



Patriarchy, Poverty and Violence

A Multifaceted Analysis of Violence against Women in Jharkhand

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About the Project: As part of it's ongoing research on Gender Based Violence (GBV) in India., the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), aims to analyze and address gaps to strengthen existing systems, addressing issues of violence, understand specific drivers of violence and build workable recommendations for better implementation, access and efficiency of these existing systems and policies.

Introduction

Violence against women (VAW) is a pervasive human rights violation with severe and lasting impacts on individuals, families, and communities. Globally, one in three women experience some form of violence. India has a particularly high prevalence, with 35% of ever-married/partnered women aged 15-49 reporting experiencing physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence at least once. IPV can lead to serious health issues, including physical injuries, emotional distress, chronic illnesses, substance abuse, unintended pregnancies, and suicidal thoughts. These consequences ripple outward, affecting families and communities (Ackerson & Subramanian, 2008; Campbell, 2002; Coker et al., 2002; Ellsberg et al., 2001, 2008). This brief provides a multifaceted analysis of violence against women (VAW) in Jharkhand, India, exploring its underlying causes and suggesting potential interventions.

Methodology

This analysis uses three primary sources: the National Family Health Survey¹ (NFHS-3: 2005-06, NFHS-4: 2015-16, and NFHS-5: 2019-21), the National Crime Records Bureau² (NCRB) (2014-2022), and the Jharkhand Police website (2014-2022). Bivariate analysis (cross-tabulation and Pearson's chi-square test) examined the relationship between predictor variables and women's exposure to domestic violence across the NFHS rounds. Sample weights were applied to ensure accurate percentage estimations. Binary logistic regression models identified determinants of domestic violence in India and Jharkhand using odds ratios (OR) with 95% confidence intervals (CI). All statistical analyses were conducted using STATA 18.0. Trends in VAW in Jharkhand were visualized using NCRB and Jharkhand police data.

1 The NFHS is a large-scale, nationally representative survey that aims to understand the prevalence of intimate partner violence at the national level. It utilizes a standardized methodology and questionnaire that allows for comparisons across states and over time..

2 NCRB Data offers the most extensive source of crime statistics in India, including cases reported to the police.

Findings

Casual beating continues to remain a norm despite an overall decline in physical, sexual and emotional violence.

Across all three NFHS rounds, physical violence remains the most prevalent form of IPV in both India and Jharkhand. In India, it declined from 35.1% (NFHS-3) to 29.8% (NFHS-4) and 28.3% (NFHS-5), a **6.8%** overall decrease, while in Jharkhand, it dropped from 35.2% to 32.8% and 30.2%, a **5%** decline. Despite this reduction, Jharkhand continues to experience higher rates than the national average, reflecting deeply rooted patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles that inflate the sustaining social inequalities, with 'casual beating' still widely accepted as a social norm. The prevalence of sexual and emotional violence which are other forms of IPV is consistently lower than physical violence in both India and Jharkhand but follows a distinct trend. Sexual violence has sharply declined in both India (from **10% to 6.3%**) and Jharkhand (from **12% to 6.3%**), while emotional violence remains stable nationally but has dropped significantly in Jharkhand (**18.1% to 11.6%**, a nearly two-fifths decline). Despite these reductions, psychological abuse remains normalized, reflecting persistent societal attitudes. cases.

Data triangulation shows inconsistent trends, highlighting the need for regular, high-quality, and contextually relevant data in Jharkhand

Jharkhand's population is approximately 40% Scheduled Caste (SC) & Scheduled Tribe (ST). Hence, Caste being a demographic indicator suggests that nationally, domestic violence among SC women shows a gradual decline over time suggesting a weakening caste-DV link, it being insignificant for other caste groups, reflecting a more complex and indirect relationship between caste and violence. However, for Jharkhand, the *prevalence of domestic violence is highest in SC women*, followed by ST, OBC, and General, but NFHS-3 to 5 shows a decline across all castes. Indicating rising awareness, and improved expression against VAW, though unevenly, with SC women remaining the most vulnerable. Higher Education is a *protective factor* against domestic violence nationally. In Jharkhand, the association is less pronounced, though not statistically in NFHS-4. However, the significant increase in women's educational attainment in Jharkhand (37% to 59% with secondary or higher education) suggests a potential protective effect.

