

Comparative Study

A Comparative Study on Attitude Towards Domestic Violence Among University Students Across Caste and Gender of Hazaribagh District

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the attitudes towards domestic violence among university students in Hazaribagh District, focusing on the influence of gender, caste, and educational background. The research seeks to understand how these factors shape perceptions of domestic violence. Initially, 28 participants were considered; however, one respondent was excluded due to being a minor. Consequently, the final sample comprised 27 university students representing diverse caste groups, including Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and General castes. The study utilized a structured self-administered questionnaire comprising 16 Likert-scale items to examine attitudes towards domestic violence. The questions focused on the acceptance of physical aggression and reasons justifying a husband's right to beat his wife. Data were collected through a web-based survey completed by participants over a 30-day period. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS software. The mean scores for attitudes were 1.3 for gender, 4.7 for caste, and 8.44 for education, indicating variations in perceptions based on these variables. Cohort analysis shows that gender and education have a moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.509$, $p = 0.007$), while other variables have a weak relationship. As shown in the regression and ANOVA, gender ($p = 0.617$), caste ($p = 0.358$), and education level ($p = 0.159$) are not predictors of approval of domestic violence. Based on selected variables, the null hypothesis must be accepted to fulfil the research aim. The findings of this study reveal that gender, caste, and educational level do not significantly predict the approval of wife-beating within the sample. While male participants were more likely to rationalize domestic violence than female participants, and Scheduled Caste and Backward Caste respondents displayed slightly more liberal attitudes towards dowry, these trends were not statistically significant in the regression model. The results indicate minimal differences in attitudes based on demographic variables, suggesting a systematic similarity in perceptions of domestic violence across the sample. The study highlights the complex and controversial nature of attitudes toward domestic violence and underscores the potential role of education in fostering awareness to challenge violent norms.

Keywords: *Public Health, Gender, Caste, Domestic Violence, University of Hazaribagh District*

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Domestic violence is an international issue of public health concern. It has a serious effect on the physical, mental and social welfare. It has been seen that domestic violence (DV) happens globally in both developing and developed nations irrespective of religion, culture and socioeconomic classes (Nmadu et al., 2022). Multiple domestic violence cases in Hazaribagh showcases the occurrences of rape, brutal beating resulting in the hospitalisation of the victims or even death. For example, Five men triggered outrage after the gang rape of a woman in Hazaribagh's Daru area; three of the accused were her neighbours and the remaining two from the neighbouring village (News18 Bihar Jharkhand, 2021). Moreover, enhancement in attitudes can decrease justification and acceptance of the issue. In Indian society, "violence" and "casteism" are the two major social evils (None Birendri, 2023). According to a report by Government of India (GoI), it has been seen that 24.6% of scheduled caste (SC) women aged 15 to 49 have faced physical violence during the 1 year (Shah, 2019).

Aim and Objectives

Aim

The aim of the study is to understand the perceptions towards domestic violence among caste and gender among University students in Hazaribagh district.

Research Objective (RO)

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine gender-based differences in attitude towards domestic violence among the University learners in Hazaribagh.
- To analyse caste-based differences in attitudes towards DV among the population.
- To examine the connection between educational qualification and attitudes towards domestic violence among University Students in Hazaribagh.

Research Problem

On 26st August 2022, a news article was published where a Hindu girl was forced to leave her home along with her sister and widowed mother in Sirma village in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand. She was physically harmed on 10th August 2022 by some men led by Md Waseem (OpIndia, 2022). The family of the girl are not ready to come back to their village even after the accused person surrenders on 23rd August 2022 (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Twitter post of the domestic violence case in Hazaribagh (Source: OpIndia, 2022)

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This incident clearly depicts that people in the area already face domestic violence because of caste and gender. It is probable that even the University learners of the area are victims of caste based and gender based domestic violence. In addition, another case reported is based on a pregnant lady from Hazaribagh who was thrashed with a stick and tied to an electric pole by her relatives (News18 Bihar Jharkhand, 2020). This act was recorded and posted on social media platforms; it went viral because of what was done.

