

**CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WIFE- BATTERING,
BASED ON PATIENTS REPORTED TO
TEACHING HOSPITAL KARAPITIYA
FROM 2006 TO 2007**



By

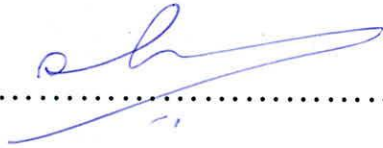
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“The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Senior Lecturers Mrs. A. Buddhadasa and Mr. M.W. Jayasundara and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institution for another Degree or Diploma”.

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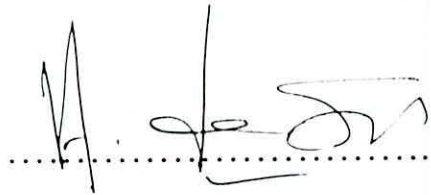
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of tables	v
List of figures	vi
Acknowledgment	vii
Abstract	viii
CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Wife battering – Introduction	02
1.2. Definitions of wife battering	04
1.3. Legal aspects	07
1.4. Global situation	09
1.5. Justification of the study	11
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW	
2.1. Social learning theory	16
2.2. Social situation/ stress and coping theory	17
2.3. General systems theory	18
2.4. The resource theory of family violence	18
2.5. Exchange/ social control theory	20
2.6. The patriarchy theory	20
2.7. Role conflict theory	21
2.8. Psychological theories	22
2.9. Associated factors of wife battering	25
2.9.1. Alcohol and drug abuse	25
2.9.2. Level of education	26

CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

3.1. Problem statement	28
3.2. Research objectives	33
3.3. Basic research questions	34
3.4. Sample	34
3.5. Sources of data and data collection	35
3.6. Data analysis	36
3.7. Ethical considerations	37
3.8. Possible errors in this study and how they were overcome	37
3.9. Limitations of the study	38

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

4.1. Demographic characteristics of victim and husbands	40
4.1.1. Age distribution of victims	40
4.1.2. Age distribution of husbands	41
4.1.3. Relationship between the age of the victim and the age of the husband.	42
4.1.4. Marital status	42
4.1.5. Occupation	43
4.1.6. Socio –economic status	45
4.1.7. Level of education	46
4.1.8. Residential area	47
4.1.9. Number of children	48
4.1.10. Nuclear or extended families	48

4.1.11. Ethnic group	48
4.2. Time of the incident	49
4.3. Place of the incident	50
4.4. Other characteristics of the victim that might have led to wife battering.	50
4.5. Other characteristics of the husband that might have led to wife battering	51
4.6. Characteristics of incidents	51
4.7. Assaults by wives on husbands	56
4.8. Effects of wife battering on wife and children	57
4.9. Re-interview of victims after 6 months of the incident	58
4.10. Impact of the Police complaint	58

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION

5.1. Incidence of wife battering	62
5.2. Place of the incident	64
5.3. Time of the incident	65
5.4. Number of incidents	66
5.5. Factors associated with wife battering	66
5.5.1. Wife battering and individual factors	67
5.5.2. Wife battering and Relationship factors	75
5.5.3. Wife battering and social factors	77
5.5.4. Culture and wife battering	84
5.6. Methods of wife battering	85
5.6.1. Psychological abuse	85
5.6.2. Physical abuse	87
5.6.3. Sexual abuse	90

5.7. Consequences of wife battering	91
5.7.1. The impact on the Children	92
5.7.2. Impacts on women	94
5.8. Management of wife battering	110
5.8.1. Awareness creation	110
5.8.2. Judiciary	113
5.8.3. Law enforcement	119
5.8.4. Support services	121
5.8.5. Management of risk and protective factors of wife battering	122
5.8.6. Deterrence for husbands	125
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
6.1. Conclusions	129
6.2. Recommendations to reduce the incidence of wife battering	136
6.2.1. Capacity building of law enforcement officers	136
6.2.2. Special training of health personnel	137
6.2.3. Raising the awareness	138
6.2.4. Establishment of victim support services	139
6.2.5. Legal reforms and Stream lining of the policy making	140
6.2.6. Maintaining data bases	141
6.2.7. Other areas that should be addressed	142
6.2.8. Suggestions for future research	145
REFERENCES	147

APPENDICES	175
8.1. The offences contained under chapter XVI of the Penal Code of Sri Lanka	175
8.2. Consent forms	176
8.3. Questionnaire – for victims	178
8.4. Questionnaire – for husbands	180
8.5. Letter of authority of Director THK	182
8.6. Letter of ethical clearance	183
8.7. Diagram form- documentation of injuries and scars.	184
8.8. Photographs	185

