



WOMEN AGAINST WOMEN: UNPACKING THE JUSTIFICATION OF WIFE-BEATING IN INDIA

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article History:</p> <p>Received 15.08.2024 Accepted 15.10.2024 Published 15.12.2024</p> <p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>crime against women, wife-beating, justifying domestic violence</i></p>	<p><i>While the Indian economy races towards being the third largest economy of the world, women continue to struggle to maintain their safety in the domain of their homes or outside. Recent National Crime Records Bureau’s data (2022) provide evidence of a 4% surge in crime against women in India compared to 2021 and the prime contributor is cruelty by husband or his relatives, accounting for around one-third of the total crime against women. On the one hand, the increasing female labor force participation rate indicates women’s contribution to the economy and their financial empowerment, on the other hand, crime data shows a contrasting picture of abuse and oppression even within the household. What is surprising more, is that the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021) data shows not only around 30% of married women have experienced domestic violence, but 45% of women themselves justify wife beating by their husband. Therefore, it creates a puzzle that in the era of woke ideologies, women empowerment and equal rights, how it fails to create a safe space for women even inside their homes; and additionally, how women themselves could justify domestic violence. Applying probability models on the NFHS 2019-21 data this paper attempts to understand the attributes of the women who justify domestic violence. The paper finds that younger, less-educated, poor, village women are more likely to justify domestic violence, and women who are not aware of the world around them and are not familiar with using the internet are more likely to justify violence. Additionally, it is found that women who justify wife-beating are also more likely to face domestic violence. The paper provides evidence that in spite of women’s improving educational attainment and working status, the deep-rooted patriarchal mindset makes women still believe that it is justified to get beaten by husbands for disobeying him or challenging his authority.</i></p>

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1. Introduction

Status of women within the household is an important concern in economics for women as it impacts women’s life in multiple ways. While India is racing to be the 3rd largest economy of the world, women still struggle to have the basic human rights, they need permission from

the family members and/or society for participation in the paid jobs, for getting education, access to health and even open a bank account. In our society daughter's successful well-paid husband is a matter of pride to many parents rather than daughter's successful career, even women sacrificing career for household duties is still a common practice. Though women in India have more opportunities/choices for career and increasingly participate in paid jobs, does this assure improvement in their intra-household status?

On the one hand, the female labor force participation rate (FLFPR) being only around one-third of the male labor force participation rate, though has increased from 21.1% in 2017-18 to 31.6% in 2022-23 and female unemployment rate decreased from 9.0% in 2017-18 to 5.1% in 2022-23. Further, another optimistic information from the same data source is that the proportion of self-employed women rose from 59% in 2020-21 to 65% in 2022-23, compared to 54% of male (Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) Annual Report 2022-2023). On the other hand, the National crime records bureau (NCRB) has reported 66.4 as the rate¹ of crime against women in India in 2022 which was 58.8 in 2018, where 20.9 is the rate of Cruelty by husband or his relatives in 2022 increased from 16.1 in 2018. While the rising trend of FLFPR indicates women's economic improvement but increasing crime against women, particularly the prevalence of domestic violence questions the status of women at home. So can women's increasing opportunities and involvement in the job market be counted as indicators of women's true empowerment, or should we consider it rather as only a coping mechanism for families to increase living costs and economic uncertainties which intensified further since the Covid pandemic period. A paper by Das (2023) shows that working women during Covid and just after faced less violence than working women before covid.

A national representative survey data, National Family and Health Survey (NFHS5) of 2019-2021 shows around 30% married women (18-49 years) have experienced domestic violence, whereas 45% women themselves supported wife-beating considering different situations and 44% men justified wife beating. If we compare this with the NFHS4 (2015-16) survey data, it reported that around 31% married women faced domestic violence by their partner, while 52% women justified wife-beating for various reasons, whereas 42% men supported wife beating. Amid this evidence from different national (or representative) data, it is interesting to notice that women in a large percentage, even larger than men, justify wife beating. This becomes more puzzling to evidence that women are being increasingly educated and joining labor force, but their mindset fails to change with education and working status, or the patriarchy is so deep-rooted, that even with the progress in education and economic status, women continue to believe that it is justified to get beaten by husband for disobeying him or challenging his authority? Attitudes and beliefs towards domestic violence are vital to prevent this evil practice towards women. To get a convincing answer to this question and explore further, it is important to examine who these women are, what are their attributes and characteristics and how can women justify wife-beating. The objective of this research is to explore the attributes of the women who themselves take stand against women by justifying wife-beating, to delve deep into these women's psyche and socio-behavioural patterns in intention to understand the background and roots of their beliefs against their own gender. Thus, the research questions are: Who are these women justifying wife-beating? Which factors

¹ Crime Rate is calculated as Crime per one lakh of population

are responsible for women's justification of wife-beating in different circumstances? Therefore, this research examines the mindset and belief of women about spousal violence, the most prevalent causes of wife-beating that get supported by women, the reason behind and characteristics of women who support domestic violence.

2. Literature Review

A large number of studies from different countries examined women's beliefs and justifications for domestic violence. Haj-Yahia (2002) used primary data collected from 356 Jordanian women to find that it is common that women not only favor wife-beating but also blame the women for getting beaten (also in Haj-Yahia et al. (2007) study on Sri Lanka). These women are also against providing help to the abused women and they claim that agencies and people should not have any say in case of wife-beating as it is a family/personal matter. Earlier in 1998, Haj-Yahia also examined the influence of patriarchal society of Palestine on women's beliefs for wife-beating by conducting survey of 425 women and found that a large percentage of these women justify beating by husbands, particularly 'when a wife is perceived as sexually unfaithful or as challenging her husband's manhood' and further claim that the husband should not be blamed solely for wife-beating. Another study on Jordan by Schuster et al. (2021) examines adolescents' attitudes towards wife-beating and 856 secondary school students were surveyed and found the acceptance rate ranges between 6 to 50 percent among these school-going adolescents. The religious and cultural beliefs, parental harsh discipline are found as important predictors of wife-beating acceptance in Schuster et al. (2021).

