

An Observational Assessment of the Unnatural Female Fatalities and Association of the Role of Socioeconomic Circumstances and Violence**Rohan Kumar¹, Suchita Kumari², Hasnain Hussain³, Alok Pritam⁴**¹Assistant Professor, Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Lord Buddha Koshi Medical College and Hospital Saharsa, Bihar, India²Tutor, Department of Physiology, Jan Nayak Karpuri Thakur Medical College and Hospital Madhepura, Bihar, India³Assistant Professor Department of Pediatrics, Lord Buddha Koshi Medical College and Hospital Saharsa, Bihar, India⁴Statistician cum tutor, Department of Community Medicine, Lord Buddha Koshi Medical College and Hospital Saharsa, Bihar, India

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Abstract**Aim:** The aim of the present study was to investigate unnatural female fatalities, causes of unnatural deaths and the role of socioeconomic circumstances and violence against women.**Methods:** A retrospective study was conducted in the Department of Forensic Medicine and toxicology in association with Sadar Hospital, Saharsa for the period of one year. Total 100 cases of unnatural deaths referred for autopsy were evaluated in the present study. Only female's cases of children's and adolescents with the age group of 5 to 20 years were enrolled in the present study. The approval of the institutional ethics committee was taken before starting the study.**Results:** Majority of the participants belonged to 5-10 years (50%) followed by 10-15 years (30%). 49% cases had accidental deaths followed by 23% suicide. 30% road accidents, 15% drowning, 12% poisoning were the leading causes.**Conclusion:** Majority of the victims of 'unnatural deaths belonged to the lower socioeconomic category. Suggestions relating to road safety, decreasing the stress of the modern mechanical life-style, educating the public in general and regarding. The availability, use and storage of poisonous substances in particular have been put forward, while highlighting the social evil of dowry system prevailing in India.**Keywords:** Death, Accident, Traffic.

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Introduction

India is the fourth most dangerous country for females, as per a gender poll that gauged awareness of threats ranging from domestic abuse and economic discrimination to foeticide and other crimes against females. The review was carried out by the UK-based Thompson Reuters Foundation.[1] Death is unnatural when caused prematurely against the order of nature by injury, position or other means of violence.[2] In India there is noticeable increase in unnatural death of female. National Crime Record Bureau, India reports have shown gradual increase in unnatural female death in India from 1967 to 2011. Although the cases of unnatural death excluding homicide of male were more as compare to female, but it is observed that females constitute higher percentage (66.4%) fire related deaths in 2011, much more than male which itself is a big issue.[3] Crime Rate Analysis against woman in India shows clearly sharp increase in crime rate,

8.8% in 2007 and 9.4% in 2011, which is a serious matter from safety and security point of Indian woman. These are mainly due to increase number of dowry deaths, torture to women, sexual offences.[4] Some female fall prey even before they are born, when expectant parents abort their daughters, hoping for son instead. Dowry might have started as an innocent custom, a symbol of love from parents to their daughters on the eve of her marriage. The purpose of this practice was probably meant to help new couples start their life in comfort. But it has, in recent years, grown into a social evil with many instances of bride burning and suicides. These are symptoms of social corruption.[5]

Suicide is defined as 'the human act of self-inflicting one's own life cessation' (Shneidman 1985). Due to complex medicolegal associations and stigma, suicide has always been concealed in Indian society,

severely underreported and misclassified in official reports.[6] The WHO (2002b) defines violence as ‘the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation’. The types of violence are broadly classified as self-directed violence (deliberate self-harm or suicide), interpersonal violence (family and intimate partner violence and communal violence) and collective violence (social, political and economic violence). The nature of violent acts could be physical, sexual, psychological and involving deprivation or neglect. In 2000, an estimated 1.6 million people died as a result of violence globally, with an age adjusted rate of 29/100,000 population. Half of these were suicides, one-third homicides and one-fifth war related deaths.[7]

The aim of the present study was to investigate unnatural female fatalities, causes of unnatural

deaths and the role of socioeconomic circumstances and violence against women.

