

**RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN INDIA:
EVIDENCE FROM THE 2015-2016 NATIONAL FAMILY HEALTH SURVEY**

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all my family, friends and faculty who helped along the way. Without you, this work would not have been possible.

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The World Health Organization defines intimate partner violence (IPV) as “behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors” (WHO, 2017). IPV is a pervasive and global phenomenon that affects individuals all around the world. Women in patriarchal societies are at an increased risk of violence given the traditional gender expectations that dominate their existence. Prior literature explores socio-demographic risk and protective factors such as the intergenerational transmission of IPV and attitudes towards IPV. This research expands upon previous literature through examination of additional risk factors such as lack of socio-economic resources and approval attitudes toward IPV with an emphasis on women’s empowerment as a potential protective factor. Using data from the 2015-2016 National Family Health Survey in India, this study shows that women’s educational attainment and greater share of household decision making are found to be protective factors of IPV, whereas women’s employment and approval attitudes toward IPV are both associated with greater risk of IPV.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The issue of intimate partner violence (IPV) made international headlines in 1989 when an Indian woman named Kiranjit Ahluwalia was jailed for murdering her husband (“Spotlight on Domestic Abuse Laws”, 2008). After suffering over ten years of physical, psychological and sexual abuse, Ahluwalia had finally suffered enough and retaliated. Nearly 30 years later, the issue of IPV remains a ubiquitous and dangerous problem in India and other countries around the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines IPV as “behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors” (WHO, 2017). Data from the 2015-2016 National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in India reveals that nearly one-third of ever-married women (31%) experienced one or more forms of violence directed toward them by their husband at least once in their lifetime, and 24% of women experienced violence during the past 12 months (NFHS-4). Although both men and women can become victims of IPV, the patriarchal socio-cultural system in India fosters an environment that leaves women especially susceptible to violence. These statistics and the gender inequalities that are present in India reinforce the need to better understand protective factors of IPV in hopes of reducing its prevalence and consequences.

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) was introduced by the United Nations (UN) in 2010 to highlight differences in human development between men and women (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016). The GII measures inequality along three dimensions: health, empowerment, and economic status. The most recent 2016 Human Development Report (HDR) found that India ranked 125 out of 159 countries. In addition to GII, the UN has also created a Gender Development Index (GDI) to better understand the factors impacting women’s

empowerment in relation to life expectancy, education and gross national income (GNI). Distinct from the GII, the GDI explores indicators of the above dimensions for men and women individually and assesses the disparity to create the GDI. With a GDI value of .819, India ranked in the 5th group of countries which is characterized by low equality in human development achievements between women and men. These rankings undergird the necessity for further research on how to reduce or eradicate the systemic disparities and inequalities between men and women, and the consequences that are often associated with gender inequalities. While empowerment is just one dimension of the GII, it is the first step in promoting greater social change.

As gender inequality remains a prominent and pervasive issue in India, research on empowerment and how it relates to IPV remains dearth. With few exceptions, much of the empirical research on IPV and empowerment in India is qualitative in nature and focuses on rural communities (Kaur and Garg, 2010; Raj, Silverman, Klugman, Saggurti, Donta and Shakya, 2018). This limited scope fails to capture the socio-geographic complexity of India and overlooks certain populations. Utilizing quantitative data and methods can provide researchers, policy makers and public health officials with a larger picture of the problem in hopes of developing more effective policies and carrying out more impactful reforms.

Much of the research on IPV in India and other countries in South Asia explores socio-demographic factors that exacerbate the likelihood of IPV. In addition to exploring risk factors that subjugate women to violence, other research has examined the consequences resulting from IPV. For example, research has found a strong and consistent association between IPV and deleterious mental health outcomes such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression (Beydoun, Beydoun, Kaufman, Lo, and Zonderman, 2012; Chandra, Satyanarayana, Veena, and

Carey, 2009; Thananowan and Vongsirimas, 2014). Moving beyond the immediate impacts on the women who are victims of IPV, women's exposure to violence can also have detrimental effects on their children. Over the past several decades, research that examined the intergenerational transmission of IPV has shown that young girls who are exposed to childhood violence or inter-parental violence are more likely to experience violence as adult women (Islam, Tareque, Tiedt, and Hoque, 2014). Furthermore, researchers found that young boys who were exposed to inter-parental violence as children were more likely to perpetrate violence later in life (Islam, Rahman, Broidy, Haque, and Yu Mon, 2017).

