

A Nexus between Diversity in Women's Empowerment and Violation of their Sexual Rights in India: Evidence from National Family Health Surveys

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Abstract

Concern of women's empowerment in terms of violence reduction has become a burning issue in India since last few decades. Highlighting these issues would be impossible without realization of sexual rights of women. Mounting evidences of women's empowerment in the country does not make women privileged in providing them, their sexual rights. This study aims to explore whether diverse situation of women's empowerment is influencing violence against women including their perceived sexual rights by using data of National Family Health Survey fourth round, conducted in 2015-2016. Findings of this study reveal that upswing in the status of women in different dimension of empowerment has reduced the percentage of women who experienced spousal violence across all states of India except Meghalaya, Manipur, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Karnataka. Further, lack of equity in women's empowerment is adversely related to their perceived sexual rights. It is found that the percentage of women perceiving about sexual rights has decline in India from 75% in NFHS-3 to 70% in NFHS-4. Even after being financially empowered and holding rights in household decision making, women lack in negotiation power in individual decision making which relates to their reproductive and sexual rights. Thus, the recent upswing in different dimension of women's empowerment is not leading towards qualitative change in life of women and they are still victim of violence which largely affects their physical and mental health.

Keywords: Women empowerment; Diversity; Spousal violence; Sexual rights

Background

Approximately 30% of women age 15 and above around the world, have experienced physical and/or intimate partner violence. Domestic violence is associated with health and psychological problems for women and adverse consequences for children later in life. Despite the seriousness of the issue, the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of prevention interventions is still scarce in developing countries [1]. India is a complex country where through centuries people have developed various types of customs, traditions and practices. These customs and traditions, good as well as bad, have become a part of our society's collective consciousness. We worship female goddesses; we also give great importance to our mothers, daughters, sisters, wives and other female relatives or friends. But at the same time, Indians are also famous for treating their women badly both inside and outside their homes. In every religion woman are given a special place and every religion teaches us to treat women with respect and dignity. But, somehow the society has so developed that various types of ill practices, both physical and mental, against women have become a norm since ages.

For instance, sati pratha, practice of dowry, parda-pratha, female infanticide, wife burning, sexual violence, sexual harassment at work place, domestic violence and other varied kinds of discriminatory practices; all such acts consists of physical as well as mental element. The reasons for such behavior against women are many but the most important one are the male superiority complex and patriarchal system

of society. Though to eliminate these ill practices and discrimination against women various constitutional and legal rights are there but in reality there are a lot to be done. Several self-help groups and NGOs are working in this direction; also women themselves are breaking the societal barriers and achieving great heights in all dimensions: political, social and economic. But society as a whole has still not accepted women as being equal to men and crimes or abuses against women are still on the rise.

Empowerment of women is socio-political ideal envisioned in relation to the wider framework of women's right. It is the process that leads women to realize their full potential, their rights to have access to opportunities, resources and choices with the freedom of decision making both within and outside home. In simple word, it can be understood as giving power to women decide for their own lives or including such abilities in them so that they could be able to find their rightful place in the society. Empowerment would be achieved only when advancement in the condition of women is accompanied by their ability to influence the direction of social change gained through equal opportunities in economic, social and political spheres of life [2].

Studies have yielded conflicting information on the association between women's empowerment and violence, particularly in terms of economic opportunity, control of assets and participation in social groups. While women with greater economic resources, such as ownership of land, jewelry and other valuables, were less likely to report violence [3]. In fact, a number of other studies have shown that employed women have been found to report violence more frequently than unemployed women [3-5]. The health implications for women who participate in community social groups have not been examined

in India. However, studies in Bangladesh have documented both elevated as well as lowered odds of reported violence among women participating in microcredit programs [6,7].

Several studies reported that Women's ownership of land and property is strongly associated with a reduction in violence than employment as it acts as a "tangible exit option", strengthening women's fall-back position and therefore their bargaining power within marriage and acts as a deterrent to marital violence [8-10].

Women's vulnerability to violence is related to their general vulnerability in socio-economic systems. Land ownership results in decreasing gender-based violence largely because of women's economic empowerment and their increased agency in decision-making over land and its products, as well as increase in women's confidence, self-esteem, freedom of mobility and access to market. These factors result in enabling women to have a stronger voice and claims-making to rights and freedom, which in-turn act as deterrents to violence against women [11].

Sexual rights are the important part of reproductive rights, which include "the right to sexual freedom, autonomy, integrity, and safety of the sexual body. It also includes the right to sexual privacy, equity, sexual pleasure, emotional sexual expression, the right to sexually associate freely, right to make free and responsible reproductive choices, the right to sexual information, education and the right to sexual health care" [12].

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are impossible without the realization of sexual rights. For women to lead healthy lives, and to be free to participate in social, economic and political life, they need universal access to quality services, information and education, and conditions that allow them to realize their sexual rights that will be a pathway to diminish the incidence of violence against women. There are growing evidences of a swing in women's empowerment in the country, but women are still less privileged in terms of their sexual rights. However, in India there are scarcities of studies on women's empowerment and their sexual rights. Therefore, the present study has mainly focused to find out the existence of diversity in the context of recent swing of women's empowerment in India during last one decade (2005-2006 to 2015-2016). Additionally, this paper aims to explore how diversity in women's empowerment is influencing violence against women including their perceived sexual rights.

Data and Methodology

The basic data used in this paper has been taken from National Family Health Survey fourth round (NFHS-4), conducted in 2015-2016 under the stewardship of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. The International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai has been designated as the nodal agency for different rounds of NFHS and ORC Macro, Calverton, Maryland, USA, currently known as the ICF International have been providing the technical support in different rounds of NFHS.