Materials and Methods

A retrospective study was conducted in the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Lord Buddha Koshi Medical College and Hospital Saharsa, Bihar, India in association with Sadar Hospital, Saharsa, Bihar India for the period of one year. Total 100 cases of unnatural deaths referred for autopsy were evaluated in the present study. Only female’s cases of children’s and adolescents with the age group of 5 to 20 years were enrolled in the present study. The approval of the institutional ethics committee was taken before starting the study.

Inclusion criteria: cases of the unnatural deaths

Exclusion criteria: severely decomposed and exhumed bodies

Results:

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age	Number of Cases	Percentage of Cases
5 – 10 years	50	50
10 – 15 years	30	30
15 – 20 years	20	20
Total	100	100%

Majority of the participants belonged to 5-10 years (50%) followed by 10-15 years (30%).

Table 2: Modes of Death

Modes	Number of Cases	Percentage of Cases
Accidental	49	49
Homicide	21	21
Suicide	23	23
Not Determined	7	7
Total	100	100%

49% cases had accidental deaths followed by 23% suicide.

Table 3: Leading Causes

Causes	Number of Cases	Percentage of Cases
Road Accident	30	30
Burn	10	10
Hanging	8	8
Drowning	15	15
Fall from Height	6	6
Poisoning	12	12
Stabbing	4	4
Electric Hazard	10	10
Suffocation	5	5
Total	100	100%

30% road accidents, 15% drowning, 12% poisoning were the leading causes.

Discussion

Death is a compulsive phenomenon in any living objects, where there is life there is death. In the present study, we made an attempt to analyse the scenario of unnatural deaths among female children’s and adolescents.

In comparison with total number of post- mortems conducted in modern mortuary at Government General Hospital few cases of post- mortems done

for teenage group, it shows medico legal teenage death rate was very less in comparison with other age group. They have only few problems and few tensions, if compare with other age groups. If compare the data of teenage deaths in this study with teenage deaths data collected by Information Centre United States of America.[8] So much variation is noted in manner of deaths in both countries. In case of accidental deaths, an approximate similarity was

observed between these two studies. Teenage accidental deaths in this present study group were little high (54.34%) than USA teen accidental deaths (51.67%). There at USA precautionary and preventive measures are more in their work sites or in journeys.

A study conducted by Gonnade U et.al at Maharashtra reported that around 73 percent of burns cases were female. Out of the 88.75 percent married victims three fourth (75%) were females.[9] The present study showed that 100% burns victims were female and half of them were married. In accordance to the study carried out by Kitulwatte I D et.al at a teaching hospital in Sri Lanka the present study also revealed that the suicidal death was more common in higher age group.[10] Meel B L carried out a study between 1996 and 2004 at Umata General Hospital (UGH) reviewing medico-legal autopsies of subjects aged 18 years or below and reported that trauma accounted for 70.9% deaths and 29.1% deaths were due to other causes such as hanging, burns, lightning stroke, drowning, gas suffocation, falls from a height and poisoning.[11]

According to teenage accidents, in latter teenage phase gradual increase of exposure to outer world, journeys to different places, employment opportunities, all these factors leads to adverse effects on teenagers, so that accidental deaths were more. Both well. P.W., Aberd. M.B[12] described the incidence of fractures to the lower limbs in motor-cycle accidents was higher than in other types of accidents. A great reduction of accidents can be effected by preliminary training and supervision. At one firm, for instance, all boys applying for employment were carefully selected, and the boys were passed through the works school where their attention was focused on tidiness, suitable clothing, machines and their dangers, adjustment of guards, shafting and its dangers, etc. A fundamental lesson emerging from this study is that estimates of child mortality from unnatural causes may tell only a small part of the relevant story: morbidity must also be considered. Understanding child death is critical, but more crucial is the recognition that, when these deaths are the result of injury or violence, the impact has a far greater reach, transcending the individual, family, and society at large. Therefore, it is important to analyse the causes of such unnatural deaths to plan preventive strategies appropriate for the region.

Conclusion

Majority of the victims of 'unnatural deaths belonged to the lower socioeconomic category. Suggestions relating to road safety, decreasing the stress of the modern mechanical life-style, educating the public in general and regarding. The availability, use and storage of poisonous substances in particular have been put forward, while highlighting the social evil of dowry system prevailing in India.

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