This study will supplement and extend existing literature on IPV by exploring empowerment as a multi-dimensional construct and protective factor that may serve to mitigate the prevalence of violence against women. Before proceeding to a discussion on the theoretical framework and empirical literature, a description of the social and cultural context in India is provided. Focusing on protective factors, the following research is guided by empowerment theory to hypothesize how women's empowerment is associated with a decreased likelihood of women experiencing violence. The data comes from the 2015-2016 NFHS conducted in India. The study concludes with a summary of results and a discussion of directions for future research as well as implications for social policy and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

With a population of over 1.3 billion people, India is the second most populous country in the world, after China. The magnitude of its size allows for the country to feature diverse landscapes and cultures. As India becomes more industrialized, the large majority of the population (70%) still lives in rural areas (NFHS-4, 2015-2016). In terms of literacy, men outrank women by nearly 20% with 68% of women who are literate in comparison to 86% of men. In India, the percent of married men who are employed (98%) more than triples the percent of married women who are employed (31%). This lack of literacy and employment for women is indicative of gender inequalities in India (NFHS-4, 2015-2016).

The most common religion in India is Hinduism, which accounts for about 80% of the population (NFHS-4, 2015-2016). Like all major religions, Hinduism is largely male dominated. The role of women in Hinduism becomes increasingly vaguer as the status of women advances in society (Dasgupta, 2017). Within the religion, women are granted limited freedoms and are viewed as dependent entities. Aside from the role of women in Hinduism, one of the most controversial components of the religion is the caste system. With its origins dating back more than 3,000 years, the caste system divides Hindus into four main categories on the basis of their karma (work) and dharma (duty) (“What is India’s caste system”, 2017). While all societies feature some form of stratification, the caste system is particularly detrimental given its tradition of bestowing privileges on the upper class and sanctioning repression on lower caste individuals. The hierarchical culture of India is a product of Hinduism and the hegemonic ideologies associated with the religion permeate the entire country.

The status of women in Indian society naturally extends to their status within the home. Women’s status within the home can be discussed as the autonomy and control women have in

regard to choices such as marriage, household decision-making, and responsibilities. With reference to marital choice, parentally arranged marriages were common in traditional India and women were rarely consulted in spouse selection. This practice served to reinforce patriarchal ideology by limiting women's freedom. However, as a result of an expansion in higher education, technological innovation and Western influence, hybrid arranged love marriages and love marriages have become more dominant in Indian society (Allendorf, 2013).

In addition to freedom of mate choice, marriages in India are also impacted by three gendered socioeconomic forces: economic factors, empowerment and gender performance (Desai and Andrist, 2010). Economically, dowry traditions are still common in India and parents are often influenced by financial incentives or limitations when making choices regarding their daughter's marriage. While gender performance or doing gender is useful in understanding the symbolic dimensions of gender, empowerment influences the gender hierarchy in terms of household division of labor and disparity in financial and emotional control. Looking specifically at the division of domestic labor, men's participation is largely influenced by the specific household task, as well as the women's economic contribution (Luke, Xu, and Thampi, 2014). Although one might expect greater male support in female breadwinner homes, men who earned less than their wives were least likely to assist with housework. This is indicative of women's marital power being constrained by societal gender norms. The degree to which women are granted autonomy is also attributed to religion and region. Regional differences in female autonomy in India is widely documented, with women in Northern India receiving fewer opportunities to exert control over economic resources, household decision-making and their own mobility (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001).

Patriarchal ideology as a social and cultural organization dominates and dictates the day-to-day lives of many Indian women. The Indian patriarchy manifests itself blatantly in the form of discrimination against women such as restricted or limited access to healthcare and education. Other forms of discrimination include dowry traditions, child marriages, and the view of women as a liability (Sharma, 2007). Though domestic violence was recognized as a criminal offense in 1983, it was not until mid 2000s that civil protections were afforded to victims of domestic violence through the enactment of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (NFHS-4,2015-2016). Despite legislation intended to correct the issue, violence against women remains a pervasive issue across India. The social and cultural climate in India and other south Asian countries has contributed to protest in recent years over the treatment of women, specifically violence against women.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Over the past three decades, researchers, lawmakers and public health officials have devoted their time and resources to better understanding the socioeconomic, demographic and cultural antecedents of IPV. As violence against women persists as a pervasive threat, a growing body of empirical literature focuses on middle-income countries that are often disproportionately impacted by the issue. Gender inequalities and power imbalances remain an important feature in the discourse, as they have been found to increase the risk of IPV. The following section begins by reviewing risk factors often associated with IPV, before exploring potential protective factors. Once risk and protective factors have been outlined, a discussion of the theoretical framework that guided the present study is provided.