The National Family Health Survey is national sample survey designed to provide information on population, family planning, maternal and child health, child survival, HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reproductive health, and nutrition in India. Randomly selected women age 15-49 years were interviewed in

both rounds of the survey. The information on different dimensions of diversity in women's empowerment has been collected from approximately 649775 women aged 15-49 years in NFHS-4.

Violence against women has been assessed through their reported experience of spousal violence and perceived sexual rights. The spousal violence and perceived sexual rights have been taken as dependent variables to assess the vulnerability in the context of diversity in women's empowerment. To find the association between these dependent variables and diversity of different dimensions of women's empowerment the correlation and multivariate linear regression techniques have been used. The Simpson's Diversity Index defines the homogeneity or heterogeneity of spatial diversity across different population subgroups. The index is defined as follows:

Simpson's Diversity Index is a measure of diversity which takes into account the number of population sub groups present, as well as the relative abundance of each subgroup. As the richness and evenness of the subgroup increases, so the diversity in the population increases.

$$D=1-((\sum n(n-1))/(N(N-1)))$$

n=the proportion of particular district

N=the total proportion of occurrence of an event in all districts in each particular state

The value of D ranges between 0 and 1. With this index, 1 represents infinite diversity and 0 represents no diversity.

Results

Levels and diversity in women's empowerment across different states of India

The status of women in customary Indian society can be sedate by their autonomy in decision-making, ownership of house, land or assets, education and by the degree of access they have to the outside world. Table 1 presents the current situation of women's empowerment by using these dimensions across all 29 states and India as a whole. NFHS-4 has first time collected information on ownership of household assets, having a saving bank account and use of mobile phone.

Though India follows the tradition of patriarchal system of society, still significant proportions (38%) of women are having ownership of house or land. Results from the Table 1 reveal that the prevalence of women owning house or land is substantial and varies among the states. The proportion is lowest in Himachal Pradesh (11%) and highest in Manipur (70%) along with other north-eastern states like Arunachal Pradesh (60%), Meghalaya (57%), Tripura (57%) and Assam (52%). In other states like Odisha, Bihar, Karnataka, Jharkhand, and Telangana, more than half of the women have the ownership of a house or land. Women's empowerment has different dimensions and it can be approached in different ways.

Table 2 explored the level of diversity from different dimensions of women's empowerment by using Simpson's Diversity Index across 29 states in India. The table portrays that the level of diversity of owning of house or land is found less in state of Goa (0.520) and more heterogeneity is seen in Uttar Pradesh (0.985). The variation in diversity may be because of the variation in the size of the population.

States	Owning house or land	Bank account	Mobile use	Household decision making	Working in last 12 months who were paid in cash	Women who have 10 or more years of schooling
Andhra Pradesh	44.7	66.3	36.2	79.9	42.1	34.3
Arunachal Pradesh	59.7	56.6	59.8	89.1	17.1	31.0
Assam	52.3	45.4	46.0	87.4	17.0	26.2
Bihar	58.8	26.4	40.9	75.2	12.5	22.8
Chhattisgarh	26.4	51.3	31.0	90.5	36.8	26.5
Goa	33.9	82.8	80.9	93.8	23.6	58.2
Gujarat	27.2	48.6	47.9	85.4	30.2	33.0
Haryana	35.8	45.6	50.5	76.7	17.6	45.8
Himachal Pradesh	11.3	68.8	73.9	90.8	17.0	59.4
Jammu and Kashmir	33.3	60.3	54.2	84.0	12.4	37.2
Jharkhand	49.7	45.1	35.2	86.6	24.8	28.7
Karnataka	51.8	59.4	47.1	80.4	29.1	45.5
Kerala	34.9	70.6	81.2	92.1	20.4	72.2
Madhya Pradesh	43.5	37.3	28.7	82.8	29.9	23.2
Maharashtra	34.3	45.3	45.6	89.3	28.9	42.0
Manipur	69.9	34.8	63.1	96.2	40.9	45.9
Meghalaya	57.3	54.4	64.3	91.4	35.9	33.6
Mizoram	19.7	57.4	77.3	96.0	29.3	40.2
Nagaland	34.7	38.9	70.5	97.4	22.3	33.3
Odisha	63.5	56.2	39.2	81.8	22.5	26.7
Punjab	32.1	58.8	57.2	90.2	18.5	55.1
Rajasthan	24.1	58.2	41.4	81.7	18.6	25.1
Sikkim	24.8	63.5	79.8	95.3	19.9	40.7
Tamil Nadu	36.2	77.0	62.0	84.0	30.5	50.9
Telangana	50.5	59.7	47.8	81.1	45.2	43.3
Tripura	57.3	59.2	43.9	91.7	26.3	23.4
Uttar Pradesh	34.2	54.6	37.1	81.7	16.6	32.9
Uttarakhand	29.2	58.5	55.4	89.8	15.5	44.6
West Bengal	23.8	43.5	41.9	89.9	22.8	26.5
India	38.4	53.0	45.9	84.0	24.6	35.7

Table 1: Percentage of women having different dimensions of autonomy and empowerment across the states of India, NFHS-4 2015-2016.

