

Transmission of inter-generational spousal violence against women in India

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Violence against women is a major human rights and public health concern. The adverse health consequences that women experience due to violence are wide ranging and encompass physical, reproductive, sexual and mental health outcomes. It is often unnoticed and disregarded, in part because it is considered as a forbidden. It is not only confined to the less developed or developing world but has remained a global challenge. As UN Secretary-General, BanKi-Moon (2007) puts in “*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*”.

Due to its damaging repercussions to the women, family, society and as whole to the nation, lately it has drawn attention of the researchers and policy makers in the developing countries. In developing countries, women are vulnerable to many forms of violence, and domestic violence being the most common of them. Violence against women in the home is one of the most pervasive human rights challenges of our time. It remains a largely hidden problem that few countries, communities or families openly confront. Violence in the home is not limited by geography, ethnicity, or status; it is a global phenomenon.

Violence against women is rampant in India and spousal violence being its worst form. According to India's National Family Health Survey-III, which interviewed 125000 women in 28 states during 2005-06, over 40% women reported being beaten by their husbands at some point of time. Over 51% of the 75,000 men interviewed didn't find anything wrong with assaulting their wives on some ground or other.

In India, cultural and social factors play an important role in developing and promoting violence against women. With the socialization process at different phases of life, men usually tend to take up the stereotyped gender roles of domination and control, whereas women grow up to follow the path of submission, dependence and respect for the authority throughout her life. The home, which is supposed to be the most secure place, is where women are most exposed to violence.

Its prevalence and causes have been extensively discussed in both the social science literature and the popular media. The economic, social, and psychological effects of domestic (i.e., marital or spousal) violence have also received considerable attention from researchers. One focus of this attention has been the possible effects on children who witness violence within the family, including effects on their own tendency to perpetrate or experience domestic violence as adults.

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The phrase “cycle of violence” is commonplace in the literature on spouse abuse. Research on effects of witnessing inter-parental spousal violence by children have mostly proved its association as a major risk factor with children’s behavioral problems, adolescent conduct disorder, and adult intimate partner violence in their marital life. The studies have shown that intimate partner violence between parents increased the risk for children’s difficulties with “impulsive emotionality and aggressive personality styles in adolescence.” These traits are in place long before adult intimate relationships begin, increasing the likelihood that the cycle may repeat itself when conflict arises in their own spousal relationships. But there are also some researches that deny any positive relationship between witnessing parental aggression and spousal violence in their own married life. Therefore, there is a need to redefine the predictive models of spousal violence that could explain the absoluteness of these phenomena of inter-generational transmission of violence.

In India, there have been many attempts to capture the causes and consequences of domestic violence, particularly spousal violence against women, as it holds more true in case of India. However, due to lack of data and sensitivity of the pertinent issue researchers have remained limited to socio-economic and demographic risk factors and have failed to look into the transmission of inter-generational spousal violence at national level.

The gender gap in the attitudes towards violence against women is shaped by attitudes towards gender. Traditional gender-role attitudes, whether held by women or men, are associated with greater acceptance of violence against women, while egalitarian attitudes are associated with less acceptance of violence. If one can confirm that effects of witnessing violence between parents based on the probability that children will experience violence in their own marriages, either as perpetrators or as victims then one can conclude that the major part of gender roles accepted by women in India today are the effects of transmission of gender roles from the earlier generation. Therefore, it remains important for the researchers to identify the existence and extent of this inherent risk factors of spousal violence against women in India.

Therefore, this paper tries to investigate the hypothesis that spousal violence against women in India, in the long run depends upon the inter-generational transmission of violence within families holds true or not. A principal strand in the cycle-of-violence literature examines the effects of witnessing violence between parents on the probability that children will experience violence in their own marriages, either as perpetrators or as victims.

Review of literature:

This section tries to critically review few literatures on spousal violence, the concept and theory of inter-generational transmission of violence and then a brief focus on the past researches on spousal violence against women in India.

The most extensive empirical research on domestic violence has been that of Murray Straus and Richard Gelles. In general studies during 1990's show that spousal violence against women are indicators to the acceptance of violence, gendered attitudes and sex role inequalities in the society. (Anderson, 1997; Caron & Carter, 1997). Despite many-fold attempts to reduce spousal violence against women, it continues to be widespread (Feder, 1999; Pence & Lizdas, 1998; Pence & Paymar, 1993).

There are two basic explanations on the etiology of spousal violence - 1) feminist/patriarchal and 2) behavior learned in the family of origin, i.e through social learning (Peterson, 1980). Rising from the feminist movement of the 1970's, the feminist/patriarchal model gave the initial definition of family violence as "wife abuse" or "battering". One of the consistent finding regarding etiological characteristics of family violence is the inter-generational transmission of violence (Margolin, Sibner, and Gleberman, 1988). There is no shortage of theories on spousal violence. Unfortunately the empirical data in support of those theories is lacking.

Inter-generational transmission of spousal violence is often explained in terms of social transmission of behavior where the behavior of one individual enhances the likelihood that a second individual will adopt a behavioral trait characteristic of the first one. Thus, it can be said that what is actually transmitted is an "idea" about the benefits of adopting a particular behavior and that such ideas motivate particular behaviors later in life when appropriate circumstances arise (Bandura 1977). The high frequency of violence in the families of origin of men who are domestically violent has been found in a number of studies like by Rosenbaum and O'leary 1981, Straus, et al. 1980. The explanation of the inter-generational transmission of violence is often framed in terms of acquisition of aggressive behaviour (Bandura, 1977). In a study by Kalmus (1984) the exposure to inter-parental violence was found to be more strongly related to the enactment of violence than was the experience of being abused; this modelling of aggression was not sex specific.

Grych and Fincham (1990) found witnessing inter-parental violence leads to problems in adjustment, behavior and emotional well being of the children and it continues to persist even when they grow up, and similarly Johnson and O'Leary (1987) found associations between aggression and symptoms of conduct disorder, depression and anxiety. A meta analysis by 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. In 1995 the studies of Jaffe and Sundermann concluded that witnessing inter-parental violence and direct experience to violence in childhood are equally dangerous.

According to studies by Bowlby (1977), Johnson and Williams-Keeler (1998) and Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981) witnessing inter-parental violence have comparable psychological and behavioral outcomes that hamper healthy emotional development and relational bonding in adulthood. When children are exposed to these methods of conflict resolution, they never learn pro-social alternatives to solve family problems and, therefore, lack strong alternative means for solving problems throughout life (Eron, 1997). Margolin,

1997 and Christensen 1987 in their study showed that children who witness family violence are more likely to enact violence with one another.

Extensive research in the past thirty years has revealed the multidimensional aspects of witnessing inter-parental violence in childhood (Stith et al., 2000), and its important role in quantifying its frequency and impact (Grych & Fincham, 1990).

