



SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THENMARADCHI DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT IN JAFFNA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence against women is one of the most contemporary social issues in Sri Lanka. This study aimed to identify the socioeconomic implications of domestic violence experienced by women. All 107 women were selected in Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat. The mixed method research design was undertaken with the help of a questionnaire survey and interviews. The Chi-square for univariate analysis was employed to analyze quantitative data with the usage of SPSS version 21 and qualitative data were analyzed thematically using the thematic analysis. According to the results, Hinduism (98.1%) was the predominant religion and 24.3% of the respondents' age range was 26-30 years. The majority of the victims (54.2%) were educated up to secondary educational level. Wage labour was the primary livelihood of many women and most of the respondents' monthly income was less than 20,000 Sri Lankan Rupees. There was a significantly high status between economic domestic violence and the variables including education ($p<0.000$); occupation ($p<0.000$) and income ($p<0.000$). Further, financial instability, low income, financial insecurity, unemployment, debt, poverty, low level of living standards, helplessness, lack of social recognition, and lack of social support were the significant economic and social impacts on women. In addition, stress, fear, tension, low self-esteem, and eating and sleeping disorders were the major psychological impacts on women. Additionally, cultural norms, fear, and stigma often cause women to stay silent about their experiences with abuse. Most of the women used coping mechanisms to cope with their implications. The research concludes that psychological implications were the most severe implication among the participants. This study suggests that vulnerable communities should be identified and services such as counselling and legal aid should be made easily accessible.

KEYWORDS: *Socio-Economic problem, Dowry, Sexual Violence, Domestic violence, Vulnerability*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women remains a significant contemporary social issue that can result in physical harm as well as long-term psychological issues including anxiety, depression, antisocial behaviour, suicidal thoughts, reduced self-esteem, social alienation, and inability to provide for themselves and their families. Further complications may include gynaecological, gastroenterological, and cardiovascular symptoms (Colorado-Yohar *et al.*, 2016; Jack *et al.*, 2018; Kulwicky *et al.*, 2015; Lafta, 2008; Niolon *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, domestic violence leads to a decrease in healthy life years for women of childbearing age and fatalities (Alhabib *et al.*, 2010; Niolon *et al.*, 2017).

Domestic violence is a significant public health issue. It poses serious challenges that need to be addressed in Sri Lanka and broadly refers to any type of physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse perpetrated by any member of the household (Bandara *et al.*, 2022). Unfortunately, these numbers have been increasing during the economic crisis due to a variety of reasons. The Sri Lankan economic crisis causes reduced electricity, fuel, and cooking gas consumption, food shortage, poverty, and cancellation of critical surgeries in the country (Hovan George *et al.*, 2022). The cost of living crisis in Sri Lanka has brought many impacts on people. The biggest dilemmas experienced by women were the feeling of being victims.

Domestic violence refers to “any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to Women. Including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (United Nations, 1993). According to Sri Lanka's Prevention of Domestic Violence Act No. 34 of 2005 (Oct. 34 August 2005) “Domestic violence is any emotional abuse committed or suffered by an intimate partner within or outside the home environment, arising out of a personal relationship between the victim and the intimate partner”. Based on the Women’s Wellbeing Survey conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics in 2019, 20.4% of Sri Lankan females out of a population of 51.6% were

victims of domestic abuse (Women’s Wellbeing Survey, 2019).

This study has been based on the real-life experiences and voices of women who were victims of violence during the rising cost of living crisis in Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat. At present, the large number of domestic violence cases in the study area has been identified as a serious problem. The women face impacts such as financial strain, low income, financial insecurity, unemployment, inability to repay loans, poverty, declining standards of living, helplessness, sexual exploitation, and lack of social support, tension, low self-esteem, stress, eating and sleeping disorders. Also, women were inclined to stay silent about their abuse experiences due to certain cultural values, fear, lack of knowledge, lack of professional support, acceptance of abuse, and stigma. Among women who experienced domestic violence in this study site, only a small proportion have sought help themselves for the violence from the Divisional Secretariat office, hospitals, and court. Therefore, it was identified as a public health concern and this study was conducted by the researcher to investigate it. Also, it will help future researchers to carry out in-depth analyses to establish the relationship between socio-economic impacts and associated factors of women who had domestic violence. As no such study has so far been conducted in this area, the study is expected to fill an important research gap.

