

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

Monwara Khatun Asha*

Graduate School of International Development, Nagoya University, Nagoya, Japan.

ABSTRACT: Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a pervasive issue deeply rooted in societal structures, often challenging to identify and address in legal contexts due to its complex nature. This study explores the reasons behind educated women tolerating IPV in Bangladesh, a topic previously unexamined in the country. Employing a qualitative approach, the research utilizes secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews with educated women who have experienced IPV. The primary finding reveals that fear of social stigma is the predominant factor in these women's decision to remain in abusive relationships despite their desire to leave. This study contributes to the existing literature by highlighting the persistence of IPV among educated women in Bangladesh and underscoring the limitations of education alone as a protective factor. This research also highlights the unfriendly/unwelcoming nature of Bangladesh's legal environment despite the presence of laws that align with international standards. Limitations of the study include the potential overlap between IPV and marital dissatisfaction and the inability to verify perspectives from opposite points of view. Future research should address these gaps to provide a more comprehensive understanding of IPV dynamics in Bangladesh.

KEYWORD: Intimate Partner Violence, Women Empowerment, Education, GBV, Bangladesh, South Asia

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In Bangladesh, intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread and deeply ingrained concern that impacts women from all socioeconomic and educational backgrounds (Bakchi et al., 2020; Johnston & Naved, 2008). Alarming, even among educated women, there is a troubling acceptance and justification of violence within marital relationships (Daibes & Safadi, 2022). The vast range of estimates for the country's IPV prevalence, which ranges from 15.5% to 82.7%, reflects the complexity of the problem and the variety of violence that women encounter (Bakchi et al., 2020, p. 16). This acceptance is frequently based on longstanding social norms and the generational cycle of violence, with early exposure to IPV normalising it in adulthood (Stake et al., 2020). Many women in rural areas believe that IPV is a socially acceptable act, highlighting the deeply rooted attitudes that endure despite educational growth (Marium, 2014). The issue is further made worse by contributing elements such as underage marriage, dowry customs, economic dependence, and views of wives' disobedience (Bakchi et al., 2020).

Although initiatives like microfinance programs and NGO engagement seek to empower women, their effectiveness in lowering IPV is still uneven (Stake et al., 2020). It is evident that institutional interventions are urgently needed given the extremely low disclosure rates—just 1% of victims report IPV to law enforcement or medical professionals (Stake et al., 2020). To effectively combat IPV in Bangladesh, a comprehensive strategy that not only dismantles damaging conventions but also empowers women and establishes supporting networks is needed.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the underlying factors or justifications that educated women draw upon to justify or tolerate violence within their marital relationships in Bangladesh?

To answer the main question, it is essential to explore the following additional questions further:

2. How do educated women navigate the conflict between their knowledge of gender equality and their acceptance of IPV? And

3. How do witnessing family violence and exposure to violence in the workplace and community influence the acceptance of intimate partner violence among educated women in Bangladesh?

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand the factors for why educated women in Bangladesh tolerate IPV and how these women navigate the tension between their empowerment and their tolerance of violence. In addition to this, this research will also explore

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

whether witnessing violence in early life or in surrounding contributes to the acceptance of violence.

1.3 Importance of the Study

There is a crucial gap in the academics to understand why educated women tolerate intimate partner violence. A recent study in Jordan by Daibes and Safadi (2022) sheds light on how educated women in abusive marriages struggle with self-respect versus societal expectations. Similar dynamics likely play out in Bangladesh as two authors argued that IPV remains deeply embedded in socio-cultural practices (Hasan et al., 2023) and religious misinterpretations (Naved et al., 2017). Although it is evident that IPV causes serious physical harm (Naved et al., 2017)

and psychological trauma (Esie et al., 2019) to Bangladeshi women, it is unclear why educated women specifically continue to endure such abuse. Another puzzle is to understand the complex societal web where these women are stuck despite being educated. Therefore, it is essential to address and explore this issue in the Bangladeshi societal context.

1.4 Definition of Terms

1.4.1 Intimate Partner Violence:

The concept of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in this research focuses on violence that occurs between people sharing intimate personal connections. The Center for Disaster Control and Prevention (CDC) describes IPV as;

“Physical violence, sexual violence, stalking and psychological aggression (including coercive tactics) by a current or former intimate partner (i.e., spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner or ongoing sexual partner)” (Breiding et al., 2015, p.11).

This relational perspective helps to capture the intricate dynamics of personal relationships, particularly to explore IPV in Bangladesh’s distinctive sociocultural context.

1.4.2 Empowerment

In this research, empowerment is understood as a process with many aspects that help a person to take full control of their lives. It includes aspects like gaining financial independence, becoming aware mentally, building a positive mindset, staying motivated and developing psychological resilience (Page & Czuba, 1999). This concept aligns with United Nation’s view, which emphasizes giving people the power to take action on issues they find important in their personal lives, communities and society as a whole (United Nation, 2015).

1.4.3 Psychological/Emotional Abuse

This study follows the definition by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) where psychological aggression in intimate partner violence (IPV) is explained as using verbal or non-verbal communication to cause emotional harm or control a partner (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024). The findings of this research reveal a scenario where educated women in Bangladesh continue to endure deep psychological suffering, which makes them hopeless and even ready to walk away from their marital relationships.

1.5 Conceptualizing Intimate Partner Violence

1.5.1 Definition of IPV

Intimate Partner Violence is a widely recognized issue, with many leading organizations defining it based on its multifaceted nature as the World Health Organization says;

“a behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours. This definition covers violence by both current and former spouses and partners” (World Health Organization, 2022, “Definition” section).

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) acknowledges the impact of IPV on a broader spectrum of Individuals within a family unit (children and older adults), which goes beyond romantic partnerships and includes various familial relationships (Government of Canada, 2019). The RCMP’s broader understanding of family is especially relevant in a country like Bangladesh, where family dynamics play a big role in everyday life. For educated women, the family expectations and responsibilities can shape their view of how they perceive the effect of IPV, particularly in extended family situations.

1.5.2 Types of IPV

1.5.2.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as using physical force to hurt a spouse, causing any physical injury or harm. This can include actions like hitting, slapping, beating, kicking, choking or even using weapons (Lacey et al., 2013; World Health Organization, 2012). The percentage of Physical abuse is 41 worldwide and is the second most visible form of IPV (Dalal et al., 2009). However, it remains underreported in Bangladesh (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). Several contributing factors have been highlighted by Wahed and Bhuiya (2007) for the underreporting, such as gender inequality, strong belief to maintain family honor and stability, the tendency to ignore domestic violence by the middle class and widespread fear of social ostracism.

According to Tran et al. (2020), the victims of physical abuse are at high risk of having maternal common mental disorders (CMD), and they have poor mental health. Besides, the data from this study highlights a connection between the victim and their

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

breastfeeding their child since they are less likely to breastfeed their children. In addition, physical abuse can lead a person to long-term anxiety and depression, physical injuries and chronic diseases. The victim typically isolates herself socially, experiences low self-esteem and faces difficulties in making positive connections (Tran et al., 2020).

1.5.2.2 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is defined as any kind of sexual activity that happens without consent, such as marital rape, forced sex and sexual harassment in relationships (Sugarman & Hertweck, 2022; World Health Organization, 2012). Varikuti (2020) further emphasised that this type of abuse violates a person's autonomy and rights by forcing him/her to engage in sexual activity against permission. In a research based in India, Deosthali et al. (2022) found that sexual abuse may occur in different situations. However, women may experience specific types of violence, like being forced to have children, especially in marriages.

1.5.2.3 Psychological Abuse

The World Health Organization defines psychological abuse as a variety of actions, from verbal abuse and persistent disrespect to acts of intimidation, including causing property damage, as well as threats of violence or manipulating child custody agreements (World Health Organization, 2012).

Perpetrators sometimes use psychological tactics to establish control and distance themselves from their relationships; these tactics may include tracking communication channels, limiting social engagements, and diminishing the victim's professional achievements. This pressure can take the form of limitations on social connections and career progress (Thompson et al., 2023), which can significantly impact educated women's feelings of autonomy and self-worth. Dalal et al. (2009) conducted a thorough analysis and found that, with a prevalence rate of 71%, verbal abuse is the most common type of abuse in Bangladesh. The study emphasizes that a couple's lower level of education is a significant risk factor.

1.5.2.4 Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour is a type of abuse where the offender exerts power to control and influence another person without causing any physical harm. The World Health Organization defines it as behaviour that includes strategies like isolating people from their support systems, keeping track of their whereabouts and limiting their access to resources essential for their well-being (such as money, jobs, education, and healthcare) (World Health Organization, 2012).

1.5.3 Prevalence and Statistics

1.5.3.1 Global Prevalence of IPV



Figure 1. Global Prevalence of IPV

Note. Source: World Health Organization, (2021)

According to WHO (2021), 37% (UI 33–42%) of ever-married or partnered women (between the ages 15–49) in the "Least Developed Countries" have suffered some physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime. This trend of lifetime prevalence can also be observed in the three subregions of Oceania: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. On the other hand, the lowest lifetime prevalence rates are found in the four subregions of Europe, ranging from 16–23%, followed by Australia and New Zealand (23%), South-Eastern Asia (21%), Eastern Asia (20%) and in Central Asia (18%).

In the trend for the past 12 months, the prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among ever-married or partnered women remains highest in the "Least Developed Countries" at 22% (UI 19–26%) and the subregions of Oceania Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Following these regions, Sub-Saharan Africa (20%) and Southern Asia (19%) report notable rates of intimate partner violence over the same period. On the contrary, the lowest estimated prevalence rates for this type of violence are recorded in Australia and New Zealand (3%), Northern America (6%), Eastern Asia (7%), and the subregions of Europe (4–7%), which are mostly high-income regions.

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

These statistics show that regions with lower income and less development tend to have higher rates of intimate partner violence. For example, the higher rates in “least developed countries” can be due to gender inequality and lower income which make women more vulnerable to abuse. On the other hand, the lower rates in regions like Australia, New Zealand, Europe and America might reflect better legal protection and a stronger support system for women.

1.5.3.2 Prevalence in Bangladesh



Figure 2. Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence
Note. Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, (2016)

The 2015 survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, supported by UNFPA and the EU, presents a stark picture of intimate partner violence (IPV) among ever-married women in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2018). It indicates that a significant majority, nearly 72.6%, have experienced some form of IPV during their lifetime, with over half, approximately 54.7%, encountering it within the past 12 months. Controlling behavior emerges as the most prevalent form of abuse, affecting 55.4% of women, underscoring the pervasive nature of coercion in intimate relationships. Physical violence, reported by 49.6%, highlights the alarming extent of bodily harm endured by victims. Emotional and sexual violence are equally harrowing, impacting 28.7% and 27.3% of women, respectively, and revealing the breadth of psychological and physical suffering. The compounded nature of IPV is starkly evident, as 57.7% of women report enduring a combination of physical, sexual, or emotional violence throughout their lives.