Though most of the studies concludes that exposure to parental-spousal violence is linked with many negative outcomes like intimate partner victimization (Cappell, C., Heiner, R. B. (1990) & Feerick, M. M., & Haugaard, J. J. (1999). But also there are few studies which show that there is no positive relationship between witnessing parental aggression and spousal violence in their own married life.(Capaldi, D., & Clark, S, 1998.) For example, Straus et al. (1980) and Steinmetz (1977) found clear intergenerational effects; but Mihalic & Elliott, 1997 found intergenerational effects that differed by sex. Similarly, few other studies found a weak link or no link between aggression in the family of origin and subsequent violent behavior as an adult (MacEwen & Barling, 1988). Therefore, exposure to parental spousal violence may be a risk factor for spousal violence but the relationship cannot be confirmed as absolute. Therefore it still holds true that that most of the adults who grow up in violent homes do not become violent adults perhaps for the effect of other risk factors like higher level of education, cultural difference etc (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987). As Pollak 2002 rightly points out that witnessing domestic violence in the family of origin is not an inexorable precursor of violence, but it does increases the likelihood of violence.

The inter-generational transmission of spousal violence against women on the other hand has also been tried to explain by the socio-biological theory which explains the phenomena through transmission of genes that causes individuals to behave in certain ways that increase the likelihood that those genes are replicated in future generations. This approach is also applied to everything from sex roles to human lineage systems and kinship terminologies (Wilson, 1978; Alexander, 1974; Kurland, 1979), but it remains quite controversial among the social scientists (Sahlins, 1976; Barkow,1978).

Therefore there is a need to refine predictive models of spousal violence among individuals who have been exposed to inter-parent spousal violence. Alexander et al. in 1991 further suggested that witnessing parental violence is associated with rudimentary attitudes among males, and acceptance to spousal violence against women among females who perceive their partner to have conservative views. Data indicates that exposure to family violence is an important consideration in the development of gender role beliefs and norms of spousal violence.

In developing countries, women are vulnerable to many forms of violence, and domestic violence represents the most common form (Heise et al.) and India is no exception to it. Evidences from population-based surveys suggest that 21 % to 48 % of women from different socio-cultural settings in India have experienced domestic violence (INCLLEN 2000; Jejeebhoy 1998; Verma 2003; Visaria 1999). In India in a more recent study (Youths in India : Situations and Needs 2007) one-quarter of young women reported that they had ever faced physical violence perpetrated by their husband (25%) and a similar percentage of young men (24%) reported perpetrating violence on their wife. NFHS 3 captures spousal violence against women as 35%.

Research on domestic violence in recent times has slowly changed its attention from understanding the causes to understanding the cultural patterns and the meaning of violence for women. Researchers like Karlekar, 1998 have tried to explore family image and family security which defines a woman's constructions of femininity and that make women acceptable to cultural violence and abuse.

In a study Karlekar (1998) found that in India, there exists a wide societal acceptance for wife-abuse, which is very often even considered justifiable under certain circumstance: disputes over dowries, a wife's sexual infidelities, her neglect of household duties, and her refusal to obey her husband blindly are all considered legitimate causes for wife-beating.

Previous studies on domestic violence have clearly shown that spousal violence against women is pervasive and deeply rooted in socio cultural norms (Mitra 1999; Rao 2000; Visaria 1999). Kishor and Johnson (2004) indicated several socioeconomic and cultural risk factors of domestic violence in their 'multi-country' empirical study of prevalence of domestic violence, which included India.

Like some of the studies highlighted that higher socioeconomic status levels and higher levels of education among women acts as a protective factors against women's risk of domestic violence.(Jejeebhoy,1997; Visaria,1999) Demographic factors such as age, number of living male children, and extended family residence are negatively associated with risk of spousal violence in South India.(Rao, 2000) Also, studies have shown lower levels of dowry is associated with significantly higher subsequent risks of violence in India.(Jejeebhoy,1998) The association of substance abuse by men and indulgence into spousal violence has also been cited as risk factor of spousal violence in India.(Rao,2000; Kishor, 2004)

But one of the inherent risk factor of spousal violence against women in India has not been covered at vast. The silent transmission of spousal violence from generation to generation in India has not received much attention of the researchers though it is one of the most risky predictor of spousal violence. Few studies at regional level have tried to give some picture on this phenomenon in India.

For example, a study by Koenig, Stephenson et al. (2006) tried to examine various individual and community level influences on domestic violence in Uttar Pradesh, India. Along with many other risk factors like childlessness and economic pressure, they confirmed the positive link between the inter-generational transmissions of spousal violence against women in India.

Jeyaseelan et al. (2007) also confirmed that substance abuse, childhood exposure to physical violence by parents and witnessing of parental spousal violence increases the risk of perpetrators/victims of spousal violence in adulthood.

Similarly, another cross-sectional study of physical spousal violence against women in Goa, India by Kamat, Ferreira et al.(2010) found that women who witnessed inter-parental violence were more likely to accept it as a 'normal' behavior, and were more likely to be victimized.

A recent report "Youth in India : situation and needs" tried to capture some data on the extent of witnessing of inter- parental spousal violence .According to it 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.

In India there is deficiency of research on spousal violence against women, due to lack of data and sensitivity of the issue. Moreover, these papers fail to consider the impact of social learning of violence and even the papers like that of Koenig et al. and Kamat et al. could not throw much light that could identify the transmission of spousal violence as an absolute and inherent factor of violence against women which is transmitted from generation to generation and has over the years made violence against women a much acceptable norm in India.

Therefore with the need to understand the gravity and extent of this phenomenon at India level, this paper attempts to focus on the transmission of inter-generation spousal violence in India.

Hypothesis and Objectives of the Study:

“We assume that men who are exposed to parental spousal violence are more likely to be violent as adults, and that women who witness parental violence as children are more likely to remain or more tolerant with an abusive spouse.”

There are three major objectives of the present study:

1. To investigate by empirical evidence that informs the intergenerational transmission of spousal violence against women in India.
2. To understand whether impact of childhood exposure to parental spousal violence on spousal violence is more significant on men or women.
3. To examine the differentials in this relationship in different settings of socio-demographic characteristics and cultures and also to see whether there is concordance in spousal violence against women between earlier generation and current generation.

Data Source and methodology:

This research paper uses data from India’s third National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06, which is the first ever nationally representative survey data addressing the dynamics of domestic violence in India. NFHS 3 was launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, conducted by International Institute for population Sciences and ORC Macro International. The data collected for domestic violence includes ever-married women of age 15-49. The analysis in this paper is confined to sample of women where their husband’s were also interviewed that is, both the partners in a couple were interviewed. Total sample size for this analysis is 28904 couples.

Two major variables were computed to see the extent of spousal violence against women: First to judge the attitude towards spousal violence against women and secondly to see the (behavioral) event of actual spousal violence against women. Exposure to parental spousal violence has been categorized into different levels depending upon the exposure in either single partner or both the partners. Based on these variables various assessments were made with the help of different statistical tools. Binary logistic regression was also carried out with

different models of background characteristics and regions in order to study the effect of childhood exposure to parental spousal violence.