Use of bank or savings account among women is quite prevalent among women age 15-49. More than 50% of women using bank account in India. Women who belongs to EAG states like Bihar (26%) and Madhya Pradesh (37%) along with North-eastern states such as Manipur (35%) and Nagaland (39%) reported to have lowest

ownership of bank account that they themselves can use, whereas Goa (83%) has the highest proportion of women owning bank or savings account followed by Tamil Nadu (77%), Kerala (71%), Himachal Pradesh (69%) and Andhra Pradesh (66%). Signs of women's empowerment are also evident in terms of increase in the percentage of

women having a savings account that they use themselves. The diversity in the ownership of bank account is found to be less in the state of Goa (0.500) followed by Sikkim (0.662) and Tripura (0.693) (Table 2). On the other hand, the diversity in the ownership of bank account is found high in the state of Uttar Pradesh (0.984) followed by Madhya Pradesh (0.975), Maharashtra and Bihar (0.969 each) and Tamil Nadu (0.968).

States	Owning House or Land	Bank Account	Mobile use	Household decision making	Working in last 12 months who were paid in cash	Women who have 10 or more years of schooling
Andhra Pradesh	0.920	0.923	0.923	0.922	0.920	0.918
Arunachal Pradesh	0.927	0.932	0.929	0.935	0.934	0.901
Assam	0.957	0.962	0.962	0.961	0.955	0.954
Bihar	0.968	0.969	0.972	0.971	0.972	0.960
Chhattisgarh	0.938	0.938	0.929	0.935	0.943	0.904
Goa	0.520	0.500	0.497	0.496	0.485	0.498
Gujarat	0.934	0.961	0.96	0.96	0.960	0.955
Haryana	0.943	0.948	0.95	0.951	0.945	0.948
Himachal Pradesh	0.913	0.915	0.916	0.915	0.907	0.913
Jammu and Kashmir	0.921	0.953	0.954	0.951	0.940	0.949
Jharkhand	0.952	0.949	0.948	0.949	0.953	0.925
Karnataka	0.962	0.966	0.963	0.964	0.965	0.961
Kerala	0.918	0.929	0.928	0.926	0.922	0.926
Madhya Pradesh	0.974	0.975	0.974	0.975	0.977	0.966
Maharashtra	0.967	0.969	0.969	0.971	0.969	0.967
Manipur	0.854	0.868	0.867	0.866	0.871	0.832
Meghalaya	0.830	0.841	0.836	0.843	0.844	0.706
Mizoram	0.855	0.861	0.863	0.865	0.862	0.855
Nagaland	0.884	0.862	0.884	0.885	0.902	0.801
Odisha	0.965	0.963	0.957	0.962	0.960	0.943
Punjab	0.938	0.949	0.949	0.949	0.949	0.948
Rajasthan	0.951	0.965	0.963	0.965	0.966	0.952
Sikkim	0.604	0.662	0.671	0.674	0.676	0.670
Tamil Nadu	0.961	0.968	0.969	0.968	0.968	0.967
Telangana	0.889	0.898	0.894	0.895	0.897	0.887
Tripura	0.737	0.693	0.661	0.698	0.729	0.581
Uttar Pradesh	0.985	0.984	0.984	0.984	0.983	0.980
Uttarakhand	0.924	0.917	0.916	0.912	0.905	0.889
West Bengal	0.936	0.946	0.945	0.947	0.947	0.936

Table 2: Diversity in women's empowerment across the different states of India, 2015-2016.

With the bank account, women's accessibility of mobile phones is too prevalent in Indian states. This study shows that 46% of women's are using mobile phone in India, however, the use differs by states and found to be lowest in EAG states. About 29% of women age 15-49 in

Madhya Pradesh use mobile this is found to be lowest among all the states followed by Chhattisgarh (31%), Jharkhand (35%), Andhra Pradesh (36%), Uttar Pradesh (37%) and Odisha (39%). In Assam, Karnataka, Telangana, Gujarat almost half of the women use mobile

phone. Moreover, the ownership of mobile is reported highest in the state of Goa and Kerala (81%) along with Sikkim (80%), Mizoram (77%) and Himachal Pradesh (74%). According to Connected Women 2015, a report by Group Special Mobile Association (GSMA), only 28% women in India own a mobile phone as against 43% men. The gender gap of mobile ownership, the report said, is as much as 114 million [13]. The diversity in use of mobile phone among women age 15-49 in the states of India portrays that the diversity is observed to be less in Goa (0.497) followed by Tripura (0.661) and Sikkim (0.671). Nevertheless, except Goa, Tripura and Sikkim, the diversity is considerable in rest of the states and found to be highest in Uttar Pradesh (0.984).

Women's empowerment may be the key slogan for every government since independence, but the findings of a government report show that women still lag behind men in having a say in decision making and in their participation in economic activity. Our study portrays that women's household decision making is substantially high in all the states of India. However, still it varies from 75% which is the lowest in EAG state like Bihar and highest in Nagaland (97%), accompanied by Mizoram (96%), Manipur (96%), Sikkim (95%), Tripura (92%), Meghalaya (91%) and Assam (87%). Diversity in household decision making is noteworthy in all the states except Goa (0.496), Sikkim (0.674) and Tripura (0.698).

Economic existence of women across the states of India from their work status in last 12 months reveals that percentage of women working in last 12 months who were paid in cash is the lowest Bihar and Jammu and Kashmir (12% each), whereas the percentage is highest in Telangana (45%) followed by Andhra Pradesh (42%), Manipur (41%), Chhattisgarh (37%), Meghalaya (36%), Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh (30% each). An educational attainment of women diminishes the gender gap and maximizes the women's

empowerment. The results show that percentage of women who have 10 or more years of schooling is lowest in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Tripura (23% each).

