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The impact of domestic violence on women's autonomy

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Abstract

Domestic violence is a practical and obvious problem which affects women lives across different countries. The prevalence and occurrence of domestic violence impede women autonomy at home. Thus this study aims to assess the impact of domestic violence on women's autonomy. In doing so, the researchers used mixed type of research and the data gathered through interview and questionnaire. The study is limited to married women (aged > 15). Overall the researchers found that domestic violence is highly prevalent in the study area. The frequency of occurrence of domestic violence shows that most women face domestic violence once a week (51.7%). The majority of respondents suffer physical and financial type of domestic violence which is 26.7% and 25%, respectively. Moreover, the majorities of the respondents (95%) agree and strongly agree on the negative impact of domestic violence on their decision making at home. The study finds a significant correlation between the prevalence of domestic violence in general and husband control of finance. Again, the correlation between a woman beaten by your husband and stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger shows significant and positive correlation. Ultimately, there is also positive and significant correlation between husband threatened to hurt physically and a woman stop seeing family or friends.

Keywords: 1. Women 2. domestic violence 3. decision-making autonomy 4. Bule Hora Woreda.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an understanding of the problem of domestic violence and an international agreement has developed on the need to deal with the issue. These efforts were evident in recent international documents, such as the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women (1993), the declaration of platforms

for action of the recent UN conference on human rights (Vienna, 1993), population and development (Cairo, 1994) and the Beijing Platform of Action of 1995 (WHO, 2005).

For instance, the definition of gender based violence was first expressed in 1993 when general assembly passed the Declaration on the Elimination of all forms Violence against Women. According to the declaration the term “violence against women” means any act of gender based violence that result in, is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (UN, 1993).

In Ethiopia, according to the study conducted by Tsegahun (2008), domestic violence was highly prevalent in almost all woredas which integrated in that study (Bahir Dar town, Burayu woreda, Bakoworeda and Gulele Sub-city), with the lowest prevalence found in Addis Ababa (90%). Though some progresses have been made in the area of education, women empowerment, and political representation, little attention is given to the domestic status of women in Ethiopia. This reality is clearly expressed in the Ethiopian CEDAW report (2010) says, “Although discriminatory laws and policies have been abolished over time, yet the challenge to fully and effectively realize gender equality still remains, due to the deep-seated attitudes and inherited from cultural legacies that customarily look down on women.” (United Nations, 2010: 12). The above all evidences show that despite the existence of some studies on the prevalence and cause of domestic violence, there is lack of comprehensive study on the impact of domestic violence on women autonomy particularly in west Guji Zone Bule Hora Woreda. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to fill this gap by assessing the impact of domestic violence on women autonomy. This was why the researchers were conducted this study.

Moreover, the study has focused on answering these questions: What extent domestic violence exists in Bule Hora Woreda? What type of domestic violence takes place in Bule Hora Woreda? What is the impact of physical violence on women decision making power at home? What is the impact of psychological violence on women decision making power at home? In similar fashion, the study aimed at addressing the following objectives; to identify the extent of domestic violence existence in Bule Hora Woreda; to identify the types of domestic violence in the Bule Hora Woreda; to assess the impact of physical violence on women power decision making power at home; and to find out the impact of psychological violence on women autonomy and freedom of mobility.

1. Materials and Methods

Research Approach:In the study the researchers have used mixed approach which is both qualitative and quantitative approach. This is important to increase the accuracy of the study and to triangulate the result. In order to capture women's experiences of domestic violence in their own words and from their own standpoint, qualitative methodology was primarily used.

Data Source and Type: Primary Sources:

In this study, both primary and secondary data sources had used. Primary sources were collected from in-depth interview and questionnaire. The interviews were covered different themes including women experience of domestic violence, the cause and consequences of domestic violence, decision-making power in home and contact with formal and informal supports and responses. The interview guide has unstructured and semi-structured format design to cover a wide range of topic in depth. Furthermore, the focus groups discussions were used with the aim of increasing the reliability of information that was gathered from in depth interviews. It is better matched for exploring norms, beliefs, and practices of peoples (World Health Organization, 2005: 132).

Secondary Sources: On the other hand, secondary data were obtained through consulting related and available published and unpublished materials such as, books, , journal reports, documents articles, project document and related materials.

Sampling Techniques: In this study, the researcher was used simple random and purposive sampling technique to select the subjects of study and the study area. For the numerical data and expression the researchers used simple random sampling technique. This technique is important because each element have equal chance of being selected. On the other hand, for the qualitative data this study was employed purposive sampling technique which includes in-depth interview. Accordingly, the study used key informants to explore and better understand the problem and the issue in-depth.

Instruments of the Study: The basic instruments used in this study were questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion, and key informants. The information those collected by using the above tools were analyzed in the form of tables which are used for the presentation of information and data in a tabular form specially those acquired from the field. The data analysis was also done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Questionnaire: The questionnaires are advantageous whenever the sample size is large enough to make it uneconomical for reasons of time or funds to observe or interview every subject. In conducting the study the researchers designed the questionnaires in to two parts. The first part is a classification section. This requires such details of the respondent sex, age, occupation etc. The second part possesses the questions relating to the subject matter of the inquiry. The responses for this second part form the basis of the study's data presentation and analysis. These represent purely the primary source of data collection.