2. METHODOLOGY

The study area



Source: Divisional Secretariat Report (2022)

The study was conducted in Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat area in Jaffna district within the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. There are 15 Divisional Secretariat Divisions in Jaffna district and each consists of 60 Grama Niladhari Divisions (Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat report, 2022). In the Eastern border of this area is the Pachchilaippalli Divisional Secretariat area. In the Western border are Navatkuli Semmani Bridge and Upparu Sea water. In its Northern border are Thondaimanaaru sea water and the Vadamadchi South-west Divisional Secretariat area. In its Southern border are the Jaffna Peninsula and the Poonagari Divisional Secretariat area. The area of Thennamarachchi Divisional Secretariat is 232,19 km², and according to its census for November 2021, it has a population of 73,394 in 22,889 families (Divisional Secretariat Report, 2022).

This community-based study was conducted as a mixed-method research design to identify the socioeconomic implications of domestic violence against women, and some related factors (quantitative) and real-life experiences of such violence (qualitative) simultaneously in the study area. According to the Jaffna District Secretariat, there were 246 incidents of domestic violence in Jaffna district in 2021 (District Secretariat Report, 2022). Based on the registered cases in Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat and court of Chavakachcheri, in total, there were 107 responses to the self-administered questionnaire survey, which were from women who had experienced domestic violence in the last 12 months in 2021 (Divisional Secretariat report, 2022). Further, 15 interviews were conducted in the study area.

Primary data was gathered through a self-administered questionnaire and interviews. To achieve the aim of this study, a self-administered questionnaire was developed using open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions. Multiple choice questions provided a list of answers of forms of domestic violence and impacts of domestic violence from which the respondent could choose, and it was aimed to exhaust all possible answers. In this case, the researcher includes an "Other, please specify" answer choice to reduce bias in the study. The related research areas can be broadly analyzed by conducting interviews. By using interview method, researchers could have a

holistic view of the meaning behind the phenomenon of domestic violence and explore social processes in rich and complex details through this study. Secondary data was collected from the Divisional Secretariat, District Secretariat, research articles, journals, and website data. Victims of domestic violence in the community were included in the research after obtaining permission from the Divisional Secretariat. Informed verbal consent for attending the study was also taken from all participants before conducting interviews, once the purpose and the objectives were explained by providing a written consent form (information sheet) before the questionnaire. Confidentiality was maintained during the data collection and they were ensured that information collected would be used only for the study. And, the right to individual dignity was respected. The data generated were stored and kept locked in a protected environment.

Data analysis

The quantitative data collected through a questionnaire survey were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods and a chi-square test with the usage of SPSS (version 21), and the qualitative data were analyzed utilizing thematic analysis. In the initial step, axial coding (initial reading of texts) was critical to understand the content and core notions drawn from various aspects of domestic violence on women. Then, open coding (coding the text after repeated reading) began with the collection of raw data. In this phase, researchers generated 57 basic codes after the comprehensive analysis of the responses. In the final stage, selective/theoretical coding (generating themes through codes) was completed after the core concepts emerging from the coded data categories and subcategories have been identified through axial and/or open coding. First, the data were analyzed descriptively using means and standard deviations for continuous variables and counts and percentages for categorical variables. To study the forms of domestic violence in each aspect of family life, the chi-square test was used for univariate analysis. All values such as influence factors and forms of domestic violence were calculated by using the chi-square test, statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. To evaluate reliability

of the variables, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was set at more than 0.6.

3. RESULTS

Testing for Validity

The researchers utilized the Expert Validity technique to establish the validity of the data collection tools.

Testing for Reliability

A reliability test was done by utilizing Cronbach’s alpha value using SPSS. Bernstein, *et al* (1994) confirmed that the standard value for Cronbach’s alpha could be more than 0.6, which was previously recommended by Bagozzi (1988). Table 1 shows the reliability values and number of items for each variable used in this research study.