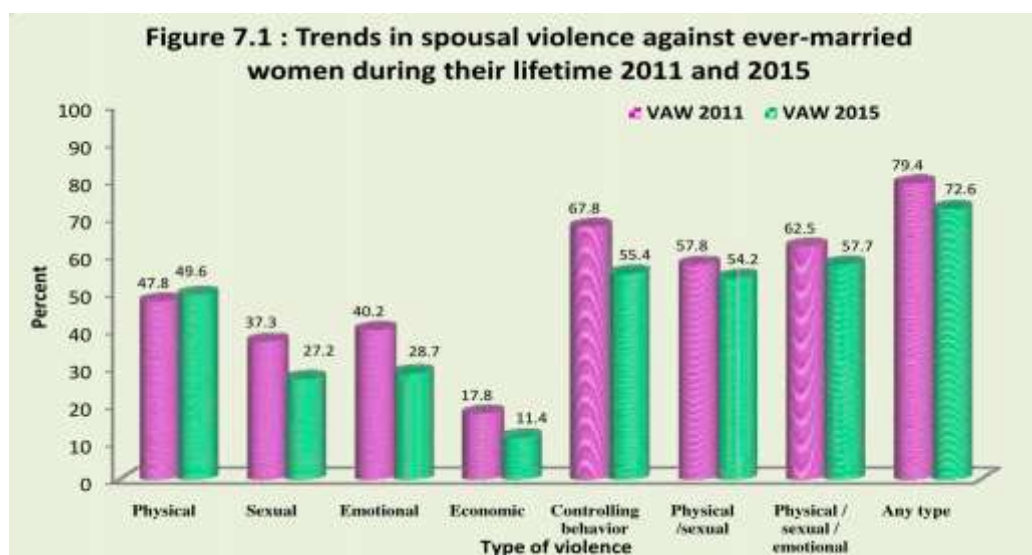


Figure 3. Trends in Spousal Violence against Ever-married Women during their Lifetime
Note. Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, (2016)

During the period spanning from 2011 to 2015, there were significant shifts in the prevalence of partner violence against ever-married women in Bangladesh (as shown in the chart). While physical violence showed a marginal increase, other types of violence, including economic, sexual, emotional, and controlling behavior, exhibited notable decreases. Specifically, sexual

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

violence declined from 37.3% to 27.2%, emotional violence from 40.2% to 28.7%, economic violence from 17.8% to 11.4%, and controlling behaviour from 67.8% to 55.4%. Despite the observed positive trend in reducing various forms of partner violence against ever-married women in Bangladesh between 2011 and 2015, the prevalence remains alarmingly high. This persistent high ratio of violence serves as a significant barrier to achieving gender equality and undermines women's ability to participate fully in the labour force.

1.6 IPV among Educated Women

According to the BDHS (Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey) 2017-18, Islam et al. (2021) argue that women with higher levels of education are less likely to approve of intimate partner violence (IPV) since they are more socially active and human rights conscious, which makes them more likely to see IPV negatively.

In contrast, a comparative analysis by Marium (2014) reveals that despite increasing female literacy rates in rural Bangladesh, reported incidents of violence against women, including dowry-related violence and rape, have also increased. This suggests that higher education levels alone do not necessarily lead to a decline in domestic violence. Despite educational advances, the continued rise in reported violence suggests that other factors, such as deep-seated patriarchal practices and underreporting of violence, remain crucial.

In a nationwide study of women in India, Ackershon et al. (2008) found education as a protective factor for women. Their findings emphasize the significance of a comprehensive approach that includes educating both men and women as well as improving the overall educational standards in communities. According to these studies (Islam et al., 2021; Marium, 2014; Ackershon et al., 2008), it is obvious that women who are better educated tend to be less tolerant and less likely to experience intimate partner violence, as education increases their awareness and sense of empowerment.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Perceptions of IPV among Educated Women

Several studies consistently explore how education can change people's attitudes toward intimate partner violence (IPV). In Pakistan, Khar (2017) found that women with any level of formal education are less likely to accept IPV compared to those without education. What's particularly interesting is that this trend is widespread - it does not matter whether women live in rural or urban areas or their socio-economic background. Education acts as a powerful equalizer. Likewise, Nabaggala et al. (2021) pointed out that in Sub-Saharan Africa, women with lower levels of education are prone to experience IPV, particularly in rural settings. These findings emphasize that education plays a key role in fighting IPV, and the impact is not limited to any geographical location or economic condition.

Looking at this issue through a comparative lens reveals important differences in how education shapes the perception of IPV. Schuler et al. (2013) argued that educated women who are more aware of their rights often consider IPV as a violation of their personal dignity. On the other hand, women with less education tend to think of IPV as a normal part of married life, a view shaped by cultural beliefs about women's submission and male authority (F. Rahman & Sakib, 2022). Soni et al. (2023), using BDHS data, showed a progressive decline in IPV justification among higher-educated women, from 0.78 in 2014 to 0.67 in 2017-18. This downward trend exemplifies how education gradually changes attitudes and empowers women to reject IPV as a social norm. Nevertheless, the liberatory potential of education is not without

limitations. Kabir (2017) and Rahman (2019) observed that while education fosters greater awareness of gender equality, socio-cultural constraints often moderate its transformative effects. In high-IPV-prevalence contexts like Bangladesh, societal pressures frequently curtail women's autonomy, even among the educated.

Women's empowerment is further enhanced by economic freedom, which has a direct connection to education. According to Ackerson et al. (2008), education boosts financial independence as it reduces dependency on abusive partners and hence lessens tolerance for IPV. Women having professional training or employment are better able to view IPV as a violation and actively fight it by using legal or psychological support networks (El-Etreby et al., 2024). When women achieve financial independence, they sometimes encounter criticism because it challenges established gender norms. Husbands may feel intimidated, which may lead to increased IPV in order to reestablish authority (Murshid et al., 2016). In addition, even financially independent women may choose to remain quiet about abuse to prevent disrupting family dynamics because divorce brings social stigma and may cause exclusion for both the woman and her children (Samuels et al., 2019).

In high-IPV countries like Bangladesh, education's larger role in fostering self-efficacy and self-esteem is especially significant. El-Etreby et al. (2024) defined self-esteem as a belief system that includes self-efficacy, motivation and self-regulation. They found it as a protective factor against the negative impacts of intimate partner violence. Higher levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem empower women to effectively negotiate issues and claim their rights. Education can also increase a person's mental health resilience, as a study from the United States illustrates that mental health resilience reduces the physical and psychological effects of intimate partner violence (Usta & Shatila, 2023).

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the connection between IPV, empowerment and education are complex. Educated women are better able to make independent decisions and participate in the economy, which lessens their reliance on men. Yet, education must extend beyond the basic level in order to have a substantial impact. According to Sanawar et al. (2019), women in Bangladesh who have just passed elementary school have a higher likelihood of being physically abused than the more empowered person with a higher level of education. Since primary education might not be enough to successfully empower women, this stresses the significance of reaching a particular degree of education.

2.2 Gender Role Conflicts in Patriarchal Societies

In Bangladesh, patriarchy works as a system that gives males authoritative power and women to play subordinate roles through different interconnected ways. First of all, in traditional family structure, where women live in their husband's homes after marriage and family ties favour the male side, puts women in a submissive role and strengthens male authority. This structure reflects deeply ingrained patriarchal standards by prioritizing male lineage and reducing women's autonomy (Sultana, 2011).

Secondly, women's freedom of movement and public exposure are heavily restricted by societal norms (i.e. Purdah), which further restrict their opportunities outside of the home. This practice is embedded in cultural and societal norms, makes women more dependent on men and prevents them from participating in the workforce (Asadullah & Wahhaj, 2017).

In a qualitative study, Thomas (2020) explores the South Asian context and emphasizes how conventional gender roles and in-laws' family play a crucial role in determining the dynamics of IPV in households. By enforcing and adhering to these norms, in-laws' family not only normalise violence but also make women more susceptible to IPV. This highlights how intergenerational power structures and entrenched gender expectations perpetuate systematic oppression and familial control.

2.3 Societal and Cultural Justifications for IPV Acceptance

2.3.1 Cultural Narratives

Societal and cultural norms play a key role in the perpetuation and justification of intimate partner violence (IPV). The patriarchal systems around the world uphold male authority by depicting women as inferior and responsible for preserving family peace. The idea of "patriarchal bargains", first proposed by Kandiyoti in 1988, provides a framework to understand how women navigate restrictive patriarchal structures by trading compliance for social and economic security. This compliance, often seen as a strategic adaptation, provides benefits, including protection, economic stability, and social acceptance while reinforcing male authority. Ahmed and Tabassum (2011) applied this framework in Bangladesh, where women in Sylhet justify IPV as a necessary compromise to ensure family stability.

In Bangladesh, the intertwining of patriarchal norms, family expectations, and collectivist values amplifies the pressures on women to conform. For example, Samuels et al. (2019) observe that family elders often advise women to "endure for the sake of the family fame", portraying intimate partner violence as a private matter and discouraging any sort of outside assistance. Similarly, Schuler et al. (2011) critique mainstream societal narratives that normalize IPV under culturally acceptable conditions. According to their findings, a large number of Bangladeshi rural respondents justify IPV within limits deemed "socially acceptable," which reflects community-driven perceptions rather than personal disapproval. For instance, one respondent stated, "Our society has set it up like this. It does not matter whether it is right or wrong—a husband can beat his wife" (p. 25). These cultural norms highlight how IPV is entrenched in societal structures where it is believed that intervention is not appropriate.

2.3.2 Social Stigma and Economic Dependence

Social stigma supports IPV tolerance among women in Bangladesh. Divorce or separation is heavily stigmatized and often seen as a personal failure rather than a systemic form of abuse (Schuler & Islam, 2008). Many are forced to be silent since women who leave violent marriages are frequently ignored by their families and communities. Besides, the cultural emphasis on family reputation intensifies this problem, as IPV survivors are often held accountable for disrupting familial harmony. Economic dependence compounds these challenges, as financial stability does not necessarily equate to autonomy in patriarchal societal contexts. Schuler & Islam (2008) highlight that economic empowerment can provoke a backlash, with men perceiving women's independence as a threat to their traditional power structures.

