

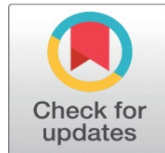
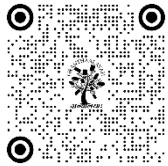
UNVEILING THE SILENT STRUGGLE: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG MARRIED KOM WOMEN, MANIPUR

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the prevalence and nature of domestic violence among married Kom women in Manipur, India. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines quantitative survey data from 100 women with qualitative interviews from 20 participants. The findings reveal a high prevalence of psychological and economic violence, with approximately 75% of respondents reporting these forms of abuse. Physical violence was reported by 35% of participants. The study identifies several key factors contributing to domestic violence, including alcohol abuse, economic dependency, and deeply ingrained cultural expectations that pressure women to endure abuse for the sake of family cohesion. The research highlights the complex interplay between psychological, economic, and physical abuse, exacerbated by substance abuse and financial control within households. The study also explores coping strategies employed by women and the challenges they face in seeking help due to social stigma and lack of support systems. The findings emphasize the need for a multi-dimensional approach to intervention, including economic empowerment programs, addiction support, community-based initiatives, and efforts to challenge patriarchal norms. This research contributes to the understanding of domestic violence in rural and tribal contexts, providing insights for policy development and targeted interventions.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Kom Women, Psychological Abuse, Economic Abuse, Physical Abuse

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is one of the most widespread violations of human rights around the globe and targets women. There is always a cross-border boundary of geographical, cultural, and socio-economic dimensions. However, regional factors, cultural practices, and economic circumstances hugely differ in the forms and extent of domestic violence. The issues regarding domestic violence among the tribal communities, especially the Kom women of Manipur, remain largely unexplored due to geographical factors as well as the simple fact that there was hardly any research work on marginalized groups. This paper attempts to understand the various forms of abuse in the domestic arena faced by married Kom women, with special attention being given to psychological and economic abuse. It also explores the undergirding of such phenomena: alcoholism and financial dependency on husbands. The purpose of the study is to shed

some light on the silent struggle of these women, providing empirical insights for intervention and policy measures in the future. This research aims at establishing the prevalence and types of domestic violence in the community, and also social and economic along with cultural aspects as factors supporting it.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Coping Strategies of Women in Rural Manipur

According to Baite (2024), it has been found that different coping mechanisms are carried out by the women of rural Manipur, bringing issues regarding married women and domestic violence. The research has shown that these women more often use coping mechanisms such as silence, emotional support from family members, and, in some cases, developing resilience through spirituality. Researchers found that many of these community women and, even more often, the members of the Kom community do not report such violence. This aversion is mainly due to social stigma apprehensions and a deep-rooted cultural expectation for preserving family unity. The study underlines the fact that suffering is what a woman has to undergo for the sake of her family; this adds to further complicating matters for women. The study also underlines the nature of abuse faced, wherein psychological and economic violence is found to be the dominant kinds of abuse. Psychological abuse includes verbal insults, emotional manipulation, and intimidation; economic violence is often represented by an oppression of financial resources over a woman, keeping her dependent on her mate. This finding is in line with the broader research regarding domestic violence, showing that this is a trend that needs immediate attention. However, Baite also delves deeper into coping mechanisms: how some are adaptive and others maladaptive. For instance, though the idea of spirituality might comfort other women, then again, some others may seek out poor coping mechanisms, like seeking medication or perhaps avoidance of social contact. This ambivalence highlights the complex emotional interaction that women are involved in as they struggle to live through their existence under domestic violence. Summing up, Baite's study forms a strong empirical foundation for understanding how women cope with situations like theirs relating to socio-economic and cultural status.

Women's Empowerment and Vulnerability

Discussing the more general issue of Manipur and women's empowerment about domestic violence, Devi (2021) has underlined the fact that though education and employment have empowered women a bit in the cities, the women of the villages and the tribals are still more or less disenfranchised. Devi's research underscores that the economic dependence on the husband along with the deep-rooted patriarchalism raises the vulnerability of women significantly against domestic violence. Women who lack financial independence fear that they might be stranded without substantial means of subsistence if they leave abusive relationships for fear of the financial implications of it. Economic vulnerability is high in rural areas since these women have subsistence farming, in which they are not in a position to identify alternative means of income. However, empowerment programs must be specific to the socio-cultural realities of rural and tribal communities if they are to be effective. Programs that have targeted education on the rights of women, vocational training, and credit access would go a long way in improving the agency of women and reducing their vulnerability to domestic violence. Furthermore, Devi strengthens the appeal made to include men in empowerment activities as changes in the current societal male role norms involve men. It will be easier for households to gradually begin to deconstruct the patriarchal structures if the labor division is relatively more equitable and mutually responsible regarding the decisions they make about the household.