For the sake of getting reliable and useful data the study applied both open and closed ended questionnaires. As the problem under review was varied and complex, a combination of the two was better than the exclusive use of open ended question. Accordingly, the open questions gave the respondents the freedom to decide the aspect, detail and length of their answers. It enabled the respondents to give a more adequate presentation of their particular cases and convey flexibility in their choice. The closed questions on the other hand were designed to keep the questionnaire to a reasonable length and this encouraged response and validity in terms of the representativeness of the returns. It was the hope that it will minimize the risk of misinterpretation unlike the former. It also permitted easier tabulation and interpretation by the researchers.

Interview: The study applied unstructured and semi-structured interview format as another method in the collection of primary data to cover a wide range of topic in depth. As a research method, the interview is a conversation carried out with the definite aim of obtaining certain information. The questions were however be unstructured and semi-structured were similar to the open and closed questions of the questionnaire respectively as discuss earlier. The form of the opening interview is crucial, nevertheless, to win those who are less willing to cooperate. The aim of the large scale survey through the interview was to attain uniformity in the asking of questions and recording of answers.

Concerning the duration of the interview it lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. Based on the interests of the interviewees majority of the data were recorded by tape recorder. On the other hand, some interviewees were not interested to be recorded, therefore the researchers had taken notes enduring interview. The data those obtained from tape recorder transcribed carefully in Amharic before the information translated in to English. The interviews were made from November to the beginning of December in 2019. It was conducted with each participant at mutually convenient place and time. The interview, which was conducted with women victims of domestic violence, in the form of conversation that it allowed each women to redefine the question to suit her and generate meanings through an exploration of her own thoughts and feelings.

Sample Size: According to Yalew Endawek (2011), there is no one defined way that determines the sample size of a study especially in social science researches. Determination of how much the sample a particular research needs depends on the type

of research. For quantitative research in order to determine sample size the following things should be taken in to consideration. First, identify the type of research. Second, know the research method, whether it is correlation, experiment, or other. If the research is correlation, the sample size should not be less than 30 (Ibid: pp.139). Third, testing hypothesis and finally financial capability should be considered. Therefore, using formula for determining sample size, of the population has virtually no effect on how well the sample is likely to describe the population Fowler (2002).

Data Analysis and Interpretation: The researchers used both qualitative and quantitative means of data analysis. The studyhas control and checks on the questionnaires administered. Each administered questionnaire was be given a code and keyed into a computer for data processing. The data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Percentile was also used to present the analysis of the data obtained from close ended items of the questionnaire. The data collected through open ended questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion were analyzed qualitatively.

Research Design: The study used mixed research design as the problem of the study fits.These are Cross-sectional and descriptive research designs. Selection of the designs is based on the nature and objective of the problem that can help to get best understanding of the research statement and with the problem of the study.

Ethical Considerations: Since research on domestic violence is sensitive issue; it is important to raise ethical issues. Considering this, the researchers applied the following ethical considerations.First, consent was asked and the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. Second, they were know that the study offers benefit to them and for all women. Privacy was promoted and respondents were informed that whatever information they provided kept confidential. Tape recording was carried out taking into consideration the willingness of each participant. Thus, they were requested not to be recorded, if they were not willing full.

3. Data analysis and interpretation

Characteristics of Participants:

Table1: Characteristics of Respondents

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------|
| Age of participant | 15-25 | 44 | 36.7 |
| | 26-40 | 54 | 45.0 |
| | above40 | 22 | 18.3 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| | Orthodox Christian | 18 | 15.0 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------|--------------|
| Religion of participant | Protestant | 92 | 76.7 |
| | Catholic | 8 | 6.7 |
| | Other | 2 | 1.7 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Educational background | Illiterate | 58 | 48.3 |
| | Primary education | 38 | 31.7 |
| | Secondary education | 20 | 16.7 |
| | Diploma and above | 4 | 3.3 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Job of participant | Farmer | 26 | 21.7 |
| | Merchant | 34 | 28.3 |
| | Civil servant | 4 | 3.3 |
| | House wife | 56 | 46.7 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |

Since the study was taken on married women, all the participants selected were above the age of fifteen. When we look at the percentage of participant's age in the above table, 45% of the respondents were at the age of between 26 and 40 and only 18.3% were above 40 the rest 36.7% are in between 15 and 25. Most of the participants (76.7%) were Protestants in their religion and 15% were from Orthodox Christian, the rest were from Catholic and other. In addition, the educational backgrounds of the participant in the above table shows that 48% of the participants are illiterate and only 4% are above diploma and above. Likewise, 46.7% of the participants are house wife and only 3.3% are civil servant.