The BDHS data reflects progress in changing attitudes, reporting a decline in the proportion of ever-married women who justify IPV—from 20% in 2017-18 to 14% in 2022 (BDHS, 2022, p.221). While this suggests positive shifts, Schuler et al. (2011) critique DHS-style surveys for failing to capture nuanced cultural and societal factors influencing IPV tolerance. Women may outwardly reject IPV during the ongoing surveys to align with changing societal norms yet privately tolerate it due to cultural pressures such as maintaining family honor or securing their children's future. Kandiyoti's (1988) approach provides critical insight into how educated women negotiate patriarchal agreements while frequently sacrificing their independence

for safety and social acceptance. This is also supported by Ahmed and Tabassum (2022), who illustrate how women justify IPV to maintain family stability.

2.4 Impact of Familial and Child-Centric Concerns on IPV Tolerance

2.4.1 Family Expectations and Stability

Women usually suffer from IPV as a result of society's emphasis on preserving family stability and unity. They are raised culturally to put family honor and integrity first, even if it means sacrificing their own safety. Bhuiya et al. (2003) found that failure to perform family responsibilities, like caring for children or doing household chores, often leads to abuse, with 10% of verbal and 5.1% of physical abuse cases. In patriarchal households, these norms reinforce IPV as a disciplinary tool where men generally exercise authority over women.

In Bangladesh, divorce and separation through legal procedures remain heavily stigmatized. Women are supposed to protect family honor which is closely connected to their marital status. Many women stay in abusive relationships to avoid social stigma and blame associated with divorce (Samuels et al., 2019). This stigma and blame may not be limited to them and often extends to their children and broader social setting. Due to these psychological pressures, women sacrifice their own well-being to protect the fame of their family, which further contributes to IPV tolerance.

The interplay between cultural norms and financial problems again exacerbates this issue. In many circumstances, women's economic empowerment is insufficient to overcome these deeply rooted expectations. Schuler & Nazneen (2008) argued that traditional social beliefs that prioritize family stability over personal safety make it more difficult for women to reject abusive relations. According to these beliefs, women are the ones to be the protectors of family unity despite violence because it values endurance and sacrifice.

2.4.2 Child-Centric Concerns

Many women who are raising children choose to tolerate IPV. The well-being of their children comes before their own safety, and many women prioritize their duty as caretakers as to their own safety. According to Naved et al. (2006), women often tolerate violence in order to protect their children from the negative effects of divorce, such as financial uncertainty and social stigma. These concerns outweigh the physical and emotional harm of IPV on the women themselves.

Women's acceptance of IPV is sometimes driven by fears of damaging their children's social and emotional development. Women are not encouraged to consider divorce or separation both for keeping the mother's reputation and the child's future well-being. This traditional belief supports the idea that preserving family unity, even in an abusive context, is significant for a child's stability and security (Samuels et al., 2019).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) defined Social Learning Theory as the behaviour and attitude that someone learns through observing and imitating other people. Research shows that childhood exposure to domestic violence frequently creates the impression that abusive behaviours are normal in the family, which raises the risk of IPV victimization or perpetration in later life (Mbinyi et al., 2012). Women often end up accepting mistreatment in relationships which continues the cycle of learned violence (Chan et al., 2015).

A recent study from rural Bangladesh explores a significant connection between experiencing family violence at a young age and attitudes towards wife abuse in adulthood (Karim et al., 2021). On the other hand, persons who did not have any exposure to abusive behaviour at an early age were found to be rejected in adulthood. From this pattern, it is evident that women who witness violence during childhood, whether in family settings or surroundings, might often see it as a normal part of relationships.

2.5.2 Intergenerational Theory of Violence

The Intergenerational Theory of Violence explains that individuals who grow up in violent surroundings tend to continue those patterns into their adulthood (Pollak, 2004). It is likely that a husband's aggressive behaviour stems from seeing or experiencing violence as a child. However, a wife may choose to stay in such a relationship since she was exposed to violence in her early life. Black et al. (2010) studied how growing up around interparental violence might affect someone's chances of experiencing or committing IPV in their own relationships. It shows that early familial experiences might influence the future relationship (Stith et al., 2000).

Besides, a longitudinal study conducted by Shakoor et al. (2022) that explored data from the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development over a 50-year period offered additional evidence. The study revealed a consistent pattern of IPV passed down through generations, showing how violent behaviour remains over time. This normalization of violence reinforces abuse cycles since children raised in violent settings are more likely to embrace IPV as an acceptable conflict resolution tactic in adulthood (Koenig et al., 2003).

These theories (Social Learning Theory and Intergenerational Theory of Violence) help to understand why educated women in Bangladesh might accept IPV despite having access to education and awareness.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Study Design

A qualitative methodological framework is employed in this study to delve into why educated women in Bangladesh tolerate IPV. Qualitative research is useful in revealing overlooked topics, investigating complex dynamics, identifying gaps and documenting survivors' experiences (Hardestey et al., 2019). The data in this research is analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis, a technique intended to find, examine and report on the themes. According to Braun et al. (2019), reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) is an analytical method that analyses data while maintaining researchers' subjective opinions and how these might influence the results. Qualitative research methodology and reflexive thematic analysis offer a deeper understanding of how people perceive their understandings in specific settings.

3.2 Sampling

Snowball sampling and the purposive approach were utilized in this study. To make the most use of limited resources, the purposive technique is frequently used in qualitative research to locate and identify the information (Patton, 2014). Snowball sampling has been used due to the nature of this study, as it involves the hard-to-reach (Shaghaghi et al., 2011) population. To select the interview participants, the researcher asked friends and relatives for recommendations and used referrals from others¹. Additionally, all the participants were well-informed about IPV, as they all have high levels of education².

3.3 Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the interview, participants were required to identify as women survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV), possess at least a bachelor's degree, be of Bengali nationality³, have the ability to participate in a Zoom interview and be willing to be audio-recorded during an interview.

To finalize the participants, I provided an explanation of intimate partner violence in the context of this study, recognizing that its meaning might vary based on the survivors' backgrounds and experiences. Five participants were finalized for the interview, as they met all the established criteria.

3.4 Data Collection

After obtaining approval from the Ethics Review Committee, the researcher conducted five semi-structured interviews via the Zoom platform between July to September 2024. The interview process required significant flexibility, as participants needed adaptable scheduling due to their familial responsibilities.

¹ The researcher approached friends and family members, inquiring whether they knew of any women who might be experiencing challenges or difficulties in their married life over an extended period. The purpose of the study was clearly explained, and it was emphasized that participation would be entirely voluntary and confidential. If acquaintances identified potential participants, they were asked for consent to refer these individuals to the researcher for further contact.

² Completed bachelor's degree.

³ Those who have official right to belong to Bangladesh. According to the **Citizenship Act of 1951**, which has been amended several times, Bangladeshi nationality can be acquired by birth, descent, registration, or naturalization. Wikipedia Contributors (2024, December 23). Bangladesh Nationality Law Given the sensitive nature of this study, conducting in-person interviews were challenging as participants might be uncomfortable sharing their private information face to face or unable to make time for formal meetings. A semi-structured method was purposefully chosen since it allows the researcher to keep focus while encouraging participants to share their thoughts as well as explore new ideas (Adams, 2015).

All interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. After conducting the interviews in the Bengali language, the researcher manually translated the transcripts into English after transcribing them verbatim. In order to ensure the accuracy and nuance of the data, the process was carried out without any assistance of artificial intelligence.

3.5 Data Analysis

Giorgi's (1985) framework, which included a number of methodological processes, was followed throughout the data analysis process. The first step was data cleaning, which involves carefully eliminating terms that aren't necessary to preserve the transcripts meaning. The text was organized and analysed using NVIVO qualitative data analysis software (version 15). Following the NVIVO data processing, the researcher carefully examined the coding and nodes to ensure that participants' responses were correctly aligned with the research questions (Wong, 2008). Two features (coding queries and matrix coding queries) were used to find out the connection between themes.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

This study was reviewed and approved by the ethics review committee of Nagoya University's Graduate School of International Development (GSID). Participants were fully informed about their rights and the scope of their involvement. Participation was optional, with the option of withdrawing without any consequences. The goal of the study, any risks, advantages and confidentiality procedure were all thoroughly explained, and participants were welcomed to ask any questions at any time. Participants were given

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

the option to end the interview at any time or refuse to answer any particular questions in order to reduce any potential risks, and they were guaranteed that all information gathered would be deleted upon their withdrawal. To maintain their comfort, participants were encouraged to express any additional needs throughout the process.

CHAPTER 4

SETTING THE SCENE

4.1 Social and Cultural Context of Bangladesh

Bangladesh has achieved significant progress in women's empowerment, education and gender equality despite its status among the least developed countries. According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index, the country is ranked 59th in the world, yet it holds its place seventh in terms of political empowerment (Dhaka Tribune, 2023).

However, persistent challenges remain, as Bangladesh ranks 131 out of 170 countries in the Gender Inequality Index, reflecting ongoing disparities in access to resources and opportunities (United Nation, 2024). According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the literacy rate has steadily improved, reaching 77.9% in 2023, with males at 80.1% and females at 75.8% (BSS News, 2024). Cultural norms around unpaid domestic work, which requires women to put in 7.3 times more hours than males, limit women's economic potential even if 50.6% of them have completed secondary school and 42.7% are employed. The government aims to address these disparities by targeting 50% female participation in all sectors by 2030 (United Nation, 2024).

Despite these advances, Bangladesh faces critical issues with intimate partner violence (IPV), ranking fourth globally and second in South Asia for IPV prevalence based on a WHO report as cited in Prothom Alo (2021) and about 50% of women aged 15–49 have experienced physical or sexual violence, reflecting deep-rooted cultural norms that tolerate such behaviour. Progress in health outcomes, such as lowering the maternal mortality ratio to 136 per 100,000

live births by 2023, demonstrates a commitment to enhancing women's well-being (BSS News, 2024).

However, despite the rapid development in Bangladesh, deep-rooted societal factors such as traditional gender roles, family honour, societal norms, and the emphasis on marital stability continue to hinder progress and slow the pace of development (Esie et al., 2019; Jesmin, 2015; Sen, 2024). These cultural beliefs limit women's progress and make abusive behaviours seem socially acceptable. Numerous qualitative and quantitative research has explored how these factors restrict women's autonomy and decision-making power by supporting traditional patriarchal structures (Naved et al., 2006; Rahman & Sakib, 2022; Schuler et al., 2011; Schuler & Nazneen, 2018). The traditional belief that women should prioritize their family honor and marital stability forces them to accept or endure IPV, which seriously hinders their empowerment and overall well-being (Jesmin, 2015).

