

Couple Interaction and Predicting Vulnerability to Domestic Violence in Uttar Pradesh

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During last few decades increasing attention has been paid on the issues of domestic violence. Domestic violence comprises of physical, emotional, sexual and economical abuse occurring in adult relationship between intimate partners within the household. Domestic violence against women is one of the gender based violence and affects women's sense of personality, causing insecurity, lack of safety, loss of health and self importance. Domestic violence has been emerged as a potentially important factor for sexual, reproductive and child health. It also affects contraceptive behaviour of a couple as well as the level of infant death. Here we have considered only physical domestic violence against female which took place within the household because it affects female in all sphere of life. In the present analysis an attempt has been made to study the relationship between female's experience of domestic violence and couple interaction separately after controlling some socio-demographic variables using logistic regression techniques. For this study Uttar Pradesh which is the most populated state of India has been considered and the data has been taken from NFHS-III conducted during 2005-06. Findings reveal that 43 percent women suffer from physical domestic violence in the society as a whole and if couple takes joint decision the prevalence of domestic violence were observed to be 24 percent less. Education and occupation of female, standard of living, media exposure and partner's alcoholic behaviors are also found to be possible predictor domestic violence.

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the issue of domestic violence emerged as a primary concern among the growing community of researchers and policy makers who are interested in women's health and their status. It has also come out as a central concern because such violence impedes the women's economic and social development and capacity for self-determination. Although, women in developing countries experience violence in various forms throughout their lives, domestic violence is the most pervasive form of violence against women (Heise et. al., 1994). Female to male partner violence may also occur but the most predominant form of domestic violence in developing countries is male to female violence.

Despite the growing interest in this issue, most of the studies have been limited to western countries only. Population based evidence on the enormity of domestic violence, its

precipitating factors and its consequences for women and their families remain scares in most of the developing countries. In the absence of reliable data on the extent of this problem, many policy makers have been reluctant to address this issue, given that it touches on what has traditionally been viewed as a highly personal and sensitive aspect of family life. However, some studies have explored the level and determinants of domestic violence in South Asia including India and have mostly attributed it to hierarchical gender relations (Heise et. al.1994). Wife beating alone has been subject of research in two important Indian studies by Jejeebhoy & Cook (1997) and Rao (1997). These studies reveal that the prevalence rate of domestic violence is very high and deeply rooted in India.

Domestic violence may arise from a combination of individual, biological and psychological characteristics as well as social, economic factors such as social stratification, poverty, gender inequality, social norms and tradition. Levinson (1989) has outlined three factors that predict domestic violence. According to him, a pattern of using physical violence for conflict resolution, male authority in the home and divorce restriction on women create conditions that are conducive to domestic violence. Many research works have confirmed a strong association between socioeconomic status and domestic violence. In a study, household wealth and partner's education is inversely associated with domestic violence (Jejeebhoy & Cook, 1997 & Martin et al. 1999). In addition to immediate physical injury, domestic violence is linked to such other negative health outcomes as unwanted pregnancies, increased risk of sexually transmitted infection, and mental ailments. Women' experience of domestic violence is also associated with their autonomy but, it is not clear how women autonomy affect the risk of experiencing domestic violence particularly in developing countries. Thus, possible link between status of women or women's autonomy and domestic violence have received considerable attention in recent years. A study conducted by Jejeebhoy (1998) has identified that the sex of the children, autonomy of women, religion and caste are some of the risk factors for domestic violence. Besides these it is found in another study (Gerstein, 2000) that in Uttar Pradesh, men's low educational level and poverty are important reason for domestic violence.

Studies conducted by Schuler & Hashmi et al (1996) and Koenig et al. (2003) reveals that women with increased status which is measured by their educational attainment, degree of autonomy or control over resources are more protected from violence. Many studies have shown that increased women autonomy may actually exacerbate the risk of violence (Koenig et. al.,

2003), however, some evidence shows that this association may be context specific and that, in more conserve setting. Thus, women status plays an important role in shaping women's risk of domestic violence Inspite of varying definitions and diverse methodologies, current research provides important insights into the determinants and consequences of domestic violence.