3.1. The Magnitude of Domestic Violence

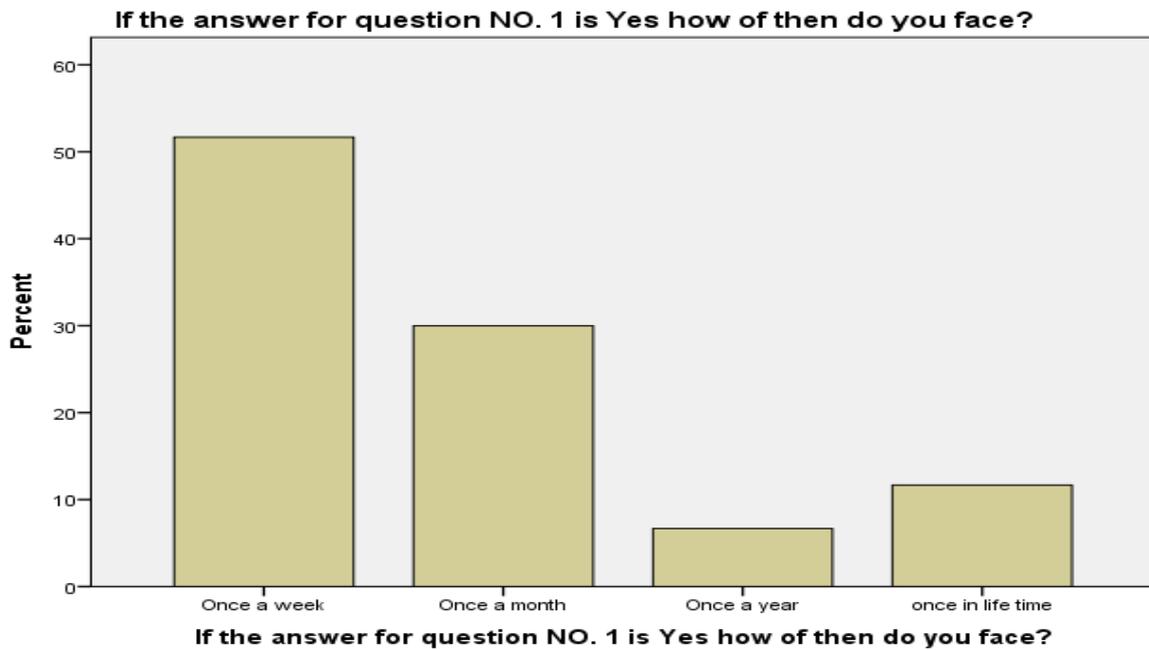
Table 2: The incidence of domestic violence

Do you face the incidence of domestic violence?

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid YES | 106 | 88.3 | 88.3 | 88.3 |
| NO | 14 | 11.7 | 11.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

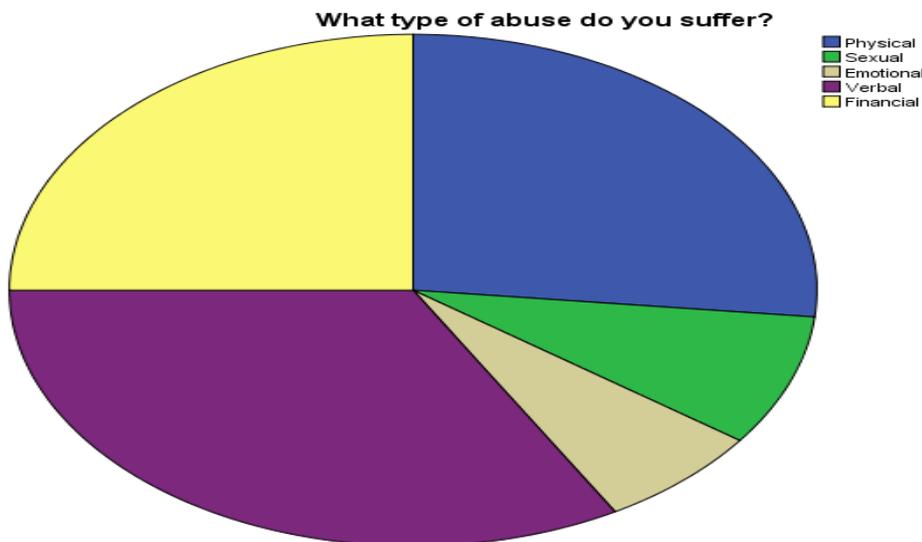
As shown in the above Table 2, 88.3% of the respondents replied that they face the incidence of domestic violence and only 11.7% says “NO” for the incidence of domestic violence. This indicates that domestic violence is highly prevalent in the study area.

Figure 1: How frequently domestic violence occurs



Those women who face the incidence of domestic violence were asked how often they face domestic violence and their answer shows that 51.7% once a week, 30% once a month, 6.7 % once a year, and 11.7% once in life time. Therefore the result reveals that most women face domestic violence at least once a week.

Figure 2: Type of domestic violence women suffer



Despite the fact that domestic violence has many forms and ways, for the sake of the research the researchers of this study classified domestic violence in to five, i.e. physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, and financial. As a result the participants of this study were asked what type of domestic violence they suffer. The result of this question show that 33.3% of the respondents suffer from verbal abuse, 26.7% and 25% of the respondents suffer from physical and financial abuse respectively, and 15% were suffered sexual and emotional domestic violence. This implied that the majority of respondents suffer physical and financial type of domestic violence (51.7%).

Table 3: Husband enforce for uncomfortable sexual activity

Does your husband ever force you to engage in sexual activities that make you uncomfortable?