To estimate spousal violence the following question were used, so that all faces of physical spousal violence could be well captured.

Less Severe (Physical) Violence

Does/did your husband ever do any of the following things to you?

- a. Slap you?*
- b. Twist your arm or pull your hair?*
- c. Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?*

Severe (Physical) Violence

Does/did your husband ever do any of the following things to you?

- a. Kick you, drag you, or beat you up?*
- b. Try to choke or burn you on purpose?*
- c. Threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon?*

Conceptualization of the process:

Parallel to the hypothesis we also try conceptualize that the severity of spousal violence will considerably differ according to the exposure of men and women or both in some cases. It will help us not only to understand whether there is any association between the childhood exposures to parental spousal violence and spousal violence in adulthood but also how this process works.

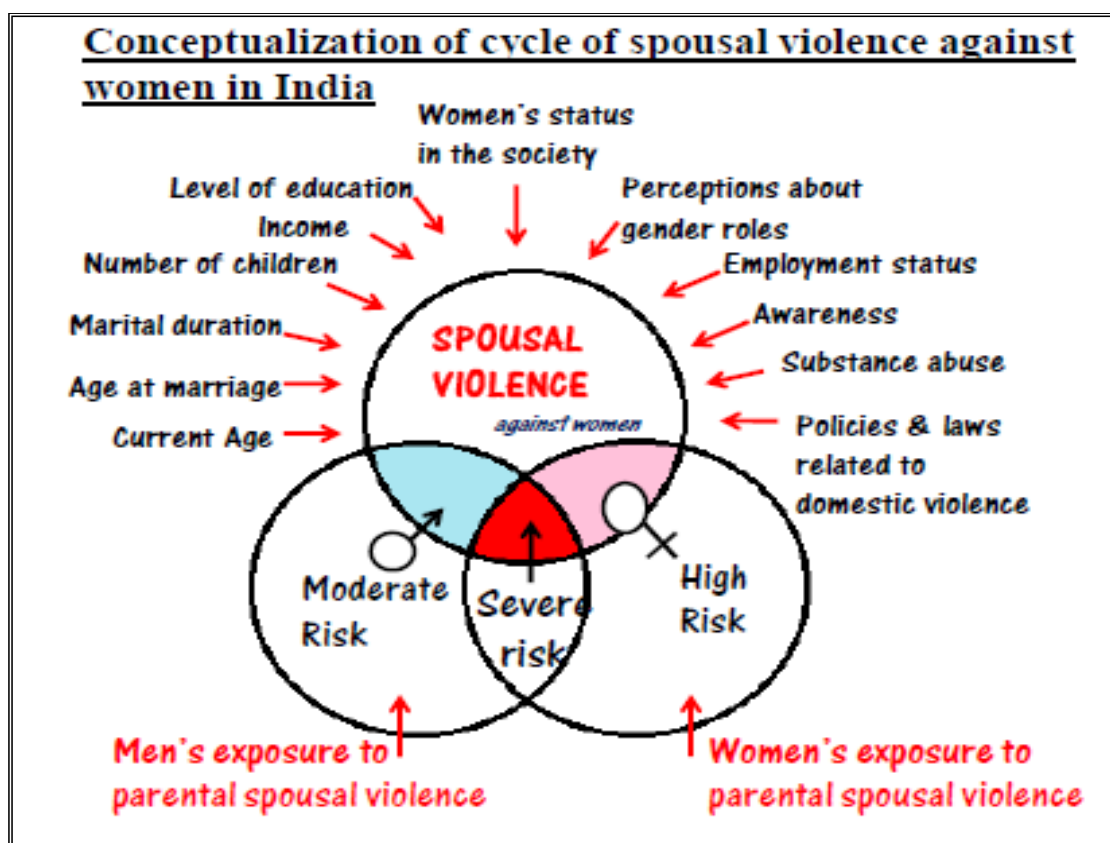
Possibly there could be four cases: If none of them had the exposure, then if some conflict arises firstly, husband may not resort to violence or even if he does, then his wife will try to prevent or oppose him and eventually there will not be any future episodes of spousal violence. Therefore, among these couples there will less or no chances of spousal violence.

Secondly, if only husband had the childhood exposure to spousal violence, then if some conflict arises, he may immediately resort to violence but his wife will try to stop him and when every time this happens, the episodes spousal violence will be reduced. Therefore, among these couples there will moderate chances of spousal violence.

Third case could be where only wife had the exposure to childhood parental spousal violence and then if some conflict arises between the husband and wife, and husband initiates the violence, she will simply accept to it and it will become an approved act of solving any conflicts among the couple and episodes of spousal violence will continue. Therefore, among these couples there will high chances of spousal violence.

Fourth case might be, when both had the childhood exposure to parental spousal violence and in that case whenever there is a conflict, then husband will take up violence straightforwardly and his wife will also easily approve to his ways of solving the conflict. Therefore, among these couples there will acute chances of spousal violence.

But obvious, the above four cases will vary with different background characteristics.



Results and Discussion:

Table 1(a) shows the difference in percentage of women who experienced spousal violence according to their and their husband's exposure to parental spousal violence. It is quite evident that both men and women who had witnessed parental spousal violence in their childhood have reported considerably higher involvement/experience of spousal violence than those who had no such exposure. But this difference is higher for women (28.0 %) than men (11.3%), showing that exposure to parental spousal violence in childhood plays a more crucial role in building a women's understanding to set gender norms. The difference in the reported spousal violence of men and women among those who have childhood exposure to parental spousal violence is more than 13.5%, explaining that women's likelihood of becoming more acceptable to violence by their intimate partners is higher as compared to men's likelihood of becoming perpetrators of violence. The prevalence of spousal violence against women is 35% at national level.

<u>Table 1(a)Percentage of women who experienced spousal violence according to experience of their/husband's parental spousal violence</u>			
Exposure to parental spousal violence of men and women			
	No	Yes	Total
Women	28.2	56.2	34.1
Men	31.4	42.7	34.6
<u>Table 1(b)Percentage of women and men who justify wife beating according to exposure to parental spousal violence</u>			
Exposure to parental spousal violence of men and women			
	No	Yes	Total
Women	48.8	59.5	51.1
Men	45.3	65.7	51.2

Table 1(b) tries to capture the difference in attitude of men and women who justify wife-beating, according to their childhood exposure to parental spousal violence. Both men and women who have witnessed parental spousal violence justify beating wife for any reasons much more than those who had no such exposure. Apparently, men's exposure to parental spousal violence seems to be more implicitly shaping their attitudes towards their gender behavior than women. Among those men who justify wife-beating, 65.7 % were those who had exposure to childhood parental spousal violence which is higher by 20.4 % points than those who had no such exposure. Those men and women who had exposure to parental spousal violence, wife-beating was justified by less than 6.2 % points by women as compared to men.