Fawole et al. (2005) investigated the prevalence of domestic violence among civil servants in Nigeria and found that female respondents justified wife-beating more compared to the male respondents. Rani et al. (2004) using the demographic and health surveys (DHS) of 1999-2001 in Benin, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe, found that acceptance of wife-beating is widespread in these seven African countries and men are less supporter of wife-beating than women themselves. Oyediran (2016) studied the trends and determinants of Nigerian women's attitudes towards wife-beating using three rounds of DHS data (2003, 2008 and 2013) and revealed that the acceptance has declined from 62% in 2003 to 46% in 2008 and then to 37% in 2013.

Many other studies found that women justifying wife-beating is a common mindset in many countries, such as study by Rani and Bonu (2009) on 7 countries - Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Nepal, and Turkey; Rani et al. (2004) found in Benin, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe; Dalal et al. (2012) on Bangladesh, India and Nepal; Alam et al. (2021) on Bangladesh; Dhaher et al. (2010) and Khawaja (2008) on Palestinian women; Tayyab et al. (2017) on Pakistan; Dikmen and Munevver (2020) on Turkey; among others.

Studies that have found different significant predictors of wife-beating acceptance among women in different countries, such as wealth as negative predictor (Rani and Bonu, 2009; Rani et al. 2004; Dalal et al. 2012; Oyediran 2016); education level as negative (Rani and Bonu, 2009; Rani et al. 2004; Dalal et al. 2012; Dhaher et al. 2010; Oyediran 2016; Alam et al. 2021), age as negative (Rani and Bonu, 2009; Rani et al. 2004; Khawaja 2008); working status of women as negative (Rani and Bonu, 2009; Dhaher et al. 2010); ethnic and religious affiliation

(Oyediran 2016; Obeid et al. 2010; Alam et al. 2021), among others. There are studies that found some significant positive predictors of justifying wife-beating as working status (Diop-Sidibe et al. 2004; Khawaja 2008); rural habitations (Dalal et al. 2012; Oyediran 2016); history of violence in the family (Dalal et al. 2012; Obeid et al. 2010), having more than one child (Dhaher et al. 2010); recently married (Dhaher et al. 2010); lower household decision making role (Dhaher et al. 2010; Oyediran 2016; Alam et al. 2021; Tayyab et al. 2017); frequency of listening to the radio (Oyediran 2016); parity and contraceptive use (Alam et al. 2021).

By interviewing 450 women in three cities of Palestine regarding attitudes towards wife beating, Dhaher et al. (2010) found that one of the main reasons for women justifying wife-beating is if a wife insults and/or disobeys husband. Dikmen and Munevver (2020) examined Turkish women's views on attitudes of women towards wife-beating in relation with their own experience of domestic violence using primary survey data and found that acceptance towards wife-beating can increase the risk of domestic violence and with egalitarian views the acceptance decreases. Mondal (2021) used NFHS-4 data on India to investigate the association between marital relationship and dynamics in marriage, attitude towards wife-beating with violence against women and found that there is a positive association between wife-beating acceptance and the risk of intimate partner violence. Rahamatollah and Siddegowda (2010) used a random sample of 200 Indian and 200 Iranian women from Mysore and Esfahan cities, respectively to study the beliefs regarding wife-beating and found that the Iranian women sample had larger score for justification of wife-beating, gain for wives and responsibility and punishment for husband, whereas Indian sample showed more interest in helping the victims.

Though there is no shortage of literature on women's justification of wife-beating in different countries, similar research on India is not adequate, particularly to explore the attributes of the women who are against other women by justifying wife-beating. While India's poor reputation regarding women's safety should indeed be a genuine concern, and therefore, research on exploring women's nature of suffering and their related mindset of accepting the violence towards them is an important area to work on. Intuitively, it seems obvious that men who do not hesitate to abuse their wife, for whatever reasons, will also support this type of behavior, but it is surprising when women, themselves, show support for the abusive males and blame the women's behavior for getting beaten by the husbands. Therefore, this research examines the mindset and belief of women about spousal violence, the most prevalent causes of wife-beating that get supported by women, the reason behind and characteristics of women who support domestic violence.

3. Data and Empirical Strategy

This study uses India's National Family and Health Survey - fifth round (NFHS-5) 2019-2021 (published in 2022), which covered 707 districts of 28 states and 8 UTs of India and interviewed 724,115 women of age 15-49 years. Further, from the overall women sample only one married woman per household of age 18-49 years is randomly selected for the domestic violence module, and a subsample of 72,056 women were interviewed under this module. For both the overall and subsample of women appropriate weights are used to make it nationally representative. The survey on women provides information on individual demographic,

economic and social characteristics, husband's background, reproductive behavior and childbearing, marriage and cohabitation, use of contraception, among many others.

To explore the background and characteristics of women who are supporters of wife-beating, the dependent variable of the analysis is whether a woman justifies wife beating or not. This binary variable is constructed using the survey question where respondents were asked "In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife..." given seven separate circumstances. The explanatory variables for the analysis are variables that represent individual women's characteristics and attributes.