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid YES | 62 | 51.7 | 51.7 | 51.7 |
| NO | 58 | 48.3 | 48.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

As presented in Table 3, 51.7% of the respondents replied that their husband forced to engage in uncomfortable sexual activity and 48.3% of the respondents said that their husband never forced them to engage in uncomfortable sexual activity. The researchers of this study asked this question to participants because domestic violence also includes marital rape. Marital rape is non-consensual sexual assault in which the perpetrator is the victim's spouse.¹ It is also called spousal rape. Actually, many countries including our country Ethiopia did not give attention to this issue. The widespread idea that a husband has a right to sex, and has a right to use his wife's body for this purpose makes it difficult to recognize sexual coercion as domestic violence. However, in contemporary international documents and conferences women's right advocates explained that women have the right to engage in sexual activity which is comfortable to them and marital rape is considered as one type of domestic violence.

Table 4: Whether Husband Makes to Feel Bad or Not

| Does your husband try to make you to feel bad about yourself? | | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | YES | 68 | 56.7 | 56.7 | 56.7 |
| | NO | 52 | 43.3 | 43.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

¹Medhanit Adamu & Sofanit Mekonnen (2009): Gender and the Law Teaching Material Prepared under the Sponsorship of the Justice and Legal System Research Institute

The result of Table 4 revealed that 56.7% of the respondents replied “YES” for the question “Does your husband try to make you to feel bad about yourself?” and 43.3% “NO”. The husband can make a woman to feel bad about her in different forms. The major way of making a woman to feel bad about herself is humiliate in front of others, threatening with divorce, and show the intention of taking another wife. ²

3.2. The Impact of physical Violence on Women Decision Making at Home

Table 5: Physical domestic violence

| | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Has your husband ever actually hurt you? | YES | 92 | 76.7 |
| | NO | 28 | 23.3 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Have you ever been beaten by your husband? | YES | 86 | 71.7 |
| | NO | 34 | 28.3 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Has your husband threatened to hurt you physically? | YES | 62 | 51.7 |
| | NO | 58 | 48.3 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Have you ever defending yourself from a physical assault? | YES | 24 | 20.0 |
| | NO | 96 | 80.0 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |
| Does your argument with your husband ever result in hitting, kicking or pushing? | YES | 68 | 56.7 |
| | NO | 52 | 43.3 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 |

According to this study, physical violence is one type of domestic violence in which men spouse hurts women physically. It includes; kicking, pushing, hitting, beating, and hurt physically by different means. Most of the time physical violence against women results in fear and loss of confidence on victim women. Women who suffer domestic violence are silent and they do not want to defend their husband because their argument with their husband results in beating. The result shown in Table5 is in compliance with this idea. 76.7%, 71.7%, and 51.7% of respondents are hurt or injured, beaten, and threatened to hurt physically by their husband in their life time. Likewise, 80% of respondents did not defend themselves from physical assault and 56.7% of respondents said that their argument with their husband results in hitting, kicking or pushing.

² An interview taken from women Affair Supervisor, Women and Children Office Bule Hora Woreda

Table 6: The impact of physical violence on women decision making at home

Do you believe that physical violence has negative impact on your decision making at home.

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|----------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | Agree | 50 | 41.7 | 41.7 | 41.7 |
| | Strongly Agree | 64 | 53.3 | 53.3 | 95.0 |
| | Disagree | 6 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The major issue under this study is not only measuring the prevalence of domestic violence, but also assessing the impact of domestic violence on women autonomy. Women decision making at home is a vital point to determine women freedom or autonomy at home. As a result the researchers of this study asked respondents about the impact of domestic violence on women decision making at home. Consequently, 95% of the respondents agree and strongly agree on domestic violence has negative impact on their decision making at home. This implies that the prevalence of domestic violence affect women decision making role at home. Women who suffer domestic violence has passive role in decision making in their home and most decision are made by their husband. If a women are victim of domestic violence, she always afraid of her husband and for any decision she waits for her husband’s permission and instruction. ³

3.3. The Impact of Psychological Violence on Women Autonomy

Table 7: Frequency of women Afraid of their husband

Are you ever afraid of your husband?

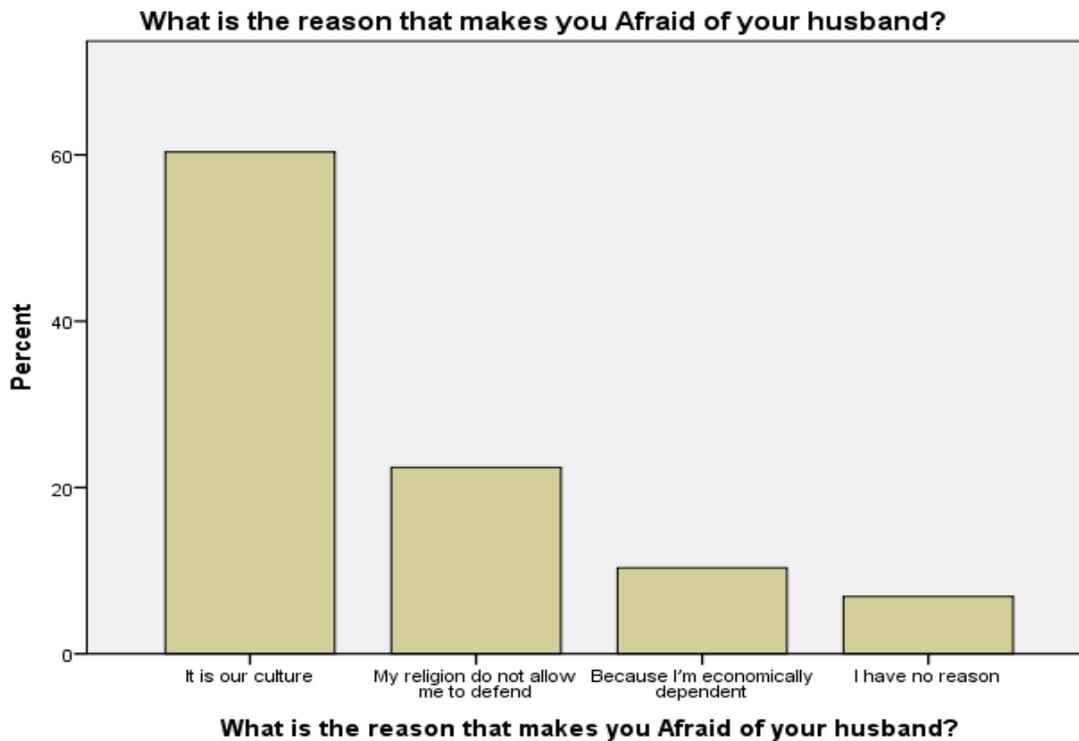
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | YES | 114 | 95.0 | 95.0 | 95.0 |
| | NO | 6 | 5.0 | 5.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