Jharkhand ranks 17th among the 29 states and 7 union territories as per the events of crimes against females in the nation. In March 2018, as per the order of the Supreme Court, the Jharkhand police force issued different instructions for the avoidance of “honour killings” for any events of violence by caste based panchayats (Cbgaindia.org, 2019). It has been seen in a report that in India 51.7% of women and 42.2% of men justify the act of beating or hitting their wife. Among the Hindus, SC men mostly justify this age (Shah, 2019). It is followed by OBCs, STs, and Others. The highest percentage of violence in this regard is seen in Manipur, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. Moreover, 35% of married women in Jharkhand experience physical, sexual and emotional violence (Figure 2).

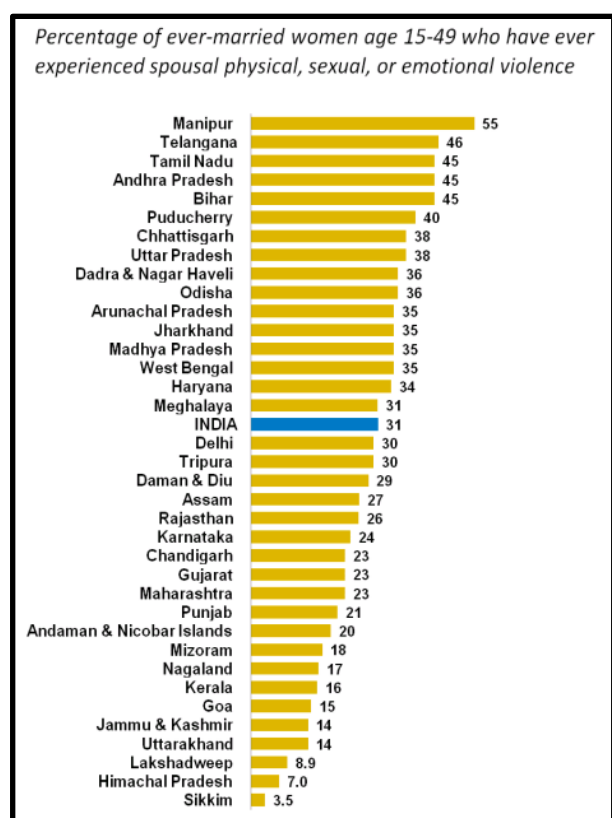


Figure 2: Violence percentage among females in India (Shah, 2019)

Significance

The study is significant because it helps in the understanding of the perceptions of University students in Hazaribagh about domestic violence. University students, being highly educated, provide valuable insights into perceptions of domestic violence based on their educational background. Understanding their views can help promote awareness and challenge harmful beliefs. The findings can also inform policies and programs aimed at addressing and reducing domestic violence.

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Relation with other published work

Chowdhury *et al.*, (2024) conducted a study which showed that scheduled caste women in India face major incidents of intimate partner violence. In addition, as explained by Dutta and Bharti (2024), based on a survey of 230 tribal women from Jharkhand, Physical violence was present in 51.43% of victims, while 8.57% reported partner-controlling behavior. In addition, there are other studies also which have been done on domestic violence based on gender and case. The present study resonates with the previous studies by focusing mostly on university students in Hazaribagh. It has narrowed down the scope of the overall topic to one major district of India and a particular population.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Including Parts

This study explores perceptions of domestic violence among university students in Hazaribagh district, focusing on the influence of gender, caste, and education. Data were collected through a survey questionnaire administered to participants from diverse demographic backgrounds to analyze how these factors shape attitudes and behaviors towards domestic violence.

Objectives

- To examine gender-based differences in attitude towards domestic violence among the University learners in Hazaribagh.
- To analyse caste-based differences in attitudes towards DV among the population.
- To examine the connection between educational qualification and attitudes towards domestic violence among University Students in Hazaribagh.

Hypotheses

Research hypothesis is the statement which gives a possible explanation for a pattern or phenomenon (Chigbu, 2019). Moreover it helps in the prediction of outcome.

(Null Hypothesis) H_0 : There is no major difference in attitudes towards domestic violence among university students based on gender, caste and educational levels.

(Alternative Hypothesis) H_1 : There is a significant difference in attitudes towards domestic violence among university students based on gender, caste and educational levels.

Participants

Initially 28 participants were approached for the survey. However, one respondent has been omitted because of being a minor candidate. Hence, the final number of survey participants was 27. The study focused on graduate and postgraduate university students in Hazaribagh district, including both male and female participants from Scheduled Caste, Backward Caste, and General caste groups.