Cultural traditions in Bangladesh, such as prioritizing family honor, collectivism and marital stability, heavily impact relationships and contribute to IPV. According to Naved et al. (2006), 26% of urban and 34% of rural women reported they remain silent about IPV because of fear of damaging family honor. Collectivist ideals force women to put up with abuse for the sake of their children's future and social standing because they place a higher priority on preserving the family unit than on their own personal welfare. This cultural emphasis on marital stability often forces women to tolerate violence, as separation is stigmatised and seen as a threat to family cohesion (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007).

Traditional gender roles further reinforce IPV by prescribing women's subordination and men's authority within marriage. Non-compliance with these roles, such as questioning the husband (29.1%) or failing in household duties (17.6%), often triggers violence (Bhuiya et al.,

2003). According to a WHO multi-country study as cited in Wahed & Bhuiya (2007), given that 53.3% of urban and 79.3% of rural women defend wife-beating in specific situations, the acceptance of IPV as a form of discipline is alarmingly normalised. This is a reflection of society's inflexible patriarchal structures and belief in male domination.

4.2 The Role of Education in Shaping Gender Norms and Expectations

Bangladesh has significantly improved girls' access to education over the past few decades, particularly at the primary and secondary levels. From 39% in 1998 to 67% in 2017, females' secondary school enrollment increased dramatically, indicating a significant movement in education toward gender equity (World Bank, 2019). At the primary level, Bangladesh has achieved near gender parity, with a primary enrollment rate of around 98% and a higher female-to-male ratio (Khan, 2023). These milestones underscore the country's commitment to fostering greater educational opportunities for girls. For example, according to the UNDP Bangladesh (2023) Strategy report, women comprise over 63% of the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry workforce, underscoring the connection between economic inclusion and education. With 92% of borrowers being women, microfinance has further empowered women economically and increased their ability to make decisions and integrate into society in their homes (UNDP Bangladesh, 2023).

However, progress in higher education for women has been slower. Between 2015 and 2023, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for females in higher education rose marginally from 12.11% to 16.51%, a 4.4 percentage point rise in seven years (University World News, 2024).

Barriers such as early marriage, poverty, and inadequate facilities for female students restrict women from pursuing advanced

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

education. Furthermore, women's capacity to continue their education after marriage is restricted by social pressure to fit into conventional roles; only 28.2% of married women continue their education after marriage (Howlader et al., 2023).

Despite progress in education and workforce participation, gender disparities persist in Bangladesh. According to the Labour Force Survey 2022 (UNDP, 2023), Women's labour force participation is just 42% because they spend eight times as much time providing unpaid care as men do. Furthermore, the fact that only 13% of women have land ownership significantly restricts their economic independence and reinforces entrenched gender roles.

4.3 Legal Framework and Support Systems for IPV in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has established a comprehensive legal framework to address violence against women, including Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), through laws such as the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980, the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2000, and the Acid Control and Acid Crimes Prevention Acts of 2002. These laws collectively demonstrate the country's commitment to addressing gender-based violence through a comprehensive legal approach. Earlier measures like the Cruelty to Women Ordinance (1983) and the Family Court Ordinance (1985) laid the groundwork, while the Women and Children Repression Act (1995) introduced special provisions to prosecute gender-based violence (Brackett & Downing, 2017; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). However, despite the existence of these laws, systemic challenges persist. Legal loopholes and procedural technicalities frequently obstruct justice, particularly when perpetrators occupy dominant socio-economic positions. This systemic bias undermines the legal process and deprives survivors of essential redress. Interventions aimed at reducing violence have had little success and raise questions about the overall efficiency of legal and social structures in protecting women (United Nations, 2000). Samuels et al. (2019) describe the Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women as a unique initiative that integrates legal frameworks, governmental policies, and the efforts of NGOs and women's activist organisations to address IPV. While this holistic and intersectoral strategy positions Bangladesh as a leader in combating IPV, the reported prevalence rates remain alarmingly high. According to data from BBS and NIPORT (as cited in Samuels et al., 2019), significant gaps exist in addressing the underlying causes of intimate partner violence (IPV), with 49.6% of women experiencing physical abuse, 28.7% experiencing psychological violence, and 27.2% experiencing sexual violence.

Wahed & Bhuiya (2007) further identify barriers to enforcing these laws, particularly in cases involving rape in police custody. They noted that accountability is rare, with few perpetrators facing the consequences. Suppression of evidence by law enforcement officials and procedural delays protect offenders, while collusion between local elites and religious leaders who exploit traditional arbitration systems creates further obstacles to justice.

The judicial system in Bangladesh closely complies with international standards that describe domestic abuse as physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial harm (Brackett & Downing, 2017). Particularly, one of the strictest laws is Bangladesh's Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act of 2000. In keeping with the nation's strong commitment to preventing violence against women, it includes the death sentence for 12 specific crimes. Notwithstanding their strength, implementation and enforcement issues limit the ability of the legal framework to provide justice and protection to survivors of intimate partner violence. Addressing these systematic flaws is critical to sustaining the judicial system's efficacy and improving victim outcomes.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter covers the study's primary findings, including a) participant demographics, b) reasons for tolerating IPV, c) conflict between empowerment and acceptance of IPV, and d) participants' childhood and surrounding experiences.

5.1 Demographic Information

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Interview Participants

Interview	Marriage Duration	Age	Occupation	Education	Children
Participant 1	4y	32	Lawyer	Bachelor	No
Participant 2	21y	37	Teacher	Masters	Yes
Participant 3	4.5y	31	Lawyer	Masters	No
Participant 4	23y	35	Unemployed(currently)	Bachelor	Yes
participant 5	6y	28	Teacher	Masters	Yes

Note. Source: Authors's Own (based on interview data)

All participants were carefully chosen based on the predetermined standards to fulfil the goal of the study. Having a minimum bachelor's or higher degree and being married with a considerable amount of experience in their marriage were the primary requirements for participation. These standards made sure that participants possessed the educational and interpersonal backgrounds necessary to make a significant contribution to the study's focus on IPV tolerance among Bangladeshi educated women. While no particular professional background was necessary, participants' educational and, in certain situations, legal backgrounds offered valuable perspectives on the wider institutional and legal limitations they could face. Since three of the participants were mothers,

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

the study may look into whether their responses or sense of responsibility to protect their marital relationships were influenced by concerns for their children.

5.2 Reasons for IPV Tolerance

According to their responses, all participants reported suffering from psychological or emotional abuse as a type of intimate partner violence, and they have endured this abuse for a long time, which has continued frequently throughout their marriages. The highlighted themes reflect the primary reasons for their tolerance of the abuse. Social stigma appears as the main reason for their tolerance, which is further supported by patriarchy, collectivist family expectations, feelings of insecurity, a lack of legal protection and concerns about the future of their children. Each theme has been meticulously coded in alignment with the participants' responses.

Table 2. Reasons for IPV Tolerance

	Reasons for Tolerance
	Social Stigma
Psychological/Emotional Abuse	Patriarchy
	Family Expectation and Collectivism
	Insecurity
	Limitations of Legal Protection
	Children's Future

Note. Source: Author's Own (based on interview data)

5.2.1 Psychological/Emotional Abuse

During the interviews, participants described the patterns of emotional strain and psychological distress within their marital relationships. While no instances of physical violence were reported, the participants described interactions that left them feeling disrespected, excluded and undermined in their autonomy. These experiences reflect recurring relational challenges that participants perceived as deeply impactful and emotionally draining.

A central theme in participants' accounts was the perceived lack of respect and recognition for their contributions to family life. Participant 3 described how her husband's repeated dismissive remarks, though subtle, created an environment she found toxic and emotionally exhausting: My husband has never physically hurt me. I believe that most educated men abuse women emotionally, which is very hard to explain or express. In my case, my husband is a quiet person, but he constantly irritates me with small comments... he's not interested in going out with me in general. According to him, a wife should always stay at home... when this keeps happening day after day, I feel very frustrated and think about separating from him and giving him a divorce. The relationship feels so toxic. (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024)

Participant 1 echoed this emotional strain, characterizing her husband's harsh statements as a source of fear and deep emotional pain: Sometimes, his words are so hurtful that I feel it's impossible to live with him and I see him as more dangerous than an animal, fearing that something terrible could happen...some of his behavior has hurt me deeply, to the point where I have questioned whether I can continue this marriage. (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024)

For several participants, their sense of independence seemed affected by recurring behaviors they experienced as restrictive or unacknowledged. Participant 2 recounts how her husband's refusal to acknowledge his mistakes or consult her in decision-making creates a persistent sense of exclusion and frustration: My husband never admits his mistakes. If I point out something he did wrong, he starts an argument by saying things over and over again. He also never consults me on anything.

He hasn't changed in this regard since we got married. He makes no effort to involve me in his decisions. (P2, personal communication, July 8, 2024) Participant 4 shares her experience of feeling isolated within her marital home and described her husband and in-laws' behavior as manipulative, which left her feeling trapped and unsupported:

I really can't handle this situation anymore. I told my father-in-law, 'Father, I have lived with you all this time, but now I can't take it anymore. No woman can handle this much pressure. I'll go wherever I see a way out. Please look after your grandchildren'... I even told my husband and father-in-law that I would go to Dhaka and work as a maid if

necessary to earn money, but they don't listen to me. They just try to comfort me and keep me locked inside. (P4, personal Communication, July 16, 2024) Financial strain also emerges as a factor contributing to participants' psychological distress. Participant 5 described her husband's financial demands and her in-laws' persistent expectations for monetary support as she says: I have experienced a lot of domestic violence. The thing is, my father's family is financially unstable, but my in-laws are well-off. From the beginning of my marriage, my husband and mother-in-law have been asking me for money, which is essentially dowry. We had a love marriage, and both families agreed. There were no financial dealings discussed at the time of marriage. This problem has been ongoing for the past three years. (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024) And again, My husband asked me for

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

money to buy a motorcycle ... I managed to give him 40,000 taka, but he refused it because he wanted the full amount... my in-laws were never happy with me because they expected expensive gifts from my family, which they didn't get due to my family's financial struggles. (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024) Collectively, these experiences highlight the emotional toll of recurring behaviors that participants described as coercive, dismissive, and isolating. Some behaviors, like feeling undermined, disrespected, excluded from family matters, or unacknowledged for their contributions, may seem like signs of marital dissatisfaction. However, the participants' response shows an ongoing patterns of imbalance and distress. These patterns are consistent with the effects of psychological abuse in IPV, where such behaviors deeply harm emotional well-being and personal agency (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2023). While certain responses could be interpreted as marital discord (possibly arising from dissatisfaction within the relationship), other factors (financial pressure, controlling behaviour) exhibit patterns consistent with psychological abuse. Over time, such experiences appear to erode the participants' emotional resilience, which often leaves them feeling hopeless and disengaged from their marital lives. For instance, Participant 1 noted:

"The only solution seems to be leaving the relationship, but I can't do that" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

Similarly, Participant 3 reflected on the challenges of considering separation due to complex societal and personal constraints: "The relationship feels so toxic. But divorce isn't really an option for several reasons" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024). These dynamics underscores how these relational factors gradually move beyond isolated conflicts and contribute to a broader pattern of persistent psychological distress.

