

## **A Statistical Study on Women's Perception on Violence against Women in Puducherry**

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### **Abstract**

Violence against women is a crucial topic of discussion in all the countries in the world. Violence against women is classified mainly as physical, sexual and psychological violence. In India, in spite of government's policy to overcome this problem, violence against women is predominant. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report on violence against women in Puducherry shows that very few incidents are actually reported. The main focus of present study is to know the opinion on violence against women and remedial measures from the women above 18 years of age in Puducherry. Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents are also reported in this paper. The main factors influencing the occurrence of violence against women are also explored using statistical techniques.

### **Introduction**

The United Nations Declaration on the elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1993 define "Violence Against Women" as "Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or likely to result in physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats to such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life". Violence against women continues to be a human rights issue in many countries in spite of the fact that numerous efforts are taken to eliminate it at the national and international levels. In spite of the prosperity, globalization, education and empowerment of women, we have failed to eliminate violence against women. Various studies on violence against women have been conducted at global level. Demographic and health surveys have been carried out at the global level, focusing on domestic violence and its effects on the health of women and girls. In most of the surveys on violence against women conducted in Asia, the study population is restricted to samples of married women only, thereby creating a serious underestimation of overall prevalence of violence against women in society. Dr. Sunita Kishor, Senior Gender Specialist (USA) has done a lot of research and published many articles on violence against women. Sunita Kishor (2005) discusses about the measurement of domestic violence, challenges and data gaps in this area. World Health Organization (WHO) and other agencies are also taking initiatives to overcome the violence against women throughout the world. Many international organizations are regularly conducting meetings and carrying out research to overcome the serious problem of violence against women. Many books and articles are written on various issues and methodology of violence against women (Ruchira Tabassum Naved (2003), Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise (2005), Johnson Holly, Natalia Ollus, Sami Nevela (2008), Renezetti C M, Edleson J L and Bergen R K(2011).

In recent years, violence against women has gained a lot of public acknowledgement in India. In India also many government departments and non-governmental organizations are working rigorously to eliminate the problem of violence against women. The 1998-99 and 2005-06 survey reports of National Family Health Survey (NFHS), India give information on quality of health and family planning services, domestic violence, reproductive health, the nutrition of women and the

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status of women. The incidence of crime against women published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that only a small percentage of crimes are actually reported. Victims of violence generally prefer to maintain silence due to existing social traditions and customs in spite of strong laws. Many crimes are not reported and there is a need to get more information particularly in smaller towns and villages. There is not much information about the offender and the victim on their age, educational background, relationship between the victim and the offender, time of crime etc. These details should be collected for setting up effective mechanisms for protecting the victims and creating awareness among women.

A detailed literature review on statistical methodology used in violence against women has been done by Mangoli R N and Tarase N G (2009). Many articles on violence against women in India reveal that there is a need to collect more information on different types of violence as most of the crimes are not reported (Ashok Kumar and Khan M E (2010), Bontha V Babu and Shantanu K Kar (2009), Ghosh D (2007)). This shows that there is an urgent need to collect reliable information in all the regions of India regarding violence against women. Only if reliable and complete data on violence against women is available, the government could take effective steps to curtail violence against women in India. Recently, many books based on violence against women have been published (Mukerjee D (2005), Ahuja R (2009)).

Even though some surveys have been conducted on this topic in the past by the social scientists, the focus of the surveys was mainly in the collection and compilation of the data. On the other hand, it is now proposed to statistically analyze the data to identify the inherent correlation structure among the various factors to identify the root causes for the violence against women. The socio-economic information about the age, profiles of education, employment, economic conditions, housing conditions, behavioral pattern, marital status, health conditions etc. and the type of violence (physical, sexual, emotional and economic) of women in the rural and urban areas of Puducherry are also collected. The problem is to identify the socio-economic factors that influence the nature, type and intensity of violence against women. The major factors due to which women are subjected to violence in Puducherry is identified by interacting with people working in this field. A detailed questionnaire has been developed based on the discussion with sociologist and other experts in women studies.

In this paper, the main objective is to measure women's opinion over various forms, causes and remedial measures of violence against women in Puducherry. This work also aims to determine women's perception of effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies for solving the problem of violence against women. The methodology used in this study is described in Section 2. The results are discussed in Section 3 and conclusion of the study is given in Section 4.