Risk Factors

There has been an abundance of research that examines IPV in India due to the high frequency of instances of IPV in the country. An analysis of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) conducted between 2005 and 2012 found that India ranked seventh in IPV prevalence among countries with the highest reported prevalence of IPV (Solotaroff and Pande, 2014). The growing body of literature provides insights into several factors that place women at a higher risk of IPV. Arranged or forced marriage remains a common practice in India, thus increasing the likelihood of IPV. However, research findings are inconsistent for one study found that women in “love” marriages were twice as likely to report IPV than women who were in arranged marriages (Rocca, Rathod, Falle, Pande and Krishnan, 2009). In addition to the type of marriage, another study found that women who marry before the legal age at 18 are at an increased risk of IPV (Speizer and Pearson, 2011). Empirical research also revealed an

association between low levels of educational attainment and IPV victimization among Indian women in a nationally representative sample (Sabri, Renner, Stockman, Mittal, and Decker, 2014).

Attitudes towards IPV are shaped at both the individual and community levels. Patriarchal ideologies that dominate India define traditional gender role expectations and may alter power dynamics in a way that greatly favors men. Women who are socialized under this patriarchal system are likely to allow dominant cultural ideologies influence their own beliefs on gender dynamics. Numerous studies found that women who justified violence against women were more likely to experience violence than women who did not (Begum, Donta, Nair, and Prakasam, 2015; Kishor and Johnson, 2004; Schuler, Lenzi, Shamsul, and Bates, 2017; Sabri et al., 2014, Xu, Kerley, and Sirisunyaluck, 2011). Given the diverse geography that comprises India, scholars have studied how regional differences play a role in the perpetration and justification of IPV. Women in rural areas or slums face a greater disadvantage in terms of access to resources and were also at increased risk of IPV (Sabri and Campbell, 2015). Marital dissatisfaction, depression, drinking, and child abuse were all significant predictors of perpetrating IPV among men (Jin, Doukas, Beiting, and Viksman, 2014).

To summarize, the socioeconomic factors outlined above shed light on the circumstances and experiences that may place women in developing countries at an increased risk of IPV. Cultural factors such as marital choice and attitudes that are supportive of violence against women were associated with higher levels of IPV. Additional factors such as low educational attainment and living in rural areas were also found to increase the likelihood of IPV. Once the risk factors associated with IPV are established, the next step in the present study is to discuss protective factors that may reduce the prevalence of violence against women in India.

Empowerment as a Protective Factor

A careful literature review suggests that research on empowerment as a protective factor of IPV is limited. Existing empirical studies on the relationship between women's empowerment and prevalence of IPV often generated inconsistent and contradictory findings (Schuler et. al, 2017). For instance, given diminished autonomy and independence, unempowered women are expected to be at greater risk of violence. Some research findings, however, run counter to this expectation and finds that greater empowerment can be viewed as challenging social norms of a patriarchal system, thus putting women at an increased risk of IPV (Ackerson, Kawachi, Barbeau, and Subramanian 2008; Atkinson, Greenstein, and Lang, 2005; Macmillian and Gartner, 1999). Still a large body of literature is dedicated to empowerment as a protective factor, especially in countries outside of India (Murshid and Critelli, 2017; Rahman, Hoque, and Makinoda, 2011; Schuler and Nazneen, 2018). The general consensus from the contradictory findings is that the role of empowerment as a risk or protective factor is linked to the normalization of empowerment and that further research is necessary to systematically document and explore context specific effects of empowerment.