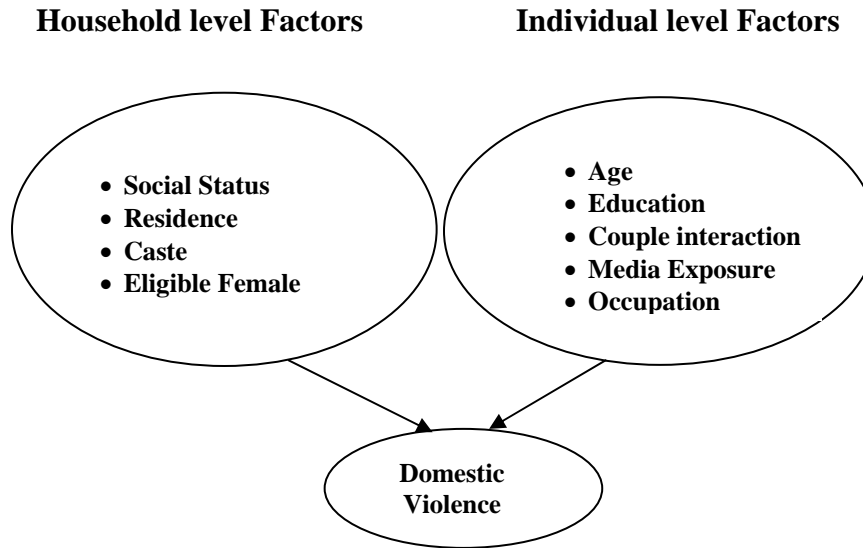
Since, Indian society is mainly patriarchal i.e. men oriented society (Altekar, 1962; Karve, 1965). Cultural and social norms that enhance patriarchal values are impelled in Indian society and, in the process they perpetuate inequality between men and women and condone violence against women. Rigid gender role in Indian society has negative effect as couple interaction such as male dominance. Studies on domestic violence have indicated that it is pervasive and deeply rooted in socio-cultural norms (Bhatti, 1990, Miller, 1981, Mitra, 1999). However, little research has been conducted on the prediction of vulnerability of women to the experience of domestic violence incidents in the context of her socioeconomic and cultural background. In this study an attempt has been made to know the relationship of couple interaction with female experience of physical domestic violence. The dynamics of couple interaction within the Indian context is essential to understand the extent of domestic violence.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual frameworks and broader understanding of the underlying determinants of domestic violence in the developing country are in early stages of development. The causal factors and processes associated with the phenomenon of domestic violence are not clearly understood (Kishor & Johnson, 2004). By examining the selected background characteristics of the individual and their relationships affecting spousal interaction, it is possible to figure out certain factors that are associated with an increased vulnerability of experiencing domestic violence.

Figure 1 outline our broader conceptual framework to predict the vulnerability of women to domestic violence. Our framework posits domestic violence to be a function of the interrelated effect of individual and household level characteristics. At the household level, the key constellations of determinants are social status, residence, caste and number of eligible female in the family and at the individual level the key constellation are age, education, couple interaction, media exposure and occupation. The subsequent paragraph justifies the insertion of the above mentioned probable risk factors for women experience of domestic violence.

Figure1. Framework for the Determinants of Domestic Violence



Household Level Factors

Social Status of Household: A common assumption in the literature on domestic violence is that the women who belong to low social status of household are more likely to experience violence than the women who belong to middle or higher social status (Heise, 1998; Jeweks, 2002). However, low socio-economic status of the household is not necessarily a causal factor; but it is generally assumed that low socio-economic status may increase the risk of domestic violence.

Place of Residence: In general the absence of social interaction in urban living so it is believed to be associated with higher risk of domestic violence. Kishor & Johnson (2004) had shown in his multi-country study that in majority of developing countries, women living in urban area are more likely to experience domestic violence than their rural counterpart, only two counties (India and Egypt) show opposite relationship.

Caste: Various studies have also shown that women's caste has some association with the risk of experiencing domestic violence (Visaria, 1999). In socio-economic hierarchy of India, women from scheduled caste and scheduled tribe and other backward classes are still most deprived and disadvantage groups in terms of their status in the house, higher number of children, shortage of resources, which may lead to intensify level of pressure on head of family, which in turn may be one of the cause of domestic violence.

Eligible Female in the Household: Previous researches have shown different relationship between experience of domestic violence and number of eligible member in the household.

Many studies suggest that women living with another eligible female in the house receive a degree of protection from domestic violence (Daga 1998).

Individual Level Factors

Current Age of the Female: Various studies have shown that women's age affects the likelihood that she would experience domestic violence (Daga, 1998). Experience of violence is generally hypothesized that increase with the age of female domestic violence increases, since, for older women her period of exposure to the risk of domestic violence is longer. However, the study conducted by Kishor & Johnson (2004) indicates that the relationship between age of the women and domestic violence is not simple, but, it does not increase monotonically and varies erratically within narrow range of age.