Table 1: Reliability for each variable

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
Social impacts	.668	7
Economic impacts	.643	7
Psychological impacts	.879	7
Coping mechanisms	.727	8

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 2: Sociodemographic factors of participants

Variables	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Age (years)		
20-25	17	15.9
26-30	26	24.3
31-35	16	15.0
36-40	23	21.5
41-45	10	9.3
46-50	7	6.5
51-55	2	1.9
56-60	5	4.7
>60	1	0.9
Total	107	100.0
Religion		
Hindu	105	98.1
Christians	2	1.9
Total	107	100.0
Educational level		
Primary Education (1-5)	6	5.6
Secondary Education (6-11)	58	54.2
G.C.E A/L	32	29.9
Bachelor's degree and above it	9	8.4
Technical college	2	1.9
Total	107	100.0

Occupation		
Self Employment	9	8.4
Business	1	0.9
Wage labour	28	26.2
Government job	12	11.2
Private job	3	2.8
Home working	15	14.0
No occupation	39	36.5
Total	107	100.0
Monthly total income (Rs)		
Less than 10000	16	15.0
10001-15000	21	19.6
15001-20000	24	22.4
20001-25000	9	8.4
25001-30000	8	7.5
30001-35000	9	8.4
More than 35000	20	18.7
Total	107	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 2 shows the socio-demographic factors of participants. In the study population (107), the majority of the women (24.3%) belonged to the age group between 26 and 30, and the smallest minority of the participants (0.9%) were over the age of 60. The age range of the participants varied from 20 years to 64 years while the mean (standard deviation), median, and mode were 35 (9.616), 33.78, and 27.85 respectively. The vast majority of the participants (98.1%) were Hindu and the majority of the participants (54.2%) had studied up to the ordinary level, while 36.5% of the participants were unemployed. The total income of the majority of them (57%) was Rs.20000 Sri Lankan Rupees and the average monthly income per family was 12683 Sri Lankan Rupees.

Table 3: Perpetrators of Domestic violence

Perpetrators	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Spouse (Husband)	107	45.1
Father-in-law	17	7.2
Mother-in-law	90	38.0
Brother-in-law	9	3.8
Sister-in-law	14	5.9
Total	237	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 3 indicates that in the overall prevalence of any form of violence during the rising cost of living crisis among the study population, husband (45.1%) was the

main perpetrator followed by other family members. Nearly 38% percentage of victims were more likely to experience violence from their mother-in-law.

“My husband depends on his mother. He doesn’t have his own opinion; he follows his mother talking after that he beats me in front of others. The main reason for the fighting between us was his mother. She desires to separate us” (Case study, 07).

Table 4: Forms of economic violence

Economic violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Restricting access to money	62	30.1
Preventing from work	55	26.7
Refusing to give food	19	9.2
Controlling their income	44	21.4
Forcing into debt	2	1.0
Forbidding to work hours	24	11.6
Total	206	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 4 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (30.1%) were unable to access money, which was the main economic form of domestic violence. A few women (1%) were forced into debt by their perpetrators. The following case studies indicate these:

“He goes to earn money. He brings some goods for family needs. But those goods are not enough for our family during the current cost of living crisis. So, I work in a hospital as a caring person. Now I buy the goods and things. He doesn’t like to go to work. He scolds and fights with me because I go to work” (Case study, 03).

“He doesn’t like to work hard usually. In the situation where I am a member of both the Samurdhi and Community Centre in our village, he will pressure me to get a loan. However, if I am not a member, he will criticize and confront me with malicious intent. Now violence is increasing at home due to crisis” (Case study, 09).

Table 5: Association between economic violence and selected independent variables

Variables	X ²	df	P value
Age	11.131	8	=0.194
Education	22.447	4	<0.000
Occupation	25.488	6	<0.000
Income	26.125	16	<0.000

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The results of the chi-square test showed in Table 5 that socioeconomic factors such as education (p<0.000), occupation (p<0.000), and income (p<0.000) were significantly higher in economic violence. There was no significant association between age (P=0.194) and economic violence.