As far as domestic violence is concerned, it has different forms and types. Psychological domestic violence is a type of abuse by men against women which will affect women’s psychology. It includes threaten or warn, controlling finance, controlling where a woman do, go and visit, and controlling what a woman buy for herself. Women who are victims of psychological violence have symptoms of isolation, fear, and low participation in household decision making. As shown in Table 7, 95% of respondents said “YES” for the question “Are you ever afraid of your husband?” According to the study women have

³ An interview taken from women Affair chief, women and children office in Bule hora Woreda

different reason for their fear. Among the reasons culture and religion takes the line share which is 58.3% and 21.7% respectively.

Figure 3: Frequency of reason for afraid of husband



Financial control is one way to express and impose one’s own influence over a wife. In most case, women in developing countries are financially dependent on their husband. This in one hand gives unofficial privilege for men to influence women and control women’s life. The result of the study in figure 3 shows that 61.3 % of the respondents said their husband control their finance. As cited in (Nisha and Mukesh, 2011), Goode (1971) explained that the resource theory version of feminist theory predicts that women who have more autonomy (perhaps because they earn independent in- comes) would experience less mate violence than women with less autonomy⁴.

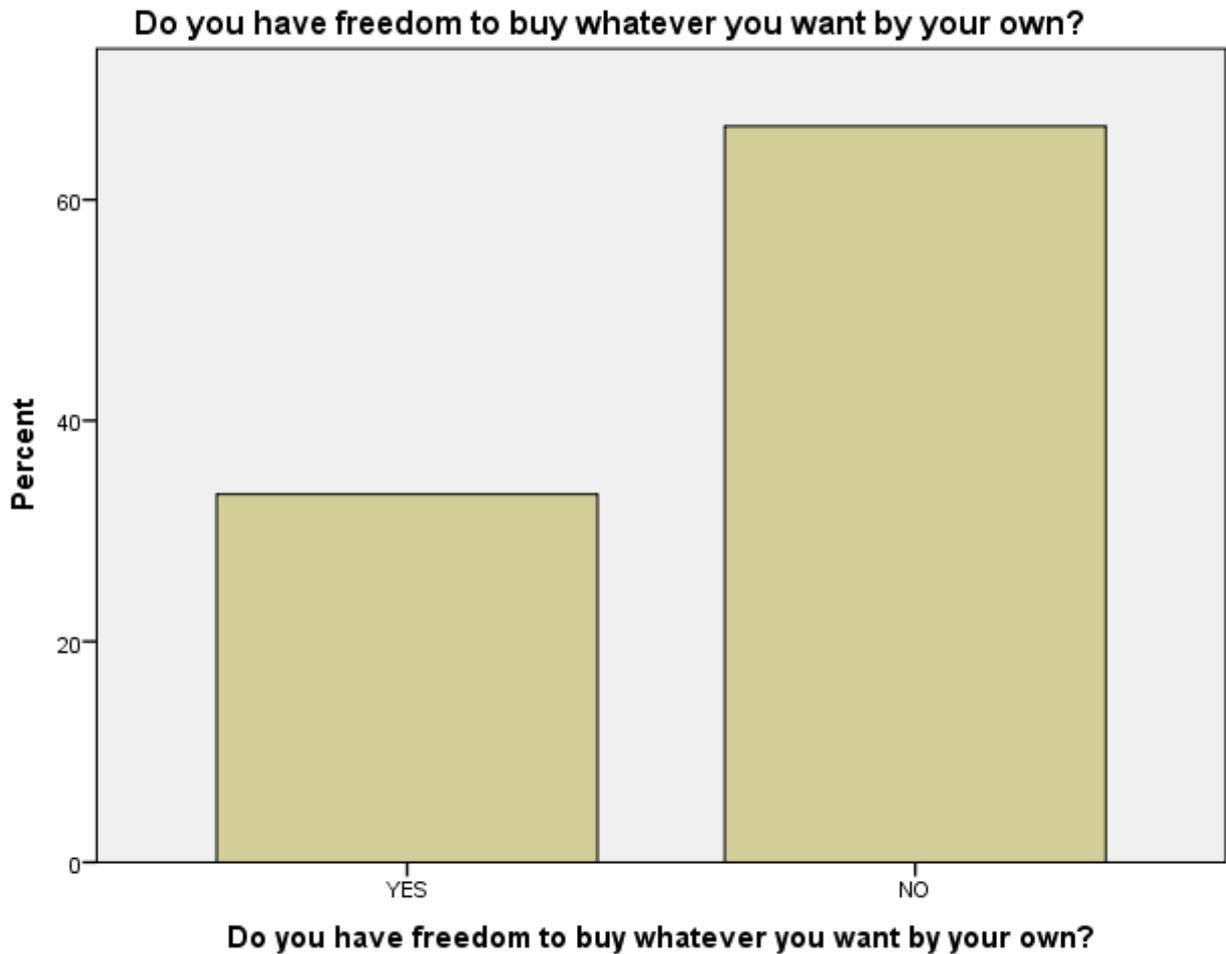
⁴ See Mukesh E. and Nisha M. (2011): Domestic Violence and Women’s Autonomy in Developing Countries: Theory and Evidence, Canadian Journal of Economics.