Education: Education has been one of the factors of empowerment of women. It has given women autonomy and the capability to assemble and incorporate information, and control the modern world and protect themselves from any form of violence (Kishor, 2000, Kishor & Johnson 2004). It is assumed that women with more education have greater abilities to protect themselves in times of need, such as dealing with a violent partner. Thus, it is expected that women with higher level of education experience less violence. Studies conducted at INCLEN (2000) suggest that this variation should be interpreted carefully as women with higher education and from higher social status are less likely to disclose such experience.

Occupation of Female: Economic independence is also one of the leading factor for women's economic independence. The relationship between work status of the women and her experience of domestic violence can be conceptualized in a way that women who are engaged in paid employment have more say over household matters. However, due to transition phase, the changing economic control from men to women can also lead to more incidents of domestic violence.

Couple Interaction: There is rare empirical evidence on the role of the couple interaction in shaping women's risk of domestic violence. Considerable uncertainty persists concerning the extent to which this dimension is protective against violence. The study conducted by Jejeebhoy and Cook (1997) revealed that women control over resources was associated with significantly lower risk of domestic violence. A study from Philippines found that although the risk of

domestic violence is higher when husband/wife dominates major decisions relative to joint decision making (Hindin & Adair, 2002).

Media Exposure: Exposure to mass media are some of the means by which women gain status within the household as well as outside the household (Caldwell, 1979). Because with the media exposure women interest with outside of the world. She gain some knowledge about the real life problems and have interest in the outside world but sometime the knowledge gain through media such as from TV or newspaper may not be good for her social life. This type of knowledge may be one of the reason of increasing domestic violence.

Data and Methodology

For the analysis purpose the present study uses the data for Uttar Pradesh from National Family Health Survey (NFHS-III) conducted during 2005-06. NFHS along with information on fertility, mortality, family planning and healthcare, also provide information on three type violence against women, i.e. physical, sexual and emotional. In this study, only physical violence has been considered as domestic violence.

In NFHS-III, domestic violence is defined as violence by spouse as well as by other household members. International research has shown that spousal violence is one of the most commons forms of violence experienced by women. Based on conceptual framework, the predictor variables in the study are women's current age, education, caste, standard of living index, place of residence, occupation of women, media exposure, eligible women lived in the household and whether partner drink alcohol or not.

In order to examine the linkages between couple interaction and domestic violence, a dichotomous variable couple interaction was generated. To define couple interaction, following questions have been used; such as, who takes decision about obtaining her own health care, making large household purchase, making purchase for daily household needs, visiting their family relative, and who usually makes each decision about household activities. Couple interaction is 'yes', means decision were taken jointly for all the above five mentioned questions and 'no' for decision was not taken by jointly for any one of the above mentioned question i.e. either by husband or by wife.

Bivariate analysis has been done with selected background variables in order to investigate socio-economic and demographic characteristics of women exposed to violence;

further, the impact of various background characteristics and couple interaction on women experience of domestic violence has been assessed through multivariate logistic regression analysis.

Result and Discussion

This analysis is based on 5873 women who provide complete information required for the present study in which 2565 women are vulnerable to the risk of domestic violence. The variables included in our study are shown in Table 1 along with their type and ranges. Table 2 represents the distribution of women according to domestic violence as well as some socio-demographic variables considered in the study. It may be noted from the table out of the total women considered in the study 58.66 percent are from rural background and rest 41.34 percent are from urban background. Result reveal that most (40 percent in all) of the women are from age group 20-30 years and the percentage of women in age group 30-40 years is 37.99, whereas, there are 17.68 percent women in the age group above 40 years. It is reflected from the table that only 40 percent women are literate and rest are illiterate. Only 10.56 percent completed their education up to eighth standard whereas, 16.92 percent completed their education up to class tenth. About 13 percent women are having education more than tenth standard. This shows that so far as educational level of women is concerned Uttar Pradesh is much behind among other states of India. The maximum percentage of women are noted in high status household followed by middle status, the percentage of women belonging to the household having medium and high status women are 35.25 and 39.76 percent respectively. As far as caste is concerned majority of women comes from OBC (Other backward castes) i.e. 46.71 percent and female belonging to the SC/ST category is 24.45 whereas 28.84 percent women are from other castes. The table also shows that 77.17 percent couples are not having interaction whereas; only 22.83 percent are having interaction to take any decision jointly. The table also depicts that 70.25 percent are having exposure to mass media. As far as occupation is concerned there are majority of women are housewife in the study sample. It is also reflected from the table that approximately one fourth women's partner drink alcohol.