At the national level, factors such as social *norms (attitudes towards wife beating, women's empowerment)*, individual characteristics (*age, education, employment status*), and husband's alcohol consumption were associated with domestic violence. However, in Jharkhand, a more

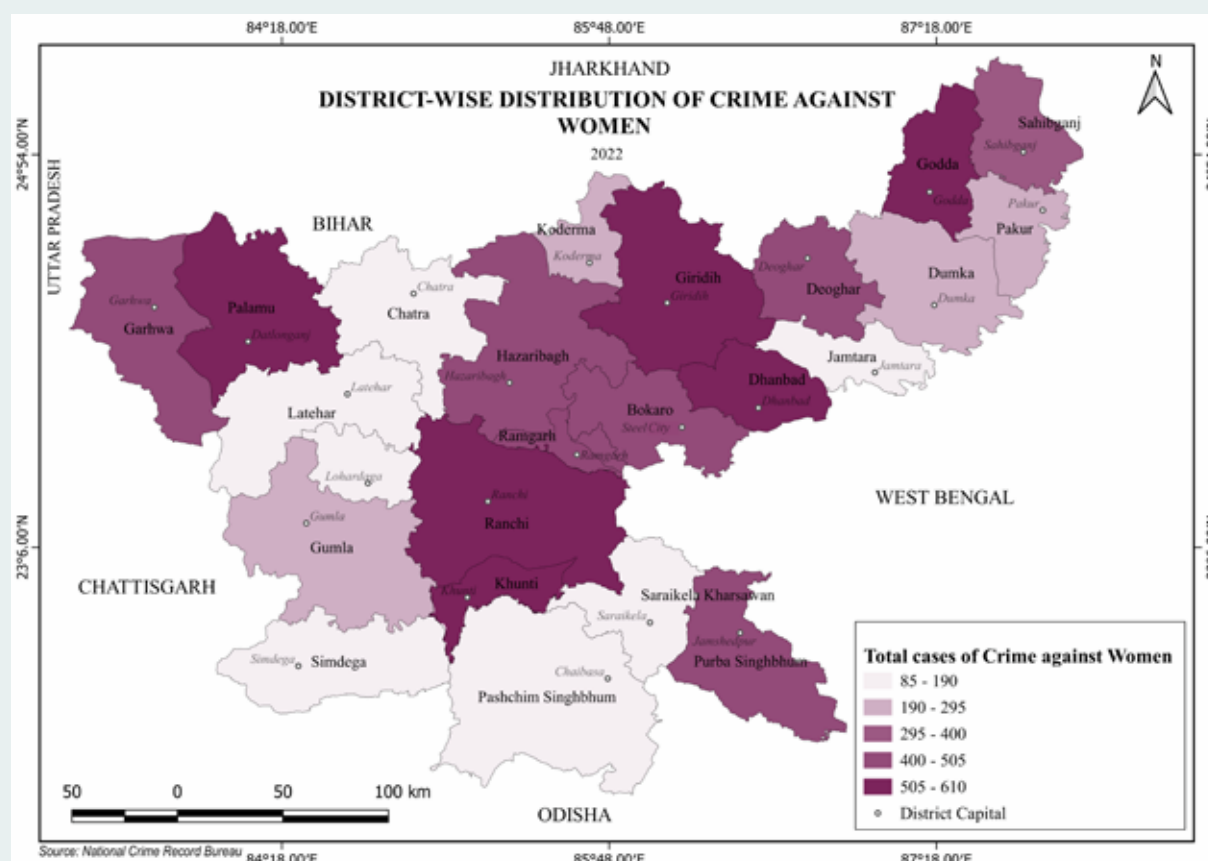
limited set of factors, including attitudes toward wife beating, women's employment, caste, and the husband's alcohol consumption, were significant predictors. This divergence might reflect the unique sociocultural context of Jharkhand, where deeply ingrained patriarchal norms and limited access to resources may overshadow the influence of other factors identified in national studies.

Table 1: Determinants of domestic violence in Jharkhand and India: A comparative analysis

Key drivers/ Predictors	Jharkhand	India
Women's employment (Individual characteristic)	<p>In Jharkhand, the association between women's employment and domestic violence is weaker than national trends. This may be due to low female workforce participation and the prevalence of informal, low-autonomy jobs that don't challenge traditional gender roles.</p> <p>(Women's employment \propto DV, weak association)</p>	<p>In India, there is a consistent and significant association between women's employment and increased risk of domestic violence. This suggests that women's workforce participation can be met with resistance, reflecting entrenched patriarchal norms.</p> <p>(Women's employment \propto DV, strong association)</p>
Husbands' alcohol consumption (Husband's characteristic)	<p>In Jharkhand, domestic violence remains high, particularly among women with alcohol-consuming spouses. Chronic drinking, addiction, poverty, unemployment, and patriarchy exacerbate the severity of violence.</p> <p>(Husband's alcohol consumption \propto DV, strong association)</p>	<p>In India, husbands' alcohol consumption is a strong predictor of domestic violence. While the risk was highest during NFHS-4 (likely due to alcohol dependency), the threat persists.</p> <p>(Husband's alcohol consumption \propto DV, strong association)</p>
Attitude towards wife-beating (Social Norm)	<p>In Jharkhand, women who justify wife-beating experience higher levels of domestic violence, with the likelihood increasing over time.</p> <p>(Women justifying beating \propto DV, strong association)</p>	<p>In India, women who justify wife-beating are also at higher risk of experiencing domestic violence, indicating that normative acceptance reinforces its occurrence.</p> <p>(Women justifying beating \propto DV, strong association)</p>