Figure 4: Whether husband control Finance or not



Furthermore, women’s autonomy at home is associated with women’s freedom to buy whatever they want; for instance, jewellery. Basically, the word autonomy implied putting one’s own decision on own affair. This includes deciding to buy what a woman wants without the influence of a husband. Unfortunately, most women who are victims of domestic violence did not have a freedom to choose and buy whatever they want by their decision. The result of this study as shown in Figre5 revealed this fact. 66.7% of respondents did not have freedom to buy whatever they want.

Figure 5: Freedom to buy whatever you want



As explained by domestic violence impairs women autonomy by preventing a woman from doing what she wants. A husband may act domestic violence against his wife by preventing her to see her friends, restricting from visiting her family, and woman who are victims of domestic violence husband seeing friends, and insisting on knowing where she is at all times. As shown in Figure 5, 81.7% of the respondents said 'YES' to the question "Does your husband try to control where you go, what you do and who you see?". This implied that most of the respondents are under the control of their husband and it is only the husband's decision to allow for visiting families and friends.

Figure 6: Husband control where you go, what you do, and who you see

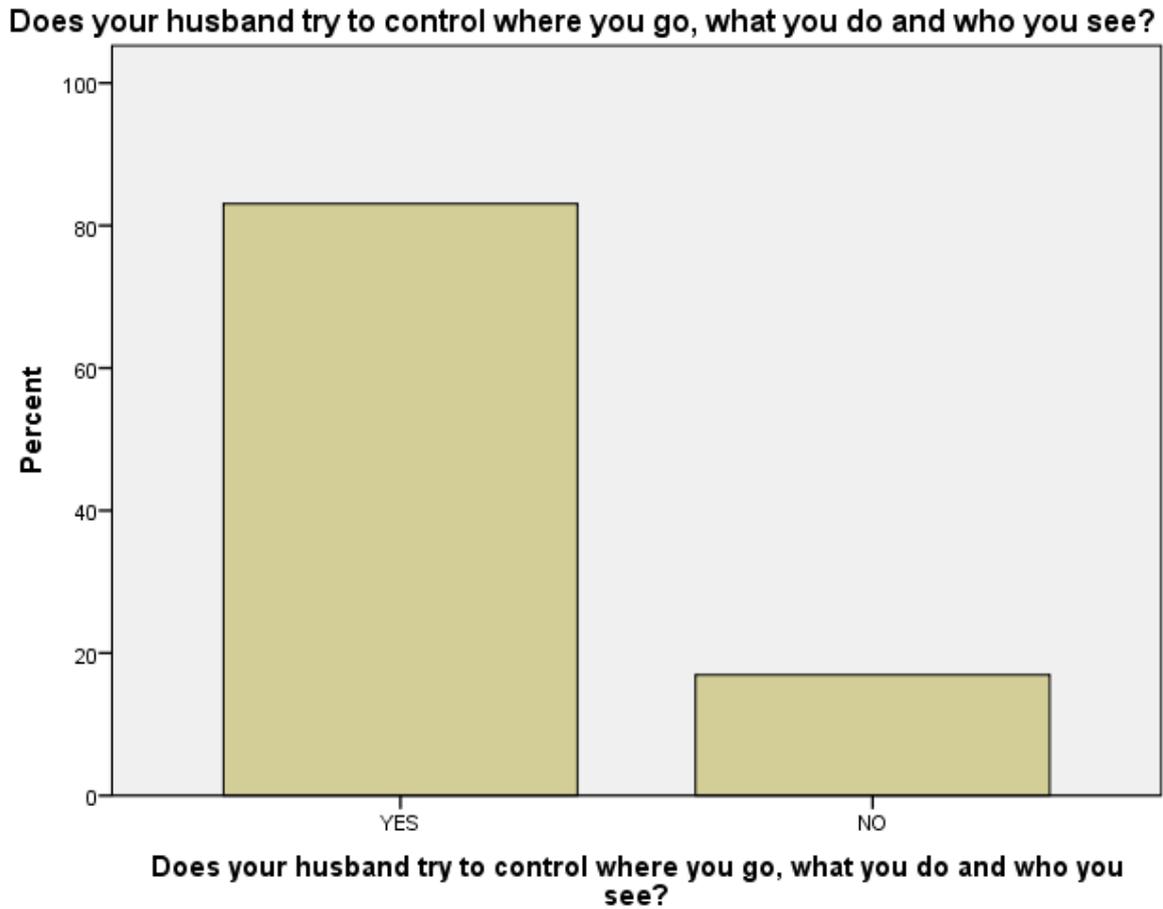


Table 8: Stop seeing friends or family to avoid husband’s jealousy

Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger?