The table reveals that the level of domestic violence is approximately 10 percent high among rural women than urban women. It is also interesting to note that women belongs to age group 30-40 years are more vulnerable to the risk domestic violence than other age group of

women. More than 46 percent of women who belong to age group 30-40 years experienced domestic violence while only about 31 percent of women belong to the age group below 20 years are vulnerable to the domestic violence. It is further noted that the prevalence of domestic violence decreases as the education of women increases. Illiterate women are more likely to face domestic violence which is approximately 52 percent compared to women having education high school and above which is only about 13 percent. A similar effect can be seen in context of social status. As social status of household of women increases the percent of female experiencing domestic violence decreases, 57.02 percent women belonging to low social status household are exposed to risk of domestic violence whereas, this percentage is only 30 if the women belong to high social status of household. It may also be noted from the table that approximately 60 percent women of SC/ST and 44.37 percent of OBC women are vulnerable to domestic violence. This percentage is quite low if the women belong to other caste category. The result of the table also indicated that where husband and wife jointly made household decisions women are less likely to face domestic violence which is 6 percent higher than the women who are not having such interaction. It is also reflected from the table that 51.42 percent working women are exposed to the risk of domestic violence. It may also be observed that when partner of women drink alcohol the prevalence of domestic violence is higher among the women whose partner take alcohol.

Table 3 provides the result of univariate logistic regression focusing on the women's experience of domestic violence. This table reveals that the women belonging to the urban areas have approximately 35 percent lower risk of experiencing domestic violence as compare to women living in rural areas. From the tables it is clear that there is a significant positive association between women's current age and domestic violence. Women of age group 20-30 and 30-40 are about 66 percent and 99 percent more risk of experiencing domestic violence as compare to women of reference category (below 20 yrs.), whereas women of age group 40 and above are 80 more likely to face domestic violence.

It is worthwhile to mention that the education of female has considerable impact on women vulnerability to domestic violence. The risk of violence is much higher for the women who are illiterate than any other category. The women whose education up to class eight have nearly 21 percent less risk of experiencing domestic violence, and those women's education up to tenth or more have nearly 86 percent lower risk of experiencing violence. Similarly, social

status of household has significant effect on the women's experience of domestic violence. It is evident from the table that the women belonging to the household having middle and high social status has about 27 and 67 percent respectively lesser risk of domestic violence than low social status groups. Here as the social status of the household is increasing the risk of female experiencing domestic violence is decreasing significantly. Caste also emerges as significant predictor of domestic violence, as compare to reference category (others) women belonging to SC/ST has 2.89 times and OBC has 1.75 times higher risk of experiencing domestic violence. The result also depict that 20 percent less chance of domestic violence for women who belongs to households having more than one eligible women as compared to its counterpart i.e. the household having one eligible female. Similarly, the table depicts that housewife are 38 percent significantly less likely to experience domestic violence as compare to working women. It is also evident from the tables that couple interaction has remarkable effect on the experience of domestic violence. Those women who take decision jointly with their spouse have approximately 24 percent lesser risk of experiencing domestic violence as compare to their counterpart (decision taken individually husband or wife). The relationship of domestic violence to the factor media exposure and partner drink alcohol is also statistically significant, women who have exposed to mass media 33 percent are less vulnerable to domestic violence, whereas those women whose husband drink alcohol are 2.56 times more risk of experiencing domestic violence then the women whose partner not drink alcohol.

Table 4 shows the result of multivariate logistic models to assess the impact of couple interaction on female's experience of domestic violence after controlling some socio-demographic variables. Model-I shows the effect of couple interaction on female experience of violence excluding the socio-demographic variable partner drink alcohol. It is interesting to see the Table 3 that after controlling various socio-demographic results is in reverse order of univariate case that is urban women has approximately 13 percent significantly more risk of experiencing domestic violence than rural women. Women belonging to age group 20-30, 30-40 and above 40 experience significantly higher risk of violence relative to reference group (below age 20). The risk of domestic violence is 1.82, 2.19 and 2.18 times higher in age group 20-30, 30-40 and 40 and above respectively as compare to the reference group. The risk of experiencing domestic violence is increasing significantly with the increase in age group of woman which is an agreement with earlier findings that woman's age also affects likelihood that she will