5.2.2 Social Stigma

Social stigma is the main reason for all of the participants to tolerate the abusive behaviour of their husbands, and social pressure to maintain marriage is the most significant societal stigma impacting participants' family lives. This pressure is reinforced by other norms, like blaming women and accepting physical abuse as normal, which often makes women too afraid to speak up and choose to stay silent instead.

A pervasive societal expectation to "maintain marriage at any cost" emerged as a core pressure, forcing participants to internalize endurance as a virtue. This pressure is intensified by fears of social disgrace, as highlighted by Participant 3's remark that a divorced woman is viewed as worse than a murderer as she said:

"When a woman divorces her husband, people don't just see her as divorced—they treat her as if she committed a crime. Society looks at a divorced woman worse than it looks at someone who has committed murder" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

This powerful stigma forces women to stay in their marriages by discouraging them from finding relief or independence. Beyond this, social norms institutionalize gender bias by consistently shifting accountability away from men and unfairly blaming women in all situations. Participant 2's observe society tends to blame women as she said;

"If a woman is divorced, instead of blaming her outright, I think it's important to investigate whose fault it really is. It's wrong to blame a woman without knowing the truth. Our society is like that—women are often blamed, no matter the situation. A woman is often held responsible for everything" (P2, personal communication, July 8, 2024).

Also, participant 3 said; Every woman in our country faces a dilemma to some extent because, before making any decisions, a woman must consider what society will think of her. In other countries, divorce isn't taken as seriously, but in our country, women are blamed for it. (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024) It highlights the societal narrative that holds women accountable for all actions and forces them to put up with abuse and keep quiet. This pattern of blaming women limits their ability to speak out while reinforcing men's dominance and gender inequality. Participant 2's remark that "some people physically abuse their wives without any reason" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024) illustrates how societal norms have normalized physical abuse and consider it as an accepted aspect of marital life.

Participants reported widespread disregard for women's well-being, which indicates that societal acceptance of abusive behaviors leaves them feeling powerless to seek redress. This entrenched culture of silence highlights the strong influence of societal norms on participants' lives. It continues to cause emotional, financial, and psychological harm in the name of social conformity.

5.2.3 Patriarchy

The participants' responses underscore a patriarchal norm that positions husbands as the ultimate authority. It reinforces a power imbalance that normalizes emotional control. Participant 5 said: "In our society, the husband's word is final, no matter how educated the wife is. Consulting the wife is seen as a waste of time" (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

Participant 1 said: "...husband is expected to be the head of the family, making all the decisions" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

These illustrate a cultural devaluation of women's voices, where educated wives are expected to yield to their husbands' decisions. This system not only limits women's autonomy but fosters an environment where open communication is suppressed, which ultimately sustains male dominance in family matters. Additionally, this authority often permits husbands to use their wives as emotional outlets for unaddressed frustrations, as Participant 3 noted: In our society, marriage is mandatory. A daughter's family feels relieved after her marriage, while the son's family feels like they've gained a servant. The son thinks he now has a place to vent his frustrations and fulfill his desires, which he can't express with family members. (P3, personal communication, July 15,

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

2024) The expectation that women should endure such emotional strain keeps them in a lower position and creates an environment where emotional abuse is seen as a normal part of marriage. Thus, patriarchal norms both rationalize and perpetuate emotional abuse by framing male control as inherent to the marital relationship.

5.2.4 Family Expectation and Collectivism

The participants' responses emphasize how deeply collectivist expectations shape their endurance of emotional abuse, with family reputation and societal perceptions that creates significant barriers to their leaving. As Participant 1 notes,

If I leave him, it will greatly impact my family, especially since my parents are old and wouldn't be able to accept it.....also, my brother has already gone through a divorce, and if I were to consider divorce, society would look down on us and say that nothing in our family ever sustains—it only breaks. (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024) This focus on preserving family honour over personal well-being reveals a cultural framework where individual suffering is often dismissed in favour of collective expectations, with divorce seen as a source of shame rather than a solution. Similarly, the weight of familial obligations limits self-autonomy and prioritizes family roles, as Participant 3 shares: "As the eldest son and me being the eldest daughter-in-law, we bear all the family responsibilities. There are so many demands from the family that we don't get any time for ourselves" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

Emotional endurance becomes a duty rather than a choice when personal needs and marital satisfaction are compromised in order to fulfill these responsibilities. Disparaging remarks from family members further erode self-worth, as illustrated by Participant 5's mother-in-law, who said, "What use is a wife like you? We needed a younger, less-educated girl with better financial standing" (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

Such comments reduce women to their perceived social or economic utility and discourage them from challenging the status quo. These perspectives reflect a norm where emotional abuse is internalized as part of fulfilling family and social obligations that further reshape individual agency into a collective duty.

5.2.5 Insecurity

Another crucial factor in determining tolerance for intimate partner violence (IPV) is insecurity in a judgmental society. The comments suggest that social narratives around divorced women create powerful deterrents against leaving abusive relationships. For instance, Participant 3 notes that:

"Even in your job, your colleagues might try to take advantage of you because you're divorced...people see divorced women as easy targets and treat them differently. They make suggestive comments and try to take advantage" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

It reveals how professional and personal boundaries are compromised in the face of marital dissolution. This view follows an unspoken social rule that punishes separation. It puts women's dignity and safety at risk and makes them rely on marriage to avoid mistreatment from others. Further, social assumptions around morality and family honour weigh heavily on participants' choices. Participant 4 expresses fear of being accused of "immoral" relationships if she separates. This reflects the societal belief that women outside marriage are subjected to moral judgment, as she said:

If I separate from my husband or think about divorce, people will assume I'm involved in an immoral relationship with another man. This is why I can't speak against my husband. Fear of losing my reputation often stops me from saying anything...my neighbors keep talking about my daughter, saying, 'You should marry her off soon. If you delay, you won't find a good boy anymore'. (P4, personal communication, July 16, 2024) This pressure manifests not only in the participant's choices but also impacts familial reputation, as seen in the reference to her daughter's marriage prospects. This family impact shows how community expectations link women's personal choices to their family's reputation and make it harder for them to escape IPV situations.

The participants' restraint also reflects an acceptance that seeking help can aggravate their situation, as Participant 5 articulates:

"If I seek help for my problems, it will only create more problems for me, as people will mock me. I have to keep my pain to myself, day after day" (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

Here, social mockery acts as a tool to discourage women from addressing abuse. The codes collectively suggest that the threat of public scrutiny and the cascading impact on family status reinforce a form of IPV tolerance rooted in protecting one's social reputation over individual well-being.

5.2.6 Limitations of Legal Protection

The inadequacies in legal protections and institutional support systems significantly contribute to educated women's tolerance of IPV in Bangladesh. Participant 3 underscored the inadequacies of domestic violence laws, stating,

The laws regarding domestic violence in Bangladesh are inadequate. The laws need to be revised because there are many loopholes. In court, victims are questioned in such a way that it feels like they are being raped all over again in public. This is why women from decent families avoid going through such situations. (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024)

This illustrates not only the presence of legal gaps but also the re-traumatizing nature of court proceedings, which serve as a significant deterrent for women seeking justice.

The absence of legal recognition for mental abuse further weakens the framework for addressing IPV comprehensively. Participant 1 expressed this limitation, noting, "Sometimes I think there should be laws for mental abuse, but no one talks about it,

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

and there aren't any legal complaints regarding this...laws against mental abuse should be implemented" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

This shows that current laws are too limited and fail to address the psychological aspects of IPV. As a result, many survivors are left without the support they need.

Furthermore, the participants emphasized the ineffectiveness of existing legal mechanisms and organizations. Participant 5 stated, "Although our country has many organizations and laws for women, they don't have any practical implications" (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

This critique highlights the gap between policy and practice, where systems lack the capacity or commitment to protect women effectively. Even when legal protections are theoretically available, societal stigma remains a powerful barrier to their utilization. As Participant 1 explained, "Women are aware of the law, but they are too scared of societal judgment to seek help" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

This indicates that societal norms discourage women from pursuing legal action and diminish the perceived utility of existing legal frameworks. Although the participant addressed the limitations of legal protection, it appears that while the legislation exists, the whole legal environment does not encourage or foster a sense of safety. Therefore, it creates an unwelcoming and unfriendly atmosphere and makes it difficult for victims to seek legal help.

5.2.7 Children's Future

One participant (Participant 4) mentioned how children's future, especially social expectations surrounding her daughter's marriage prospects, strongly influenced her decision to endure IPV. Despite personal hardship, she feels bound to the marriage, stating, "If I didn't have children, I might have left this marriage a long time ago and earned a living on my own. It's only because of my children that I'm still in this marriage; otherwise, I wouldn't stay" (P4, personal communication, July 16, 2024).

The fear of societal judgment compounds this decision, as she worries about her daughter's reputation, expressing, "I'm always very stressed because of what people say about my daughter. I fear what will happen if I can't marry her off" (P4, personal communication, July 16, 2024).

5.3 The Conflict between Empowerment and Acceptance

This chapter is organised into three sections. The first section examines participants' perceptions of equal rights, assessing their level of awareness. The second explores how this knowledge influences their sense of empowerment and shapes their perspectives. The third section addresses the challenges to their empowerment, specifically how they continue to tolerate IPV despite their awareness and empowerment.

5.3.1 Perception of Equal Rights

Table 3. Participants Perception of Equal Rights

Perception of Equal rights	Category	Theme	Description
	Expectation	Thinking Equal	Aspiration for true equality in the relationship.
	Reality	Disrespectful	Experiencing disrespect despite an expectation of equality.
		Not being helpful	Partner's lack of support for equality and shared responsibilities.
		Not thinking equal	Realization that the husband does not view the wife as an equal partner.

Note. Source: Author's Own (based on interview data)

This table highlights the tension between participants' positive expectations of gender equality and the disheartening realities they experience. All participants value equality as a concept, as indicated by Participant 4, who insists on equal treatment of her children, and Participant 2, who values respect for women in religious teachings. Yet, they confront a cultural landscape steeped in patriarchal norms that reinforce inequality at home and work.