Empowerment is a complex construct because of ways in which it is conceptualized. This lack of clarity in research on the relationship between empowerment and violence is widely noted (Cattaneo and Goodman, 2015; Kasturirangan, 2008). While scholars agree that empowerment is both a process (e.g., in intervention studies) and an outcome (e.g., in survey-based studies), there is often less agreement over what empowerment entails (Cattaneo et al. 2015; Zimmerman, 2012). Empowerment can take different forms dependent on individual and contextual factors, as well as its social or economic manifestations. Furthermore, empowerment

can be either absolute or relative in regard to resources (Vyas and Watts, 2008). Cattaneo and Goodman developed an Empowerment Process Model to clarify its conceptual inconsistencies (2015). This model defines empowerment as goals, actions to achieve them, and their ultimate impact shaped through community resources, knowledge, skills and self-efficacy.

The multidimensionality of empowerment is further complicated by temporal factors. One study in particular analyzes how certain aspects of empowerment may impact the likelihood of violence differently if they occurred prior to the marriage as opposed to after (Rocca et. al, 2009). Women who seek greater empowerment during the course of their marriage may be seen as challenging norms or boundaries. Scholars find that this newfound access to resources or opportunities may be met with greater violence as men often rely on IPV to assert their dominance when feeling challenged (Ellsberg, Jansen, Heise, Watts, and Garcia-Moreno, 2008; Koenig, Ahmed, Hossain, and Mozumder, 2003). Despite this, Ellsberg and her colleagues (2008) found that as men became more accustomed to their wife's autonomy, the impact of empowerment was positive, and violence decreased over time. Furthermore, empowerment is viewed as a protective factor in areas with less rigidly defined gender roles (Koenig et al., 2003). This finding suggests that gender inequality fosters violence and as empowerment becomes more normative in society, IPV is likely to decrease.

As an important indicator of empowerment, education is consistently viewed as a protective factor while findings regarding economic empowerment remain convoluted (Ackerson et al., 2008; Koenig et al., 2003). The only instance in which education increased IPV was in the case where women obtained higher educational attainment than their husbands (Vyas et al., 2008). This is in line with the findings above in which women who challenged patriarchal norms were often at a greater risk for violence. Relative resource theory addresses this status

inconsistency and suggests that women who have a higher status than their partner are at an increased risk of violence (Macmillan et al., 1999).

A similar study exploring empowerment and IPV in India focused on indicators of economic empowerment such as working status, type of employment, income in comparison to their partner, and exposure to bank accounts (Dalal, 2011). The study found that women's employment status was not a protective factor and concluded that economic empowerment alone is not enough to achieve change and that empowerment is most effective when combined with education and transformation of traditional cultural norms (Dalal, 2011). While the present study has similar goals, it is unique in that it utilizes the most recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) and explores dimensions of empowerment that are not exclusively economic in nature.

Traditional sociological research utilizes survey data to better understand the impact of empowerment on IPV. While survey data is beneficial in assessing the current state of IPV, intervention or prevention research is necessary for change. Through operationalization, empowerment can be manipulated as a process measure to assess its efficacy as a protective or risk factor. Previous studies exploring economic empowerment intervention were also combined with gender dialogue groups to evaluate their impact on levels of reported IPV (Gupta, Falb, Lehmann, Kpebo, Xuan, Hossain, Zimmerman, Watts, and Annan, 2013; Kim, Watts, Hargreaves, Ndhlovu, and Phetla, 2007). This in itself is interesting in that it highlights the multidimensionality of empowerment and suggests that economic empowerment alone may not be entirely effective in IPV reduction. The economic empowerment programs provide an understanding of concepts like household economy and budgeting while the gender dialogue component serves to break down traditional gender norms and foster more egalitarian households through discussion of women's contributions. One particular study found that in comparison to

women who only took part in the economic program, women who participated in the gender dialogue group were significantly less likely to report physical or sexual IPV (Gupta et al., 2013). While that study questioned the sustainability of long-term intervention effects, a similar study found that two years after the initial intervention exposure, the risk of IPV was reduced by more than half (Kim et al., 2007). In the context of IPV, these findings highlight the notion of empowerment as a process through which women obtain greater independence through ideational changes (Cattaneo et al., 2015). For the purposes of this research, empowerment is conceptualized as women's employment opportunities, control over their own earnings, responsibility in household decision-making, educational attainment and whether or not a woman believes that violence against women is justified in certain situations.