Further, the scenario is more or less same in other EAG states like Rajasthan (25%), Odisha (27%) and Chhattisgarh (27%). In Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Goa and Himachal Pradesh more than half of women have completed 10 or more years of schooling. The highest percentage of women having 10 or more years of schooling is reported in Kerala (72%) accompanied by Himachal Pradesh (59%) and Goa (58%). In case of women's 10 or more years of schooling, diversity is observed to be less in Goa (0.498), Tripura (0.581) and Sikkim (0.670) and considerably high in rest of the states. Findings from Table 3 reveal that diversity in women's empowerment in Goa, Sikkim and Tripura is marginal. As diversity in these three states is less in terms of ownership of house/land, having bank account, use of mobile phone, household decision making, working in last 12 months and paid in cash and 10 or more years of schooling. The north-eastern states namely Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland present more or less same diversity for the above different dimension of women's empowerment. However, diversity is profound in most of the EAG states.

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix of indicators of women's empowerment. The correlation matrix shows the statistical measure of association between the indicators. The indicator "Household decision making" is highly correlated with the women having "Bank Account" and "Use Mobile". The lowest correlation of "Household decision making" is with "Owning House or Land" and "Women who have 10 or more years of schooling". Women "owning house and Land" are highly correlated with having "Bank account" and "working in the last 12 months who were paid in cash". The indicator "Bank account" is highly correlated with the "Use of mobile".

Variables	Household decision making	Owning House or Land	Bank Account	Mobile	Working in last 12 months who were paid in cash	Women who have 10 or more years of schooling
Household decision making	1					
Owning House or Land	0.64	1				
Bank Account	0.96	0.68	1			
Mobile	0.94	0.5	0.9	1		
Working in last 12 months who were paid in cash	0.79	0.64	0.71	0.63	1	
Women who have 10 or more years of schooling	0.63	0.22	0.67	0.73	0.22	1

Table 3: Correlations between indicators of women empowerment in NFHS-4 (2015-2016).

Empowerment and violence against women across different states of India

In India, the differences in the experience of any form of violence are distinct with respect to the level of female literacy, rights in decision making, age at marriage of girls, female work participation rate, and somehow the level of alcohol consumptions by their husband. Women's participation in household decision making was substantial in NFHS-3, which has again increased in India (77% to 84%) and all the states over the period (Table 4). However, in Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Mizoram and Assam percentage of women participating in household decision making has been declined by 7.1,

6.6, 3.4, 1.2 and 0.7% points from NFHS-3 to NFHS-4. Furthermore, percentage of women participating in household decision making has considerably increased in Jammu and Kashmir (23% point) followed by West Bengal (20% point), Uttarakhand (18% point) and Rajasthan (17% point) and Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh (14% point each). While, women's participation in decision making has improved in all the states, at the same time percentage of women married before age 18 has significantly declined from NFHS-3 to NFHS-4. The proportion of women married before age 18 shows the effective change in one decade as results reveals that in NFHS-3, 47% of women are married before age 18 which has declined to 27% in NFHS-4. The highest decline seems in EAG states namely Uttar Pradesh (57% to 21%) Chhattisgarh

(55% to 21%), Rajasthan (65% to 35%), Jharkhand (63% to 38%), to 21%). Haryana has witnessed a sharp improvement with a decline of Madhya Pradesh (53% to 30%), Bihar (60% to 39%) and Odisha (37% 21% points over time.

State/UT	Women who participate in household decision-making		Women married before age 18		Men who consume alcohol		Spousal violence		Perceived sexual rights	
	NFHS-4	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-3
Andhra Pradesh	79.9	N.A	32.7	N.A	34.9	N.A	43.2	N.A	64.6	N.A
Arunachal Pradesh	89.1	95.7	23.5	42.0	59.0	61.1	30.6	38.8	47.8	73.9
Assam	87.4	88.1	32.6	38.0	35.6	37.8	24.5	39.4	56.6	72.0
Bihar	75.2	69.2	39.1	60.3	28.9	34.9	43.2	59.0	67.9	72.2
Chhattisgarh	90.5	76.6	21.3	55.0	52.7	52.3	36.7	29.9	82.3	87.8
Goa	93.8	91.1	9.80	11.7	44.7	40.0	12.9	16.8	68.3	73.1
Gujarat	85.4	83.8	24.9	38.7	11.1	16.1	20.1	27.5	59.2	67.7
Haryana	76.7	83.8	18.5	39.8	24.5	27.7	32.0	27.3	80.8	82.3
Himachal Pradesh	90.8	79.2	8.60	12.3	39.7	29.5	5.90	6.20	85.2	88.9
Jammu and Kashmir	84.0	60.4	8.70	14.4	10.5	12.5	9.40	12.6	56.3	63.7
Jharkhand	86.6	77.7	38.0	63.2	39.3	38.9	34.0	36.9	76.4	84.6
Karnataka	80.4	68.6	23.2	41.2	29.3	28.3	20.5	20.0	40.3	72.2
Kerala	92.1	88.0	7.6	15.4	37.0	45.2	14.3	16.4	60.7	63.7
Madhya Pradesh	82.8	68.5	30.0	53.0	29.6	30.8	33.0	45.7	75.4	84.9
Maharashtra	89.3	84.9	25.1	39.0	20.5	24.0	21.4	30.7	80.6	73.9
Manipur	96.2	94.4	13.1	12.7	52.5	47.4	53.1	43.8	49.0	83.3
Meghalaya	91.4	90.4	16.5	24.5	44.6	49.2	28.7	12.8	45.7	73.7
Mizoram	96.0	97.2	10.8	20.6	49.6	42.0	17.0	22.1	63.4	68.7
Nagaland	97.4	96.9	13.3	21.4	39.0	38.5	12.7	15.2	67.8	69.1
Odisha	81.8	80.3	21.3	37.2	39.3	39.6	35.2	38.4	63.7	62.7
Punjab	90.2	87.9	7.64	19.7	34.0	43.4	20.5	25.4	91.1	80.5
Rajasthan	81.7	65.1	35.4	65.2	15.9	19.1	25.1	46.3	81.1	82.6
Sikkim	95.3	93.6	14.5	30.1	51.2	45.4	2.60	16.3	75.9	90.6
Tamil Nadu	84.0	87.4	15.7	21.5	46.7	41.5	40.6	41.9	39.4	76.0
Telangana	81.1	N.A	25.7	N.A	53.9	N.A	43	N.A	57.0	N.A
Tripura	91.7	77.9	32.2	41	57.6	40.9	27.9	44.1	31.0	43.9
Uttar Pradesh	81.7	75.9	21.2	58.6	22.1	25.3	36.7	42.3	77.5	80.7
Uttarakhand	89.8	71.5	13.9	22.6	35.2	39.1	12.7	27.8	83.5	84.6
West Bengal	89.9	70.2	40.7	53.3	28.7	34.0	32.8	40.1	61.4	60.4
India	84.0	76.5	26.8	47.4	29.3	31.9	28.9	37.2	69.8	75.0