First, I investigate the data through descriptive analysis by exploring the bivariate relationship between justification of wife-beating and demographic variables. For this purpose, I conduct χ^2 tests to find out the statistical significance of the aforementioned relationships.

For further inferential findings, the multivariate regression analysis is used along with the bivariate regression models. As the dependent variable is a binary variable, such as justifying wife-beating or not, a logistic regression model is used to explore the relationship of this dichotomous dependent variable with a set of predictor variables. Logistic model assumes that the observations are a random sample from a population, and it is represented by the equation:

$$Y_i = \pi(X_i) + \epsilon_i$$

Where Y_i represents the dependent variable, woman i 's justification for wife-beating; $\pi(X_i)$ represents the conditional probability of justification wife-beating given the independent predictor variables (X_i) or $\Pr(Y_i = 1 | X_i)$ and ϵ_i is the random error term. The general form of the model is as:

$$\pi(X_i) = \Pr(Y_i = 1 | X_i) = \frac{e^{X_i'\beta}}{1+e^{X_i'\beta}}$$

Separate logistic regressions are used considering justification of wife-beating as dependent variables for seven different reasons and also in overall any situation.

Dependent Variable (Y): The binary dependent variable is constructed from the questions asked to women regarding their justification about wife-beating in seven situations, such as "In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife...": (i) If she goes out without telling him? (coded as *Autonomy*) (ii) If she neglects the house or the children? (coded as *Neglect*) (iii) If she argues with him? (coded as *Argue*) (iv) If she refuses to have sex with him? (coded as *Refuse*) (v) If she doesn't cook food properly? (coded as *Spoil*) (vi) If he suspects her of being unfaithful? (coded as *Unfaithful*) and (vii) If she shows disrespect for in-laws? (coded as *Disrespect*). The answer choices were 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't know' and if a woman answered 'yes' for wife-beating gets '1', otherwise gets '0' for answering 'No' or 'Don't know'. Apart from the seven binary dependent variables constructed on seven different dimensions of situations, combining these seven circumstances, another binary dummy variable is constructed as a woman respondent gets '1' if she has answered 'yes' for wife-beating in at least one situation, otherwise '0' where the respondent didn't justify wife-beating in any circumstances.

Independent / explanatory Variables (Xs): To find what factors contribute to the acceptance of wife-beating among women I use explanatory variables such as, residence location (coded as rural = 1, and urban = 0), gender of the household head (female = 1 and male = 0), wealth (categorical variable according to wealth class, such as poorest = 0, poorer =

1, middle = 2, richer = 3 and richest = 4), respondent's age (in age groups, such as below 18 years = 0, 18-23 = 1, 24-29 = 2, 30-35 = 3, 36-41 = 4, 42-47 = 5 and above 47 years = 6), respondent's education (in categories, such as No education = 0, primary = 1, secondary = 2 and higher education = 3), respondent's working status (working = 1 and not-working = 0), Own any property (solo or jointly with husband, yes = 1 and no = 0), use mobile for financial transaction (yes = 1 and no = 0), religion and caste as categorical variables, whether the respondent listens radio (yes = 1 and no = 0), whether the respondent uses internet (yes = 1 and no = 0), whether the respondent has taken loan (yes = 1 and no = 0), and whether the interview was interrupted due to any reasons (yes = 1 and no = 0). To control for state level unobserved characteristics, such as state-specific social norms, patriarchal values and customs, people's relation and dynamics, which can also influence women's mindset and beliefs within household, state fixed effects are used in the estimations. Additionally, the survey data noted information regarding any minor interference/interruption happened during the interview, which could be a signal of family's control over women's life. In the analysis, I use this information as a variable to control for the biasedness in responses due to even minor interference during the survey.

Appropriate survey weights are used for the estimations to consider survey related biases and to make the sample a nationally representative one. The multicollinearity between the covariates is tested by variance inflation factor and is not found (VIF value below two for all included covariates). To test the model appropriateness of the covariates on the survey data, the F-adjusted test for goodness of fit is conducted.

4. Results and Discussions:

Among the women in the overall sample, wife-beating is justified by 19% women for the reason of going out without husband's permission; 28% women for neglecting children; 22% for arguing with husband; 11% for refusing to have sex with husband; 14% if wife burns food; by 20% women if wife is unfaithful; 32% women justify wife-beating for disrespecting in-laws; and 45% women justify wife-beating for at least a reason or more. Therefore, disrespecting in-laws is a prime reason for justifying wife-beating whereas refusing sex is the least consideration for wife-beating.

Table 1: Percentage of Women who Justify Violence according to Background Characteristics

Variables	Wife-beating justified for the reasons of:							
	Permission	Neglect	Argue	Refuse	Spoil	Unfaithful	Disrespect	Any
Overall	19.31	27.75	22.14	11.12	13.79	20.05	31.96	45.32
Residence:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Urban	15.9	25.1	17.4	8.8	10.4	17.6	28.3	40.4
Rural	20.9	29.0	24.4	12.2	15.4	21.2	33.7	47.7
HH ² head:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p>0.1	p>0.1	p>0.1	p>0.1	p<0.05	p<0.05
Female	20.7	29.7	22.7	11.2	14.3	20.6	33.1	46.7
Male	19.0	27.3	22.0	11.1	13.7	19.9	31.7	45.1
Age groups:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
below 18	17.3	26.0	20.1	10.1	13.3	18.1	29.5	41.6
18 - 23	17.6	24.7	20.1	9.6	12.4	18.4	29.6	42.2
24 - 29	18.5	26.5	21.1	10.8	13.0	19.0	30.6	43.9
30 - 35	19.5	28.5	23.2	11.7	13.5	20.5	32.6	46.4