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid YES | 66 | 55.0 | 55.0 | 55.0 |
| NO | 54 | 45.0 | 45.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

The above Table 8 show that 55% of the respondents said “YES” to the question “Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger?” This indicates that in order to avoid their husband’s jealousy 55% of the respondents stop their social life. Many women who are victims of domestic violence prevent themselves from seeing families to avoid conflict with their husband as a result of their husband’s jealousy. As explained by the respondent⁵, women who are victims of domestic violence;

⁵ An in interview conducted with Police officer, at Bule Hora Woreda police station

particularly by husband’s jealousy, are isolated from the community. The women fear to improve her social life because of her husband’s jealousy. Among the cases of domestic violence reported to police station in Bule Hora Woreda, the major cause of the conflict is husband’s jealousy. ⁶

Table 9: Preventing from continuing education or getting job

Has your husband ever prevented you from leaving the house, getting a job, or continuing your education?

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid YES | 54 | 45.0 | 45.0 | 45.0 |
| NO | 66 | 55.0 | 55.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 120 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Many studies conducted in domestic violence revealed that education is one instrument to defend against domestic violence. If the woman is educated and get better job, she develops confidence over her and start to defend her husband in time of violence. Most illiterate women are dependent on their husband both economically and in decision making. In some case, there is a condition that a husband prohibits a woman to go for education and search for job outside of their home. Even if women have the right to education and better job, this right is not always exercised by women because of unwillingness of their male partner or husband. However, today because of international and national campaign for education women are allowed to go to school and get better job. The result of the study shown in Table 9, explain this fact. 55% of the respondents replied that their husband did not prevent them to go for education or getting for job.

As far as the aim of this study is concerned, correlation between two variables should be measured in order to know how much the two variables are related. Correlation is a statistical technique that shows how strongly two variables are related to each other or the degree of association between the two. In this sense, the researchers of this study identify the correlation between variables in order to show their association.

First, there is appositve correlation between the incidence of domestic violence and husband control of finance. As shown in Table 13 the correlation coefficient is 0.247 and correlation is significant at 0.01 levels. This result refers that when the incidence of domestic violence increase there is an increase in husband control of finance.

⁶ IBID

Table 10: Correlation between incidence of domestic violence and husband control of finance

Correlations

| | Do you face the incidence of domestic violence? | Does your husband control your finances? |
|---|---|--|
| Do you face the incidence of domestic violence? | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | 1 .247** .006 120 |
| Does your husband control your finances? | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | .247** 1 .006 120 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Second, the correlation between a woman beaten by your husband and stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger again shows positive correlation. When the numbers of women beaten by their husband increase, the number of women stop seeing family or friends to avoid husband's anger also shows increment. Here the correlation coefficient is 0.451 and correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.

Table 11: Correlation result between a woman beaten by your husband and stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger

Correlations

| | Have you ever been beaten by your husband? | Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger? |
|--|---|--|
| Have you ever been beaten by your husband? | Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N | 1 .451** .000 120 |

| | | | |
|--|---------------------|--------|-----|
| Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger? | Pearson Correlation | .451** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 120 | 120 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Third, there is also positive correlation between husband threatened to hurt physically and a woman stop seeing family or friends. The correlation is positive and the correlation coefficient is 0.398. Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.

Table 12: Correlation between husband threatened to hurt physically and a woman stop seeing family or friends

Correlations

| | Has your husband threatened to hurt you physically? | Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger? |
|--|---|--|
| Has your husband threatened to hurt you physically? | Pearson Correlation | .398** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 120 |
| Have you stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger? | Pearson Correlation | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| | N | 120 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

However, the result of this study shows are no significant relation between the incidence of domestic violence and participants job and educational background.

As shown in the above discussions, the prevalence of domestic violence against women affect each dimension of women autonomy; i.e, women decision making at home, financial autonomy, and women freedom of movement or the right to visit family or friends.

3.4. Mechanisms used to minimize the impact of Domestic Violence on Women Autonomy

As the result of this study shows, minimizing the impact of domestic violence is not an easy issue because of the following reasons. First, domestic violence has been generally understood by the community as a private issue, on the grounds of assuming home as a place of safety and security away from the involvement of others. It needs collaboration and cooperation of different parts of the community.⁷ A study by the World Health Organization (2005) reported intimate partner violence is the most prevalent yet relatively hidden and ignored form of violence in women's life. 63% of participants in this study replied that when they face the incidence of domestic violence they keep quiet because they did not expose their private issue to the public (they say it is between a husband and wife).

Secondly, domestic violence against women is taken as a women issue only. In order to minimize the impact of domestic violence each and every part of the society should be aware of the issue and discuss the issue in public. When a woman is a victim of domestic violence, the consequence does not only go to a woman it also affects the entire family and the society at large.