Role of Civil Society in Addressing Domestic Violence

Although the context of the study differs in location being located in the Sundarbans region of West Bengal-Das and Lakshmana (2022) examined the role played by civil society in addressing domestic violence. Geopolitically, the socio-economic conditions in the Sundarbans are similar to those conditions faced by the women in the rural areas of Manipur. The study shows that NGOs play a significant role in offering support services to victims, be the legal aid, counseling, or even shelter. These organizations are usually the first port of call for the victims as they provide essential resources and guides. Civil efforts, however, according to Das and Lakshmana, go little beyond trying to eliminate the deep-rooted cultural acceptance of domestic violence. Generally, societal attitudes are well entrenched in most instances in that public opinion seems to view the problem as one between them and the victim rather than a social problem. Thus, these social norms and cultural acceptances can sometimes lessen the impact of NGO intervention since victims live in fear of what their communities might do to them if they raise a voice. Hence, this study stresses and recommends conducting community sensitization and awareness-raising activities so that harmful social norms may be changed and a culture of

zero tolerance for domestic violence be encouraged. Das and Lakshmana stress that efforts need to be increased in collaboration between NGOs, government agencies, and local communities. Collaboration between them will help them construct a holistic support system, help direct crisis intervention services to victims, and bring about a long-term attitudinal shift among the members of society towards domestic violence.

3. METHODS

Method Outline

Exploring Domestic Violence among Married Kom Women of Manipur, a Mixed-Methods Research of 100 married women aged 20 to 50 years have been assessed utilizing the Domestic Violence Against Women Scale- RHMJD (Revised Homicide and Major Domestic Violence Scale) for forming sub-criteria of violence such as psychological, economic, physical, and sexual abuse. For this purpose, the sample was sought to be representative as the survey was carried out across several villages. 20 subjects have undergone in-depth interviews qualitatively to find out their experiences.

Research Philosophy

According to the research design, a pragmatic approach to research philosophy is followed as it deals with aspects of reality in practical and real-life circumstances. The research helps us realize that social phenomena like domestic violence cannot be explained in absolute terms without multiple perspectives. Thus, the two methods of research-quantitative and qualitative-found a representation of the complexity and depth of experiences of women within the socio-cultural context of Manipur.

Research Approach

The deductive approach is focused on the quantitative component, where theories established regarding domestic violence inform a survey instrument. An inductive approach guides qualitative interviews and thus allows participants to narrate their experiences in a way that avoids imposed categories because the discovery of emergent themes is encouraged.

Research Design

The researcher employed a concurrent triangulation design whereby data gathering involved collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. Such a design allows findings from both sources to be compared, thus improving the depth and reliability of results about domestic violence problems among married Kom women.

Research Strategy

A cross-sectional research strategy is used, which outlines the prevalence and experiences of domestic violence within a certain period. The point in time will be the most important when the research strategy is used to identify relationships between various socio-economic as well as cultural factors that have exacerbated domestic violence in the community.

Research Method

This study will use a mixed-method approach. Statistics are obtained through a survey conducted on 100 married women, and qualitative data are collected through in-depth interviews of 20 participants. This means that there is integration of statistical data with more personal accounts of the stories under consideration for a proper holistic understanding of domestic violence.

Data Collection Method

The survey was conducted in two consecutive phases: In the first phase of the study, the survey was administered to 100 married women from different villages across various categories of violence. In the second phase, in-depth qualitative interviews were carried out among 20 participants, focusing on their personal experiences regarding socio-cultural factors and experiencing domestic violence within the context of alcohol consumption and access to support systems.

Research Ethics

Ethical considerations are paramount in this research. From all participants, informed consent is acquired, meaning that participants know the purpose of the research and what their rights are. Confidentiality is kept to a minimum detail, and participants are assured anonymity. Relevant review boards ensure that certain aspects of the study do not violate ethical standards for minimizing harm, along with the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

Research Limitations

There are some limitations to this study. Its cross-sectional design limits inferences of causality, and self-report data may be biased owing to the under- or even over reporting of experience. A qualitative sample size of 20 may limit generalizability, yet it is enough to spot key themes. Cultural factors also influence the responses made, and sensitivity is required in interpretation.

4. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The results of this study underpin the alarming prevalence of domestic violence among married Kom women in Manipur, especially in a complex interplay of psychological, economic, and physical abuse. Practically 75% of the respondents showed prevalence in psychological and economic violence, mainly as the most common abuses within their marriages-very revealing insights into the lived experience of these women. This study manifests domestic violence among married Kom women in Manipur, holding an overwhelmingly interrelated nature that would include psychological, economic, and physical abuse. Culture has sustained these norms in which maintaining the former is more important than the latter, promoting such a cycle of violence. Vulnerability breeds further entrenchment by economic dependency and substance abuse.

Comprehensive interventions can solve all these issues. Financial education through women empowerment in support programs for addiction recovery and community engagement activities may allow them greater resilience and perhaps favourably enhance family relationships. Community-based programs that assist in changing the attitudes toward domestic violence within society are key to breaking the culture of silence regarding this abuse. According to the study, ending domestic violence requires a collaborative effort that starts with individual participation toward societal intervention. Once education and awareness lead to economic empowerment, we would then deconstruct structures that enable this violence to perpetuate and create safer spaces for women and their families within the context of rural Manipur.

Psychological Violence

Verbal insults and threats manifest more often as psychological violence. A bigger number of the women described their husbands as ritualistic in demeaning them continuously, with psychological abuse to keep them in check. This is consistent with observations made by Baite in rural Manipur; it is a systemic problem related to cultural attitudes toward gender and authority, showing that psychological abuse is not a personal problem but a systemic problem based on cultural attitudes toward gender and authority.

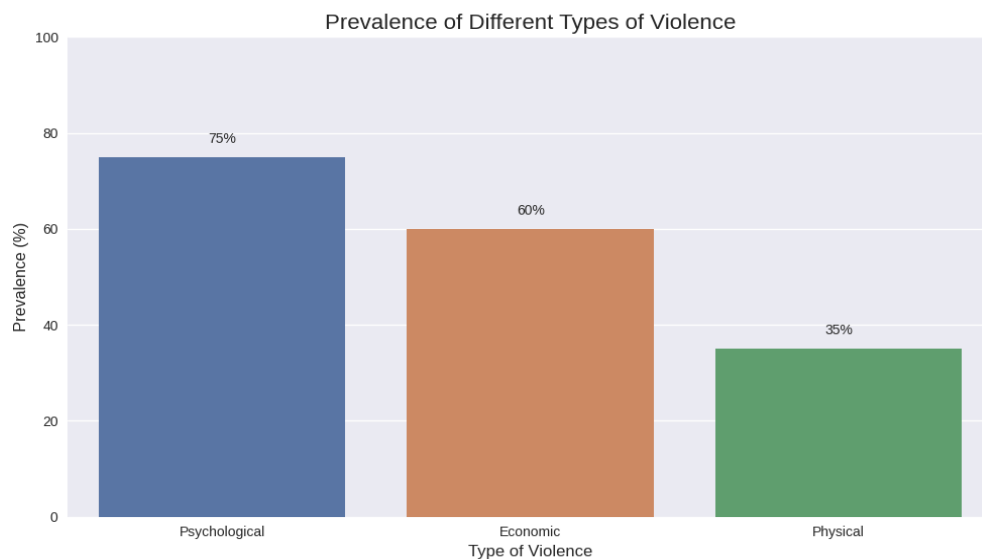


Figure 1: Prevalence of Different Types of Violence

[Source: Self-Created]

There are very deep psychological implications for emotional abuse on women's mental health and self-esteem. Thus, such tactics not only facilitate maintaining an upper hand over abusers but also estrange women from potential sources of support. They impede the victim's self-esteem in a manner that forces them to continue staying in abusive relationships for unforeseen hardships. The cyclical nature of abuse reflects in the larger contextual role that defines the community in oppression, subordination, and silence against women, mainly due to unawareness and a lack of discussions on issues about psychological settings in the community.

Economic Control

Economic violence is equally disturbing and revolves around 60 per cent of the women who claimed that husbands or their spouses dominated all the finances, including earnings from farm work. Economic domination is an important component in the analysis of the larger spectrum of domestic violence because it deprives women of financial independence and decision-making, repositioning them to depend only on the perpetrator. The fear of withdrawal of finances for basic requirements is one of the calculated threats that an oppressor uses to exercise dominance and have complete control over the household.