² HH: Household

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36 - 41	20.7	29.7	23.1	11.6	14.6	21.0	33.5	47.6
42 - 47	22.0	31.2	24.7	12.6	15.9	22.5	35.1	49.1
above 47	21.3	30.5	24.7	13.2	16.5	23.6	36.9	50.1
Education:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
No Edu.	23.1	30.5	27.1	14.7	17.8	23.2	36.3	50.4
Primary	22.3	31.1	27.6	13.4	16.4	23.5	35.2	50.0
Secondary	18.9	27.6	21.2	10.4	13.2	19.7	31.6	45.0
Higher	12.9	21.8	13.7	6.4	8.0	14.2	24.3	35.7
Wealth:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Poorest	21.8	28.2	26.7	13.8	16.8	22.2	33.6	47.8
Poorer	19.3	27.6	23.5	11.9	14.6	20.3	32.2	45.9
Middle	20.3	30.1	23.2	11.7	14.3	20.9	34.1	47.9
Richer	19.9	29.5	21.0	10.3	13.4	20.7	33.0	46.6
Richest	15.3	23.4	16.4	8.1	10.0	16.3	27.0	38.5
Caste ³ :	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
SC	15.3	22.0	19.3	9.8	11.0	17.6	26.0	37.8
ST	21.1	30.1	24.1	12.4	15.0	21.7	34.4	48.4
OBC	18.2	25.1	22.1	11.9	14.5	20.0	31.8	44.1
General	21.0	30.5	22.8	11.1	14.7	20.7	34.2	48.4
Religion:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Hindu	19.3	27.9	21.8	10.9	13.8	19.8	32.1	45.5
Muslim	20.4	27.1	25.7	13.1	14.8	22.0	32.6	46.1
Christian	22.1	38.4	23.3	11.0	12.7	23.7	38.6	53.0
Sikh	12.7	12.6	12.3	7.1	7.4	10.4	13.0	22.1
Buddhist	18.9	30.6	20.8	14.0	18.5	25.9	38.6	51.9
Working:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Yes	22.9	33.6	25.4	12.8	16.4	22.9	36.8	51.1
No	18.1	25.7	21.0	10.5	12.9	19.1	30.3	43.3
Property ownership:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Yes	21.8	29.8	23.9	12.8	15.9	21.8	34.6	49.6
No	17.4	26.1	20.7	9.8	12.1	18.7	29.9	42.0
Listens Radio:	p<0.05	p>0.1	p>0.1	p<0.05	p<0.05	p<0.1	p>0.1	p<0.05
Yes	20.7	28.7	22.2	12.2	14.9	21.1	31.9	47.1
No	19.1	27.6	22.1	11.0	13.6	19.9	32.0	45.0
Uses internet:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Yes	14.5	23.0	16.0	7.6	9.5	15.9	26.2	37.8
No	21.7	30.1	25.2	12.9	15.9	22.1	34.8	49.1
Motherhood:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Mother	20.5	29.2	23.6	11.9	14.6	21.2	33.4	47.4
Non-mother	16.5	24.4	18.8	9.3	12.0	17.4	28.6	40.5
Total	107309	107374	107253	106574	107371	107057	107257	105624
Took Loan:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Yes	26.1	39.9	28.6	13.6	17.9	25.5	41.1	57.5
No	16.8	26.4	19.2	8.7	11.2	18.1	30.7	42.7
Total	55214	55225	55146	54901	55207	55074	55147	54446
Mobile Banking:	p>0.1	p<0.05	p<0.01	p>0.1	p>0.1	p<0.05	p<0.01	p<0.01
Yes	18.0	25.6	17.9	10.4	12.2	17.8	28.2	40.6
No	18.4	27.2	20.9	9.9	12.3	19.5	31.3	44.7
Total	58032	58044	58004	57824	58040	57921	58004	57380
Husband's alcoholism:	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Yes	24.4	36.4	27.2	13.2	15.7	23.9	40.0	54.9
No	19.1	27.0	22.3	11.3	14.0	20.2	31.4	44.9

³ Caste abbreviations - SC: Schedule Caste, ST: Schedule Tribe, OBC: Other Backward Class.

Total	63647	63662	63587	63492	63634	63501	63563	62869
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Note: The p values of the χ^2 tests are shown beside each row variables, indicate the statistical significance of the association between the predictor variables and women’s justification for wife-beating for different reasons.

Table 1 shows the contingency table of respondents' attitudes towards wife-beating in relation to different attributes and demographic variables, the columns represent percentage distribution of respondents’ justification of wife-beating for different reasons and the rows represent women's demographic, economic and social attributes which are used in the analysis. The p values of the χ^2 test results indicate the statistical significance of association between different socio-demographic variables and women's justification of wife-beating.

Table 2 shows the results from the logistic regressions performed in three types of models, bivariate models where the regressions are separately performed considering beating justification as dependent variable and only independent variable used is different covariates taking one at a time. The multivariate models 1 and 2 include different sets of covariates. The multivariate models’ goodness of fit is tested (by using ‘-svylogitgof-’ command in STATA, as suggested by Archer et al. 2007) and found that model 1 with larger number of covariates is a better fit to the given survey data⁴. Table 2 shows the results of all the bivariate models in rows and multivariate models 1 and 2 in the columns for any (at least a) reason. The results for seven individual dimensions/reasons are not shown in the paper but would be available upon request.

