



IMPACT OF WOMEN'S LITERACY AND EDUCATION LEVELS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVALENCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ODISHA AND WEST BENGAL

Dr. Anamika Lenka* Dr.Samir Kumar Lenka**

***Assistant Professor**,Regional Institute of Education (NCERT) Bhubaneshwar, Odisha.

****Associate Professor and Head ITEP**,Department of Education,North Hill University, Shillong ,Meghalaya,India.

Abstract

This work examines the domestic violence in multi-dimensional perspectival demonstrate the relationship between education and domestic violence previous research argued that improvements in women's education wool raise their awareness and thereby reduce violence against them. The finding of the researchers is in support that the main cause of Domestic violence is lack of education. Taking this as a hypothesis the work focused on the comparative analysis of domestic violence in Odisha and West Bengal. Odisha is considered as the state with improving female literacy rate whereas West Bengal is considered as the state with highest female literacy rate. The analysis of the NEHS data showed the result that both lack of education and rising levels of education among women has negligible effect on protection of women from violence against them. In fact, the temporal analysis showed the increasing trend in the percentage of women in West Bengal who have completed ten or more years of education are more vulnerable to all forms of violence than the women in Odisha.

Key Words-Analysis, Violence, Argued, Litrecy

Introduction

Last year, the issue of domestic violence came back to be in the public eye with an intensity rarely noticed; this is because COVID-19 had an amplified impact on problematic previous domestic relationships, such as isolation, financial problems, stress, greater strains on the relationship due to home management difficulties and new roles, and possible implications for the spouses' work (e.g., the need for telework). What are the causes and, above all, the risk factors associated with a greater or lesser use of domestic violence by the family members? The answer to this question can be found by comparing two sample groups, one composed of individuals who have had experience of male aggression (incapable of managing frustration), and the other group of those who, despite experiencing the same violence, are able to give an adequate educational response to the partner, and then lead them to react differently to men in the interpersonal translation perspective. Indeed, the first group underlines how old paradigms are far from being overcome, emphasizing, on the contrary, the persistence of aspects of sexism and women's objectification, making them tools for realizing male drives and, consequently, leading to violent behaviour. Even more alarming is the fact that it is the figure of the mother that plays a distinctly conditioning role: if she promotes an educational style based on punitive behaviours rather than educational ones, and in this perverse defensive mechanism, the female is the main offender in the violent boy. The father, on the other hand, plays a more supportive role, expecting utilization and protectiveness from his daughter in response to authoritarian teachings.

Violence in close or intimate relationships is a serious public health problem. The ongoing discussion of laws, regulations, and policies relating to what has been identified as Intimate Partner Violence



(IPV) defines the remarkable social importance of this complex problem, which refers to the experience of physical or sexual violence, or both, as well as episodes of psychological aggression (i.e., controlling behaviours, insults, and other non-physical threats) within a marital or non-marital intimate relationship. Actually, Interpersonal Violence (IPV) has a negative impact on individuals, families, and society, and can lead to an increase in risky behaviours and health-damaging outcomes for the victims (direct effect) and to negative effects on the individuals related to the victim, such as their children, extended family members or peers, typically leading to uncoordinated and poorly planned interventions. Because of this, several projects of investigation were realized the world over with the aim of identifying the risk factors, protective factors and/or, particularly focusing on the important and effective role that psychological prevention that psycho-educational programs based on life skills education have in the "population".

Domestic violence against women represents a pervasive human rights violation that transcends geographic and socioeconomic boundaries. In India, this insidious form of gender-based violence remains deeply entrenched, perpetuated by long-standing patriarchal norms and systemic gender inequalities. Despite concerted efforts to enhance women's access to education as a pathway toward empowerment, the relationship between educational attainment and reduced vulnerability to domestic violence is nuanced and warrants further examination. This research aims to elucidate the complexities of this relationship through a comparative analysis of domestic violence prevalence and attitudes across varying levels of women's literacy and education in the states of Odisha and West Bengal.

Previous studies have yielded conflicting perspectives on the role of education in mitigating domestic violence. While some scholars argue that higher educational attainment can enhance women's awareness, decision-making abilities, and economic independence, thereby reducing their susceptibility to abuse, others challenge this notion, suggesting that education alone is insufficient to dismantle deeply-rooted patriarchal attitudes and power structures that enable violence against women. By delving into the contrasting trajectories of Odisha and West Bengal in terms of female literacy rates and efforts to promote girls' education, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse and inform targeted interventions to address this critical issue.

II. Literature Review

Existing literature has extensively explored the potential of education to serve as a protective factor against domestic violence. Numerous scholars argue that higher levels of educational attainment can enhance women's awareness, decision-making abilities, and economic independence, thereby reducing their susceptibility to abuse (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013; Weitzman, 2014; Rani & Bonu, 2009). This empowerment through education is posited to challenge traditional gender norms and power dynamics that often underpin domestic violence.