Participants expressed frustration with the inequitable division of labor in households, where, despite their jobs, they shoulder all domestic responsibilities without assistance or recognition. Participant 1 exemplifies this, stating,

"If I ask my husband to help with cooking, he'll say, 'Is cooking my job? Is cleaning my job?' He doesn't have a helping mindset and doesn't believe men and women are equal" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

Participant 3 said: "My husband has similar mindset... 'You're a woman, you have periods, you can't work after childbirth. Men don't have these problems, so how can women be equal to men'" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

Participants note that women are expected to handle both office tasks and household chores independently, as men typically don't

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

assist. This unfair division of labor keeps true equality out of reach. Participant 3's comment that:

Both my husband and I work all day. After work, I come home and do all the household chores—cooking, cleaning, everything. My husband comes home and rests, while I keep working, without getting any respect for my efforts. So, where is the equality? (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024) underscores the fatigue and resentment this imbalance breeds.

5.4 Empowerment

Table 4. Key Indicators of Empowerment Among Participants

Empowerment	Theme	Description
	Attempts to change husband's behavior	Taking proactive steps to improve the marital relationship and reduce abusive behavior.
	Being Positive	Maintaining a hopeful attitude
	Hoping for societal change	Belief that the larger society will eventually adopt more equal and respectful norms.
	Managing situation	Developing personal strategies to cope with or mitigate IPV.
	Men should be respectful	Expectation that men should uphold respect, indicating awareness of gender equality principles.

Note. Source: Author's Own (based on interview data)

The theme in the table suggests an empowered mindset the participants have, as they actively seek respect, attempt to change their husbands' behaviors, be positive, manage the situation and envision a more equitable society. However, their empowerment operates within restrictive social norms, resulting in resilience (ability to cope, adapt, and endure within these limitations) rather than complete autonomy (independent decision-making). Participant 1 illustrates this by saying,

"Initially, I thought I could change my husband's behavior, but after many attempts, I've given up" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024). And also as participant 3: After every argument, we sit down and talk. I explain the behaviors that upset me, and he listens and agrees, but after a few days, he goes back to his old ways, and the same arguments start again" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

It shows a willingness to advocate for change but acknowledging the limitations imposed by her husband's deeply ingrained attitudes. This sentiment echoes throughout other participants' narratives, as they balance their ideals of equality with the practical challenges they face. A structured approach to managing relational conflict is demonstrated by participant 3's efforts to facilitate open communication and even seek for counseling, as she stated: "We've even gone for psychological counseling. It helps temporarily, but after a while, the same problems come back" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

Here, despite her efforts to address issues and bring change, recurring behavioral patterns prevent any lasting progress.

Participants also hold a vision for broader societal change, as illustrated by Participant 3's reference to societal examples of gender equality: "Through your research, I hope to see changes in our society. Just like we see the example of gender equality in the cartoon 'Mina,' I hope our society becomes like that too" (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

This desire points to an awareness of systemic barriers and a hope that future norms will reflect gender equality more closely. Nevertheless, empowerment, in this context, is influenced by the demands of family responsibilities. Even though these women are capable and proactive, they face cultural and personal limits. Thus, through resilience and selective engagement, they develop adaptive strategies that embody empowerment, even in the face of social limitations.

5.5 Challenges to Empowerment

Table 5. Key Challenges Hindering Participants' Empowerment

Challenges to Empowerment	Theme	Description
	Adjustment	The need to conform and adjust personal values to meet family or societal expectations.
	Depression	Emotional toll due to the pressure of balancing empowerment with societal expectations.
	Family Pressure	Influence of family members who may discourage standing up against IPV for the sake of stability.
	Financial Problem	Economic dependence makes it harder to resist or leave abusive situations.
	Normalization	Accepting IPV as part of life due to pressure to maintain family unity.

Note. Source: Author's Own (based on interview data)

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

Table 5 outlines various key obstacles to the empowerment of participants, highlighting a complicated relationship among emotional resilience, financial difficulties, familial pressures, and the ingrained reliance on endurance and patience. The concept of "adjustment" appears prominently as participants often feel forced to suppress their emotions and

Sometimes I have to console myself by thinking that perhaps he didn't intend to hurt me, and I just took it the wrong way. Even when I know he intentionally hurt me, I don't dwell on it for long because I know harboring negative feelings will only make it worse. I feel that women in our society are victims in many ways. We can't express what we go through, so we just have to adjust, adjust, and adjust. Honestly, I don't see any option other than enduring it. (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024)

it reflects a common mechanism to avoid conflict despite the emotional toll it exacts. In these situations, participants reported relying on self-consolation or acceptance as coping strategies, with Participant 1 noting that enduring negative emotions only intensifies their distress.

Financial difficulties further constrain empowerment by creating dependency and reducing autonomy. Participant 4 shares how her husband's irresponsibility and risky investments have created continuous financial strain and leaves her unable to adequately provide for her children. She expresses a desire to improve her situation, imagining "starting a chicken farm" (P4, personal communication, July 16, 2024) to alleviate her family's suffering. However, her dependence on her husband is further exacerbated by the fact that her lack of financial resources limits her ability to act independently. Participant 3 reflects on how financial stress has changed her marital relationship, stating, Before marriage, we spent a lot of time together and went on trips, but after marriage, our financial situation worsened. So I think sometimes it's because of financial stress that my husband doesn't want to go out with me anymore. (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024) This suggests that financial difficulties not only strain their relationship but also lead to emotional disconnection which ultimately leaves her feeling neglected and unsupported.

In addition to emotional and financial challenges, family pressure intensifies the weight of endurance. For instance, Participant 5 explains, A lot of things happen in life. If you keep everything in mind, it becomes impossible to continue the marriage. So, I try to avoid bad situations or stay quiet. I try my best to overlook my husband's bad behavior...When I can't handle it anymore, I close the door and cry for 1 or 2 hours, then I go back to my work. (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024) that when her husband's behavior becomes unbearable, she feels forced to stay silent to protect her family's reputation.

These responses show how societal norms force women to accept silence and endure hardships as normal. This limits their ability to grow and feel empowered. Despite these formidable barriers, their persistence—such as looking for work or considering new income streams—illustrates a form of resilience that seeks empowerment even within restrictive boundaries.

Summary:

Sections 5.3.1 and 5.4 provide insights into the participants' knowledge and sense of empowerment, while section 5.5 outlines the barriers they encounter in acting on this empowerment. Despite being educated and aware, participants find themselves constrained by deeply rooted social, financial, and relational obstacles. These barriers limit their ability to change their circumstances, despite their efforts to find solutions and make repeated attempts at resolution. Ultimately, they find ways to cope and adjust instead of escaping, as enduring and accepting their situation feels like the only option. Social expectations leave them with no other realistic choice. These dynamic reveals that structural limitation hold back their empowerment. They end up with constrained resilience and little room for real transformation.

5.6 Experiences of Inequality (childhood and surrounding)

Table 6. Experiences of Inequality in Childhood and Immediate Surroundings

	Theme	Description
Personal Experience of Inequality	Childhood Experience	Early life experiences that shaped perceptions of inequality.
	Experience in Surrounding	Observations of inequality in the environment, such as profession, community or society.

Note. Source: Author's Own (based on interview data)

The participants' early exposure to abusive behaviors and gender inequality, both within the family and in surrounding, reveals that these experiences shape their acceptance of restrictive social norms. For example, Participant 1 and Participant 5 observed such behaviour in her family as she said:"There was always a dominating attitude that women's words didn't matter. I didn't see it with my parents, but I saw it with my uncle, who was very controlling towards my aunt" (P1, personal communication, July 15, 2024). And, "Sometimes my parents argued. My father made big decisions without consulting my mother, which led to problems" (P5, personal communication, September 30, 2024).

It reflects an ingrained and dismissive attitude toward women's voices. Such observations may extend into adulthood, where participants note similar issues in their peers' lives (colleague) but rarely discuss them openly, as seen when Participant 2 says,

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

“I don’t usually discuss personal matters with colleagues, but sometimes I can tell from their words that their husbands are similar” (P2, personal communication, July 8, 2024).

Participant 3 said: “Even in the flat next to ours, I’ve seen such incidents. A colleague of mine also recently called me and shared many of her problems” (P3, personal communication, July 15, 2024).

This internalized awareness may lead to normalising inequality and limiting participants’ capacity for change despite their education and empowerment.

Summary:

Educated women are often perceived as knowledgeable, aware, and empowered individuals capable of applying their understanding effectively in private life. However, this research uncovers a contrasting reality: even educated women remain constrained by deeply rooted social and cultural norms. While the study indicates that education contributes to financial stability, e.g., through microcredit or NGO membership (Bates et al., 2004) and less tolerance of IPV (Schuler et al., 2013), others (Jesmin, 2015) find no significant positive correlation between women’s empowerment and attitudes toward IPV. This research argues that educated women’s attitudes toward IPV tolerance are predominantly shaped by deeply ingrained social and cultural norms, which often overshadow the impact of economic empowerment. While financial stability may offer women some degree of autonomy, this study indicates that societal expectations and cultural conditioning play a more significant role in perpetuating IPV tolerance among educated women. This suggests a complex interplay between cultural constraint and women empowerment, whereby achieving economic independence on its own is insufficient to challenge deeply rooted normative structures.

Another key finding of this research is that all women who experienced IPV demonstrate a strong understanding of equal rights and actively look for solutions to address their situations. However, despite their best efforts, these attempts rarely lead to meaningful change. Instead, these women often develop coping strategies to deal with their circumstances, as escaping their situations is restricted by societal and cultural norms. This pattern aligns with previous research (Daibes & Safadi, 2022), which underscores how deeply entrenched norms limit women’s ability to break free from abusive relationships.

Early exposure to violence—both within families and in surrounding environments—profoundly shapes women’s acceptance of IPV. This exposure normalizes violence and influences their attitudes which makes it challenging to reject IPV in adulthood. Also, this finding supports both Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes the role of observational learning in shaping attitudes and the Intergenerational Theory of Violence, highlighting how these patterns persist across generations.

Furthermore, this research identifies critical gaps in the legal protection system. While Bangladesh has laws aligned with international standards, such as the Dowry Prohibition Act (1980), the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act (2000) and The Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act (2010)⁴, these laws fail to provide victims with a safe and supportive environment to seek help (Omar Faruk et al., 2020). If victims do not feel secure when approaching the legal system, the existence of robust laws becomes irrelevant.

⁴ This Act aims to uphold the United Nations conventions on women’s and children’s rights, ensure equal rights for women and children as guaranteed in the Constitution of Bangladesh, and prevent domestic violence while protecting women and children from it. (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, 2010).

5.7 Limitation

This research is based on a very limited sample, comprising only five IPV victims, which may not fully represent women from diverse socio-economic backgrounds in Bangladesh. Additionally, the findings rely entirely on the participants’ interview responses. While conducting a focus group discussion could have enhanced the depth of the data, time constraints prevented its inclusion in this study.

