

# **Exploring Domestic Violence in India: A Comprehensive Analysis of Marital Violence and Women's Perspectives**

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## **Introduction**

Violence against women has become a global epidemic, wreaking havoc on women's physical, psychological, sexual, and economic lives. This breaches human rights and impacts the status of women in the household and society. A significant component of violence against women is domestic violence, also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, or intimate partner violence, which can be of any form, i.e., physical, emotional, sexual, etc. This domestic abuse is generally committed by a family member or, in most cases, by the spouse. According to National Crime Record Bureau India, crime against women increased by 20% in 2021 over 2020. Most cases were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives' (31.8%). Similarly, a study by Sahoo and Pradhan (2007) found that not only is domestic violence widespread in India but also the acceptance of justifying wife beating in some situations by ever-married women.

## **Objectives**

This study focuses on understanding the type of violence married women face in India and their perception of spousal violence. The study is divided into focused objectives:

- i. To study the perception of domestic violence or wife beating among married women in India and its different regions.
- ii. To examine the categories of domestic violence faced by married women in India.
- iii. To compare the prevalence and perception of domestic violence among women from different backgrounds in India.
- iv. Association of various backgrounds on domestic violence and its perception among married women.

## **Data and Methodology**

The data used for the study has been taken from the National Family Health Survey of India, 5<sup>th</sup> round (2019 – 2020). We accounted for the possible types of DV and the various scenarios

where women have agreed to justify wife-beating by husbands among married women aged 15- 49 years in India. Outcome variables taken up in the study are (i). Three principal domestic violence outcome variables are physical violence (divided into less severe and severe), emotional violence, and sexual violence. In addition, another variable, i.e., any form of domestic violence, was also derived. If at least one of the four forms of domestic violence (physical and/or emotional and/or sexual) was present, it was considered as the presence of any form of domestic violence, similarly, for (ii). Perception, seven variables were considered: unfaithful, disrespectful, neglecting the children, going out without telling, arguing, refusing sex, and burning food.

Assessing the objectives is done through the choice of appropriate instruments. Data were analyzed using STATA (15.0 version). Bivariate analyses were used to determine the prevalence and correlation coefficient to see the relation between perception and experience of domestic violence. Multivariate Logistic Regression was carried out to study the association between experience of domestic violence (dependent variable), perception of domestic violence (dependent variable), and demographic characteristics (independent variables) such as age, education, place of residence, wealth status, and exposure to mass media.

### **Expected Findings**

In India, the perception of married women on domestic violence in certain situations tells that almost 48% of women agree on wife beating when she is unfaithful, disrespectful, neglects the children, goes out without telling, argues, refuses sex, and burns food. Most married women agree that wife beating is justified if the woman is disrespectful towards her husband (30.5%) and neglects the children (25.7%). Married women agreeing on justifying wife beating is seen highest in the southern region with 78%. Similarly, it is observed that 23.8% of married women in India experience violence. Among the four emotional, sexual, severe, and less severe physical violence, married women face less severe physical violence (28%) and emotional violence (13.15%) the most. The southern region of India records the most experience of emotional and physical violence among married women.

Comparing the perception of domestic violence and experiencing domestic violence shows that age and place of residence show similar results, i.e., with increasing age and urban to rural transition, the percentage of agreeing on domestic violence and experiencing increases. However, there is a significant difference (approx. 20%) observed between the perception of domestic violence and experiencing it, with experience on the lower side among all the

background variables. The relation between the perception of women of wife beating in different situations and experiencing different types of domestic violence indicates that they are negatively correlated.

All the different background was significantly associated with the experience of domestic violence, inferring that all the background characteristics had a highly significant association with the experience of domestic violence. Likewise, in the case of perception of domestic violence by women, education, place of residence, and exposure to mass media are found to be significantly associated.