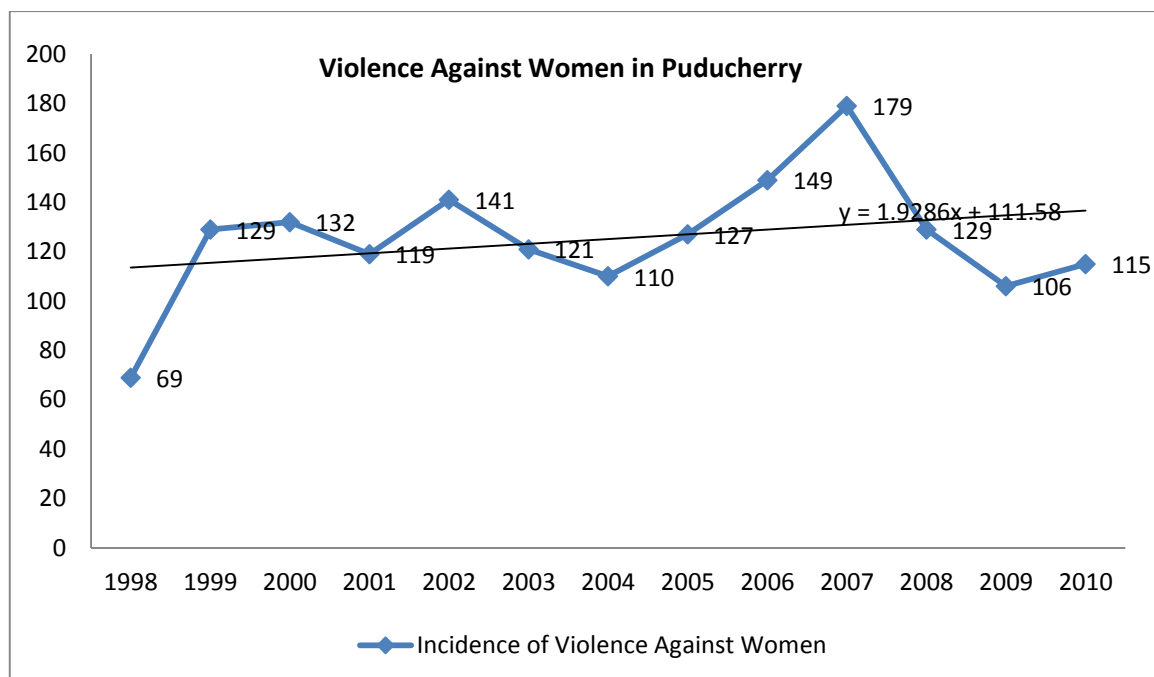
## **Methodology**

The primary data collection on violence against women in Pondicherry was carried out by direct enquiry method. A detailed questionnaire was prepared and the main survey was conducted. The sampling units were selected by applying suitable sampling techniques. Selection of areas and sampling units has been done based on the 2001 census data of Puducherry. Since the study is to be conducted in the rural and urban areas of Puducherry, a multistage stratified random sampling method is applied to select samples from the five rural areas namely Villianur Commune Panchayat, Nettapakkam Commune Panchayat, Bahour Comune Panchayat, Mannadipet Commune Panchayat, Ariyankuppam Commune Panchayat and five urban areas namely Pondicherry Minicipality, Ozhukarai Munciplaity, Villianur Town, Kurumbapet Town, Ariyankuppam Town separately. Stratified random sampling is used in the first two stages. At the first stage, Puducherry population is divided into rural and urban area. In the second stage, stratification is done based on number of places (wards/villages) in each of the five rural and urban areas. Then from each selected second stage units, random sample of households are selected. The sampling units are selected with probability proportional to size using the census data. All the villages/towns are stratified according to population size. The number of sampling units in rural and urban areas is decided on the basis of percentage of urban and rural population in Puducherry. The survey was conducted among women in the age group 18-80 years. One woman from each selected household was included in the survey.

The various objectives were investigated by conducting a sample survey in Puducherry. The statistical analysis was carried out using SPSS software.

### Results and Discussion

Figure 3.1 shows that only few cases of violence against women are reported as per the National Crime Record Bureau. There is increase in the number of cases from 2004 to 2007.



**Figure 3.1 Reported Incidence of Violence Against Women in Puducherry**

The details of socio-economic characteristics of sampled women respondents are presented in Table 3.1. Majority of women participants are in the age group 18-29 (54%) and 30-39 (22.9%). Most of the respondents (80%) are Hindu and 66.1% belong to OBC category. Regarding the educational status, nearly 50% of the women respondents are having college education. About 76% respondents reside in urban area and are nuclear family. 58% of participants are married women.