Table 4: Percentage of married women who participate in household decisions, early marriage and their husband alcohol consumption behavior in states of India (NFHS-3 to NFHS-4).

Alcohol use and violence both are common in our society and the association between alcohol and violence is well documented. Alcohol consumption and, in particular, binge-drinking increases the risk of being a victim of violence; usually through decreased physical capacity, compromised decision-making and isolation in unsuitable settings. It also increases the likelihood of perpetrating violence through reduced inhibition and increased aggression [14].

Finding from the study portrays that in India the proportion of men who consume alcohol has marginally declined from 32% to 29%. However, it has increased in Himachal Pradesh (30% to 40%), in the north-eastern states like Tripura (41% to 58%), Mizoram (42% to 50%), Sikkim (45% to 51%), and Manipur (47% to 53%). At the same time, some EAG states like Bihar (35% to 29%), Rajasthan (19% to 16%) and Uttar Pradesh (25% to 22%) have shown a reduction in alcohol consumption since NFHS-3 (2005-2006).

Not only in India even all over the world there has been increasing concern about violence against women. Violence of any kind has an unfavorable impact on the economy of a country through increased disability, medical costs, and loss of labor hours; however, because women bear the effect of domestic violence, they disproportionately bear the health and physiological burden as well [15]. The result indicates that experiencing spousal violence and their perceived sexual rights to be quite prevalent in India. The results portrays that a considerable variation in spousal violence and perceived sexual rights in India and across the states (Table 4). A comparative proportion of ever married women experiencing spousal violence in India have declined from 37% in NFHS-3 to 29% in NFHS-4. Results too reveal that proportion of women experiencing spousal violence has substantially declined over time in almost all the states except Meghalaya, Manipur, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Karnataka where the violence has increased by 16%, 9%, 7%, 5% and 0.5% respectively. Particularly in Manipur, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka, increase in alcohol consumption among men is the primary cause for increasing spousal violence. Women from Rajasthan (reported the highest decline in experiencing spousal violence (46% to 25%) from NFHS-3 to NFHS-4 followed by Tripura, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Assam, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

This study portrays that the women from the states Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Manipur and Meghalaya reported increment in alcohol consumption along with increase in experiencing the spousal violence. Therefore, it can be assumed that spousal violence is positively correlated to alcohol consumption. However, some of the state's like Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Tamil Nadu reported the decline in experiencing the spousal violence despite of having the higher level of alcohol consumption by their husbands, which may be due to the higher level of women education in the following states.

The association between women's empowerment and spousal violence is complex. Spousal violence resulting from gender-based discrimination is widely reported to be a social phenomenon, with its roots largely in the patriarchal control of women by men. The evidence just cited may lead us to think that women who are empowered are more able to stand up for their rights [16,17]. In this study the indicator 'Perceived sexual rights' is computed on the basis of three variables combined together. Whether a woman has a right to refuse sex to husband: if she knows that he is suffering with STI, if she knows he is having relationship with other women and if she says she is not

having a mood for sex. From the Table 4, surprisingly it is found that the percentage of women perceiving about sexual rights has decline in India from 75% in NFHS-3 to 70% in NFHS-4. However, perceived sexual rights among women belong to the states such as Punjab (81% to 91%), Maharashtra (74% to 81%), West Bengal (60% to 61%) and Odisha (63% to 64%) has shifted from 2005-2006 to 2015-2016. The decline in perceived sexual rights among women is highest in Tamil Nadu (37% point) followed by the north eastern states like Manipur (34% point), Karnataka (32% point), Meghalaya (28% point), Arunachal Pradesh (26% point), Assam and Sikkim (15% point each) and Tripura (13% point). In fact, all the EAG states have shown a significant decline in perceived sexual rights except Odisha.

Different dimension of Women's empowerment in India showed improvement over a decade, but there are many women who are still being a victim of violence. Women who have 10 or more years of education also have higher decision making power in the household and the community. Furthermore, the level of violence against women also has a direct implication with women's decision making power and their level of education. Figure 1 display a picture of linkages between household decision making, spousal violence and women who have 10 or more year of schooling. Though the level of education is not at the expectation level (36%) in India, the participation of women in household decision making is significantly playing a positive role in reducing spousal violence. Women from Kerala shows an important association of women's empowerment and existing spousal violence as 72% of women have 10 or more years of schooling and 92% women have participation in decision making, hence the proportion of women experiencing spousal violence is very low (14%).

