between the two variables. Moreover, Naved and Persson (2005) have also discovered a similar outcome, elucidating that the likelihood of domestic violence is higher when wives in rural areas earn an income, as opposed to not earning an income. This suggests that earning an income in rural areas increases the probability of experiencing domestic violence. The justification for this approach is analogous to that of operating small enterprises. In situations where women are at risk of losing their autonomy, they may attempt to assert themselves, only to be met with acts of aggression.

The role of women in decision-making within the household is widely regarded as a crucial factor in promoting women's empowerment. When an individual's cognitive processes are esteemed within a familial context, said individual assumes a significant function within said household. According to Kabir et al. (2019), there exists an inverse correlation between women's capacity for decision-making and the incidence of domestic violence. This study employs the women decision in agriculture index as a surrogate variable for assessing women's decision-making within the household. Given that a significant proportion of rural households are engaged in farming activities, decisions pertaining to agricultural work are often indicative of decision-making processes within the household. The index demonstrates an inverse correlation with incidents of domestic violence. To be more precise, an increase in the index is associated with a decrease in the likelihood of domestic violence. The present study's results align with a scholarly article centered on women in Ethiopia, which posits that women who engage in joint decision-making with their partners are at a reduced risk of experiencing domestic violence, in comparison to women who possess limited household decision-making autonomy (Ebrahim & Atteraya, 2019). Yodanis (2004) discovered through analysis of data from various countries that instances of sexual violence perpetrated by men against women tend to decrease when both partners hold positions of power and influence in the workplace and institutions of higher education. Tenkorang (2018) has observed that the decision-making process of Ghanaian women can be categorized into two distinct components. The study reveals that family planning decision-making autonomy exhibits an inverse correlation with all four types of violence, whereas economic decision-making autonomy is positively associated with emotional and economic violence. According to Tenkorang (2018), the act of women engaging in economic decision making is viewed as a contradiction to the conventional gender roles that assign men as the primary providers for the household. Sunmola's (2019) findings indicate that Nigerian women who have a greater degree of autonomy in household decision-making are more likely to experience physical, sexual, and other forms of violence. However, based on the aforementioned discovery, the husbands exhibit a tendency to support authoritarian and dominant beliefs. Hence, the results of the study are linked to prior research and it can be recognized that there exists a negative correlation between decision-making capacity and domestic violence, holding all other factors constant.

Notwithstanding certain possible constraints, the outcomes of the study demonstrate a noteworthy correlation between domestic violence and women's decision-making in the agricultural sector. Additionally, the results indicate that the commencement of work or entrepreneurial endeavors may incite instances of violence. However, when women assume a prominent role in decision-making within the household, incidents of domestic violence tend to decrease.

Conclusion

The paper endeavors to ascertain the extent and underlying causes of domestic violence perpetrated against women. The results of this study indicate that the act of empowering women may have a greater impact on reducing incidents of domestic violence compared to previous interventions. Particularly, when women are involved in various entrepreneurial ventures and agricultural occupations in rural areas. If individuals are able to attain decision-making roles within the household, it is possible that the incidence of domestic violence may be reduced. Despite the existing challenges, there are numerous potential prospects for further exploration and development in the realm of domestic violence within rural regions of Bangladesh. The implementation of a more refined methodology, incorporating appropriate variables, may yield a more precise understanding of the underlying factors contributing to instances of domestic violence. The proposition put forth by the author posits that the education of both the husband and wife is a requisite measure in mitigating incidents of domestic violence. Given that it is typically the husband who perpetrates violence against his wife, it is imperative to prioritize educating husbands on the issue in addition to educating wives.

The variables of age, body height, body mass index, obesity, and skin color have been identified as significant factors in the occurrence of domestic violence. The present investigation employs age and BMI as predictor variables to demonstrate the influence of physical attributes on occurrences of domestic violence. The research indicates that there is no statistically significant association between the body mass index (BMI) and the occurrence of domestic violence. The impact of socioeconomic variables, including household size, income, roof category, and total land area, on domestic violence has been explored. However, the results do not exhibit statistical significance. There is a correlation between an expansion in household size and a decrease in incidents of domestic violence. Additionally, an improvement in socioeconomic status is linked to a reduction in occurrences of domestic violence.

There exists a negative correlation between household income and physical as well as sexual violence. The role of education in promoting ethical behavior is of utmost importance. There exists an inverse correlation between the educational attainment of women and their probability of encountering domestic violence. Moreover, a rise in the level of education from primary to secondary and beyond is linked to a reduction in the likelihood of experiencing such violence. The advancement of women's empowerment is a crucial element in mitigating occurrences of domestic violence. The present study investigates the significance of women's entrepreneurship in the Poultry and Livestock sectors, along with their involvement in household decision-making.

The research indicates that there exists a positive correlation between an increase in the number of Poultry and Livestock and a higher probability of domestic violence, which is in line with previous scholarly works. Furthermore, residing in rural areas substantially increases the probability of encountering domestic violence in the context of employment. The study ultimately concluded that the assumption of a prominent role by women in household decision-making is associated with a reduction in incidents of domestic violence.

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