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Age distribution of victims	40
Table 4.2	Age distribution of husbands	41
Table 4.3	Victim's occupation	43
Table 4.4	Husband's occupation	44
Table 4.5	Socio-economic status of the family	45
Table 4.6	Level of education of victims	46
Table 4.7	Level of education of husbands	47
Table 4.8	Number of children	48
Table 4.9	Time of the incident	49
Table 4.10	Place of the incident	50
Table 4.11	Number of incidents	51
Table 4.12	Type/ Types of assault	53
Table 4.13	Distribution of injuries	55

Table 4.14	Minor injuries	55
Table 4.15	Incidence of other significant injuries	56
Table 4.16	Type of assault on husbands by wives	57
Table 4.17	Impact of the police complaint	60

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 2.1	Cycle Theory of Violence	24
Fig. 4.2	Relationship between the age of the wife and the age of the husband	42

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MUDITHA VIDANAPATHIRANA

ABSTRACT

Wife battering is a type of domestic violence. In Sri Lanka, it is probably quite common, but not so openly discussed or reported. This research study is concerned with the problem of wife battering in Sri Lanka. Wife battering is a serious problem that was not been properly studied from a criminological point of view in Sri Lanka. Studies that have been conducted so far have concentrated on the demographic characteristics of victims and perpetrators and the nature of incidents. They have not conducted in-depth studies. Therefore, the study was designed to understand this problem in depth. Current study applies to a criminological perspective. Theories of wife battering were reviewed and applied in this study for the analysis of data. Thirty two victims of wife battering who were referred to the Department of Forensic Medicine for medico-legal investigations from 1st of November 2006 to 31st of October 2007 have been included. Clinical case studies, questionnaires and interviews were used. Examinations were conducted at the female wards of the Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya after obtaining informed written consent from each victim. After the first round of interviews victims were re-interviewed after 6 months.

Their husbands were also interviewed. Data were analyzed to understand the relationships between various variables and relevant characteristics.

Seventy eight percent of wife battering occur in lower socio-economic group and among urban families. It usually occurred at home between 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Seventy six percent of victims were young and were below the 39 years. Fifty three percent had faced more than 10 incidents. All had been psychologically and verbally abused. Hundred percent had been punched, 62% kicked and 38% assaulted with some kind of weapon. Twenty two percent had injuries such as black eyes, 19% tram line contusions, 9% slap marks etc. Some children of those families turned violent and some were not attending school. The common age of the perpetrator was 30-39 years. Usually husbands were alcoholics. It was not clear as to whom the instigator of the action that led to wife battering. Commonly used weapons were hands, feet, clubs, broomsticks and firewood. Commonly affected areas were head, upper limbs, lower limbs and neck. Commonest significant injury was black eye.

The findings of this study revealed a triangular relationship of wife battering, alcohol abuse and child abuse. Breaking of this triangle by prevention of alcohol abuse would be an effective management tool of wife battering in high risk families. Re-interview of the victims after 6 months helped to ascertain the impact of the police, judiciary, mediation boards and family counselling for solving the problems of wife battering. None of the women had been victimized after the settlement reached at the Magistrate Courts, mediation boards and family counsellor. Therefore, it is concluded that making complaints to the police and the referring such cases to magistrate courts, mediation boards and family counsellor is an effective way of dealing with the problem of wife battering.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Wife battering – Introduction	02
1.2. Definitions of wife battering	04
1.3. Legal aspects	07
1.4. Global situation	09
1.5. Justification of the study	11

1.1. Wife battering – Introduction

Wife battering is a common occurrence in the society. It cuts across racial, ethnic, religious, educational and socioeconomic strata. What is reported to the law enforcement authorities is only the tip of the iceberg. In order to fully understand the terminology we have to dwell on certain other related terms such as family violence, domestic violence etc. “In the 1960s and 1970s various organizations, fighting for the rights of women and children, exposed the harm that resulted from physical, sexual and psychological abuse at home. They demanded public action. Psychologists, physicians, anthropologists and social scientists, among others, increasingly focused their attention on the various factors that enter into episodes of domestic violence. Within 3 decades, family violence, the well kept secret, has come to be recognized as a major social problem” (Adler, Muller and Laufer, 1995 pp 239-240). According to Small (1985), wife battering constitutes the largest proportion of family violence – almost 76%.

Now, the domestic abuse (DA), family violence (FV), domestic violence (DV), intimate partner violence (IPV), gender based violence (GBV), violence against women (VAW) or wife battering (WB) are being discussed as a major criminological issue.

Domestic abuse occurs when one person in an intimate relationship or in marriage tries to dominate and control the other person. In the majority of instances, the abuser is the husband. He uses fear, guilt, shame and intimidation to wear the spouse down and gain complete control over her. He may threaten her, hurt her or hurt those dear to her (Davis *et al.*, 2007).