Materials

To conduct the study, a set of questions have been prepared in Google Forms. It has included 16 Likert-scale based questions (Appendix 1). In fact, each question has a 5-point scale which has options: Totally disagree, Disagree, Often, Totally agree, Agree and Sometimes. Based on this 5-point Likert scale, 16 survey questions are produced. The purpose of questions was to measure the perceptions towards physical violence including justification of violence, gender roles and aspects of power dynamics.

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Data Collection

The study employed a primary data collection method using an online survey distributed to university students in Hazaribagh district. Responses were gathered over 30 days, collecting information on gender, education, caste, and attitudes toward domestic violence. The data has been analysed through the SPSS software which is shown in the section of results. In addition, based on the main focus of the project, the independent variables which are selected are Gender, Caste, Education of the university students. With these variables, the dependent variables which are mostly aligned with the topic are Question 1, Question 4 and Question 10 (Appendix 1). The reason behind selecting these questions for SPSS is based on the nature of the topic which is based on Domestic Violence and proving the hypotheses. For preparing the SPSS data, Coding has been used with the survey questions

Variables

- **Independent Variables:** Gender, Caste, Education of the university students.
- **Dependent variables:** Perceptions toward domestic violence which is seen through the responses from the survey.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics

The set of methods that are primarily used to summarise and describe the main attributes of a dataset like central tendency, distribution and variation is referred to as descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics in Table 1 summarises the main aspects of the important variables in the study that properly fulfils the research objectives.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Gender	27	1	2	35	1.3	0.465	0.946	0.448
Category	27	1	9	127	4.7	3.338	-0.042	0.448
Education	27	1	17	228	8.44	5.272	0.208	0.448
1) It is necessary for the husband to hit/beat his wife if she breaks the rules of the house.	27	1	6	50	1.85	1.433	1.888	0.448
4) It is justified to beat your wife.	27	1	6	46	1.7	1.295	2.321	0.448
10) There is nothing bad about beating your wife.	27	1	4	42	1.56	0.801	1.505	0.448
Valid N (listwise)	27							

(Source: self-made through SPSS)

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The data collected from twenty-seven university students (signified by the number “N”) of Hazaribagh district are presented in the table with descriptive analysis for gender means 1.3, caste means 4.7, and education means 8.44 (Table 1). Out of 27 respondents, gender shows that mostly women are present, category (9) shows that dominant castes are present, and education (17) shows that most of the women are well educated. Therefore, the responses to domestic violence items gave a low endorsement to wife-beating norms, not supporting traditional female subordination or new cautions.

Correlation

Correlation coefficient

Correlation is the statistical process used to create a connection between two variables. Correlation coefficient (represented as r) ranges from -1 to +1. For the study, the correlation has been performed between the independent variables (gender, caste, education) and dependent variables (there is nothing bad about beating your wife) (Table 2).

Table 2: Correlation

Correlations					
Control Variables			Gender	Caste	Education
10) There is nothing bad about beating your wife.	Gender	Correlation	1.000	0.117	0.461
		Significance (2-tailed)		0.569	0.018
		df	0	24	24
	Caste	Correlation	0.117	1.000	0.251
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.569		0.216
		df	24	0	24
	Education	Correlation	0.461	0.251	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	0.018	0.216	
		df	24	24	0

(Source: self-made through SPSS)

The results show that gender is not related (Cohen’s d= 0.065) to the perception that “there is nothing bad about beating your wife”. Likewise, results for Category are quite meaningless since the correlation coefficient is (r = 0.196, p = 0.328) (Table 2). However, education correlates with rejecting this belief positively at a higher level (r= 0.509, p = 0.007). Therefore, the findings of this study show that Education has a direct effect on the dependent variable, while Gender and Category had no effect.

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Regression and Hypothesis testing

Regression

The statistical technique used to connect a dependent variable to one or more independent variables is known as regression. For this study, the regression has been done for independent variables (gender, caste, education) and dependent variables (there is nothing bad about beating your wife) (Table 3).