Theoretical Framework

In order to develop empirical hypotheses using empowerment as a protective factor, the current research is guided by empowerment theory as developed by Marc Zimmerman. It is important to note that there is no singular cause or risk factor that contributes to the perpetuation of violence. Rather there are numerous personal, situational and sociocultural factors that can be analyzed to understand violence against women. In correspondence with the literature reviewed above, individual factors such as witnessing marital violence as a child can place individuals at a greater risk of violence. Male dominance in a family, male control of wealth and husband's use of alcohol are all likely situational factors that contribute to violence against women. Finally, at the societal level, dominant ideologies in society can also perpetuate violence in the form of patriarchal attitudes and strict gender roles. This is evident through approval attitudes towards wife beating and the perpetuation of gender violence that is associated with these attitudes.

Empowerment Theory

In 1993, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women stated that “Violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women, which have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women...” (United Nations General Assembly 48/104, 1993). In the decades that have followed, research on intimate partner violence has overlooked empowerment theory in addressing this gender disparity. Two main sociocultural theories used to analyze IPV are feminist theory and power theory, which are rooted in the exploration of gender inequality and power imbalances (Bell and Naugle, 2008).

Feminist theory is often utilized to address the gender inequalities that lead to the perpetuation of IPV. While IPV is a gender-neutral term, much of the dialogue surrounding the problem is gendered e.g., wife beating or violence against women. Feminist theory establishes gender as the central focus of the argument and asserts that the use of violence against women is a means of reinforcing patriarchal domination (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Similarly, power theory also examines the association between gender inequalities and IPV but suggests that the power imbalance is not exclusively the result of gender alone. Early literature on power theory and IPV suggests that family structures and social acceptance of violence also contribute to the likelihood of IPV (Straus, 1976). The primary distinction between empowerment theory, feminist theory and power theory rests in their intent. While feminist theory and power theory seek to identify risk factors through their examination of inequality, empowerment theory is unique in that it aims to identify ways to prevent these inequalities. Although it is of course necessary to identify factors that may place individuals at a higher risk of experiencing IPV, protective factors are imperative in their prevention possibilities. Furthermore, empowerment theory provides a

more comprehensive framework for examining IPV through its integration of both feminist and power theories.

As mentioned previously, empowerment is a multidimensional construct that occurs across multiple levels. Zimmerman posits that, “Individual, organization and community empowerment are mutually interdependent and are both a cause and a consequence of each other” (Zimmerman, 2012). At the individual level, Zimmerman conceptualizes empowering processes as attempts to exert control or manage resources. Through this perspective, women’s empowerment is understood through higher education and employment. It is well documented that increased education for women is associated with higher wages, decreased rates of HIV infection, less malnutrition, increased participation in politics, and reduced infant mortality (Patrinos, 2008). Looking exclusively at the ways in which increased education has benefited women individually, girls who took an active role in their education exhibited greater autonomy in spousal selection and were also less likely to accept domestic violence as appropriate (Friedman, Kremer, Miguel, and Thornton, 2015). Furthermore, improving women’s educational opportunities can create positive cultural and structural changes. Culturally, exposure to knowledge and higher education may result in an ideational change in that it can provide women with an enriched worldview. Structurally, increased education can provide more opportunities for mobility which can be equated with greater autonomy. Specifically, higher levels of educational attainment may offer women a better chance at obtaining meaningful employment, which can lead to personal income and increased independence.

An empirical analysis on the impact of employment on empowerment suggests that paid work is not only economically beneficial for women but also has the power to transform women’s personal agency (Mahmud and Tasneem, 2014). The study found that earning an

income provided women with a sense of self-reliance and control over their own lives, in addition to bolstering their self-esteem and offering hope for a better future. Therefore, employment provides not only the financial means to obtain one's goals but also fulfills fundamental human desires for these women, such as having control over one's life and future.

Situationally, empowerment can be discussed as shared responsibilities or shared leadership. In the context of this study, empowerment at the situational level can be understood in terms of women having control over their earnings and participating in household decision making. It can be expected that women who have either shared or sole responsibility over their earnings and household decisions are likely to have a higher level of female autonomy than those who are not involved in the decision-making process. Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that gender egalitarianism can greatly decrease the risk of domestic violence for women (Kishor et al., 2004; Xu et al., 2011). Finally, at the community or societal level, empowerment can be obtained through tolerance for diversity. Greater tolerance will likely result in the denunciation of patriarchal gender norms. For the purposes of this study, denunciation of patriarchal norms can be conceptualized as the disapproval of violence against women. Previous literature shows that women who tolerate wife beating are at an increased risk of violence (Begum et al., 2015; Kishor et al., 2004; Schuler et al., 2017; Sabri et al., 2014; Xu et al., 2011). Approval attitudes toward wife beating are indicative of hierarchical gender dynamics that greatly disadvantage women.