However, a contrasting body of research challenges this notion, suggesting that education alone is insufficient to dismantle the deeply-rooted patriarchal attitudes and power structures that enable violence against women (Visaria, 1999; Kimuna & Djamba, 2008; Jeyaseelan et al., 2007). These studies argue that sociocultural and institutional factors play a significant role in perpetuating domestic violence, and merely increasing women's educational levels may not adequately address these underlying drivers.



Theoretical frameworks such as the Ecological Model (Heise, 1998) underscore the multifaceted nature of domestic violence, influenced by individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. This holistic perspective highlights the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses not only educational disparities but also the broader sociocultural and institutional contexts that perpetuate gender-based violence.

In India, various policies and initiatives have been implemented to promote gender parity in education and combat domestic violence. These include the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All) program, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), and state-specific schemes like Odisha's Girls' Incentive Programme and West Bengal's Kanyashree Prakalpa. However, their efficacy in addressing the root causes of domestic violence and transforming deep-seated societal attitudes remains a subject of ongoing debate.

III. Methodology

This study relies primarily on data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted by the Indian government, specifically the fourth (2015-16) and fifth (2019-21) rounds. The NFHS provides invaluable insights into the prevalence of domestic violence, women's attitudes toward justifying wife-beating, and educational indicators across various Indian states. Additionally, data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and other relevant reports have been utilized to supplement the analysis.

The comparative approach between Odisha and West Bengal is particularly insightful, as these states represent contrasting trajectories in terms of female literacy rates and efforts to promote girls' education. While Odisha has demonstrated steady improvements in recent years, West Bengal has consistently ranked among the top-performing states in this regard, boasting relatively higher literacy rates and more progressive initiatives to address gender disparities in education.

It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of the data sources. The NFHS and NCRB data primarily capture reported cases of domestic violence, which may underestimate the actual prevalence due to underreporting and sociocultural stigma associated with disclosing such incidents. Furthermore, the NFHS data on attitudes toward wife-beating is based on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by social desirability bias and prevailing gender norms.

Despite these limitations, the comprehensive nature of the NFHS surveys and the comparative analysis between Odisha and West Bengal provide a valuable lens through which to examine the relationship between women's educational attainment and the pervasiveness of domestic violence across diverse socioeconomic and cultural contexts within India.

IV. Results and Analysis

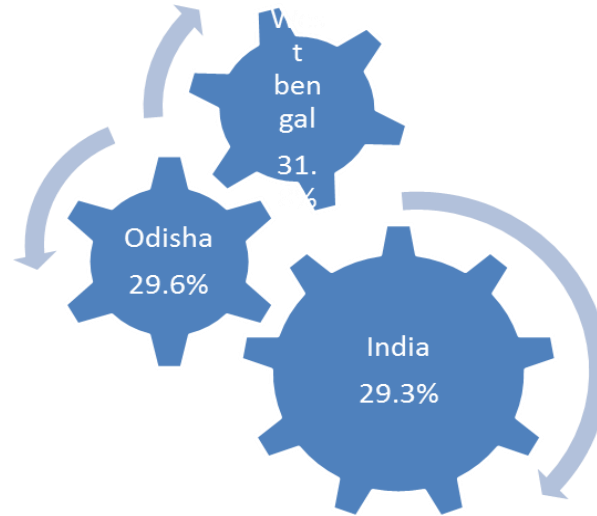
A) Prevalence of Domestic Violence

Table 1: Prevalence of Domestic Violence against Women (NFHS-5, 2019-21)

Location Percentage of Ever-Married Women (18-49 years) Experiencing Spousal Violence
India 29.3% Odisha 29.6% West Bengal 31.8%

Table . 1

India	Odisha	West Bengal
29.3%	29.6%	31.8%



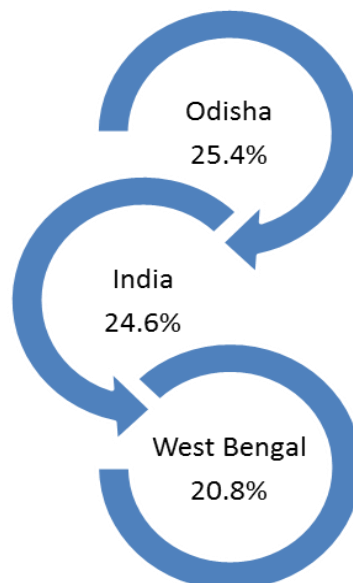
The NFHS-5 data, as presented in Table 1, reveals that 29.6% of ever-married women aged 18-49 in Odisha and 31.8% in West Bengal have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional spousal violence. While West Bengal's figure is slightly higher than the national average of 29.3%, both states exhibit alarmingly high rates of domestic violence against women. This challenges the simplistic notion that higher literacy rates alone can significantly reduce the prevalence of such violence.