Table 3: Regression Results

Coefficients						
Model				Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
				Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.090	0.486		2.246	0.035
	Gender	0.193	0.381	0.112	0.507	0.617
	Category	-0.044	0.047	-0.182	-0.937	0.358
	Education	0.050	0.034	0.328	1.457	0.159

Independent Variable: (10) There is nothing bad about beating your wife.

(Source: self-made through SPSS)

The result of the regression analysis, using “There is nothing bad about beating your wife” as the criterion variable, is presented below. The gender of the participant (T = 0.617, df = 634) and the category of the participant (T = 0.358, df = 634) did not come up as significant predictor variables. In contrast, the participant’s education (T = 0.159, df = 634) was also the only variable that showed any statistical significance as the constant. All the $p < 0.05$ indicate that there is no relationship between gender, caste categories, education level and attitude towards domestic violence among university students in Hazaribagh (Table 3).

Table 4: Anova

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.733	3	0.911	1.504	0.240 ^b
	Residual	13.934	23	0.606		
	Total	16.667	26			

a. Dependent Variable: 10) There is nothing bad about beating your wife.
b. Predictors: (Constant), Education, Caste, Gender

(Source: self-made through SPSS)

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This analysis independently shows that the predictors or independent variables like Education, Category, and Gender that do not affect attitudes toward domestic violence. The cumulative sum of squares for the regression model and the residual are 2.733 and 13.934, respectively, meaning $F = 1.504$ and $p = .240$. These results imply that the given variables do not explain the necessary amount of variation in attitudes in question among students (Refer to Table 4).

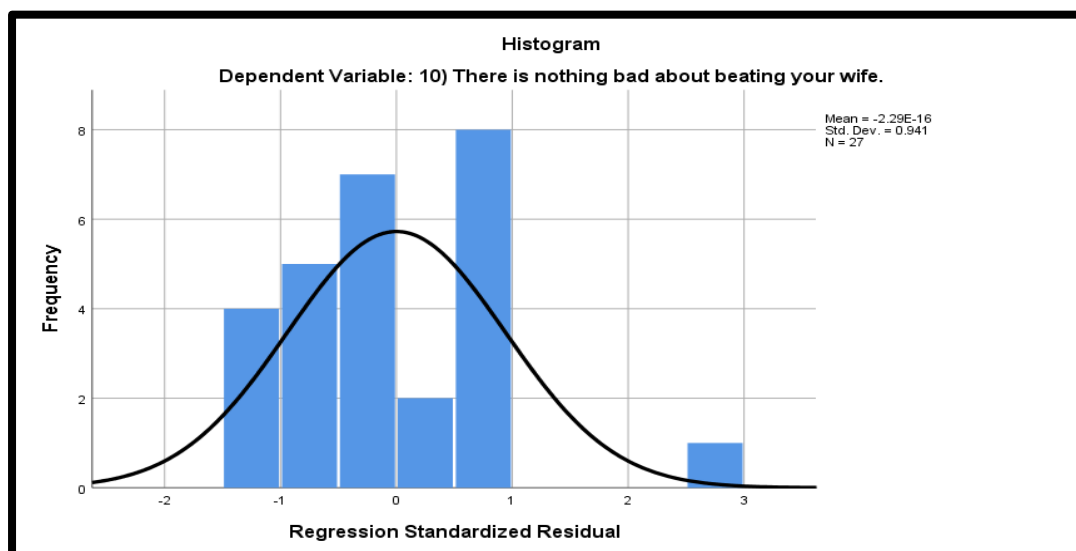


Figure 3: Regression Standardized Residual
(Source: self-made through SPSS)

The histogram above shows the standardized residuals for the regression analysis resulting from the dependent variable: “There is nothing bad about beating your wife.” The residuals appear normally distributed since the curve looks like a relatively perfect bell curve. This indicates that the model’s assumptions on normality are reasonably met, which makes it easy to interpret the regression results (Figure 3).