Table 2 shows the prevalence of spousal violence according to exposure to parental spousal violence of husband and wife in their childhood. It is very clear that those couples who have both experienced witnessing spousal violence in their childhood are the ones who involve much more into spousal violence (58.5%) than those couples who had no such exposure (25.5%). Those couples, where only wife had childhood exposure to parental violence has reported higher prevalence of spousal violence (53.8%) than in case of couples where only husband had the exposure (34.8%). Therefore, couples with childhood exposure to parental spousal violence experiences 33% more spousal violence than those who have no such exposure.

<u>Table 2. Prevalence of spousal violence according to exposure to parental spousal violence (in percentage)</u>		
Experience of parental spousal violence by husband/wife	Prevalence of spousal Violence	Percent Number
None of them	25.5	58.3
Only husband	34.8	20.3
Only Wife	53.8	12.7
Both	58.5	8.7
Total	35.0	100

So far, findings indicate that exposure to parental spousal violence does influence the transmission of violence into the second generation. It can be said that perhaps children's witnessing fathers beating their mothers in childhood increases the risk of repeating spousal violence in their own adult marital relationship. Those women who have observed their mothers being beaten up by their father, makes them expect and accept to same behavior in their spousal relation as a normal behavior whereas men tends to develop the attitude that beating their wife's is a better way to resolve any problem.

Figure 1 shows the prevalence of spousal violence in both the generations. Current (2005-06) spousal violence in India is 35% whereas the spousal violence reported for their parents by men and women are 29% and 21% respectively. The reported spousal violence by the couples for their parents is quite low, and it is lesser by the women as compared to men. It calls for two possibilities, that spousal violence has either increased from the past generation or there is under-reporting. It becomes little hard to believe that spousal violence was lower than the current prevalence, especially with the due course of change in women's position in the society. Lack of concordance in reporting of parental spousal violence by men and women,

makes it clear that the question of spousal violence faced by women themselves or by their mothers will always remain a matter of shame and guilt, and hence should be concealed.

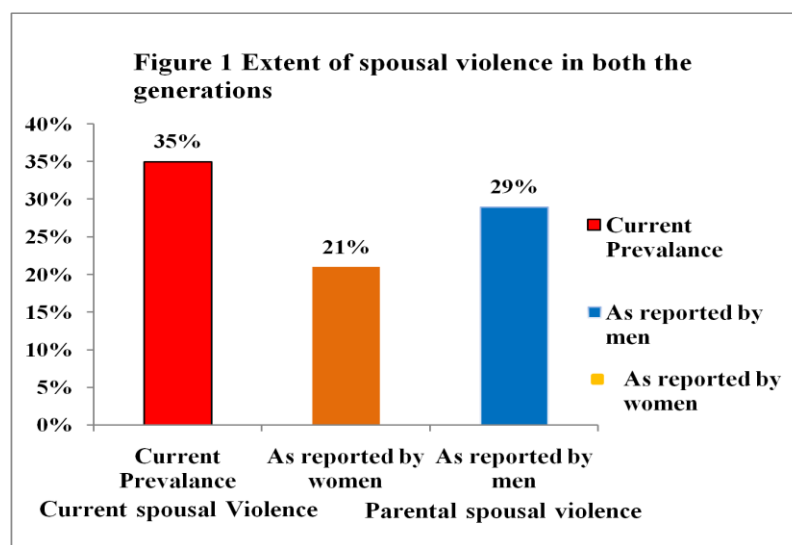


Table 3 tries to compare the differences in current prevalence and past prevalence of spousal violence by common background characteristics. In the current generation the spousal violence is highest observed in the central and east region of the country (42.4% and 39.7% respectively) and lowest in west region. In contrast, the reported spousal violence by men and women for their parents was highest in South region, but the difference is considerably high. Men reported around 17 % higher prevalence of parental spousal violence in south region as compared to women. In the past generation the parental spousal violence was lowest in north as reported by women and north-east as reported by men. The incoherent trend in the regional variation of spousal violence in the two generation makes the picture unclear. In both the generations the spousal violence is higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas but the difference is very less in case of parental spousal violence as reported by men and women separately.

In both the generations the caste wise pattern in the prevalence of spousal violence is similar. In India castes play a major role in determining one's position in the society. By the constitution of India, Scheduled caste, Scheduled tribe and other backward castes have been given special importance, as majority of them are considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Population belonging to scheduled caste had the highest prevalence and other caste had the lowest. Religion could not show any particular consistent pattern among the two generation. In the current generation Muslim couples reported highest prevalence (39.5%) followed by the Hindu couples (34.5%) whereas the parental spousal violence reported by the men and women is highest among the Christians.

With wealth index it is observed that spousal violence decreases with increase in income. The current prevalence of spousal violence is 47% among the poorest couples and 16.5% among the richest couples. Even the parental spousal violence reported by men and women shows the same trend except that it is little higher among the middle class population but it shows a decrease with increase in income.

Typically it is observed that women tend to report parental spousal violence substantially less than their counter-parts. The mass under-reporting of spousal violence of women for themselves or for their mothers may be also due to their social upbringing which does not

allow them to speak for herself or against any male member in the household, may it be her husband or her father, It again calls for attention that women should understand violence by anyone as a violation of their fundamental right and not something to be accepted as a family norm.

Table 3. Prevalence of spousal violence between the two generations (in percentage)				
	Background Characteristic	Spousal Violence	Parental spousal Violence	
		Current	Women's parent	Men's parent
Region	North	30.8	14.8	17.4
	Central	42.4	16.8	22.4
	East	39.7	21.0	23.6
	North East	33.3	20.0	16.4
	West	29.6	20.5	21.4
	South	30.7	27.2	43.8
Residence	Urban	28.9	19.5	27.2
	Rural	38.0	22.3	29.9
Caste	Scheduled Caste	44.9	26.9	36.2
	Scheduled Tribe	38.2	26.1	32.2
	Other Backward Classes	34.9	21.6	31.2
	Others	27.6	15.9	20.1
Religion	Hindu	34.5	21.2	29.3
	Muslim	39.5	20.3	25.8
	Christian	33.3	29.1	36.3
	Others	31.6	23.8	25.9
Wealth Index	Poorest	47.0	24.6	32.3
	Poorer	43.4	24.0	31.0
	Middle	38.4	25.6	34.3
	Richer	31.6	21.3	30.3
	Richest	16.5	12.1	17.9
Total		35.0	21.0	29.0

Table 4 shows the odds ratio for spousal violence by different background characteristics. It has been separately done to clearly identify the demographic, socio-economic and other risk factors of spousal violence which could later help us in comparing and restricting further analysis for parental spousal violence. We have tried to categorize various risk factors in groups like demographic, social, economic, lifestyle and attitude related.

Events of Spousal violence shows strong likelihood to be in central, east, north-east region of India than in north India, central region showing the maximum likelihood. Even west or south regions of India have higher likelihood of spousal violence. Regional variation does not play much role in determining the extent of spousal violence. Urban areas have less likelihood of spousal violence as compared to rural areas.