Table 6: Forms of social violence

Social violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Stopping from seeing family	76	19.5
Forcing to spend time at home	97	24.9
Not being allowed outside	103	26.4
Not being allowed to functions	93	23.8
Telling lies about me to family	7	1.8
Deliberately doing bad things	14	3.6
Total	390	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Looking at social forms of domestic violence in Table 6, not being allowed outside had been experienced by 26.4% of women and 1.8% of victims reported that telling lies about themselves to family was the social form of domestic violence during rising living costs. The following case studies reveal that:

“He doesn’t allow me to maintain a relationship with my mother, he always forces me to spend time at home. He always calls them over the phone for scolding with bad words” (Case study, 08).

“When the rising cost of living crisis started, I was ecstatic. I suffer from regular domestic attacks from my husband, and therefore couldnt neither move nor speak. I can’t sleep properly and feel like I am stuck in my house. I have bitter arguments with him, he doesn’t allow me to participate in any functions in our village, I don’t know how to manage” (Case study, 07).

Table 7: Forms of physical violence

Physical violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Beating	97	16.0
Throwing objects	63	10.4
Pushing	80	13.2
Use of Weapons	74	12.2
Punching	52	8.6
Kicking	72	11.8
Pulling hair	66	10.8
Strangling	37	6.1
Arm and leg twisting	37	6.1
Sudden seizure	27	4.4
Stabbing by child	1	0.2
Keeping warm	1	0.2
Total	607	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 7 states that 16% of participants in the study were more likely to face physical violence such as beating. The following case studies depict it:

"This is the only torture for me is that whatever problem he has, he shows it to me. While standing, he throws and beats with objects, and speaks virtuously with slander" (Case study, 09).

"I am only beaten when I fight. He pushes and pulls my hair with his hands. I was in the hospital for a day due to strangulation" (Case study, 01).

Table 8: Forms of sexual violence

Sexual violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Using a sexually derogatory name	61	67.9
Sexual harassment	10	11.1
Forcing sexual activities	4	4.4
Refusing to use condoms	11	12.2
Forcing sex during mensuration	2	2.2
Forcing sex in multiple times	1	1.1
Forcing sex in front of children	1	1.1
Total	90	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 8 denotes that most of the women (67.8%) were abused in the form of verbal abuse. The following themes show it:

"Using sexual language, preventing contraception, sexual harassment, engaging in extramarital sex,

forcing sex during mensuration times, forcing to have sex five or six times a day and forcing sex while children are at home" (Key Informant Interview, 01). "All his desires should be agreed to without time limit. Otherwise, he will talk me wrong" (Case study, 03).

"He stayed at Kilinochchi and went to work. When the children come after work, they will fight for his feelings if I do not agree with his desires. No idea about my family situation. I should go with him, this is what he has been doing regularly since the time of marriage" (Case study, 06).

Table 9: Forms of psychological violence

Psychological violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Harassment	34	8.4
Isolation	80	19.7
Silence	63	15.5
Coercion	74	18.2
Controlling	101	24.9
Threats	54	13.3
Total	406	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to Table 9, the most common form of psychological violence was controlling (24.9%), isolating (19.7%), coercion (18.2%), and threatening (13.3%), while 8.4% was harassment. The following case study implies it:

"The rising cost of living crisis gave me a lot of time to stay home, my home has been like a prison, and staying home too long sucks. My partner controlled me due to different thoughts on financial strain. We fight more, I fight with my husband and beat the children in anger" (Case study, 06).

The findings also concluded that psychological violence is more frequent than other forms of violence. The following evidence supports the findings that in the study of Bandara *et al.*, (2022) they focused when considering the diagram of 2018, it is seen that among the forms of violence, emotional violence was reported more than physical violence.

Table 10: Association between forms of domestic violence and income of participants

Forms of violence		N	(%)	
Economic violence	Yes	84	78.5	$X^2=26.125$ df=6 P<0.000
	No	23	21.5	
	Total	107	100.0	
Physical violence	Yes	91	85.0	$X^2=6.054$ df=6 P=0.417
	No	16	15.0	
	Total	107	100.0	
Sexual violence	Yes	64	59.8	$X^2=17.315$ df=6 P=0.008
	No	43	40.2	
	Total	107	100.0	

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to Table 10, the forms of domestic violence, economic violence ($p<0.000$), and sexual violence ($p=0.008$) were statistically significant with the total monthly income of the family of participants who experienced domestic violence. Also, there was no significant association between physical domestic violence ($p=0.417$) and the total monthly income of participants' families.