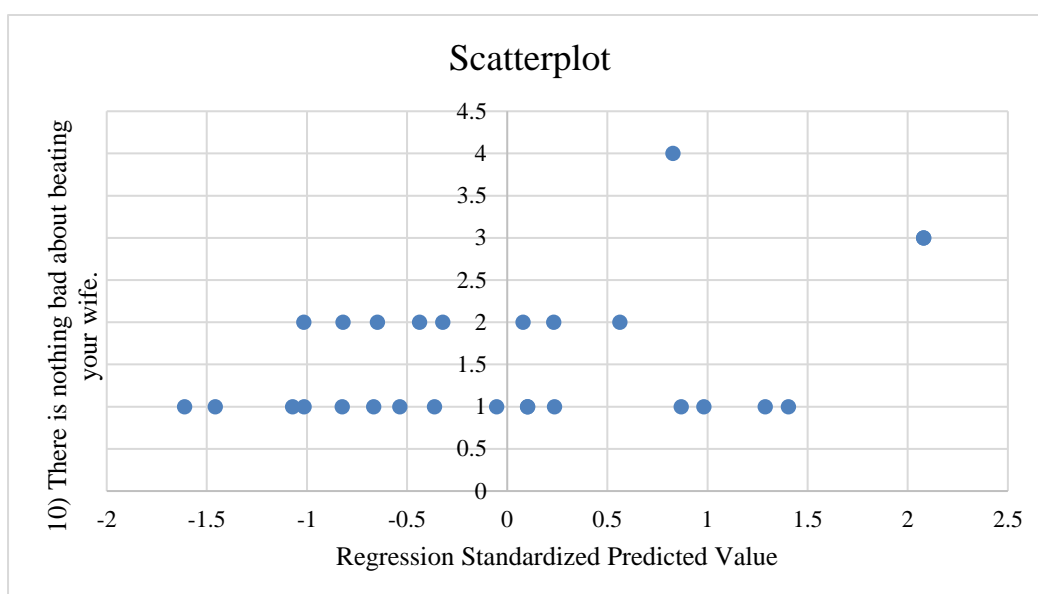


Figure 4: Regression Standardized
(Source: self-made through SPSS)

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This scatter plot shows the relationship between the extent to which the model has predicted the outcomes and the dependent variable: “There is nothing bad about beating your wife.” There is no apparent indication of the existence of linear relations as the profile of the scattered points; this means that the capacity of the predictors is relatively low (Figure 4). This strengthens the argument that gender, caste and education are not robust determinants of attitudes towards domestic violence in this study.

Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis can be divided into null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis. Null Hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no significant connection between variables. On the other hand, alternative hypothesis (H_1) states that there is a significant connection between variables (Kang, 2021).

Thereby, according to the regression analysis, the null hypothesis is accepted because there is no evidence of a difference in the attitudes towards domestic violence as a result of gender, caste category or educational level Gender ($p = 0.617$), Caste ($p = 0.358$) and Education ($p = 0.159$). Thereby, based on regression analysis, since the p values are more than 0.05, it can be said that the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Linking with Objectives

Linking with the first objective, it has been found from the survey results of 27 participants that there are major insights about gender-based differences in perceptions towards domestic violence. Male students tend to highly justify domestic violence more than females. According to Infilbnet.ac.in, (2024), domestic violence is primarily the result of men’s want to exhibit power and control over females. This pattern has been justified based on the patriarchal system. A high number of male students agreed with statements like “*It is justified to beat your wife*”. This properly shows that gender norms bring forth violence.

Linking with the second objective, caste-based differences in attitudes have also been seen among the university students of Hazaribagh. It has been seen that more progressive perceptions have been seen from university students of Scheduled Caste and Backward Castes. Surprisingly, students of General Caste were not much progressive in this regard. This finding is quite different from the common stereotypes. It has been seen that caste-based violence in India is a concern among the Dalit women. It is mainly perpetuated by dominant castes to maintain social hierarchy and control (Hrw.org, 2024).

Linking with the third objective, it has been observed that the level of education plays a vital role in modifying attitudes. The learners who have higher educational qualifications like postgraduates did not agree with statements that normalises domestic violence. This implies that education promotes awareness and critical thinking abilities.

CONCLUSION

By these methods, it is concluded that education affects the attitudes towards domestic violence, with higher education showing the rejection towards normalization of violence in Hazaribagh ($r = 0.509$, $p = 0.007$). Gender and caste, therefore, had no conclusive influence on perceptions. Acceptance of violence may be mitigated by policies that encourage education. The study should invite larger and more heterogeneous groups in the future to support the results and examine the differences between the rural and urban participants.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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