Table 2: Logistic Regression Results

Variables	Dependent Variable: Wife-beating justified for any reason					
	Bivariate Model		Multivariate model 1		Multivariate model 2	
	Unadjusted OR	95% Conf. Interval	Adjusted OR	95% Conf. Interval	Adjusted OR	95% Conf. Interval
Residence:						
Urban	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Rural	1.3412***	1.25 - 1.44	1.2189***	1.06 - 1.39	1.2189***	1.11 - 1.34
Gender of the household head:						
Male	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Female	1.0668**	1.01 - 1.13	0.9685	0.87 - 1.08	0.9490	0.89 - 1.01
Wealth class:						
Poorest	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Poorer	1.0066	0.95 - 1.07	0.8185**	0.70 - 0.96	0.9087**	0.84 - 0.98
Middle	1.1265***	1.05 - 1.20	0.7888***	0.67 - 0.93	0.8603***	0.79 - 0.94
Richer	0.9718	0.90 - 1.04	0.6665***	0.55 - 0.80	0.7753***	0.70 - 0.86
Richest	0.5917***	0.54 - 0.64	0.0668***	0.47 - 0.73	0.6264***	0.55 - 0.71
Age groups (years):						
Below 18	Ref		Ref		Ref	
18 - 23	1.0252	0.96 - 1.09	0.3506	0.06 - 2.08	0.4584	0.18 - 1.19
24 - 29	1.0992***	1.03 - 1.18	0.3369	0.06 - 2.01	0.4402*	0.17 - 1.14
30 - 35	1.2195***	1.14 - 1.30	0.3283	0.05 - 1.97	0.4558	0.18 - 1.18
36 - 41	1.2759***	1.19 - 1.36	0.3267	0.05 - 1.96	0.4371*	0.17 - 1.14
42 - 47	1.3584***	1.27 - 1.46	0.2981	0.05 - 1.78	0.4486*	0.17 - 1.16
Above 47	1.4109***	1.28 - 1.56	0.2769	0.04 - 1.67	0.4531	0.17 - 1.18

⁴ As per Archer et al. (2007) suggestion the goodness of fit of the models with survey weights are tested by the F-adjusted mean residual goodness-of-fit test (insignificant p values (p>0.05) mean better fit and p<0.05 that is statistical significance of the F-test indicates poor fit) and found that for any reason p-value of the F-adjusted test statistic is insignificant (Prob > F = 0.232) for Model 1 and the same for Model 2 is found to be significant as (Prob > F = 0.038).

Education level:						
No						
Education	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Primary	0.9836	0.93 - 1.04	1.0059	0.85 - 1.19	0.9968	0.92 - 1.08
Secondary	0.8049***	0.77 - 0.84	0.8937	0.77 - 1.04	0.8887***	0.83 - 0.95
Higher	0.5470***	0.51 - 0.59	0.6728***	0.55 - 0.82	0.6180***	0.55 - 0.69
Working Status:						
No	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Yes	1.3680***	1.31 - 1.43	1.0187	0.91 - 1.14	1.0212	0.96 - 1.08
Own any property (Solo or Joint):						
No	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Yes	1.3630***	1.30 - 1.43	1.2257***	1.10 - 1.36	1.1734***	1.11 - 1.24
Husband drinks alcohol:						
No	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Yes	1.4958***	1.41 - 1.58	1.2312***	1.11 - 1.36	1.2605***	1.18 - 1.34
Have at least a Child						
No	Ref		Ref			
Yes	1.3243***	1.28 - 1.37	1.1638*	0.98 - 1.38		
Use mobile telephone for financial transactions:						
No	Ref		Ref			
Yes	0.8462***	0.78 - 0.91	0.9624	0.83 - 1.11		
Religion:						
Hindu	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Muslim	1.0235	0.94 - 1.11	1.1306	0.95 - 1.34	1.2021***	1.09 - 1.33
Christian	1.3459***	1.17 - 1.54	0.8247	0.63 - 1.08	0.8720	0.72 - 1.06
Sikh	0.3389***	0.29 - 0.40	0.8547	0.55 - 1.33	0.7837**	0.62 - 0.98
Buddhist	1.2928*	0.98 - 1.70	1.6264*	0.94 - 2.81	1.2715	0.94 - 1.71
Jain	0.5241	0.23 - 1.18	0.3555*	0.11 - 1.19	0.7388	0.38 - 1.45
Parsi	1.3522	0.19 - 9.58	-	-	4.4805***	1.72-11.65
No religion	0.2600*	0.06 - 1.18	0.0011***	0.00 - 0.02	0.3700	0.05 - 2.64
Other	0.4562***	0.35 - 0.59	0.6782	0.40 - 1.16	0.4676***	0.29 - 0.74
Caste:						
SC	Ref		Ref		Ref	
ST	0.8412***	0.77 - 0.92	0.8587	0.69 - 1.06	0.9746	0.88 - 1.08
OBC	0.9979	0.94 - 1.06	1.0354	0.91 - 1.17	0.9564	0.89 - 1.02
Gen	0.6368***	0.59 - 0.69	0.9689	0.82 - 1.14	0.9615	0.88 - 1.05
Listens Radio:						
No	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Yes	1.0869**	1.01 - 1.17	1.1667**	1.00 - 1.35	1.1832***	1.08 - 1.29
Uses Internet:						
No	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Yes	0.6317***	0.60 - 0.66	0.7839***	0.70 - 0.88	0.8532***	0.79 - 0.92
Has taken Loan:						
No	Ref		Ref			
Yes	1.8157***	1.70 - 1.94	1.1343**	1.02 - 1.26		
Interview Interrupted by someone:						
No	Ref		Ref		Ref	
Yes	1.2053***	1.13 - 1.29	0.9592	0.83 - 1.11	1.1216***	1.04 - 1.21

Statistical significance *: $p < 0.1$, **: $p < 0.05$, ***: $p < 0.01$

The results from the contingency tables, significance of the associations between the variables through χ^2 tests and the logistic regressions are discussed in detail in the following parts.