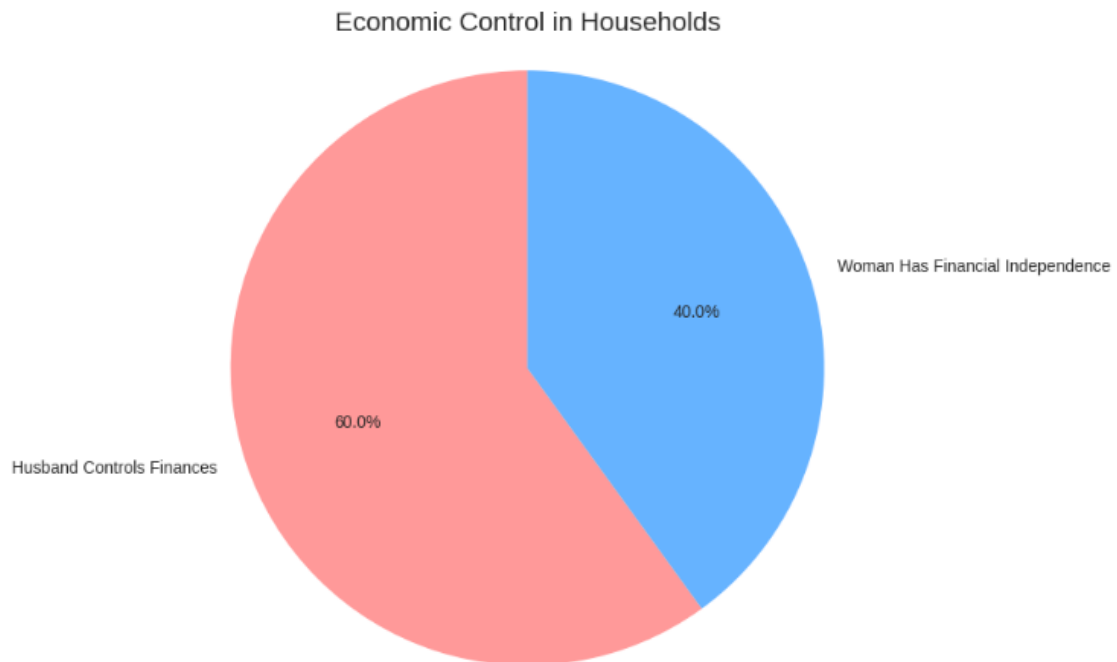


Figure 2: Economic Control in Household

[Source: Self-Created]

Devi (2021) highlighted economic dependency as the chief contributor to domestic violence in the rural and tribal context. The study results were proven right on this point in revealing in what way financial control not only effectively encloses women from breaking free from abusive situations but also perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty and dependence. That many women feel impotent in negotiating spending in the household underlines the need for such interventions that would enhance economic independence for women. Such programs could give power to women to make them regain their individual autonomy and challenge the structures of violence.

The Role of Alcohol Abuse

No Alcohol abuse is noted as a quite significant contributor to domestic violence, with more than 50% of respondents pointing out habits of husbandly habitual drinking. Those women also added that those women who consumed alcohol were most likely to be associated with an increased number of psychological and physical abuses.

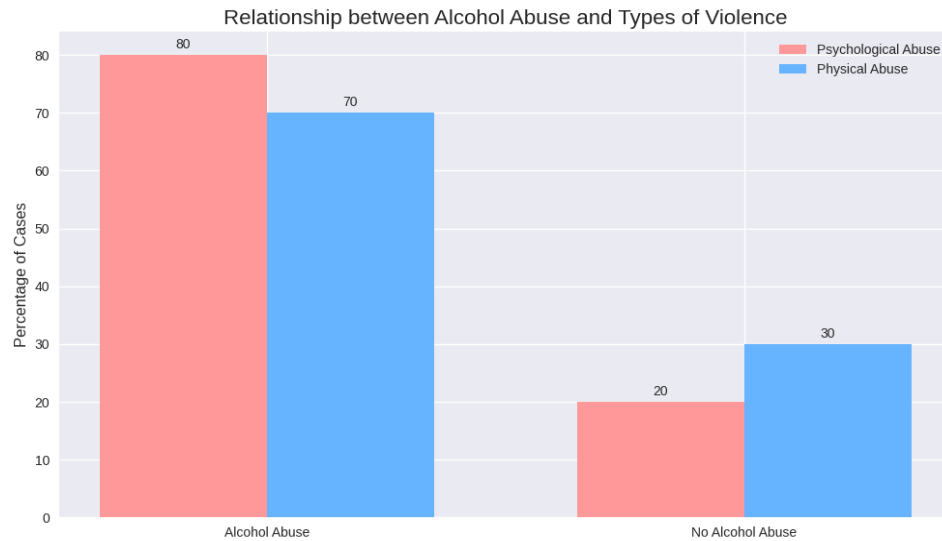


Figure 3: Relationship between Alcohol Abuse and Types of Violence

[Source: Self-Created]