The current age of husband do not have any significant effect on the occurrence of spousal violence but the current age of wife have positive association with her experience to spousal violence. With increase in age at marriage of both men and women, the chances of experience to spousal violence decreases. In contrast, with increase in marital duration the likelihood of spousal violence increases.

As compared to scheduled caste all other caste categories have less likeliness to spousal violence, lowest being the scheduled tribes. As compared to Hindu religion, couples from Muslim religion are significantly more likely to be involved into spousal violence whereas Christians show less likeliness for the same.

Level of education plays an important role in constraining men to engage into spousal violence against their wife and women acceptance to spousal violence. Men having only primary level education are more likely to take on spousal violence, whereas men with higher levels of education do not show any significant association. Notably, women with highest level of education are less acceptable to spousal violence, which means higher education to women can create awareness about her rights and well-being related to violence by their partners.

Men who have more than one wife have strong likelihood to indulge into spousal violence than those who have only one.

With increase in income the probability of spousal violence decreases, that is couples from higher wealth index are less prone to the incidence of spousal violence. Men's occupation does not show any suggestive relation towards their involvement to spousal violence whereas those women who are involved in manual works like in agriculture, domestic help are more likely to experience spousal violence than those women who are in white collared or high profile jobs.

Consumption of alcohol and tobacco products reduces men's controlling power on their cognitive abilities and hence provokes them to indulge into aggressive behavior. This holds true in case of spousal violence also, like those men who consume tobacco and alcohol are more likely to get into spousal violence with their partners, but effect of alcohol is more devastating as it increases the likelihood by more than two times.

It is thought that mass media exposure creates awareness on various issues including women's rights but exposure to any form of mass-media do not seem to work on women's perception towards spousal violence, rather it aggravates their acceptance to it. Perhaps mass media has become very common and fails to make any further difference in educating her awareness regarding spousal violence or may be could not capture the attention of the women towards programmes which could lead them to awareness. Instead men with some exposure to mass media show less likelihood to violence.

In order to understand whether attitudes or perceptions have any association with actual behavior, odds was taken out for those men who justify beating wife. Those men who think that wife-beating is justified for any reason also considerably show higher likelihood of perpetrating violence against their wives.

Due to India's rigid social structure a women's position in the society is generally identified by her number of children and particularly by her sons. However, spousal violence seems to be not affected by this. Women with minimum five years of duration of marriage with child, without child, having children but only daughters or only sons do not seem to affect her experience to spousal violence. This is perhaps, because of longer marital duration which determines her experience to spousal violence irrespective of her number of sons and daughters.

Now, it becomes easy to confirm all the risk factors that could influence a women's experience to spousal violence.

Table 4.Odds ratio for spousal violence according to background characteristics

		Predictors	Odds Ratio	95% CI	13	
DEMOGRAPHIC	Regions	North [®]				
		Central	1.99***	1.796-2.22		
		East	1.48***	1.312-1.684		
		North-East	1.30***	1.151-1.47		
		West	1.22**	1.091-1.375		
		South	1.17**	1.052-1.304		
	Residence	Urban [®]				
		Rural	0.78***	0.728-0.839		
		Current age of Husband	0.99	0.984-1		
	Age	Current age of Wife	1.01*	1.003-1.028		
		0-19 [®]				
	Age at marriage Male	20-24	0.98	0.922-1.062		
		25 +	0.90*	0.815-1		
	Age at marriage Female	0-14 [®]				
		15-19	0.87**	0.809-0.943		
		20 +	0.72***	0.635-0.823		
	Marital Duration	0-4 [®]				
		5-9	1.61***	1.449-1.8		
10-14		1.6***	1.43-1.905			
15-19		1.61***	1.338-1.951			
20-24		1.46**	1.148-1.863			
25-29		1.48**	1.105-2.008			
30+		1.45*	1.007-2.103			
SOCIAL	Caste	Scheduled Caste [®]				
		Scheduled Tribe	0.49***	0.44-0.548		
		Other Backward Caste	0.73***	0.685-0.794		
		General	0.65***	0.603-0.711		
	Religion	Hindu [®]				
		Muslim	1.49***	1.367-1.629		
		Christian	0.75***	0.663-0.857		
		Others	1.13	0.995-1.303		
	Level of Education Husband	No education				
		Primary [®]	1.11*	1.015-1.219		
		Secondary	1.07	0.991-1.158		
		Higher	0.97	0.886-1.078		
	Level of Education Female	No education [®]				
		Primary	1.08	0.983-1.193		
		Secondary	0.95	0.886-1.03		
		Higher	0.72***	0.652-0.812		
	Number of wives	Only 1 [®]				
		More than 1	1.69***	1.405-2.043		
Wealth Index	Poorest [®]					
	Poorer	0.92	0.844-1.021			
	Middle	0.83**	0.76-0.927			
	Richer	0.75***	0.673-0.843			
	Richest	0.44***	0.39-0.512			
	Not Working [®]					
ECONOMIC	Occupation of Husband	Prof/Tech/Managerial/Service	0.85	0.657-1.117		
		Clerical	0.89	0.681-1.174		
		Sales	0.92	0.722-1.193		
		Agriculture - Self employed	0.95	0.748-1.223		
		Agriculture - employee	0.96	0.738-1.249		
		Household domestic	1.01	0.794-1.291		
	Occupation of Wife	Not Working [®]				
		Prof/Tech/Managerial/Service	0.98	0.81-1.192		
		Clerical	0.70*	0.498-0.995		
		Sales	1.53***	1.315-1.801		
Those who justify beating wife	Agriculture - Self employed	1.25***	1.16-1.352			
	Agriculture - employee	1.35***	1.183-1.551			
	Household domestic	1.24***	1.135-1.361			
	Not Working [®]					
LIFESTYLE	Tobacco Consumption	No [®]				
		Yes	1.09**	1.033-1.167		
	Alcohol Consumption	No [®]				
		Yes	2.51***	2.376-2.663		
	Mass-media Exposure Men	No [®]				
		Yes	0.92*	0.855-0.991		
Mass-media Exposure Women	No [®]					
	Yes	1.09*	1.018-1.169			
ATTITUDE	Those who justify beating wife	No [®]				
		Yes	1.25***	1.187-1.331		
	Men who justify husband's right to get angry	No [®]				
		Yes	1.12***	1.054-1.196		
	Marital Duration 5+ and child/son preference	No child [®]				
		No son only daughters	0.83*	0.711-0.976		
	Either son / Both	0.91	0.842-1.002			

Level of significance: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; [®] = Reference category

Figure 2 a. Scattered plot between current spousal violence and parental spousal violence as reported by men among states of India