Considering the sensitivity of the topic, finding interview participants was challenging. Since this matter is very personal, many individuals were hesitant to participate, and most were not comfortable being audio recorded. This created another limitation, as it was not always possible to identify and select the exact victim of IPV.

Moreover, this research relied entirely on the statements of the participants. It was not feasible to verify the perspective of the opposite party or assess the accuracy of their reactions to this issue. This is an important factor to keep in mind while interpreting the findings. Future studies should include a larger and more specific sample and a mixed-method approach to improve the findings’ dependability and depth.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study shows that educated women’s views on IPV are more influenced by social and cultural norms than by economic empowerment. Women who are victims of intimate partner violence are aware of their rights, but they are frequently restricted by social expectations, which causes them to adopt coping strategies rather than escape. Early exposure to violence normalizes intimate partner violence (IPV), which affects acceptance as an adult. Gaps in Bangladesh’s legal atmosphere, despite alignment with international standards, fail to provide victims with a secure environment. These findings emphasise the need for systemic cultural

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

shifts and targeted legal reforms to address IPV effectively.

Funding: This research was supported by the Asian Development Bank under the ADB-JSP scholarship program in Japan.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: Interview data are available upon request.

REFERENCES

- 1) Ackerson, L. K., Kawachi, I., Barbeau, E. M., & Subramanian, S. V. (2008). Effects of Individual and Proximate Educational Context on Intimate Partner Violence: A Population-Based Study of Women in India. *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(3), 507–514. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2007.113738>
- 2) Adams, W. C. (2015). Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews. In *Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation* (pp. 492–505). John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>
- 3) Ahmed, H., & Tabassum, F. (2022). Patriarchal Norms and the Experiences of Intimate Partner Violence of the Women: A Qualitative Case Study in Sylhet, Bangladesh. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363455970_Patriarchal_Norms_and_the_Experiences_of_Intimate_Partner_Violence_of_the_Women_A_Qualitative_Case_Study_in_Sylhet_Bangladesh
- 4) Asadullah, M. N., & Wahhaj, Z. (2017). Missing from the Market: Purdah Norm and Women's Paid Work Participation in Bangladesh. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2895311>
- 5) Bakchi, J., Kundu, S., Ghosh, S., & Akter, S. (2020). Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh: A Scoping Review. *Bangladesh Journal of Bioethics*, 9(3), 15–27. <https://doi.org/10.3329/bioethics.v9i3.48913>
- 6) Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Prentice Hall.
- 7) Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2016). Report on Bangladesh Violence Against Women Survey 2015 [Government report]. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/2015-report-bangladesh-violence-against-women-survey>
- 8) Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. (2018, January 19). 2015 Report on Bangladesh Violence Against Women Survey. UNFPA Asiapacific. <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/en/publications/2015-report-bangladesh-violence-against-women-survey>
- 9) Bates, L. M., Schuler, S. R., Islam, F., & Islam, K. (2004). Socioeconomic factors and processes associated with domestic violence in rural Bangladesh. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 30(4), 190–199. <https://doi.org/10.1363/3019004>
- 10) BDHS. (2022). Bangladesh DHS, 2022—Final Report (English). <https://www.dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-fr386-dhs-final-reports.cfm>
- 11) Bhuiya, A., Sharmin, T., & Hanifi, S. M. A. (2003). Nature of domestic violence against women in a rural area of Bangladesh: Implication for preventive interventions. *Journal of Health, Population, and Nutrition*, 21(1), 48–54.
- 12) Black, D. S., Sussman, S., & Unger, J. B. (2010). A Further Look at the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence: Witnessing Interparental Violence in Emerging Adulthood. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25(6), 1022–1042. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260509340539>
- 13) Brackett, M., & Downing, K. S. (2017). Criminalization of Violence against Women and Laws against Domestic Violence: A Comparative Study of the United States and South Asia (Pakistan and Bangladesh). https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-50750-1_11
- 14) Braun, V., Clarke, V., Hayfield, N., & Terry, G. (2019). Thematic Analysis. *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*, 843–860. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_103
- 15) Breiding, M., Basile, K. C., Smith, S. G., Black, M. C., & Mahendra, Reshma R. (2015). Intimate partner violence surveillance: uniform definitions and recommended data elements. Version 2.0. Cdc.gov. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/31292>
- 16) BSS News. (2024). 7+ functional literacy rate increases to 77.9pc: BBS | News. BSS. <https://www.bssnews.net/news/180472>
- 17) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, May 16). About Intimate Partner Violence. Intimate Partner Violence Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/intimate-partner-violence/about/index.html>
- 18) Chan, A., Ahmed, A., & Nelson, B. S. (2015). The Impact of Family and Demographic Factors on Intergenerational Transmission of Violence. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277137438_The_Impact_of_Family_and_Demographic_Factors_on_Intergenerational_Transmission_of_Violence
- 19) Daibes, M., & Safadi, R. (2022). Torn Between the Real Me and the Social Me: Educated Women's Perspectives of Surviving Marital Abuse. *The Qualitative Report*. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2023.5692>
- 20) Dalal, K., RAHMAN, F., & Jansson, B. (2009). Wife Abuse in Rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 41(5), 561–

573. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021932009990046>
- 21) Deosthali, P.-B., Rege, S., & Arora, S. (2022). Women's experiences of marital rape and sexual violence within marriage in India: Evidence from service records. *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters*, 29(2), 2048455. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2022.2048455>
- 22) Dhaka Tribune. (2023). Report: Bangladesh leading South Asia in achieving gender parity.
- 23) Dhaka Tribune. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/285592/report-bangladesh-leading-south-asia-in-achieving>
- 24) El-Etreby, R. R., Hamed, W. E., Abdelhay, E. S., & Kamel, N. A. (2024). Nursing students' attitudes toward intimate partner violence and its relationship with self-esteem and self-efficacy. *BMC Nursing*, 23(1), 210. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-024-01868-2>
- 25) Esie, P., Osypuk, T. L., Schuler, S. R., & Bates, L. M. (2019). Intimate partner violence and depression in rural Bangladesh: Accounting for violence severity in a high prevalence setting. *SSM - Population Health*, 7, 100368. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100368>
- 26) European Institute for Gender Equality. (2023). Understanding psychological violence against women: The need for harmonised definitions and data in the EU. Retrieved from <https://eige.europa.eu/publications-resources/publications/understanding-psychological-violence-against-women-need-harmonised-definitions-and-data-eu>
- 27) Giorgi, A. (1985). *Phenomenology and Psychological Research*. Duquesne University Press. Government of Canada, R. C. M. P. (2019, March 21). Intimate partner violence and abuse | Royal Canadian Mounted Police. <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/relationship-violence/intimate-partner-violence-and-abuse>
- 28) Hardesty, J. L., Haselschwerdt, M. L., & Crossman, K. A. (2019). Qualitative Research on Interpersonal Violence: Guidance for Early Career Scholars. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(23–24), 4794–4816. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519871532>
- 29) Hasan, M. M., Sakib, S. M. N., & Khan, T. (2023). Factors Affecting the Violence Against Women: Evidence from Rural Bangladesh. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4486929>
- 30) Howlader, S., Rahman, M. A., & Rahman, M. M. (2023). Continuation of education after marriage and its associated factors among young adult women: Findings from the Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2017–2018. *BMJ Open*, 13(11), e078892. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2023-078892>
- 31) Islam, M., Ahmed, Md. S., & Mistry, S. K. (2021). Factors associated with women's approval on intimate partner violence in Bangladesh: A cross-sectional analysis of latest demographic and health survey 2017–18. *Heliyon*, 7(12), e08582. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e08582>
- 32) Jesmin, S. S. (2015). Married Women's Justification of Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh: Examining Community Norm and Individual-Level Risk Factors. *Violence and Victims*, 30(6), 984–1003. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.vv-d-14-00066>
- Johnston, H. B., & Naved, R. T. (2008). Spousal Violence in Bangladesh: A Call for a
- 33) Public-health Response. *Journal of Health, Population, and Nutrition*, 26(3), 366–377. Kabir, R. (2017). Higher Education of Women and Its Role in the Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence. Georgetown University Library. <https://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/1043989>
- 34) Kandiyoti, D. (1988). Bargaining with Patriarchy. *Gender and Society*, 2(3), 274–290.
- 35) Karim, R., Rahman, S., Rahman, H., Habib, T. Z., Arefin, S., & Swahnberg, K. (2021). Does childhood experience of family victimization influence adulthood refusal of wife abuse? Evidence from rural Bangladesh. *PLOS ONE*, 16(6), e0252600. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252600>
- 36) Khan, M. N. (2023, July 11). We need to transform social norms for gender equality. *The Daily Star*. <https://www.thedailystar.net/opinion/views/news/we-need-transform-social-norms-gender-equality-3365581>
- 37) Khar, A. (2017). The Role of Female Education on Intimate Partner Violence in Households of Pakistan. Georgetown University-Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.
- 38) Koenig, M. A., Ahmed, S., Hossain, M. B., & Mozumder, A. B. M. K. A. (2003). Women's status and domestic violence in rural Bangladesh: Individual- and community-level effects. *Demography*, 40(2), 269–288. <https://doi.org/10.1353/dem.2003.0014>
- 39) Lacey, K. K., McPherson, M. D., Samuel, P. S., Powell Sears, K., & Head, D. (2013). The Impact of Different Types of Intimate Partner Violence on the Mental and Physical Health of Women in Different Ethnic Groups. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(2), 359–385. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260512454743>
- 40) Marium, S. (2014). Women's Level of Education and Its Effect on Domestic Violence in Rural Bangladesh. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 19(5), 40–45. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-19534045>
- 41) Mbilinyi, L. F., Logan-Greene, P. B., Neighbors, C., Walker, D. D., Roffman, R. A., & Zegree, J. (2012). Childhood Domestic Violence Exposure among a Community Sample of Adult Perpetrators: What Mediates the Connection? *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 21(2), 171–187. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2012.639203>
- 42) Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. (2010). Bangladesh: Act No. 58 of 2010, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