The finding shows that education plays an important role in restricting men from violating women in terms of their sexuality. This is seen from the fact that women who belong to states of Manipur (53%), Andhra Pradesh (43%) and Bihar (43%) reported the highest prevalence of spousal violence, whereas the proportion of women who had 10 or more years of schooling was low in the same states. Women stated the lowest prevalence of spousal violence in states Sikkim (3%), Himachal Pradesh (6%) and Jammu and Kashmir (9%).

Sexual rights are human rights related to people's sexuality. However, discrimination, stigma, violence, fear, ignorance and some cultural and traditional beliefs threaten people's sexual rights around the world and women are especially vulnerable to sexual rights violations [18]. All human beings are born free and are equal in dignity and rights. Therefore, all young people should be able to exercise and fulfill their rights equally, including sexual rights. Figure 2 presents the linkages between women's autonomy in household decision making, women who have 10 or more year of schooling and their perceived sexual rights. In India though the 10 or more years of education is below average (36%), the autonomy in household decision making is high (84%) and the perceived sexual rights among women are also remarkably high i.e. 70%. The prevalence of indicator household decision making, ranges from lowest in Bihar (75%) to highest in Nagaland (97%). The highest reporting of perceived sexual rights by women is found in Punjab (91%), Haryana (85%) and Uttarakhand (84%) and lowest found in Tripura (31%), Tamil Nadu (39%) and Meghalaya (46%). Women having 10 or more years of schooling were reported lowest in Bihar (23%) followed by Assam (26%), west Bengal (27%) and Chhattisgarh (27%) and it was the highest in Kerala (72%).

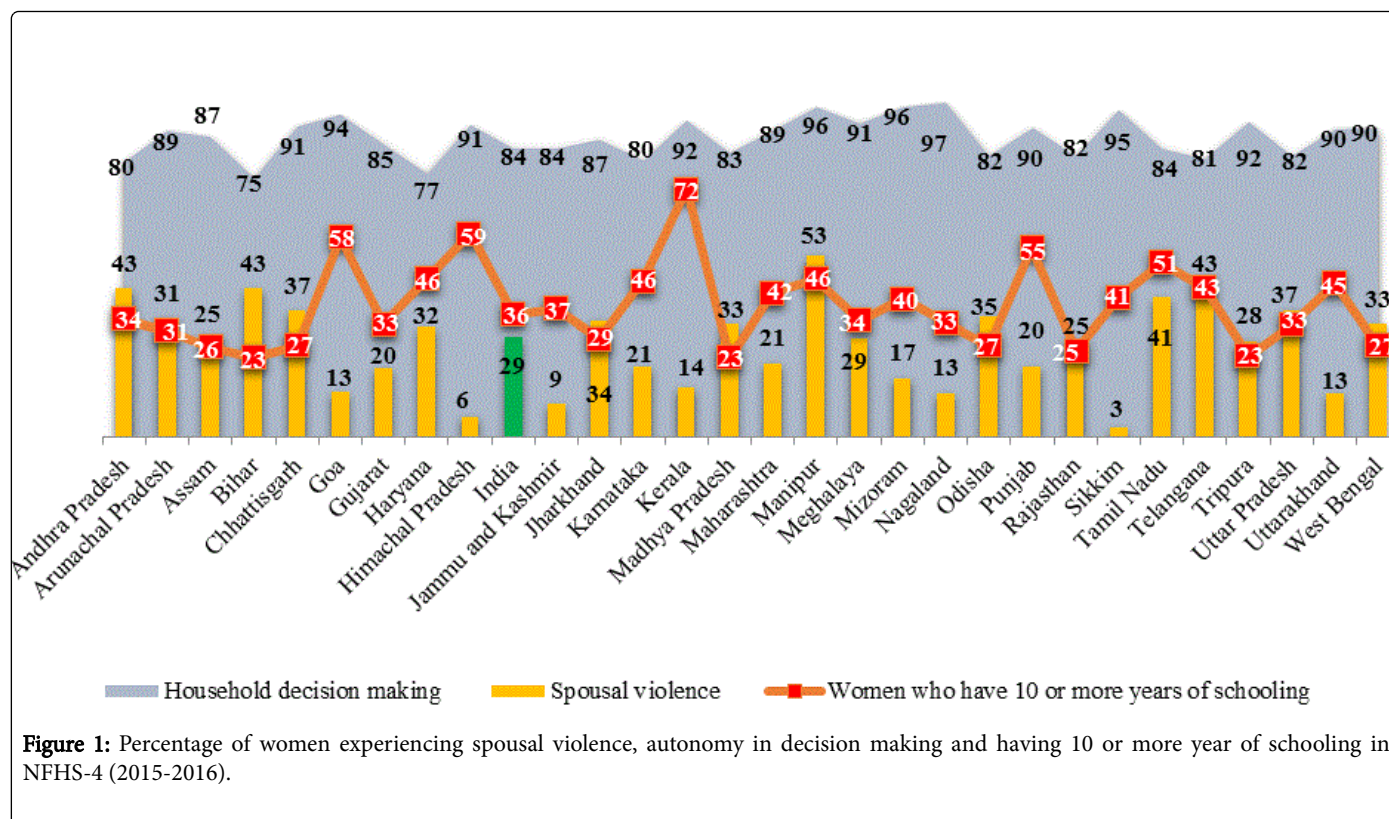


Figure 1: Percentage of women experiencing spousal violence, autonomy in decision making and having 10 or more year of schooling in NFHS-4 (2015-2016).