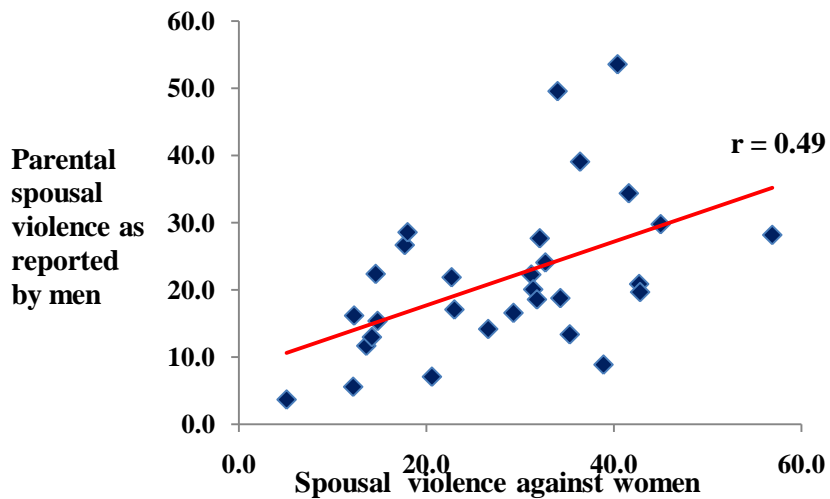


Figure 2 b. Scattered plot between parental spousal violence as reported by women among states of India

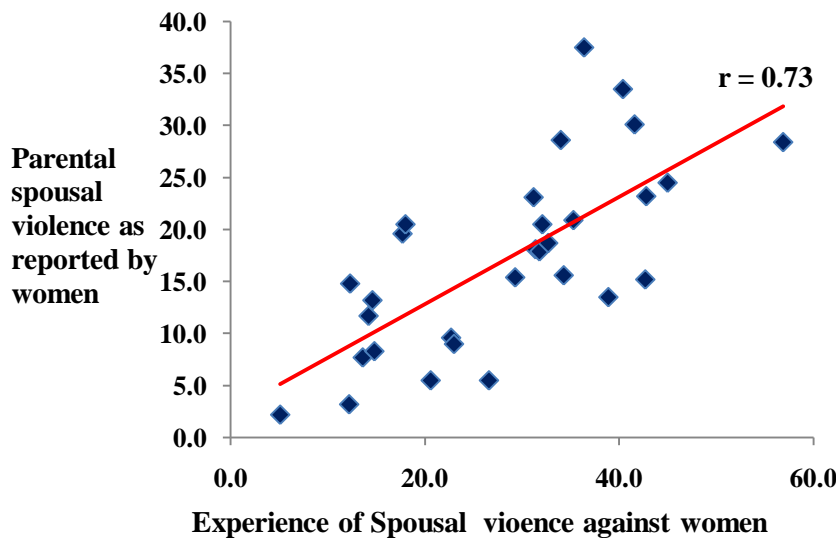


Figure 2 c. Scattered plot between current spousal violence and parental spousal violence as reported by women and men among states of India

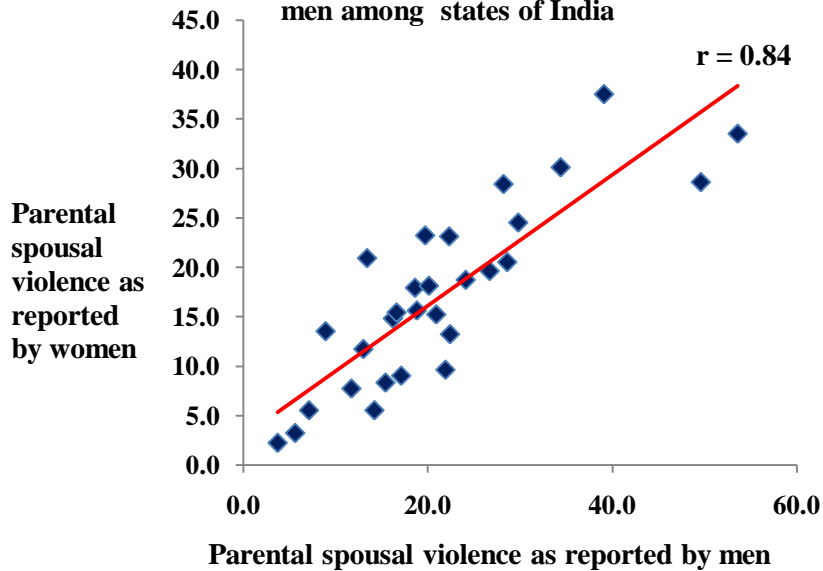


Figure 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) tries to look at the degree of correlation between the level of parental spousal violence reported by men and women separately and current prevalence of spousal violence in all the states of India.

It is clear that those men who reported parental spousal violence and their own experience of perpetrating violence against their wives shows a weak association($r=0.49$). That means that witnessing parental spousal violence by men does not influence much in transmitting the cycle of violence in them, therefore the increase in the childhood exposure to parental spousal violence will not equally or proportionately increase his chances of being perpetrators of spousal violence.

Whereas figure 2(b) shows a higher concordance ($r=0.73$) with women's reporting of spousal violence and her childhood exposure to violence by their father against their mother, therefore confirming that it affects more to the psyche and perception of women towards her acceptance to violence as a gender norm.

However, figure 2(c) shows that parental violence reported by men and women respectively has very strong relation ($r=0.84$). It confirms that in most of the states where men reported witnessing higher parental spousal violence, women also reported almost the same. It validates the consistency in parental spousal violence in all the states.

Table 5 shows the binary logistic regression analysis done for different models of background characteristics for predicting the risk of exposure to parental spousal violence of children to their own adulthood spousal violence.

First model controls for the demographic factor, whereas second model tries to control all the demographic as well as social factor, third model control for the demographic and socio-economic factors, fourth model controls all previous factors including life-style risk factors and finally fifth model takes care of all the preceding risk factors together with attitude/perception related factors. These variables are those factors which had been identified as major risks factors (table 4) of spousal violence against women in India. They have been controlled so as to find out the true association between exposure to parental spousal violence and probability of perpetrating/experiencing spousal violence in their own conjugal relationship.

All the models confirm that those couples among whom both the husband and wife had the childhood exposure to parental spousal violence are significantly more likely to experience spousal violence in their own marital relationship as compared to those where none had the exposure, or only husband or wife had such. This remains true for all the models except the fact it is highest (almost six times) when analysis is restricted to demographic risk factors and show lowest likelihood when all other factors (fifth model) try to reduce this effect to some extent.

Similarly, in all the models the chances of a woman getting victimized to spousal violence is quite higher in events where only wife had the exposure to childhood parental spousal violence as compared where only husband had the exposure. Among different models the pattern of likelihood remains same. The difference in the odds ratio of exposure to parental violence of only husband and only wife is surprising. It is higher in case of women by almost two times. This repetitive trend in the women's increased risk of spousal violence again confirms for her greater acceptance to spousal violence.