experience domestic violence (Daga, 1998; Visaria, 1999). It can be seen from the table that education is protective against the risk of domestic violence. From these tables it is evident that the risk is 32 and 79 percent lower in women having education up to class ninth and high school and above respectively with respect to female if she is illiterate. From the tables it is clear that as the education of women is increasing the chance of domestic violence is decreasing but if the education of women is up to certain level (8th class) there is no significant effect of education on domestic violence. This may be due to the fact that education has been one of the sources of empowerment for women and given ability to women to gather and assimilate information, manipulate and control the modern world, secure and protect themselves from any form of violence (Malhotra, 1997; Kishor, 2000 & 2004). It is hypothesized that women with more education have greater ability to protect themselves in times of need, such as when dealing with a violent partner. Social status of the household also emerges as a significant predictor of domestic violence against female. The women belonging to middle and high social status have significantly lower risk of violence relative to women belonging to lower social status. The result indicates that women belonging to middle and high social status household have 20 and 45 percent lower risk respectively than the women who belongs to low social status household. Heise (1998) and Jeweks (2002) have also showed in their study that women who are poor are more likely to experience violence than the women who are not poor. Byrne (1999) suggested that the aggravation or even causation of economic instability may contribute to domestic violence.

Women belonging to SC/ST and OBC have 44 and 7 percent higher risk of experiencing domestic violence compared to reference group (others) and the difference is highly significant for SC/ST. The result of the table also depicts that those female who are belonging to the household where more than one eligible female are lived are 12 percent significantly less vulnerable to domestic violence than the women who are belonging to the household where only one eligible female is reside. In joint family there is more chance of counseling of the couple by the other member of household than in the nuclear family. The relationship between occupation and domestic violence is also evident from the table; housewife has 15 percent less chance to face domestic violence than the working women. Media exposure is significantly related with domestic violence. In univariate result media exposure has a strong inverse relation but in multivariate study the result is found reversed, here we find that those women who are exposed

to media are at 9 percent higher risk of experiencing domestic violence. Those women whose husband drinks alcohol are at 2.26 times significantly higher risk of domestic violence than their counterpart which is similar to the result of the study conducted among Turkish women by Deveci et al. (2007). In Model-II of this table the variable partner drink alcohol is introduced. The performance of all variable considered in Model-I are found in same pattern in the Model-II, whereas the variable couple interaction is negatively associated with the risk of domestic violence. It is observed from the table that proper interaction between couple i.e. they always take joint decision about their life, has highly significant effect on female experience of domestic violence. Women who take decision jointly with their spouse have approximately 25 percent lesser risk of experiencing domestic violence as compare to their counterpart (decision taken individually by husband or wife). This result is an agreement with the earlier studies conducted in Philippines by Hindin et al. (2002) that women are more vulnerable to domestic violence when in the major decisions of household either take by husband or by wife. Log likelihood of the Model-II shows that this model is better than Model-I to explain the phenomenon of domestic violence. In nut shell the study wrap up that the program should be launched to enhance the spousal communication in precise mode so that they can be able to think properly about their future life.

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Table 1. Summery of Key Variables for Analysis: Domestic Violence

Variable	Type	Codes/Range
Individual Level Variables		
Age	Categorical	Under 20 years (reference category) 20-30 30-40 40 and above
Education	Categorical	Illiterate (reference category) 1-8 8-9 10 and above
Occupation	Categorical	Housewife (reference category) Working
Media Exposure	Categorical	No (reference category) Yes
Couple Interaction(taking decision jointly)	Categorical	No (reference category) Yes
Household Level Variables		
Social Status	Categorical	Low (reference Category) Middle High
Residence	Categorical	Rural (reference Category) Urban
Caste	Categorical	Others (reference category) SC/ST OBC
Eligible Female in Household	Ordinal	1-10
Partner Drink Alcohol	Categorical	No (reference category) Yes

Table 2: Percent Distribution of Domestic Violence experienced by women according to some socio-demographic variables

Variables	Percentage of female (N=5873)	Percentage of female experiencing domestic violence
Place of Residence		
Urban	41.34	36.64
Rural	58.66	47.92
Female's Current Age		
<20	4.80	30.50
20-30	39.59	42.19
30-40	37.99	46.66
>=40	17.62	44.15
Female's Education		
No Education	59.56	51.94
1-8	10.56	46.29
8-10	16.92	36.12
>=10	12.96	13.40
Female's Social Status		
Low	25.00	57.02
Middle	35.25	49.13
High	39.76	30.45
Caste		
SC/ST	24.45	56.89
OBC	46.71	44.37
Others	28.84	31.35
Number of Eligible Female in the Household		
EW (single female)	74.78	45.63
EW1 (more than one female)	25.22	37.88
Couple Interaction		
Yes	22.83	38.48
No	77.17	45.21
Media Exposure		
Yes	70.25	40.77
No	29.75	55.54
Occupation		
Housewife	66.49	39.77
Working	33.51	51.42
Partner Drink Alcohol		
Yes	25.97	60.79
No	74.03	37.67
Domestic Violence		
Yes	43.67	-
No	56.33	-