It is important to note that the efficacy of empowerment as a protective factor is greatly improved as gender equality increases. Women's initial attempts for empowerment may be viewed as challenging the status quo in traditional societies and as a result may be met with greater violence. However, as gender equality and empowerment become more normative, it is

expected that the risk of violence against women will decrease (Ellsberg et al., 2008; Koenig et al., 2003).

Conceptualizing empowerment as a multidimensional construct, Figure 1 displays both risk and protective factors of IPV across levels. At the individual level, the present study will examine such protective factors as women’s employment and educational attainment. At the situational level, women’s control over their earnings and their decision-making power will be investigated. Finally, attitudes toward violence against women will be explored as an indicator of social norm. As such, this figure will serve as a conceptual model for the present study

	Risk Factor	Protective Factor
Individual	Lack of employment or educational attainment	Women’s employment and higher levels of educational attainment
Situational	Male dominance over earnings and household decision making	Women’s control over earnings and participation in household decision making
Societal	Normative justification of wife beating	No tolerance for wife beating

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypotheses

Guided by the conceptual models as shown in Figure 1, the following hypotheses are developed to examine the association between different dimensions of empowerment theory and IPV in India at the individual, situational and societal levels, respectively.

H₁: *Women who exhibit higher levels of educational attainment will be at lower risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors.*

H₂: *Women who are employed will be at lower risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors.*

H₃: *Women who agree that a husband is justified in beating his wife under any circumstance will be at greater risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors.*

H₄: *Women who participate in household decision making will be at lower risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors.*

H₅: *Women who have control over their own earnings will be at lower risk of experiencing physical, sexual or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors.*

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

Data Source

The hypotheses outlined above are tested using data from the fourth and most recent National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4). Since the first NFHS survey was conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in 1992-1993, the survey has provided state and national level data through representative samples of households throughout India. Prepared by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), the 2015-2016 NFHS-4 covers all 29 states, 7 union territories and 640 districts in India. The primary objective of the survey is to provide data on family health and welfare as well as emerging issues in India.

The sample for the NFHS-4 was obtained using the 2011 census as the sampling frame. A stratified two-stage sampling method was employed to obtain a representative sample. Utilizing the 2011 census, researchers selected 28,586 primary sampling units, which were then mapped and clustered into segments of approximately 100-150 households. Within each cluster, 22 households were randomly selected using systematic sampling. A total of 601,509 households were successfully interviewed. Out of 723,875 eligible women age 15-49, interviews were completed with 699,686 women for a response rate of 97%.

For the domestic violence module, 83,397 women were selected and 79,729 of them answered questions on domestic violence. Of the 79,729 women sampled, only 61,496 responded to the questions related to experiences of physical, sexual, emotional violence, and controlling behaviors. Under careful consideration of the WHO's guidelines for the ethical collection of information on domestic violence, only one eligible woman from each household was selected to ensure the privacy and safety of the woman involved. Special weights were used to ensure that the domestic violence subsample was representative of the national population.

Dependent Variable

In order to adequately capture the multiple dimensions of IPV in India, the analysis accounts for physical, sexual, and emotional violence in addition to controlling behaviors. Female respondents were asked whether they had experienced violence by their current or former husbands in their lifetime. Physical violence is measured by asking ever-married women the following seven questions: “Did your husband ever:

- 1) Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?
- 2) Slap you?
- 3) Twist your arm or pull your hair?
- 4) Punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you?
- 5) Kick you, drag you, or beat you up?
- 6) Try to choke you or burn you on purpose?
- 7) Threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon?”

The second dependent variable intended to measure emotional violence by asking respondents: “Did your husband ever:

- 1) Say or do something to humiliate you in front of others?
- 2) Threaten to hurt or harm you or someone close to you?
- 3) Insult you or make you feel bad about yourself?

The third dependent variable measures experiences of sexual spousal violence. Respondents were asked: “Did your husband ever:

- 1) Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?
- 2) Physically force you to perform any other sexual acts you did not want to?
- 3) Force you with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts you did not want to?”