Characteristics	Respondents(%)	Characteristics	Respondents(%)
<b>Residence</b>		<b>Education</b>	
Rural	114 (24.0)	Illiterate	48 (10.1)
Urban	361 (76.0)	School	172 (36.2)
		College	231 (48.6)
		Research	24 (5.1)
<b>Age</b>		<b>Employment</b>	
18-29	261(54.9)	Employed	260 (54.7)
30-39	109 (22.9)	Unemployed	215 (45.3)
40-49	66 (13.9)		
More than 50	39 (8.3)		
<b>Religion</b>		<b>Marital Status</b>	
Hindu	410 (86.3)	Unmarried	177 (37.3)
Muslim	22 (4.6)	Married	276 (58.1)
Christian	40 (8.4)	Separated	3 (0.6)
Others	3 (0.7)	Widowed	19 (4.0)
<b>Caste</b>		<b>Family Type</b>	
General	41 (8.6)	Nuclear	373 (76.5)
OBC	314 (66.1)	Joint	102 (23.5)
SC	57 (12.0)		
ST	4 (0.8)		

**Table 3.1 Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents**

The opinion on various forms of violence is presented in Table 3.2. Out of 475 respondents, about 133 women feel that psychological and sexual violence are severe. The respondents were also asked to give their opinion on the type of violence which is prevalent in Puducherry. The result shows that all types of violence is widespread in Puducherry in which sexual violence (24.2%) is more prevalent as compared to other types of violence. Nearly 42.3% of women respondents feel that violence against women has decreased. About 25.7% say that violence has increased while 12.4% feel that it has remained the same.

Forms of violence against women (VAW)	Severity	Prevalence in Puducherry
<b>Physical Violence</b>	54	51
<b>Psychological Violence</b>	<b>133</b>	47
<b>Sexual Violence</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>115</b>
<b>Domestic Violence</b>	36	44
<b>Workplace Violence</b>	35	52
<b>Financial Abuse</b>	59	68
<b>Refused to answer /Don't Know</b>	26	98

**Table 3.2 Opinion on various forms of violence against women**

The women were asked to rank various causes of violence against women. Majority of women have pointed out that financial stress and low education level are the main reason for violence. Family lifestyle, family history and mental health issue are given lower ranking.

Causes of VAW	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6
Financial Stress	188	83	47	45	50	62
Marital Status	57	80	73	100	79	86
Family Lifestyle	44	66	125	92	83	65
Family History	23	60	88	110	109	85
Low Education Level	93	115	61	59	73	74
Mental Health Issues	70	71	81	69	82	102

**Table 3.3 Ranking of various causes of violence against women**

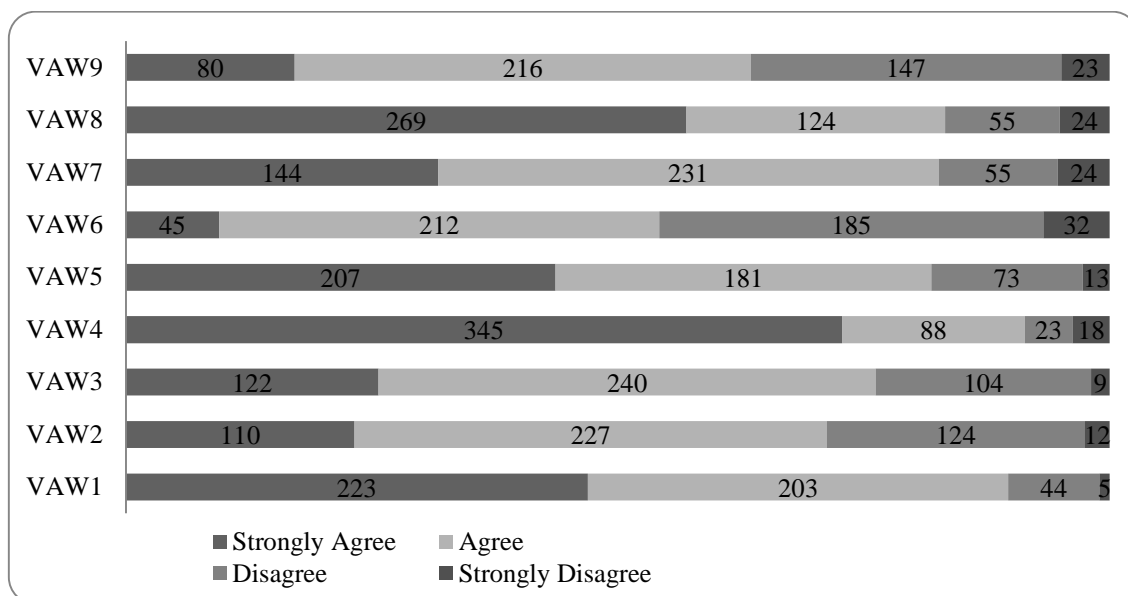
It was also investigated whether the women in Puducherry are concerned about various issues. 73.2% of the women respondents are concerned about the safety of their family and about 62% are concerned about violence against women issue. Very few women are concerned about child abuse and elder abuse. It was further probed to know the opinion on person committing the crime and remedial measures. According to the respondents, partner (43.2%) and stranger (36.2%) are involved in violence against women. Regarding reporting of violence, women prefer to get help from family members (50%) and friends (30%). Only 10% of women are in favour of approaching police, Non-governmental organization or helpline. Most of the women (51%) feel that women in the age group 18 to 34 years are more susceptible to violence. The awareness about remedial measure for violence against women among women in Puducherry is to be updated. According to the women participants in Puducherry, prevention of violence against women can be implemented by counselling services (33.1%), strict laws (21.3%), public education (12.2%), education of youth (13.3%) and improved standard of living/employment (10,3%). Since most of the women are not aware of government initiatives, very few respondents prefer victim services. The survey analysis also gives women’s perception on overcoming the problem of violence against women. Most of the women (42.9%) prefer to maintain silence and 22.7% respondents suggest that talking to a relative or friend will help them to overcome this problem. Only 20% of the women perceive that violence against women can be overcome by fighting back or opting for legal action. Table 3.4 shows that there is association between women’s education level and employment on opinion about prevention and overcoming the problem of violence against women in Puducherry.