Residence Location - Urban/Rural: The contingency table shows that larger percentage of rural women (48%) justify wife-beating compared to women (40%) living in urban areas, along-with χ^2 test indicating a significant ($p < 0.01$) association between location and women's justification for wife-beating for all reasons. Logistic estimations find that rural women have significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher odds (of 1.3 times ($p < 0.01$) as in bivariate model and 1.2 times from the multivariate models) of justifying beating for at least a reason compared to urban women. Further from the different reasons analysis, it is found that compared to urban women, rural women have 1.2 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds of justifying wife-beating for going out without permission and neglecting children, 1.1 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds of justifying wife-beating for being disrespectful to in-laws and 1.4 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds of supporting wife-beating for not cooking good meals. In other three cases, such as arguing with husband, refusing sex and being unfaithful, location of living is not found to be a significant contributor for women's justification of wife-beating.

Gender of the household (HH) head: A larger percentage of women from female-headed households justify wife-beating compared to women from male-headed households; significant association found in cases of going out without husband's permission, disrespecting in-laws and neglecting children. In the bivariate model, women from female-headed households have 1.07 times ($p < 0.05$) higher odds of supporting wife-beating for any one reason compared to women from male-headed households. However, gender of the HH head is not found as a significant predictor of the women's justification of wife-beating for any circumstances in the multivariate models.

Age: Overall, a larger percentage of older women supported wife-beating for different situations compared to younger women, whereas overall around 42% women of age below 18 years supported wife-beating, the percentage gets larger with age, and 50% women of age above 47 years supported wife-beating for at least a reason. The χ^2 test proves a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) association between age and women's wife-beating justification. In the logistic analysis, below 18 years age-group is considered as the reference group. The bivariate logistic model finds that the odds ratio of supporting wife-beating increases as age increases and is between 1.1 – 1.4 for older age groups from 30-35 years and beyond for different reasons. However, in the multivariate models the association of age with justifying wife-beating becomes insignificant for any reasons except disrespecting in-laws. In case of disrespecting in-laws, it is found that older women have lower odds (in contrast to bivariate result) of around 0.4 times ($p < 0.05$) compared to younger women below age 18 years.

Education level: Overall, a lesser percentage of educated women (such as, 36% women with higher education) are found to justify wife-beating compared to women with no education (50%). The association between education level and women's wife-beating justification are found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) by χ^2 test. Making no-education as the reference category, the bivariate model shows that women with secondary education and higher education have significantly ($p < 0.01$) lower odds of supporting wife-beating for any one reason compared to women with no education. Adding more covariates in the multivariate models the results remain robust and significant (in most cases $p < 0.01$) in all reasons, and also, the odds ratios go down with improvement in education level indicating a negative relation between education level and justification of wife-beating.

Economic status by wealth groups: As per the wealth groups, the highest percent of poorest women is found to justify wife-beating than other women, particularly in cases of going out without telling husband, arguing with husband, refusing sex and poor cooking. However, the highest percent of middle-class women is found to justify wife-beating than any other women, such as for neglecting children, being unfaithful and disrespecting in-laws. The association between wealth status and women's justification of wife-beating is found highly ($p < 0.01$) significant for all reasons. Considering poorest household as reference class, the bivariate logistic model finds that women from middle class have significantly ($p < 0.01$) 1.1 times higher odds and women from richest group have significantly ($p < 0.01$) 0.59 times lower odds to support wife-beating for at least a reason compared to women from other groups. The multivariate analysis finds that wealth is a highly significant negative predictor of women's justification towards wife-beating in all types of reasons and compared to poorest group, women in all other wealth group from poorer to richest have significantly lower odds to support wife-beating for at least a reason and six reasons except being disrespectful to in-laws. However, in case of disrespecting in-laws the multivariate model (without state fixed effect is chosen as suggested by the goodness-of-fit of the model) finds that compared to women in poorest household, women in other wealth class groups have higher odds to justify wife-beating, ORs in the range of 1.1 – 1.4, $p < 0.01$ in all cases except richest group.

Caste: As per the caste, women from SC and OBC are more in percentages to support wife-beating than women in general caste and/or scheduled tribe. Considering SC as the reference category, the bivariate logistic model shows that women from ST and general category have significantly ($p < 0.01$) lower odds to justify wife-beating compared to SC women. From the multivariate regressions, it is found that ST women have lower odds of justifying beating for neglecting children, arguing with husband and poor cooking, compared to SC women. For the reason of disrespecting in-laws, both general women and ST women have lower odds of supporting wife-beating, compared to women from SC group. Women from OBC have lower odds of supporting wife-beating for infidelity compared to SC women. The results lose statistical significance in the multivariate models.