### Graphs and Tables

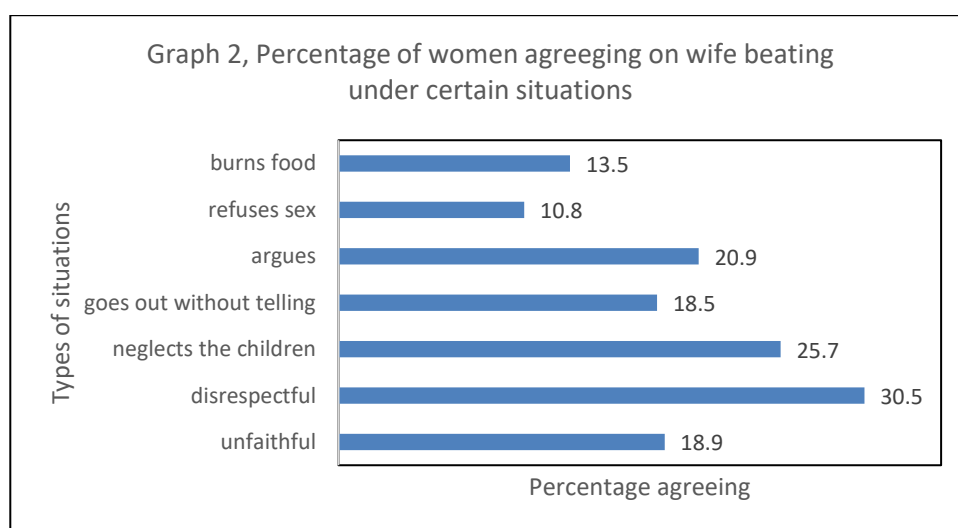
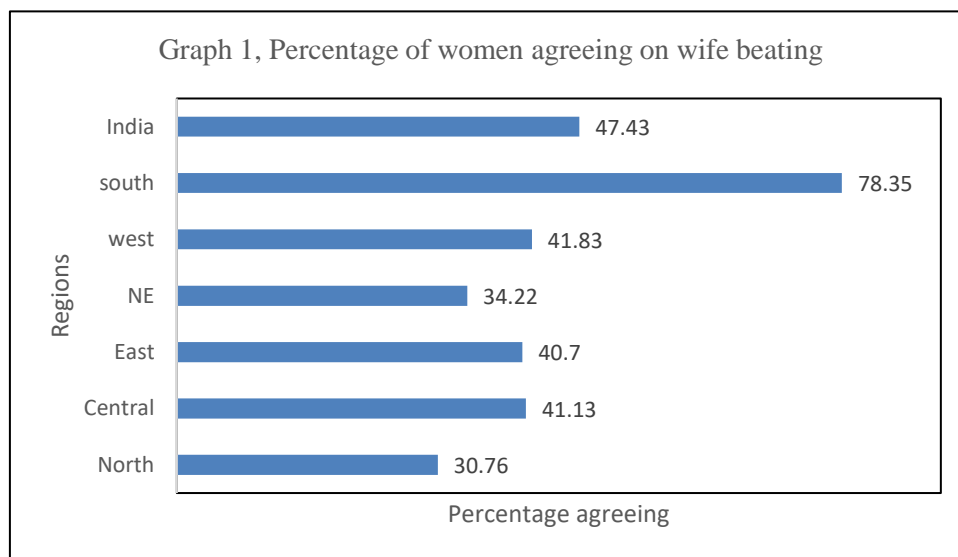


Table 1, Percentage of married women experiencing domestic violence by regions of India, NFHS-5

Regions	emotional	sexual	severe	less severe	any violence
North	9.29	4.33	3.67	17.99	15.63
Central	12.87	6.17	8.55	31.52	25.94
East	15	7.72	8.68	31.31	27.11
North-east	11.44	6.25	6.43	26.8	23.38
West	10.79	4.51	6.03	20.11	17.38
South	15.52	4.48	12.76	32.64	27.33
India	13.15	5.68	8.43	28.1	23.84

Table 2, Perception and experience of domestic violence with different backgrounds of married women in India, NFHS-5

Characteristics	N	Perception	N	Experience
Age group				
15-24	13,017	46.1	8,703	20.6
25-34	29,920	45.9	25,372	23.6
35-49	38,103	49.1	29,776	25.0
Place of residence				
urban	25,378	42.7	20,259	20.0
rural	55,662	49.6	43,592	25.6
Wealth status				
poorest	15,268	48.6	12,689	32.6
poorer	16,590	49.6	13,204	28.3
middle	16,766	52.7	13,070	24.4
richer	16,533	49.0	12,761	19.6
richest	15,883	36.9	12,127	13.6
Education level				
no education	22,936	51.1	18,118	31.1
Up to Secondary	47,886	48.1	37,792	22.7
higher and above	10,217	36.2	7,942	12.5
Exposure to mass media				
no exposure	20,123	47.0	16,126	28.3
<once a week	16,075	45.4	12,491	25.0
at least once a week	44,843	48.3	35,234	21.4