The statistics clearly point out a vicious cycle: alcohol abuse drains money from the family purse, straining the household relationship with increased chances of savage fights. Women in the sample often described themselves as caught in a vicious cycle where the very substance fueling violence also stands them in economic jeopardy. The interplay of these two factors forms a basis for the requirement of interventions specific to substance abuse in the light of the prevention of domestic violence. Addiction support groups that proffer healthy mechanisms to cope with one's addiction might help people get out of this vicious cycle.

Physical Violence

Psychological and economic abuses were more commonly reported, but physical violence still was an existing phenomenon for 35% of respondents. Accounts of physical assault, which incorporated slapping, hitting, and extreme beatings, were candid. However, many women, if so, hesitated to seek medical attention due to apprehension of the escalated attack and society's censure.

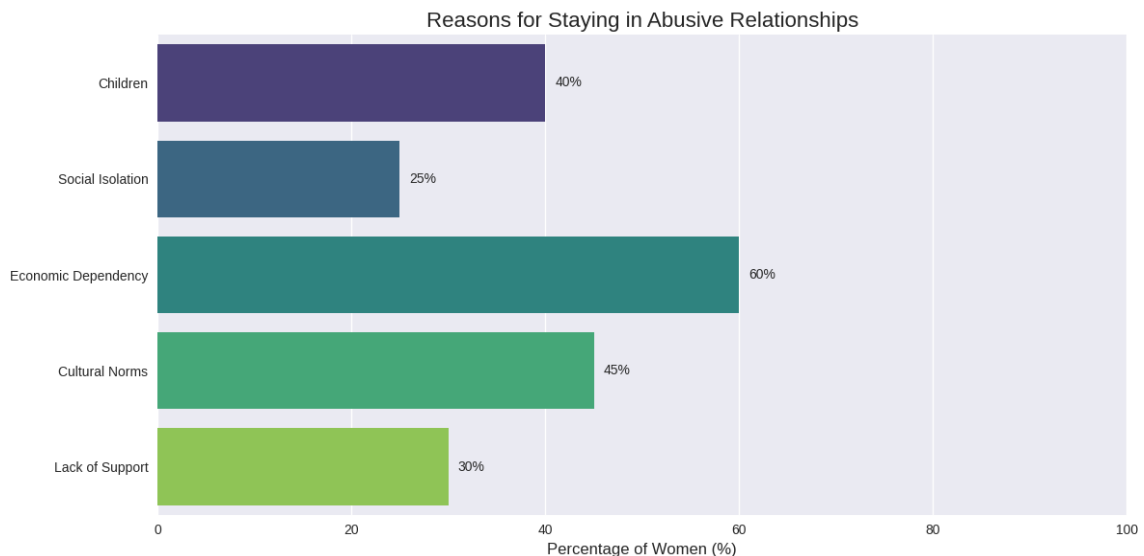


Figure 4: Reasons for Staying in Abusive Relationships

[Source: Self-Created]

This is similar to the conclusions drawn by Das and Lakshmana (2022) that such silences and fears prevail among rural women. Fear interaction with stigma over seeking support reveals a lacuna in support services. Such deprivation of health and legal support services elevates the vulnerability of rural women from Manipur. This is added to the problem by the cultural perception that a woman must endure abuse—often justified as an important part of maintaining family harmony. Such norms deeply exist within the Kom culture, whereby the majority of women consider themselves bound to stay in abusive relationships for the protection of their children or for fear of social isolation.

Cultural Expectations and Support Systems

Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed deeply embedded cultural expectations that women should acquiesce to abuse in the interest of maintaining family cohesion. Many criticized the fact that their family was not supportive of them, and sometimes, their family members used to tell them to tolerate it instead of getting help. This cultural framework not only legitimates domestic violence but also suppresses asking for help on the part of women because social and societal expectations surpass individual needs for protection and safety. Educating the public about domestic violence and encouraging emancipative community norms can be an important approach toward creating an atmosphere where women are free to report abuse and seek help.