Table 11: Impacts of economic violence

Economic violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Financial instability	107	26.7
Low income	91	22.7
Financial insecurity	104	25.9
Unemployment	20	5.0
Inability to repay the debt	79	19.7
Total	401	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 11 implies that the most common impact of economic violence was financial instability (26.7%). Financial insecurity (25.9%), low income (22.7%), inability to repay loans (19.7%), and unemployment (5%) were economically forced on women during the cost of living crisis. The following qualitative data depicts the same:

“Without a doubt, we know the current economic crisis has caused difficulties for everyone, changing their lifestyle and how family members interact with each other. And it also creates more violence among family members, particularly in this area where women are involved in domestic violence due to reduced income” (Key Informant Interview, 01).

“He has brought a refrigerator. We must pay the loan every month. But he doesn't pay it. I paid the borrowed money. If I talk about the loan, he will start to beat up me” (Case study, 04).

“During the lockdown period, we stayed at home with my family members and we were unable to go outside and buy the needed things. We became more intolerant and depended on others for meals” (Case study, 09).

The current study concluded that most of the victims of domestic violence are impacted by financial instability and financial insecurity in the study area. The study done by Women's Aid (2022) reveals similar findings that women who are affected by domestic abuse have experienced increased financial instability, cost of food, cost of fuel, reduced income, and debts.

Table 12: Impacts of social violence

Social violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Poverty	103	27.9
Declining living standards	94	25.5
Helpless	67	18.2
Lack of social recognition	23	6.2
Lack of social support	82	22.2
Total	369	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

The prevalence of impacts of social violence in Table 12, poverty was higher (27.9%) and lack of social recognition (6.2%) was lower. Further, declining living standards (25.5%), the helpless (18.2%), and lack of social support (22.2%) also had significant social impacts on women in the present study. The qualitative data show that,

“The economic crisis has taken a toll on vulnerable people, especially those with women, who in many cases, have had to take on various roles such as caregiver, income earner, and parent with few opportunities for breaks. Many women are also expected by men to work from home with their work responsibilities. It leads to poverty and creates domestic violence in family bonds” (Key Informant Interview, 01).

“Instead of having three meals a day, we reduced them to only two; breakfast and dinner. It was not easy for the children to adjust. It affects their healthy life” (Case study, 06).

“I know in this area people have heard about our family problems. It will be very hard to choose a life partner for my daughters in future” (Case study, 01).

“I began spending a lot of time with my family members. Although making breakfast and dinner are part of my daily routine, I spend a lot of time sitting and watching Television, but I don’t have family support” (Case study, 05).

The present study concluded that most of the victims are highly affected by poverty in a cost-of-living crisis. This finding also agrees with the following study by Hovan George *et al.*, (2022) carried out concerning the impact of the rising cost of living on women, the Sri Lankan economic crisis causes food shortage and poverty in the country.

Table 13: Impacts of psychological violence

Psychological violence	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Tension	103	17.0
Fear	67	11.1
Stress	101	16.7
Anxiety	56	9.2
Low self-esteem	99	16.3
Inability to trust others	73	12.0
Eating and sleeping disorder	107	17.7
Total	606	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 13 illustrates that most women (17%) suffered from tension and fewer (9.2%) suffered from anxiety. Other psychological impacts were faced by victims, such as 16.3% of low self-esteem, 17.7% of eating and sleeping disorders, 16.7% of stress, 12% of inability to trust others, and 11.1% of fear. The following case studies indicate that:

“He doesn’t drink and smoke at home, but always fights and scolds me, which affects me mentally” (Case study, 10).

“Several times I was deeply frustrated and had tension due to not tolerating his torture. Then I gave up that thought” (Case study, 02).

“I cry when he engages in fighting. I don’t eat food regularly, get proper sleep, and think deeply. When he beats me, I go out and return home for the children after he goes out. But he threatened me, I was afraid and ran away” (Case study, 03).