Religion: A large percentage of women justified wife-beating for disrespecting in-laws and neglecting children from the Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim communities. In case of wife argues with husband, the highest percent of Muslim women justified wife beating, Muslim and Buddhist women also largely supported wife-beating due to refusing sex, however, this is the least important reason for justifying wife-beating in the overall result. Poor cooking is also a dominant reason to justify wife-beating among Buddhist and Muslim women. Buddhist and Christian women also found to support wife-beating for infidelity compared to other women. In reason of infidelity a largest percentage of Parsi women (as large as 47%, not shown in the table but the result is available upon request) justify wife beating, whereas no Parsi women in the sample supported wife-beating in any other situations except disrespecting in-laws (36%) and arguing with husband (only 6%). Overall, Christian (53%), Buddhist (52%), Muslim (46%) and Hindu (45%) women supported wife-beating for at least a reason. Considering Hindu religion as the reference category, it is found from the logistic models that Parsi women have as large as 4.5 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds and Muslim, Christian and Buddhist women have significantly around 1.3 times higher odds to support wife-beating in any one circumstance compared to Hindu women. It is also found that women in the Sikh

community have highly significantly lower odds to support wife-beating for any reason, compared to Hindu women. The multivariate results also indicate that the Muslim religion is found to be a significant predictor of women's justification for beating compared to other religions, for all the reasons. Christian women have higher odds for justifying wife-beating for disrespecting in-laws; and lower odds of supporting wife-beating for being unfaithful to husband compared to Hindu women. Buddhist women have higher odds of supporting beating for going out without permission and neglecting children and infidelity, compared to the (reference) Hindu women. Sikh women are found to have lower odds of supporting wife-beating for disrespecting in-laws, poor cooking and arguing with husband compared to Hindu women.

Working Status: Surprisingly, the contingency analysis shows that a larger percentage of working women (51%) support wife-beating for at least one reason or more, whereas 43% non-working women support wife-beating for the same. The χ^2 test finds a highly significant ($p < 0.01$) positive association between working status and women's justification for wife-beating. Further, the χ^2 test results also find significant positive association between women earning cash and justifying wife-beating (result would be available on request). Considering non-working as the reference category, it is found in the bivariate model that working women have significantly 1.4 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds of justifying wife-beating at least a reason compared to non-working women. The results for working status lose statistical significance and lower in size of odds ratios in the multivariate models. The contribution of women's working status is not similar for all reasons of wife-beating justification. It seems logical to find insignificant results for wife-beating in case of going out without seeking permission from husband and it could be considered as a placebo effect. The multivariate analysis of reasons finds working status as a significant predictor in cases of neglecting child ($p < 0.05$), arguing with husband ($p < 0.01$), and spoiling meals ($p < 0.05$), it is found that in these three cases working women have higher odds to justify wife-beating due to failing to perform wife's duties.

Property Ownership (either Solo or Jointly with husband): Higher percentage of women who own any property are found to justify wife-beating in any (50%) and all situations compared to women who don't have any property ownership (42%), along with a strong significant ($p < 0.01$) positive association between property ownership of women and their justification of wife-beating found through the χ^2 test. The logistic results from all three models show that women who own property have significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher odds (1.4 times in binary and 1.2 times in multivariate models) to support wife-beating compared to women who do not own any property, and the results remains significant ($p < 0.01$) across different reasons.

Debt status – Has taken loan: The percentage analysis shows that a larger percentage of women (57%) who have taken loan justify wife-beating compared to women (43%) without debt, along with a significant ($p < 0.01$) association found between debt and women justifying beating through the χ^2 tests. Compared to women who have no debt, it is found in both bivariate and multivariate logistic regressions that women who took loan have significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher odds to justify wife-beating for at least a reason; more specifically, women with debt have around 1.2-1.3 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds to justify wife-beating for the reasons of going out without permission; neglecting children; cooking bad; arguing with husband; and also for being unfaithful, compared to women who have no debt.

Mobile Banking: A larger percentage of women who are unfamiliar with mobile banking (45%) are found to justify wife beating than women who use mobile banking (41%), and the χ^2 test indicates a significant ($p < 0.01$) association between mobile banking and women justifying wife-beating for arguing with husband, disrespecting in-laws, reasons of neglecting children and being unfaithful to husband. The binary logistic model shows that women who are habituated to use mobile for financial transactions have significantly ($p < 0.01$) lower odds to justify beating for any one reason compared to women who are not familiar with mobile banking. The multivariate regressions find that women who use mobile banking have 1.5 times ($p < 0.01$) higher chances to support wife-beating for refusing sex and 1.2 times ($p < 0.05$) higher odds to justify beating for poor cooking, compared to women who are not familiar with mobile banking. In all cases, more percent of women, who don't own a mobile and also don't have a bank account, justify domestic violence than women who have mobile or bank accounts.

Motherhood (Having at least a child): A larger percentage of mothers (47%) justify wife-beating compared to women (40%) without any children and the χ^2 test finds a significant ($p < 0.01$) association with motherhood. Considering women without children as the reference category, it is found from the bivariate regression that mothers have 1.3 times ($p < 0.01$) higher odds to support beating for at least a reason compared to women who don't have a child. The multivariate models show similar results but with some loss in statistical significance in all reasons except mothers have 1.2 times ($p < 0.05$) higher odds of justifying wife-beating for going out without permission compared to childless women.

Listens Radio: The χ^2 test indicates a significant ($p < 0.05$) association between habit of listening radio and women justifying wife-beating for the reasons of going out without permission, refusing sex, poor cooking and overall situation. From all three logistic models it is found that women who listen radio have significantly ($p < 0.01$) higher odds of around 1.1-1.2 times to justify wife-beating for at least a reason, for going out without permission, refusing sex and being unfaithful compared to women who don't listen radio. However, the result for listening radio is insignificant ($p > 0.1$) for the reason of disrespecting in-laws. In contrast it is found that less percentage of women who read newspapers support wife-beating compared to women who don't read newspapers.