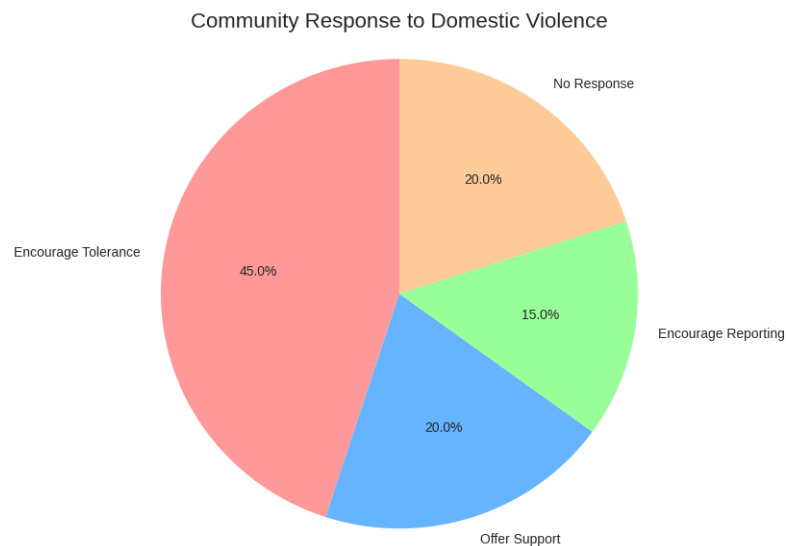


Figure 5: Community Response to Domestic Violence
[Source: Self-Created]

5. DISCUSSION

Psychological and economic violence among the married Kom women of Manipur was portrayed highly in the survey, indicating that complications from culture, economic relations, and individual dynamics sustain violence within the household in the Kom community. Confirmation of this study's results was identified to be in conformity with existing literature on domestic violence in rural and tribal communities, as reflected in Baite (2024) and Devi (2021), which respectively talk about the increase of abuse in relation to economic dependency and patriarchal norms.

The most outstanding implications of this study relate to alcohol abuse and the way it perpetuates the continuance of domestic violence. Obviously, from the data, one can clearly see a connection between alcohol use and cases where psychological, economic, and physical abuse incidents increase. Not only does it facilitate violent conduct, but it also heightens the financial cost of the family, further forcing the vicious cycle. The female respondents in this research study report that arguments over money were always common whenever the husbands had been drinking; in some cases, husbands insisted that their wives must give them their earnings or income from their agricultural activities. Specifically, this research indicates that economic violence seems an important issue for the women of this research. As it follows from the results, many women have no decision-making power over resources used by their households, even when they actually contribute to household income through farming and other agricultural activities. They still remain

subordinated under the influence of economic coercion because their husbands have the power to control resources over their families. The findings are comparable to the earlier works of Devi (2021) regarding the situation and working about how economic dependence is a prime cause of the repetition of domestic violence amongst rural and tribal women in Manipur.

Most women in this study reported experiencing psychological violence, which embraces verbal abuse, emotional manipulation, and threats. Many described themselves as being trapped within the abusive relationship because of the emotional and psychological control the husbands exert over them. Similar to Baite (2024), who cited that the most experienced type of abuse among women in rural Manipur was psychological violence. These women further reported that psychological violence usually escalated when husbands were drunk, as it was always more frequent and intense emotional abuse. Yet another significant finding of this research is that related to cultural expectations, women are entitled to suffer violence in the name of family cohesion. Women are frequently said to be pressed by members of the family and society, in general, to endure domestic violence instead of seeking help or separating from their husbands. Traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained, especially among the Kom, where this culture is most prevalent.

6. CONCLUSION

The research depicts a high degree of violence in marriages of married Kom women in Manipur. It focuses more so on psychological and economic violence as the most common type. The results have underlined the role played by alcohol misuse in the continued existence of domestic violence, the wife's dependency on her husband's income, increasing their vulnerability. Since farm work increases the household income, women have very little say in matters relating to the family's income. This makes them continue being subjected. Cultural aspects, such as the need to suffer in silence for the sake of family cohesion, pull these women deeper into the cycle of violence against them. The intervention needs a multi-dimensional approach: providing and possibly employing people through different economic empowerment programs, provision of legal and healthcare facilities, the need to control alcohol abuse through targeted interventions, and building community-based support systems in the form of NGOs and advocacy groups which provide the needed legal, psychological, and emotional support for the victims. Hence, by challenging the patriarchal order and money dependency on husbands - one of the roots of domestic violence, change in the lives of Kom women of Manipur becomes meaningful.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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