Table 5. Results of different models of logistic regression analysis for spousal violence and parental spousal violence

		MODEL I	MODEL II	MODEL III	MODEL IV	MODEL V
Predictors		Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Controlled variables		<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Demographic</i>
			<i>Social</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Social</i>
				<i>Economic</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Economic</i>
					<i>Life-style</i>	<i>Life-style</i>
						<i>Attitude</i>
Experience of parental violence by husband/wife	None of them [®]					
	Only husband	1.80***	1.65***	1.60***	1.54***	1.50***
	Only Wife	3.85***	3.60***	3.46***	3.20***	3.18***
	Both	5.57***	4.92***	4.70***	4.29***	4.15***
Level of significance: ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$; ® = Reference category						

Table 6 shows a similar analysis done particularly with model V of the previous table for understanding the regional variation in the phenomena. This has been done to understand that whether such a strong association remains true for all the regions or not. It is perceptible, that witnessing parental spousal violence in childhood remains an inherent risk factor for spousal violence in the adulthood in all the regions of India. Similar to the earlier trends, couples where both had childhood exposure to parental spousal violence have much higher likeliness to spousal violence than the other three categories related to exposure, with an exception in north (more than three times) and west region (more than five times) where women's exposure sharply increases her experience to spousal violence.

Among the couples where both the partner had exposure to parental spousal violence, the likelihood of spousal violence is highest in east region, followed by north-east region and lowest in central region.

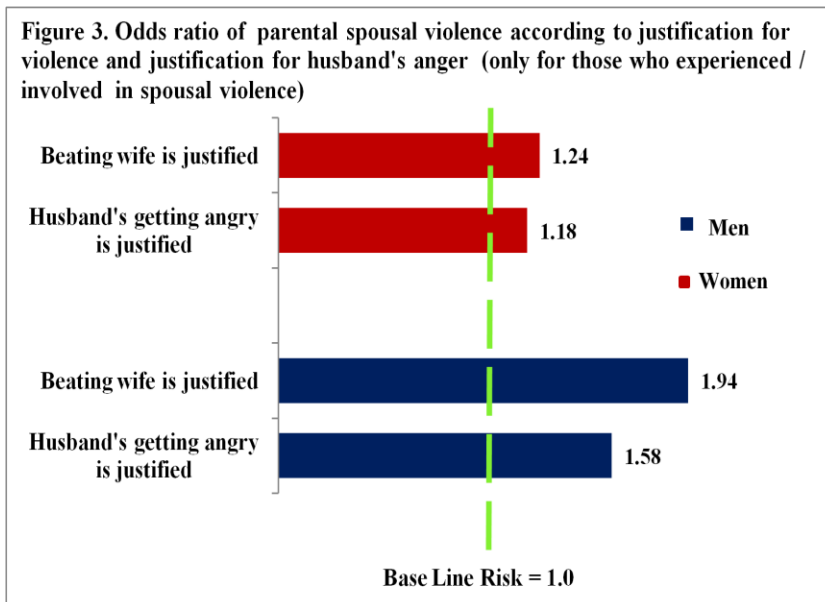
Between couples where only wife had the exposure, the chances of experiencing spousal violence is highest in west region as compared to south region where it is making the lowest influence.

With couples where only husband had the exposure to parental violence, the probability of perpetrating spousal violence is highest in north region followed by north-east region. Strangely, in west region the husband's exposure to parental spousal violence does not show any significant relationship with his involvement in spousal violence.

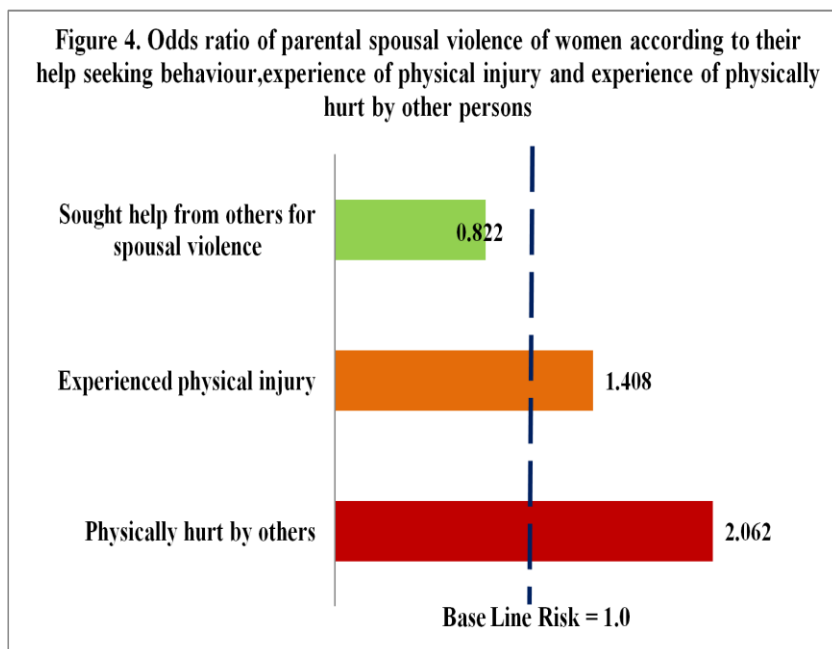
Table 6. Results of regional analysis of logistic regression for spousal violence and parental spousal violence

		NORTH	CENTRAL	EAST	NORTH -EAST	WEST	SOUTH
Predictors		Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Controlled Variables	<i>Demographic</i>						
	<i>Social</i>						
	<i>Economic</i>						
	<i>Life-style</i>						
	<i>Attitude</i>						
Experience of parental violence by husband/wife	<i>None of them[®]</i>						
	<i>Only husband</i>	1.71***	1.51***	1.45***	1.55***	1.13	1.45***
	<i>Only Wife</i>	3.87***	2.50***	4.11***	3.25***	5.21***	2.36***
	<i>Both</i>	3.24***	2.75***	4.84***	4.28***	4.18***	4.22***
<i>Level of significance: ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05; ® = Reference category</i>							

To understand whether witnessing father beating mother also bring changes in the attitude of men and women towards their gender roles and expectations, an odds ratio was carried out for those who experience spousal violence (Figure 3). It is observed that those men and women who had exposure to parental spousal violence are much more likely to justify wife-beating than those who don't have any such exposure. But the likelihood is quite high for men (OR=1.94) as compared to women (OR=1.24). Similarly, men and women who had exposure to parental spousal violence also had higher chances of justifying husband's anger than those who don't have any such exposure. Again, men's perception towards their being justified to get angry for any reason is quite higher OR=1.58) than their counter-parts (OR=1.18).



Therefore, growing up in a violent home tends to change the perception of men regarding their rights and justification of their deeds in the family and society as compared to their actual behavior. Whereas women seem to be more acceptable when they actually face violence but their opinion regarding men's right to dominate and overpower women for any reason is not much influenced as in case of men. Perhaps, women find themselves helpless when they face violence by their partners and silently prefer to subdue themselves to their husband's rage. Such inferiority among women is a result of sprawling inequalities in their access to education, health care, physical and financial resources and opportunities in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres.