Uses Internet: A larger percentage of women who don't use internet (49%), and in comparison, 38% women who use internet reported justification of wife-beating for overall situation, and the χ^2 test indicates a strong significant ($p < 0.01$) association between internet use and women justifying wife-beating for overall and seven individual reasons. The logistic analysis finds that women who use internet have significantly lower odds of around 0.6-0.9 times ($p < 0.01$) to justify wife-beating for any reason and all reasons compared to women who don't use the internet.

Husband's drinking (alcohol) habit: The χ^2 test indicates a strong significant ($p < 0.01$) association between husband's alcoholism and women justifying wife-beating for overall and seven individual reasons, and overall, a larger percentage of women (55%) with husband's drinking habit have supported wife-beating compared to other women (45%). Logistic models find husband's alcoholism as a positive contributor for women's justification for wife-beating, such as compared to women whose husbands don't drink, the women with alcoholic husband have significantly higher odds of around 1.2-1.5 times ($p < 0.01$) to support wife-beating for at

least a reason, and also for other reasons except refusing sex, spoiling food, and being unfaithful to husband.

Among women the most prevalent reasons for justifying wife-beating are disrespecting in-laws followed by neglecting children and the lowest support is found for refusing sex, in case of most of the predictors. The state-wise analysis shows that women from southern states of India, such as Andhra Pradesh (OR: 8.3, $p < 0.01$), Puducherry (5.9, $p < 0.01$), Telangana (5.2, $p < 0.01$) and Tamil Nadu (4.8, $p < 0.01$) have the highest odds to justify wife-beating compared to women in other states (reference: Jammu & Kashmir). Women from Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (0.08, $p < 0.01$) Chandigarh (0.16, $p < 0.01$) Andaman & Nicobar (0.19, $p < 0.01$) have the lowest odds to justify wife-beating for at least a reason, compared to women in other states (reference: Jammu & Kashmir).

Robustness of the results was checked by probit regression analysis and found similar results such as rural location, poverty, lower education, working status, property owners, listening radio, and non-users of internet have positive and significant impacts on women's justification of wife beating.

5. Discussion and Policy recommendations:

In Indian patriarchal society, wide prevalence of domestic violence continues, and surprisingly, women themselves justify wife-beating, blaming the circumstances and/or the victims for their behavior rather than blaming the offenders. The survey asked the questions of justification of wife-beating for seven different reasons that represent different dimensions of married women's lives, such as restriction on autonomy; considering childcare and household chores are responsibilities of wife only, obedience to husband and in-laws' authority; among others. In the analysis, it is found that the most prevalent reason for justifying wife-beating among women is disrespecting in-laws followed by neglecting children and the least important is found to be refusing sex. As the society, Indian women themselves believe that women should be obedient to the in-laws and husband and take care of the household, particularly children, otherwise beating is justified for not fulfilling the important duties of the wife.

Some of the explanatory variables' associations are found as expected, such as rural, lower educated, poor and older women support wife-beating more compared to others. However, it is found that older women have lower odds to justify wife-beating for disrespecting in-laws as obedience to in-laws at older age becomes trivial in contrast to the younger newly wed women. Wealth group analysis shows that poorest, and in some cases, middle class women are more prone to support wife-beating compared to women in the richer groups. As per caste and religion, the results are not consistent across the reasons, however overall, the general category and ST women have lower odds, and Muslim women have higher odds to justify beating compared to other women. Mothers are found to have higher odds of supporting wife-beating than other women, as the mothers considered wife should be more responsible to perform duties as they themselves take these responsibilities more seriously. As it is well-established in the literature that husband's alcoholism is a positive predictor of domestic violence, and for the women with alcoholic husband supporting wife-beating does not come as a surprise, as they themselves may face and accept that regularly. The most hopeful predictor is education, higher educated women are significantly less likely to justify violence, compared to others.

The working status and property ownership are found to be significantly and positively associated with women's justification of wife-beating. When a woman works in a paid job and for this she has to stay away from home during working hours, with a patriarchal mindset she feels guilty of not doing enough for the household, and thus, would like to compensate even taking higher burden of doing both, job and household chores. Even the most successful women working in a position of power are expected to attend the household duties, the women themselves believe and support this too. The working women with patriarchal beliefs would strongly adhere to the gender-stereotyped values, and thus, would support wife-beating in cases wife fails to perform her household duties. Another proxy of economic empowerment is property ownership, and this predictor also has similar results as the working status of women. This indicates that economic and financial empowerment doesn't improve the mindset of the women and/or society. Women in debt are also found to support wife-beating more, as the stress of repayment makes women more vulnerable to the thought of putting the family in pressure and thus adhere to patriarchal mindset similarly as the working women. Other indicators of empowerment, such as exposure to banking and use of internet to know the world are used in the analysis, and as expected, it is found that women who are familiar with mobile banking and habituated with internet have lower odds of justifying wife-beating compared to other women who are not habituated with these.

So overall, Indian women themselves believe that women should be obedient to the in-laws and husband and take care of the household and children, otherwise beating is justified for not fulfilling the important duties of wives. While it is evident that economic and financial freedom has not been enough to change women's views, rather creating confusion towards duties and rights in the prevalence of patriarchal mindsets, the policy direction could be that education, particularly social and behavioural education and awareness on women's rights facilitated by improved access to mobile and internet, would help promote egalitarian views among women and in society at large.

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