	Prevention of VAW						$\chi^2$ (p-value)	Overcome VAW				$\chi^2$ (p-value)
	Public education	Youth education	Victim Services	Counselling	Laws	Improved Living		Maintain Silence	Talk to relative	Fight Back	NGO	
<b>Education</b>												
Illiterate	5	3	0	14	4	17	40.313 (0.005*)	33	5	5	5	21.790 (0.003*)
School	25	14	5	59	39	20		86	31	34	21	
College	27	41	4	80	55	11		83	64	35	46	
Research	1	5	0	4	3	1		2	2	9	9	
<b>Employment</b>												
Employed	29	41	6	65	67	32	211.907 (0.000*)	92	68	54	44	113.045 (0.000*)
Unemployed	29	22	4	92	34	17		115	101	85	80	

**Table 3.4 Socio-economic factors associated with opinion on prevention and remedy of violence against women (\* p-value – significant)**

In addition to testing women’s attitude towards perception of violence, the survey also covered a number of statements regarding general public attitudes towards violence against women. Figure 3.1 shows that about 90% of the woman respondents agree that violence against women happens in families with low income (VAW1). 345 respondents strongly agree that violence against women often results when there is too much drinking of alcohol (VAW4). Most of the women (83%) believe that violence against women happens to women because she criticizes her partner (VAW5). Also, about 57% women strongly agree that physical violence between couples is a private matter and

should be handled within a family (VAW8). 104 respondents disagree that violence against women happens with physical and mental disabilities (VAW3).



**Figure 3.2 General attitudes towards violence against women**

The factor loadings for the opinion of women respondents on general attitude towards violence against women in Table 3.5 indicate that Factor 1 includes VAW 4, VAW5, VAW7, VAW8 and VAW9. Factor 2 comprises of VAW2 and VAW6 while VAW1 and VAW 3 forms Factor 3.

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Factor 3</b>
Violence against women happens in families with low income. (VAW1)	0.109	- 0.070	<b>0.731</b>
Violence against women happens to women from cultures with traditional views of the roles of women. (VAW2)	0.414	<b>0.835</b>	0.076
Violence against women happens with physical or mental disabilities. (VAW3)	0.124	- 0.027	<b>0.743</b>
Violence against women often results when there is too much drinking of alcohol. (VAW4)	<b>0.780</b>	- 0.471	0.039
Violence against women happens because the woman criticizes her partner. (VAW5)	<b>0.780</b>	- 0.476	0.042
Pregnant women are rarely physically abused. (VAW6)	0.430	<b>0.840</b>	0.049
A decline in moral values is one of the main causes of violence against women in our communities. (VAW7)	<b>0.793</b>	0.217	- 0.112
Physical violence between couples is a private matter and should be handled within the family. (VAW8)	<b>0.735</b>	- 0.335	- 0.147
If a woman experiences violence in a relationship then it will usually happen. (VAW9)	<b>0.722</b>	0.162	- 0.126

**Table 3.5 Factor Loadings of general public attitude on violence against women**

## Conclusion

This paper discusses about the women's opinion on violence against women in Puducherry. The majority of women believe that emotional/psychological violence and sexual violence are severe and are very concerned about their family safety. In terms of awareness about various preventive and remedial measures for violence against women, most of the women are in favour of solving the problem by either maintaining silence or talking to a friend or relative. There is lack of awareness among the women in Puducherry about the various initiatives taken by the government and non-governmental agencies to solve this problem. This study also reveals that various socio-economic factors such as age, residence, education, employment, family type and marital status plays a vital role in opinion about various issues related to violence against women.

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