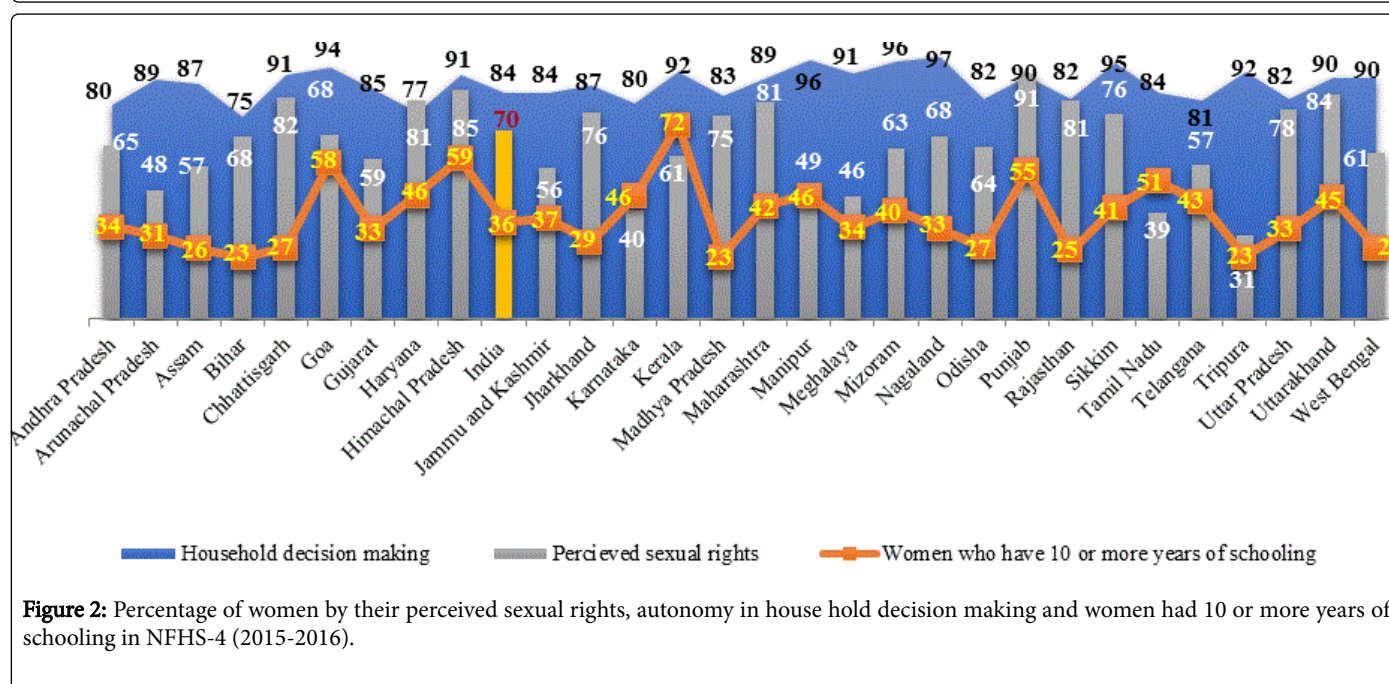


Figure 2: Percentage of women by their perceived sexual rights, autonomy in house hold decision making and women had 10 or more years of schooling in NFHS-4 (2015-2016).

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the association between spousal violence and perceived sexual rights with the potential predictors of women's empowerment (Table 5). The multiple regression model with all six predictors has produced $R^2=0.41$, $F(6, 22)=2.54$, $p<0.05$ for spousal violence and $R^2=0.30$, $F(6, 22)=1.35$ for perceived sexual rights. Results show that the spousal

violence is positively associated with bank account ($p<0.05$). However, spousal violence shows negative association with household decision making ($p<0.05$) and women who have 10 or more years of schooling. While the perceived sexual rights have no significant associations in this model.

Indicators	Spousal violence		Perceived sexual rights	
	Coefficients	C.I	Coefficients	C.I.
Intercept	0.01	[-0.41-0.42]	0.64	[0.08-1.20]
Owning House or Land	0.25	[-2.70-3.20]	1.55	[-2.46-5.56]
Bank Account	14.14**	[2.17-26.12]	-9.19	[-25.46-7.08]
Mobile	7.12	[-4.52-18.76]	4.7	[-11.11-20.52]
Household decision making	-33.99**	[-62.58-5.40]	4.03	[-34.81-42.88]
Working in last 12 months who were paid in cash	13.13**	[1.66-24.61]	-2.63	[-18.22-12.96]
Women who have 10 or more years of schooling	-0.35	[-2.20-1.49]	1.6	[-0.91-4.10]
	R ² =0.41		R ² =0.30	

Table 5: Results of multiple regression analysis in NFHS-4 (2015-16) [^{**}p<0.05].

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of this study affirm that Indian women have finally embarked on their journey to empowerment. However, the empowerment is not uniform across different states in India. The level of diversity in the context of women's empowerment is also not uniform as our finding elucidates that smaller states have lesser diversity and bigger states with large population has high diversity. In some cases, the diversity of empowerment does not go hand in hand with the perceived sexual rights, whereas in some other cases the pattern of spousal violence and diversity of empowerment does not follow the same. The states namely Manipur, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand portray high diversity in women's empowerment and the level of spousal violence in these same states is also high. Whereas in the states like Goa, Sikkim and Tripura where the diversity is at bottom level, experience of spousal violence is also low.