It is very clear that spousal violence is transmitted from one generation to another but how far does it also influence the women's acceptance to physical violence by others, her probability of experiencing physical harm and her help seeking behavior from anyone. In order to check this association odds ratio was taken out for women who had experienced spousal violence (Figure 4).

It is observed that those women who had exposure to parental spousal violence are less likely to seek help from anyone for experiencing spousal violence as compared to those who do not have any exposure. Similarly, women who had witnessed their mothers beaten up by their father in their childhood are also more likely to experience physical injuries (mostly by their husbands, in-laws) as compared to those who had no such exposure. Likewise, women with childhood exposure to parental spousal violence are significantly more likely to get physically hurt by other persons (excluding husband) in the society as compared to those who did not have any such exposure.

Conclusion:

From the analysis it is clear that the hypothesis that was conceptualized in the beginning of this paper holds true. Explicitly, it reflects the impact of childhood exposure to parental spousal violence in shaping conformation to the set gender role norms. These finding suggests that witnessing violence between one's parents while growing up is an important risk factor for the perpetration of partner violence in adulthood. Women's exposure to childhood violence seems to have more devastating effect on building her understanding towards her gender norms. As compared to men, women are more susceptible to this phenomenon of transmission. Women become more acceptable to violence as compared to men whose risk of perpetrating spousal violence increases.

Childhood exposures by husband or wife alone also have impact on spousal violence but among them women's exposure has more significant impact. The likelihood to spousal violence is much higher among those spouses where both partners have childhood exposure to parental spousal violence as compared to spouses who have no such exposure or only one partner have.

There is high concordance in current experience of spousal violence against women and spousal violence faced by their mothers whereas there is a weak association between men's involvement into spousal violence and among his parents.

Moreover, it is observed that the impact of childhood exposure to parental violence does not varies largely under different settings of socio-demographic and cultural characteristics but remains an intrinsic risk factor to spousal violence in adulthood under all different models. With economic, life-style and attitudinal factors there is slight decline in its effect otherwise it remains a strong predictor of spousal violence. Similarly, in all regions childhood exposure to parental spousal violence persists to play an important role in perpetuating violence by men to their wives.

The finding in the study requires urgent attention of the policy makers to make supportive efforts to reduce spousal violence against women in India and also towards minimizing children's exposure to parental spousal violence in order to break the inter-generational cycle of violence. Interventions are required that not only promote parents to develop skills to strategically solve conflicts in the family but also, to cultivate healthy parent-child relations, especially to girl child.

Schools can play a key role in teaching children that violence of any kind and by any one is wrong. They should be taught to avoid violence and ways of conflict resolutions and also develop positive attitudes and values towards their parents and all other intimate relations.

Education and awareness programmes on spousal violence or violence against women should focus on the impact on children and specific ways to address this hidden problem. Through some innovative programmes, street shows, plays etc. in which small and teenage girls should be focused to make them aware of violence at home or outside.

The above suggestions if followed could only reduce the effect of parental spousal violence on children but will not reduce the incidence of spousal violence. So, it is important that in future there are no cases of spousal violence against women, because what has been done cannot be completely wiped out but strategies should be such to ensure that in future no women faces spousal violence and thereby in future no children faces its negative consequences. With this direction, Government and other social service organizations should take steps to reduce spousal violence. Legislative policies and laws should be passed to strengthen the message that spousal violence or violence of any type against women is a hideous crime and that perpetrators will be severely punished. These policies must focus on the protection of children and address the impact of violence on children at home.

Increase in education and training programmes on spousal violence and promote communication and referrals units for women to complain and sought help at community level can help women to raise their voices and protect their children from the ill-effects of spousal violence. Rising women's status in the society through increase in level of education, employment opportunities, health facilities, financing facilities, right to property etc can bring positive change in reduction of violence against her in both family and outside.

Last, but not the least more and more studies should be conducted on violence against women in India, particularly domestic and spousal violence. It will help to pool information on this sensitive issue and will allow policy makers to take actions to root out this social evil from society.

According to a recent study by Harvard school of public health *“The deaths of 1.8 million female infants and children in India over the past 20 years are related to domestic violence against their mothers. In their examination of over 158,000 births occurring between 1985 and 2005, the researchers found that husbands' violence against wives increased the risk of death among female children, but not male children, in both the first year and the first five years of life.”*

Therefore, at the end we also urge to the policy makers to recognize violence against women as a critical priority within programs and policies of public health and make rigorous efforts to increase women's status and autonomy in India before it becomes too late to rectify.

Drawbacks:

Though this paper has been able to give some light on the phenomena and extend of transmission of inter-generational spousal violence but there are few limitations in the study.

Though most of the risk factors have been controlled for understanding the absoluteness of the event but we are not sure whether the exposure of childhood parental violence was also associated with victimization of childhood violence by the parents. There may be respondents who have been witnesses as well as victims of child abuse in their childhood; in that case the effect size of transmission of spousal violence may increase by many folds. We did not include

child-to-parent violence as questions posed in NFHS-3 were not collected for respondents below the age of 15, hence not making it possible to estimate parent-to-child violence.

In this paper, the experience of spousal violence does not give the severity of violence, which is in terms of its frequency. We have only looked into those cases of spousal violence where women have ever faced physical violence in their marital relationships. If a separate analysis could be done based on a complete history of spousal aggression then it will help to substantiate whether exposure to parental spousal violence also increases the episodes and severity of violence among the couples.

The evidence of violence in the previous generation has been estimated on the basis of retrospective data, that is what has been reported by the couples for their parents. The recall of parental spousal violence may produce strong negative emotions (anger, fear, sadness, shame, guilt) about the matter, therefore hiding it from reporting. Moreover, recollections of events are purely based on past memories and memories could be fallible. Therefore, there are fair chances that the parental spousal violence is massively under-reported or at least lacks accuracy.

Even there may be under-reporting of spousal violence in the current generation. Perpetrators may deny or minimize their involvement while reporting for spousal violence and victims may lie out of fear of reprisal if known to husband or out of feeling of shame. Therefore, the incidence of spousal violence may be much large than what has come out into lime light through this paper.

Lastly, since numerous literatures by socio-biologists deny the social learning theory and emphasize that intimate violence is genetically influenced. Then, it becomes important to understand the extent of influence of behavioral genetics in the family and influence of childhood exposure to parental spousal violence separately. Perhaps the only way could have been to see the prevalence of spousal violence in the family for many generations and then compare their homogeneity. But since the data used in the paper does not give this scope, we cannot make any statement on that and continue to assume that the process of transmission of inter-generational spousal violence is purely through social learning.

But definitely, given the apparent pervasiveness of the problem the childhood exposure to parental violence in India remains an important area for social, legal and public policy concern.

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