Table 3-Univariate Logistic regression analysis to assess the association between background characteristics of respondent and experience of domestic violence in Uttar Pradesh

Variable	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Place of Residence ¹			
Urban	0.6560***	0.5901	0.7292
Female's Current Age ²			
20-30	1.6635***	1.2743	2.1716
30-40	1.9937***	1.5268	2.6034
>=40	1.8020***	1.3597	2.3881
Female's Education ³			
1-8	0.7974*	0.6719	0.9463
8-10	0.5230***	0.4522	0.6049
>=10	0.1432***	0.1151	0.1782
Female's Social Status ⁴			
Middle	0.7281***	0.6364	0.8329
High	0.3301***	0.2881	0.3781
Caste ⁵			
SC/ST	2.8908***	2.4970	3.3467
OBC	1.7467***	1.5379	1.9839
Number of Eligible Female in the Household ⁶			
EW1(more than one female)	0.7998***	0.7388	0.8658
Occupation ⁷			
Housewife	0.6238***	0.5592	0.6957
Media Exposure ⁸			
Yes	0.6734***	0.6018	0.7536
Partner Drink Alcohol ⁸			
Yes	2.5647***	2.2753	2.8908
Couple Interaction ⁸			
Yes	0.7579***	0.6691	0.8585

Statistical significance: ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10

Reference Categories: ¹Rural, ²Age (<=20), ³Illiterate, ⁴Low, ⁵Others, ⁶EW, ⁷Working, ⁸No

Table 4-Multivariate Logistic regression analysis to assess the association between background characteristics of respondent and experience of domestic violence in Uttar Pradesh

Variable	Model-I			Model-II		
	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval		Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Place of Residence ¹						
Urban	1.1261 [*]	0.9836	1.2893	1.1354 [*]	0.9914	1.3003
Female's Age ²						
20-30	1.8211 ^{***}	1.3755	2.4111	1.8426 ^{***}	1.3916	2.4397
30-40	2.1889 ^{***}	1.6477	2.9080	2.2416 ^{***}	1.6868	2.9788
>=40	2.1755 ^{***}	1.6104	2.9388	2.2270 ^{***}	1.6480	3.0095
Female's Education ³						
1-8	0.9701	0.8060	1.1676	0.9646	0.8011	1.1613
8-10	0.6759 ^{***}	0.5713	0.7997	0.6757 ^{***}	0.5709	0.7998
>=10	0.2058 ^{***}	0.1595	0.2655	0.2071 ^{***}	0.1605	0.2672
Female's Social Status ⁴						
Middle	0.7964 ^{***}	0.6890	0.9206	0.7908 ^{***}	0.6839	0.9143
High	0.5564 ^{***}	0.4624	0.6695	0.5514 ^{***}	0.4581	0.6637
Caste ⁵						
SC/ST	1.4385 ^{***}	1.2157	1.7021	1.4452 ^{***}	1.2210	1.7106
OBC	1.0686	0.9241	1.2358	1.0668	0.9223	1.2338
Number of Eligible Female in the Household ⁶						
EW1(more than one female)	0.8777 ^{***}	0.8043	0.9579	0.8670 ^{***}	0.7942	0.9465
Occupation ⁷						
Housewife	0.8461 ^{***}	0.7488	0.9561	0.8404 ^{***}	0.7435	0.9499
Media Exposure ⁸						
Yes	1.0887	0.9514	1.2458	1.1090	0.9687	1.2697
Partner Drink Alcohol ⁸						
Yes	2.2581 ^{***}	1.9877	2.5654	2.2442 ^{***}	1.9750	2.5501
Couple Interaction ⁸						
Yes	-	-	-	0.7453 ^{***}	0.6516	0.8525
Log likelihood	7239.99			7221.46		

Statistical significance: ***p<0.01, **p<0.05, *p<0.10

Reference Categories: ¹Rural, ²Age (<=20), ³Illiterate, ⁴Low, ⁵Others, ⁶EW, ⁷Working, ⁸No