Protective factors	Jharkhand	India
³ Women's empowerment	<p>Modest improvement in women's autonomy and agency has been observed in Jharkhand, but these have not yet translated into a statistically significant reduction in domestic violence.</p> <p>(Women's empowerment \propto 1/DV, weak association)</p>	<p>Women's empowerment showed a small but statistically significant negative association with domestic violence</p> <p>(Women's empowerment \propto 1/DV, moderate association)</p>
Ownership of property (land and house)	<p>Land ownership is associated with increased domestic violence in Jharkhand, while house ownership shows no significant association. This suggests that there are other structural factors rooted in the political, social and economic context of the state. (Greater economic security \propto 1/DV)</p>	<p>In India, land ownership was associated with increased domestic violence in NFHS-5. While House ownership shows no significant association.</p> <p>(Greater economic security \propto 1/DV)</p>

Significant geographical variation in the reported violence against women characterises the districts of Jharkhand



³ Women's empowerment, encompassing both decision-making power and freedom of movement, is measured as a composite score.

Analysis of NCRB and Jharkhand Police data (2018-2022) reveals significant geographical variations in reported VAW across Jharkhand's districts.

Jamshedpur, Ranchi, Giridih, Dhanbad, and Deoghar consistently report high numbers of cases across multiple categories of violence. Ranchi shows a concerning upward trend in reported rape and kidnapping, while Giridih has persistently high rates of dowry deaths. Gumla and West Singhbhum show a troubling persistence of witch deaths. Latehar, Koderma, and Jamtara report fewer cases, potentially due to underreporting or lower prevalence. Some districts, like Chatra and Saraikela Kharsawan, show decreasing trends over time.

The 2022 NCRB map reveals elevated crime rates clustered in the northeast and central-north regions (Godda, Sahibganj, and Giridih, with 505-610 cases), likely due to increased vulnerability stemming from poverty and limited education. Lower rates are observed in the central-west and south (Saraikela Kharsawan, Chatra, and Paschim Singhbhum, with 85-190 cases). Jamtara falls within a moderate range.

Culture of silence continues to be pervasive

The help-seeking among women in India remains alarming low and has declined from 24% in NFHS-3 to 14% in NFHS-5. Whereas, in Jharkhand, the NFHS-5 data indicates that only 21% of women who have experienced any form of violence have sought help. This points to a pervasive *“culture of silence”*, where women are often reluctant to report violence or seek help

due to stigma, fear of retaliation, and lack of adequate support systems.

Discussion

Women in Jharkhand experience diverse forms of GBV, including witch-hunting (approximately 35 murders annually), social boycotts, harassment (4500 reported cases between 2015 and 2020), cybercrime, sexual assault, kidnapping, rape, dowry deaths, and verbal abuse. These are rooted in societal beliefs and discriminatory practices. The increasing sex trafficking of tribal women lured to cities with false promises is a particularly alarming trend. Widespread child marriage further restricts girls' autonomy and increases their vulnerability to violence. While NFHS data suggests a decline in some forms of IPV, NCRB data (2023) indicates a concerning rise in others, particularly dowry-related violence, cases under the Protection of Domestic Violence Act, and the trafficking of minor girls. Jharkhand ranks among the highest states in India for these crimes.

The data triangulation shows inconsistent trends, highlighting the need for regular, high-quality, and contextually relevant data in Jharkhand. The weak link between women's empowerment indicators—employment, education, and asset ownership—and violence is concerning and must be understood in the shifting macroeconomic and political economic context. Despite strong evidence on the role of women's ownership of property acting as an effective deterrent to spousal violence,⁴ the findings from this analysis are paradoxical and point to other factors rooted in political, economic and social factors that determine occurrence of domestic violence.

The paradoxes and geographical variations necessitate that there be an enquiry into the contextual and structural factors that provide

4 ICRW 2006, Property Ownership & Inheritance Rights of Women for Social Protection– The South Asia Experience, Synthesis report of three studies

more insights into the dynamics of violence against women in the state. Such a deep dive would inform the state's efforts in preventing and responding to VAW.

Where do we go from here?

These findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-sectoral interventions to address VAW in Jharkhand. Effective strategies must tackle root causes, such as entrenched patriarchal norms and systemic barriers to justice and support, while also addressing the intersectional vulnerabilities of marginalized communities, specifically SC/ST women.

Key recommendations include:

(a) Strengthening VAW services and response: Enhance capacity through training and sensitization on the unique challenges faced by women in Jharkhand to enable access to GBV services such as psychological, social, legal, and other support services.

(b) Empowering Women: Invest in women's economic empowerment through education, vocational training, access to financial resources, gender equity in remuneration and roles, awareness about rights, challenging gender roles, and promoting land ownership by women.

(c) Challenging Social Norms: Implement sustained public awareness campaigns promoting gender equality and challenging the social acceptability of VAW. Increase awareness about forms of violence and available services. Leverage local media and actively engage men and boys as allies.

(d) Targeted Interventions: Address the intersectional vulnerabilities of marginalized communities by ensuring equal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and legal protection. Strengthen social safety nets.

(e) Improving Data Collection: Enhance data collection and analysis, particularly in rural areas, to inform more targeted and effective policymaking.