“I have an emotional sense that I don’t have a profitable and meaningful life, I feel bad about my family relationships” (Case study, 09).

Tension and eating and sleeping disorders are the main impacts of psychological violence found in this study area. The impact of psychological violence is mostly invisible. These affect mental health and harmonious relationships. The findings concluded that most of the women are highly influenced in terms of psychological impacts on family relations rather than other impacts in the Thenmaradchchi Divisional Secretariat area.

Table 14: Formal help sources were sought by women

Formal help sources	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Police stations	87	32.0
Court	75	27.5
Divisional Secretariat	63	23.1
Conciliation board	22	8.1
Grama Niladhari	22	8.1
Women In Need	1	0.4
Intervention social centre	1	0.4
Care centre (Natpu illam)	1	0.4
Total	272	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

Table 14 shows that most of the participants (23.3%) sought help from formal sources for help such as the police, and a minority of the participants (0.3%) sought help from specialized help centres and from medical and social services. The following Key Informant Interview reveals it:

"Some refuse to file a complaint with the police because of their social norms; Because there is a fear of not being able to get married if you go to the police, there is also a ritual of not having a husband to take care of the children" (Key Informant Interview, 01).

Remedies received from formal help sources

The provision of both informal and formal assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse has the potential to enhance their safety and health outcomes. The remedies were identified by participants from the formal help sources such as, help to strengthen family unity, not satisfied with the solution, no solution received, children's learning equipment and clothes were provided through the Divisional Secretariat, the case is ongoing, violence has reduced to some extent, divorce has been sought, debt problem has been solved, livelihood assistance has been provided through the Divisional Secretariat, the husband has been punished, the husband's alcohol consumption has decreased, the children have returned to normal, monthly allowances and psychological counselling has been provided.

"Those who are most affected by domestic violence are given six months of medical treatment at Chavakachcheri hospital, six months of psychological counselling at the Divisional Secretariat, and six months of imprisonment by the courts to the perpetrators of domestic violence" (Key Informant Interview, 01).

"I sought help from the police station, the police asked me to live together with the children. But he did not accept it, he refused. Then the police sent us to go to the Divisional Secretariat. I went there but he didn't come. In the Divisional Secretariat, they inquired about everything. They also advised us to be united as a family" (Case study, 07).

Assistance for participants who experienced domestic violence

Various assistance was provided to victims of domestic violence, their husbands, and their children through the Divisional Secretariat, women's

organizations, and other community-level organizations. The following qualitative data reveals the same: "Providing assistance to children of victims experienced by domestic violence to follow their education, giving psychological counselling and visiting their homes. Assistance is provided by the Divisional Secretariat, such as sending to the WIN social organization. In addition, the "Kurundham" social organization also provides bits of advice, those who are addicted to alcohol and drugs for fourteen days, given yoga training, psychological counselling for 6 months, and sent to a clinic in hospital" (Key Informant Interview, 01).

"He beat me once. This incident reached the Grama Niladhari, he came to my home and made peace to this incident" (Case study, 08).

Table 15: Coping mechanisms used by victims to cope with impacts of domestic violence

Coping mechanisms	Frequency	Per cent (%)
Keeping calm	12	4.3
Leaving home	34	12.2
Going to work	45	16.2
Being patient	67	24.1
Reducing daily living costs	97	34.9
Seeking help from neighbors	23	8.3
Total	278	100.0

Source: Survey Data (2022)

According to Table 15, the majority of the victims (34.9%) reduced daily living costs due to the rising living costs and the minority of women (4.3%) kept calm while violence occurred in their homes. The following qualitative data represent it:

"In low-income families due to poverty, women seek help from neighbors when they are dissatisfied with their lives. And, while violence occurs at home, most victims are being silent because of their culture" (Key Informant Interview, 03).

"I have no idea about when it will end. Now I am reducing the cost of food and medicine. I eat little vegetables. I save money for children's future lives" (Case study 09).

4. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to identify the socioeconomic implications of domestic violence experienced by women in Thenmaradchi Divisional Secretariat in Jaffna district. Regarding the percentage distribution of Socio-demographic study sample features, the data reveal that the young ages of the women are a significant factor contributing to a rise in violence. At a young age, women have the fear of the stigma of society and family, and being forced to be patient can have negative psychological and emotional effects. This result is in agreement with the study of Walker *et al.*, (2021) who mentioned with similar socio-demographic data that the young age of women and a large age difference are very important factors that cause increase in violence. When they are in younger age, girls are afraid of the stigma of society and family, and being forced to remain silent can lead to an increase in the abusive behaviours associated with mental and physical health consequences.

Also, low level of education has been found as another factor of violence in this study, which is significant in qualitative and quantitative (54.2%) studies. The findings were supported by Shayestefar *et al.*, (2023) that lack of knowledge and low level of education have been found as other factors of violence in this study, which is prominent in both qualitative and quantitative studies. Balasekar, (2021) also stated that men and women who have not had the opportunity to question gender roles, attitudes, and beliefs cannot change such things. Women cannot assert their rights if they are ignorant of them.

The present study shows that women suffering from domestic violence face different types of violence from their husbands. These findings align with those of population-based research on domestic violence experienced by women conducted in Iran (Manouchehri *et al.*, 2022). Another similar study by Dammeyer and Chapman, (2018) conducted in Denmark also supported the findings that people with disabilities and IPV face different types of violence from their husbands.

The current study results show that psychological violence is more frequent than other forms of violence. The following evidence supports the

findings that in the study of Bandara *et al.*, (2022) they focused when considering the diagram of 2018, it is seen that among the forms of violence, emotional violence was reported more than physical violence, and, the study by Manouchehri *et al.*, (2022) in Iran, supports this finding, that psychological violence is the second most common violence on women.

In terms of the distribution of women based on the impacts of domestic violence, the present study found that most of the victims of domestic violence are impacted by financial instability and financial insecurity in the study area. The study done by Women's Aid (2022) reveals similar findings, that women who are affected by domestic abuse have experienced increased financial instability, cost of food, cost of fuel, reduced income, and debts.

This study depicts that most of the victims are highly affected by poverty in a cost-of-living crisis. This finding also agrees with the following study by Hovan George *et al.*, (2022) carried out concerning the impact of the rising cost of living on women, the Sri Lankan economic crisis causes food shortage and poverty in the country. In this study, a significant relationship was seen between the prevalence of domestic violence and the variable of participants' income. The following study by Manouchehri *et al.*, (2022) mentions and supports it, in Iran, where a significant relationship was seen between the overall prevalence of domestic violence and the variable of participants' income. These scenarios are very close to the present study and give valuable insights into the planning and operationalization of the present study. There is no such previous study in view of the socio-economic implication of domestic violence on women in the study site. Therefore, these findings also appear to be consistent with the present study.

5. CONCLUSION

The cost-of-living crisis is seriously affecting female victims of domestic violence in Sri Lanka. The increased cost of living has resulted in women being more fearful of leaving violent situations. Economic, social, and psychological impacts have become rife on victims in the study area during the crisis, such as financial instability, low income, financial insecurity, unemployment, inability to repay debts, poverty,

declining living standard, and helplessness, lack of social support, tension, low self-esteem, stress and eating and sleeping disorders. Most women used coping mechanisms to cope with the impacts of the rising cost of living. The present study recommends future studies to assess the implications of the rising cost of living on victims of domestic violence.

Vulnerable communities should be identified and services like counselling and legal aid should be made easily accessible and free of charge.

Efforts should be made for the proper and effective enforcement of existing laws related to women.

Livelihood assistance should be given according to the background of the victims of domestic violence.

Lists of nongovernment organizations and other governmental organizations dealing with women's issues should be made known to the public and should create awareness of domestic violence.

Police need to be sensitized to treat domestic violence cases as seriously as any other crime.

Children of afflicted women should get attention to improve their education and social development.

Women are more vulnerable because of their limited voice in the community and household decision-making. Family system theory is most applied to this study. In this study area, most of the victims' life partners are engaging in wage labour. They do not get enough money during the rising cost of living crisis. Because of that, they took loans to fulfill their needs and they also have low job satisfaction. These situations create stress on domestic violence perpetrators.

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