- Protection) Act. <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2010/en/122775>
- 43) Murshid, N. S., Akincigil, A., & Zippay, A. (2016). Microfinance Participation and Domestic Violence in Bangladesh: Results From a Nationally Representative Survey. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31(9), 1579–1596. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260515569065>
 - 44) Nabaggala, M. S., Reddy, T., & Manda, S. (2021). Effects of rural–urban residence and education on intimate partner violence among women in Sub-Saharan Africa: A meta-analysis of health survey data. *BMC Women's Health*, 21(1), 149. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-021-01286-5>
 - 45) Naved, R. T., Azim, S., Bhuiya, A., & Persson, L. A. (2006). Physical violence by husbands: Magnitude, disclosure and help-seeking behavior of women in Bangladesh. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 62(12), 2917–2929. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2005.12.001>
 - 46) Naved, R., Samuels, F., Gupta, T., Talukder, A., Masson, V., & Yount, K. (2017). Understanding intimate partner violence in Bangladesh through a male lens. Overseas Development Institute. <https://media.odi.org/documents/11397.pdf>
 - 47) Naved, R. T., Samuels, F., Masson, V. L., Talukder, A., Gupta, T., & Yount, K. M. (2017). Understanding intimate partner violence in rural Bangladesh. Overseas Development Institute. <http://cdn-odi-production.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/11517.pdf>
 - 48) Omar Faruk, M., P. Sahni, S., & Ferdinand Kirchhoff, G. (2020). Absence of Respect and Recognition of Victims in the Criminal Justice System in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Emerging Trends in Social Sciences*, 8(2), 51–56. <https://doi.org/10.20448/2001.82.51.56>
 - 49) Page, N., & Czuba, C. E. (1999). Empowerment: What is it? *The Journal of Extension*, 37(5). <https://archives.joe.org/joe/1999october/comm1.php>
 - 50) Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. SAGE Publications.
 - 51) Pollak, R. A. (2004). An Intergenerational Model of Domestic Violence. *Journal of Population Economics*, 17(2), 311–329.
 - 52) Prothom Alo. (2021, March 12). Bangladesh ranks 4th in violence against women by intimate partner. Prothomalo. <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/bangladesh-ranks-4th-in-violence-against-women-by-intimate-partner>
 - 53) Rahman, F., & Sakib, A. B. M. N. (2022). The Normalization of Domestic Violence in Bangladesh: Analysing through the Lens of Social Learning Theory. *Social Science Review*, 39(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.3329/ssr.v39i1.64917>
 - 54) Rahman, K. F. (2019). Focus on Domestic Violence in Bangladesh: A Study from Criminological Perspectives. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 20(3), 98–115.
 - 55) Samuels, F., Le Masson, V., & Gupta, T. (2019). One Step Forwards half a Step Backwards: Changing Patterns of Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh. *Journal of Family Violence*, 34(2), 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-018-0003-3>
 - 56) Sanawar, S. B., Islam, M. A., Majumder, S., & Misu, F. (2019). Women's Empowerment and Intimate Partner Violence in Bangladesh: Investigating the Complex Relationship. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 51(2), 188–202. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021932018000068>
 - 57) Schuler, S. R., & Islam, F. (2008). Women's Acceptance of Intimate Partner Violence within Marriage in Rural Bangladesh. *Studies in Family Planning*, 39(1), 49–58.
 - 58) Schuler, S. R., Lenzi, R., & Yount, K. M. (2011). Justification of Intimate Partner Violence in Rural Bangladesh: What Survey Questions Fail to Capture. *Studies in Family Planning*, 42(1), 21–28.
 - 59) Schuler, S. R., Lenzi, R., Nazneen, S., & Bates, L. M. (2013). Is women's empowerment contributing to a decline in intimate partner violence against women in Bangladesh? Evidence from a qualitative study. *Studies in Family Planning*, 44(3), 10.1111/j.1728. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4465.2013.00356.x>
 - 60) Schuler, S. R., & Nazneen, S. (2018). Does Intimate Partner Violence Decline as Women's Empowerment becomes Normative? Perspectives of Bangladeshi Women. *World Development*, 101, 284–292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.09.005>
 - 61) Sen, T. (2024). Key Economic and Social Determinants in Bangladesh: A Multi-Faceted Analysis Munich Personal REPEC Archive. MPRA Paper, 121227. <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/121227/>
 - 62) Shaghaghi, A., Bhopal, R. S., & Sheikh, A. (2011). Approaches to Recruiting 'Hard-To-Reach' Populations into Re-search: A Review of the Literature. *Health Promotion Perspectives*, 1(2), 86–94. <https://doi.org/10.5681/hpp.2011.009>
 - 63) Shakoor, S., Theobald, D., & Farrington, D. P. (2022). Intergenerational Continuity of Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: An Investigation of Possible Mechanisms. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(7–8), NP5208–NP5227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520959629>
 - 64) Shields, M., Tonmyr, L., Hovdestad, W. E., Gonzalez, A., & MacMillan, H. (2020). Exposure to family violence from childhood to adulthood. *BMC Public Health*, 20(1), 1673. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-09709-y>
 - 65) Soni, M. S. M., Akter, S., Ireen, S., Sultana, R., Begum, M., & Parvin, S. (2023). A Comparative Study of Women's Perceptions towards Wife Beating in Bangladesh: Based on Two Cross-Sectional Studies Research. *Jagannath University Journal of Science*, 10(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.3329/jnujs.v10i1.71153>

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

- 66) Stake, S., Ahmed, S., Tol, W., Ahmed, S., Begum, N., Khanam, R., Harrison, M., & Baqui, A. H. (2020). Prevalence, associated factors, and disclosure of intimate partner violence among mothers in rural Bangladesh. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 39 (1),14. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41043-020-00223-w>
- 67) Stith, S. M., Rosen, K. H., Middleton, K. A., Busch, A. L., Lundeberg, K., & Carlton, R. P. (2000). The intergenerational transmission of spouse abuse: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62(3), 640–654. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00640.x>
- 68) Sugarman, J., & Hertweck, S. P. (2022). *Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficking, and Rape*. In *Clinical Protocols in Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology* (2nd ed.). CRC Press.
- 69) Sultana, A. (2011). *Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A theoretical analysis*.
- 70) Thomas, P. (2020). *Intimate Partner Violence Amongst Women In The South Asian Diaspora*. *Health Research Methodology*.
- 71) Thompson, M. J., Hackney, K., Crawford, W., Bonner, J. M., & Carlson, D. S. (2023). Partner psychological abuse: Can you leave home at work? *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 96(2), 457–472. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joop.12427>
- 72) Tran, L. M., Nguyen, P. H., Naved, R. T., & Menon, P. (2020). Intimate partner violence is associated with poorer maternal mental health and breastfeeding practices in Bangladesh. *Health Policy and Planning*, 35(Supplement_1), i19–i29. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapol/czaa106>
- UN. (2012). *UNECE Discussion Paper 2012.1*. 2012.UNDP, B. (2023). *GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY*. UNDP.<https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/publications/gender-equality-strategy>
- 73) UNDP Bangladesh. (2023). Over 99 percent of Bangladeshis hold at least one bias against women. UNDP. <https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/blog/over-99-percent-bangladeshis-hold-least-one-bias-against-women>
- 74) United Nation. (2015). *Empowerment: What does it mean to you?* Department of Economic and Social Affairs Poverty. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/socialperspectiveondevelopment/2015/08/25/empowerment-what-does-it-mean-to-you/>
- 75) United Nation, B. (2024). *Gender Equality Brief: Bangladesh 2024*. UN Women – Asia-Pacific. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2024/04/gender-equality-brief-bangladesh-2024>
- 76) United Nations. (2000). *Violence against Women in South Asia*. Subregional Expert Group Meeting on Eliminating Violence against Women in South Asia (1997 : Dhaka). <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/449184>
- 77) University World News. (2024). Slow growth of female HE enrolment puts SDG target at risk.
- 78) University World News.<https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20240415174547846>
- 79) Usta, J., & Shatila, A. (2023). *Intimate Partner Violence and Health: Can Resilience Mitigate the Effect?* Retrieved January 9, 2025, from https://lebanon.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/intimate_partner_violence_and_health.pdf
- 80) Varikuti, G. (2020). *A Monograph on Women Sexual Abuse*. *Journal of Women's Health Care and Management*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.47275/2692-0948-105>
- 81) Wahed, T., & Bhuiya, A. (2007). Battered bodies & shattered minds: Violence against women in Bangladesh. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 126(4), 341–354.
- 82) Wikipedia Contributors. (2024, December 23). *Bangladeshi nationality law*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangladeshi_nationality_law
- 83) Wong, L. (2008). *Data Analysis in Qualitative Research: A Brief Guide to Using Nvivo*. *Malaysian Family Physician*. The Official Journal of the Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia, 3(1), 14–20.
- 84) World Bank. (2019). *Girls' education in Bangladesh: A promising journey*. World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/endpovertyinsouthasia/girls-education-bangladesh-promising-journey>
- 85) World Health Organization. (2012). *Understanding and addressing violence against women: Overview*. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/WHO-RHR-12.35>
- 86) World Health Organization. (2021). *Violence against women prevalence estimates, 2018: Global, regional and national prevalence estimates for intimate partner violence against women and global and regional prevalence estimates for non-partner sexual violence against women*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>
- 87) World Health Organization. (2022). *Violence Info – Intimate partner violence*. <http://apps.who.int/violence-info/intimate-partner-violenceAppendices>

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questionnaire

1. Can you tell me your age, education level, and what kind of work you do?
2. How long have you been married?
3. Do you have children?

A Study on The Reasons Behind IPV Tolerance Among Educated Women in Bangladesh

4. Have you experienced any kind of abusive behaviour in your marriage like physical, emotional, or sexual harm (slap, hit, control, pressure etc)?
5. How do you manage everything when these things happen?
6. Do you ever find yourself thinking this kind of behavior is okay? If so, why?
7. What does "equal rights for men and women" mean to you?
8. How do you handle knowing about equal rights and dealing with abusive behavior from your husband?
9. How has your education shaped your thoughts on abusive behavior in marriage?
10. Do you feel your education helps you deal with or stop this kind of behavior? Why or why not?
11. What are the usual beliefs and expectations about marriage and gender roles in your community?
12. How do these traditional roles affect your marriage?
13. Do you think these roles make it more acceptable to hurt someone in marriage? How?
14. Did you see or experience any kind of abusive behavior in your family when you were a child?
15. Have you seen any kind of abusive behavior around you (like in your family, community, or workplace)?
16. Do you think seeing this kind of behavior as a child affects your experiences now?
17. What changes do you think are needed to reduce abusive behavior in marriages?
18. Is there anything else you want to share about your experiences or thoughts on this topic?

APPENDIX 2

Agreement for the Interview:

All participants have been informed of the statements listed below, and they were required to confirm their agreement by responding 'YES' in order to be eligible for the interview.

1. I acknowledge that my participation in this research is voluntary and that I have the right to refuse participation or withdraw at any time without consequence.
2. I confirm that I have been provided with information regarding the research, including its description, potential risks and benefits, and confidentiality measures.
3. I understand that I can ask questions before, during, or after the interview.
4. I am aware of my right to decline to answer any interview questions or to terminate the interview at any point. If I choose to end the interview, the collected information will not be used, and any data acquired will be promptly destroyed.

Do you agree with all the information above: [Yes/হ্যাঁ]?



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.