B) Attitudes Justifying Wife-Beating

Table 2: Attitudes Justifying Wife-Beating (NFHS-5, 2019-21)

Location Percentage of Women (18-49 years) Justifying Wife-Beating for at Least One Reason India 24.6% Odisha 25.4% West Bengal 20.8%.

India	Odisha	West Bengal
24.6%	25.4%	20.8%





Alarming, the NFHS-5 found that 24.6% of women aged 18-49 across India agreed that a husband is justified in beating his wife for reasons such as going out without informing him, neglecting household duties, arguing with him, refusing sexual intercourse, or suspected infidelity. As depicted in Table 2, in Odisha, this figure stood at 25.4%, while in West Bengal, it was slightly lower at 20.8%. However, these percentages remain concerning high, indicating a worrying acceptance of violence against women, even among segments of society with relatively higher educational attainment.

C) Reported Cases of Domestic Violence

While official data on reported cases of domestic violence can provide valuable insights, it is crucial to note that these figures may not accurately represent the true prevalence due to underreporting and variations in case registration across states. Nonetheless, the NCRB data for 2021 reveals that Odisha recorded 7,589 cases of crimes against women under the Domestic Violence Act, ranking 9th among states. In contrast, West Bengal reported 29,865 cases, placing it among the top three states with the highest number of domestic violence cases registered.

D) Gender Parity in Education Indicators

Table 3: Gender Parity in Education Indicators (Census 2011 and NFHS-4, 2015-16)

Aspect Odisha West Bengal
 Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census) 64.36% 70.54%
 Gender Parity Index (GPI) for Literacy (2011 Census) 0.82 0.84
 GPI for Primary Education Enrolment (2015-16) 0.96 1.03
 GPI for Secondary Education Enrolment (2015-16) 0.90 0.98
 Dropout Rates for Girls (Secondary, 2015-16) 20.4% 17.8%.

	Odisha	West Bengal
Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census)	64.36. %	70.54%
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GPI for Secondary Education Enrolment (2015-16)	0.90	0.98
Dropout Rates for Girls (Secondary, 2015-16)	20.4%	17.8%

Both Odisha and West Bengal have made significant strides in improving gender parity in education, as reflected in indicators such as the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for literacy and enrolment rates. However, as shown in Table 3, disparities persist, particularly in rural areas and among marginalized communities. Traditional gender norms, poverty, and sociocultural barriers continue to impede girls' access to quality education in both states, contributing to higher dropout rates among female students.

E) State Efforts and Schemes

Recognizing the importance of education in empowering women and addressing gender-based violence, both Odisha and West Bengal have implemented various initiatives to promote girls' education.

Both the governments of Odisha and West Bengal have implemented various measures to address and prevent violence against women in their respective states. The steps taken by each government are as follows:



Odisha

1. Establishment of Mahila and Sishu Desks: Dedicated desks, known as Mahila and Sishu Desks, have been set up in police stations to handle complaints related to violence against women and children.
2. One-Stop Centres Instituted: One-Stop Centres (OSCs) have been instituted to provide integrated support and assistance, including medical, legal, and psychological aid, to women affected by violence.
3. Shelter Homes Established: Shelter homes have been established for women who are victims of domestic violence or require temporary accommodation.
4. Legal Aid Provided: Legal aid and support are being provided to women victims of violence to ensure access to justice.
5. Awareness Campaigns Conducted: Awareness campaigns and workshops are being conducted to educate women about their rights and empower them to raise their voices against violence.
6. Training for Police Personnel: Specialized training is being provided to police personnel to sensitively handle cases of violence against women and ensure prompt action.
7. Implementation of Laws: Existing laws and regulations related to violence against women, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the Dowry Prohibition Act, are being enforced.

West Bengal

1. Schemes for Women's Empowerment Implemented: Various schemes aimed at empowering women economically and socially have been implemented, indirectly contributing to reducing vulnerability to violence.
2. Specialized Police Units Formed: Specialized units within the police force, including all-women police stations, have been set up to address crimes against women.
3. Crisis Intervention Centres Established: Crisis intervention centres have been established to provide immediate assistance and support to women facing violence.
4. Legal Support Offered: Legal aid and support are being provided to women victims of violence to ensure access to justice and legal recourse.
5. Awareness Programs Conducted: Awareness programs, workshops, and campaigns are being conducted to raise awareness about women's rights and the importance of gender equality.
6. Helplines Operated: Helplines are being operated to provide counseling, support, and guidance to women in distress.
7. Collaboration with NGOs: Collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society groups is taking place to enhance support services for women affected by violence.

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