Similarly, Women's educational attainment and work participation and paid in cash in last 12 months are going in two different directions that is they are not correlated. The states namely Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Punjab had more than 50% of women who had 10 or more year of schooling but its impact is not seen in their work participation, it may be due to the fact that the substantial proportion of women are engaged in daily manual work (MGNREGA or some other program). That is why paid in cash in last 12 months is higher irrespective of their educational attainment. As per daily news and analysis report, Women participation in the flagship rural job scheme MGNREGA has clocked around 51% in 2015-2016, which was the maximum in the last three years [19]. Access to education is part of a larger structural concern, including the practice of son preference, which creates intrinsic discriminatory practices. Education initiatives therefore cannot rely solely on building educational infrastructure, but also need to address some of the root causes of discrimination against women and girls which affect the decisions made by parents [20]. If we try to understand the linkages between violence and work status of women, the literature suggests that working women were more likely to be abused by their husbands than their non-working peers. Women who traveled away from home for work were more likely to be emotionally and physically (severe) abused and less likely to be sexually abused by their husbands compared to their peers who worked at home [21].

The result also breaks the myth that women do not have a say in decision-making in what is perceived to be an inherently patriarchal society. In almost all the states except Bihar and Haryana more than forth fifths of women are reporting to participate in household decision making. Apart from the household decision making, women are also engaged in making decision at state or central level as according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO)'s publication "Women and Men in India 2014" found that women occupied seven out of 45 ministerial positions in the Narendra Modi's council of ministers, which is a little more than 15%, against around 10% in 2004 [22].

All the states except Bihar (26%), Manipur (35%), Madhya Pradesh (37%), Nagaland (39%), West Bengal (44%), Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Assam (45%), Haryana (46%) have more than 50% of women owning bank account that they can them self-use. The study also concludes that there is no cause and effect relationship between owning of the bank account and working in last 12 months and paid in cash across the states of India. Bank accounts owned and used by women show the biggest improvement in the last decade out of any indicator of women's empowerment. The Intermedia India Financial Inclusion Insights (FII), survey report shows growth in bank registration at both households and individual level, largely driven by the government's Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and its emphasis on individual accounts. For the first time, the majority of Indian women have been financially included. Recent data shows that the proportion of Indian women with individual accounts in formal financial institutions (primarily banks) reached 61% in 2015, a sharp increase from 48% in 2014, lagging men by only 8%. A close look at these numbers reveals opportunities and challenges to build on this quiet, and important, victory [23].

Privately owned land is overwhelmingly held in the name of men across India. Women are engaged with more than half of all agricultural labor yet one national-level survey revealed that less than 13% of privately held land nationwide was in the name of women [24]. While results from our study shows that 38% of women at national level have owning of the house or land. This national average has come about by inclusion of states like Manipur, Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh where women has more than 60% of owned house or landed property. In matriarchal state like Meghalaya, Kerala daughters inherit property from their mothers in a few communities which also adds up to a dimension of women's empowerment. In recent years throughout

the nation, mobile phones have grown at an extraordinary rate. But women's are still far away to reach an average in some states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh where less than 40% of women are using mobile phone. Use of the mobile is not just a matter of owning a mobile device but a matter of freedom and empowerment, which society feels should only be the priority or privilege of males. Mobile phones may also help women overcome physical boundaries, especially in places where they are disconnected from their support networks and destined within their husband's social sphere.

Despite of increasing status of women by different dimensions of their empowerment, this study clearly indicates that the prevalence of spousal violence against women including their sexual rights is a remarkable phenomenon across different states in India. Reported proportion of women marrying before legal age at marriage has declined in last decade though a substantial proportion is still at considerable level. Somehow, early marriage is one of the factors contributing to the experiencing violence among women in India. The empowerment is not showing any contribution in reducing spousal violence which can be seen from the fact that in the states namely Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Sikkim and Manipur despite of increase in women's empowerment measured in terms of varying dimensions like women's education, household decision making, owning of the house/land, using mobile phone and their working status, the spousal violence also have increased during last decade. Adding up to it, in the same states the prevalence of alcoholism is also increasing which can be a co-factor in women experiencing increase of spousal violence. It seems that the increase in spousal violence in these states has nothing to do in empowerment of women on contrary high prevalence of alcoholism among men with strong patriarchal norm.

On the other hand, experiencing spousal violence in the states like Goa, Himanchal Pradesh, Mizoram, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Tripura has decreased despite of the increasing level of alcohol consumption. This might be attributed to the fact that the decision-making power and educational attainment is somehow making an impact in reducing spousal violence among women. A study of Mumbai urban slums found that the prevalence of women ever experiencing domestic violence in the community was 21.2%. Women whose husband consumed alcohol [RR: 2.17, (95% CI: 1.58-2.98)] were significantly at an increased risk of ever experiencing domestic violence than their counterparts [25]. Another study in India that specially focus on youth from Bihar and Rajasthan also found that woman who report that their husband consumes alcohol are significantly more likely to report intimate partner violence than women who report that their husbands do not drink alcohol.

Surprisingly it is found that in all the states except Maharashtra, Punjab and West Bengal the perceived sexual rights of the women have deteriorated during one decade. There are few factors which compound women's vulnerability because of the way society expects women and men to behave. For a majority of women, high risk activity can simply mean being married. Social norms which accept extra-marital and pre-marital sexual relationships in men as 'normal', and women's inability to negotiate safe sex practices with their partners, are factors that make it difficult for women to protect themselves from sexually transmitted infections [26].

Findings from other study on sexual rights reveal that young women are in a miserable position not only due to lack of their control over their husband's extramarital relations but also due to their inability to protect themselves against forced penetrative sex within intimate

relationships. On the other hand, though most of the males perceive favorably towards the sexual rights of women, still in terms of behavior they consider coercion as a right over their wives. Though there is an increase in women's empowerment along with age at marriage, but that increase are not being translated into their perceived sexual rights. Even after being financially empowered and holding rights in household decision making, women tend to lack negotiation power in individual decision making which relates to their reproductive and sexual rights. These social or cultural improvements are not leading towards qualitative change in life of women which largely affects their physical and mental health.

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