Thirdly, culture plays a great role in shaping a society towards a certain way of life. Many studies revealed that most of the African culture is patriarchal or male dominated and this is not peculiar to Ethiopia. Regardless of the existence of good cultures which give power to women, the Ethiopian culture considers male as the head of family and authorizes him to lead the family. This patriarchal structure can be a root cause of domestic violence by creating a power difference between male and female. Being a husband in Ethiopian society by itself provides an informal authority to control a family. Therefore, minimizing domestic violence can be effective if the community as a whole promotes a culture which empowers women and changes traditional cultural practices which can affect women's autonomy. This can be done through creating awareness about the negative impact of domestic violence for the community.

Fourthly, economic dependence for women is crucial to minimize the negative impact of domestic violence against women. Financial dependence on a husband affects women's life in three ways. First, even though domestic violence occurs across different socio-cultural settings, the poor women are more affected and victims relatively. Second, women who are economically dependent on their abusers are less able to leave and more likely to return to abusive partners. Further, the degree of women's economic dependence on an abuser is associated with the severity of the abuse they suffer. Greater economic dependence is associated with more severe abuse. Third, economic abuse is in itself a form of domestic abuse since abusive partners may act in ways that harm women financially and undermine their ability to become financially independent (The University of Wisconsin-Extension, 2012).

⁷See Jane Francis Connor (1989): *Violence Against Women in the Family*, New York, United Nations.

Finally, all the above problems can be solved by establishing legal and political framework which aims to minimize domestic violence and its negative effect.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions: Since the aim of this study is an assessment on the impact of domestic violence on women`s autonomy, the researchers focused on physical, financial, and psychological violence as an independent variables and women decision making power, freedom of movement, and financial autonomy as a dependent variable which influenced by the prevalence of domestic violence. In doing so, in this study the researchers found that domestic violence is highly prevalent in the study area. ⁸ The frequency of occurrence of domestic violence shows that most women face domestic violence once a week (51.7%). The majority of respondents suffer physical and financial type of domestic violence which is 26.7% and 25%, respectively.

The result of the study demonstrate that 76.7%, 71.7%, and 51.7% of respondents are hurt or injured, beaten, and threatened to hurt physically by their husband in their life time. These in brief explain the prevalence of physical violence. Unfortunately, 80% of respondents did not defend themselves from physical assault. This fact confirm that physical domestic violence have negative impact on women autonomy.

Moreover, the majorities of the respondents (95%) agree and strongly agree on the negative impact of domestic violence on their decision making at home. This illustrate that the prevalence of domestic violence negatively affect women decision making role at home.

Likewise this study discloses that the majority of respondents are afraid of their husband. Among the reasons for afraid, culture and religion takes the line share which is 58.3% and 21.7% respectively. In addition, 61.3 % of the respondents said their husband controls their finance and 66.7% of respondents did not have freedom to buy whatever they want. Similarly, 81.7% of the respondents said where they go, what they do and who they visitare under the control and permission of their husband and in order to avoid their husband`s jealousy and anger most women of the respondents stop their social life. This all evidence confirmed that psychological domestic violence have negative impact on women`s autonomy and freedom.

This study finally explains the existence of significant correlation between the prevalence of domestic violence in general and husband control of finance. Again, the correlation between a woman beaten by your husband and stopped seeing family or friends to avoid your husband's jealousy or anger shows significant and positive

⁸ For more see Table1, the incidence of domestic violence.

correlation. Ultimately, there is also positive and significant correlation between husband threatened to hurt physically and a woman stop seeing family or friends.

Recommendations: On the basis of the above result and discussion, the researcher of this study put their recommendation on what will be done in the future to fight against domestic violence and its negative impact on women's autonomy. First, awareness creation for the community is crucial. The starting point of any solution is knowledge on the magnitude and impact of the problem and the issue. Without recognizing the problem of domestic violence by itself, it is difficult to talk about minimizing and solving the problem. Still, many people did not consider the problem of domestic violence as a serious issue. Therefore, the women and children affairs office should create awareness to the communities.

Second, the "Abba Gadaa", religious leaders and other concerned body should promote cultural and religious practices which support women autonomy and provides freedom for women. Through the involvement of religious and cultural leaders, it can be possible to defend and eliminate domestic violence against women. A woman who lacks autonomy at a household level did not have the ability to care and manage her children properly.

Third, in our country Ethiopia the training and awareness creation about women's right is most of the time given for women. Men are excluded from the training, but since domestic violence against women is a violence committed by a husband against a wife, the government should take men as part and parcel of the training and awareness programs and discussions.

Fourth, economic empowerment of women is significant to minimize women dependence on their men partner and to decrease men bargaining power on the basis of their economic independence. Economic dependence of women on men can be a root cause of domestic violence by creating structural power difference between men and women. Therefore, the government with collaboration of the communities should further expand work opportunities of women in addition to affirmative actions.

The last but not the least, the establishment of legal laws which prohibit domestic violence against women is essential. Even though, our country Ethiopia is a party to different international agreements and conventions which protect women right, still different studies shows low implementation of those conventions. Again, the formulation and approval of specific laws which protect domestic violence against women is still needed. Accordingly, the HPR should formulate long lasting laws that can strongly protect women's right and promote women's autonomy.

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