The final dependent variable in the analysis explores controlling behaviors and asked women a series of questions regarding their husband’s behavior in various contexts outlined below.

- 1) Jealous if respondent talks with other men
- 2) Accuses respondent of unfaithfulness
- 3) Does not permit respondent to meet female friends
- 4) Tries to limit respondent’s contact with family
- 5) Insists on knowing where respondent is
- 6) Doesn’t trust respondent with money

Response categories for all indicators of physical, sexual and emotional violence are measured by (0) Never, (1) Often, (2) Sometimes, (3) Yes, but not in the last 12 months, and (4) Yes, but frequency in the last 12 months missing. In order to conduct logistic regression, dependent variable response categories were dichotomized with (0) never and response categories 1-4 being recoded as (1). For each dependent variable, the response categories were first added together, then the index variables were dichotomized. Reliability tests were conducted before each index variable was created to ensure internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The Cronbach's Alpha for physical violence (.790), emotional violence (.720), sexual violence (.763), and controlling behaviors (.727) were all satisfactory.

Independent Variables

For the purposes of this research, the NFHS definition of empowerment was utilized to select specific variables to adequately measure and capture factors reflecting women's empowerment. The NFHS operationalized women's empowerment as "employment, earnings, control over earnings, magnitude of women's earnings relative to those of their partners, decision making, empowering attitudes, house and land ownership, and access and use of a bank account and mobile phone" (NFHS-4). The first independent variable in this analysis is women's employment. Employment is measured by a question that asked whether the respondent was working at the time of study. This variable was dummy-coded into (0) no and (1) yes.

This analysis also included education as a key independent variable. The NFHS measure for educational attainment is a self-reported measure that asked respondents their highest level of

educational attainment with response categories as (0) No education, (1) Primary (2) Secondary, and (3) Higher.

The third independent variable in the analysis measures women's participation in household decision making. Women are considered to participate in household decisions if they make decisions alone or jointly with their husbands. Three different indicators were combined into an index variable. A woman's role in household decision making is examined in the following three areas: 1) person who usually decided on respondent's health care, 2) person who usually decided on household purchases and 3) person who usually decided to visit family or relatives. Response categories for the original variables are (1) respondent alone, (2) respondent and husband/partner, (3) husband/partner alone, and (4) other. For the index variable, response categories have been reverse-coded for higher values to indicate women with greater responsibility. Prior to creating an index variable, a reliability test was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the responses with $\alpha = .817$.

Rejection of patriarchal conditions that reinforce gender inequalities can serve as an important indicator for empowerment. Given the literature that supports justification of violence against women as a correlate for increased risk of IPV, the fourth independent variable explores approval attitudes towards IPV under five circumstances. Respondents were asked if they agree that a husband is justified in hitting or beating his wife if she: goes out without telling husband, neglects the children, argues with husband, refuses to have sex with husband or if she doesn't cook food properly. A dichotomous variable was created to assess if a woman justified wife beating in any of the situations outlined above. The variable was dummy-coded with (0) indicating that the woman does not justify wife beating under any circumstance or (1) woman

accepts wife beating in at least one of the five situations. The reliability of this variable was tested and revealed a sufficient alpha level of .841.

The final independent variable in the analysis represents whether the respondent has control over her own cash earnings. Respondents were queried as to which person usually decided how to spend respondent's earnings with response categories consisting of a reference category (0) husband/partner alone or someone else, (1) respondent and husband/partner or respondent and another person, and (3) respondent alone. Given that only a limited percentage of women in India are employed, the total number of cases for this variable is much less than the total sample for the other key independent variables. Given the importance of this variable, it was included in the results, but a separate model was estimated to account for the missing cases.

Control Variables

In consideration of previous research, several control variables were included in the analysis. Control variables include age (in years), type of place of residence (dummy-coded with 1 = urban and 0 = rural), husbands alcohol consumption (dummy-coded with 1 = yes and 0 = no), a wealth index, religion (dummy-coded with Christian as the reference), and number of children.

Analytic Approach

This analysis began with univariate descriptive statistics to provide summary statistics of all variables. Next, bivariate analysis of the variables was conducted using cross-tabulations. Chi-square statistics were included to display the possible associations between the dependent variables and categorical covariates. Independent sample T-tests were conducted to assess the association between the dependent variables and continuous covariates. Given that the

dependent variables have been dichotomized, nested logistic regression models were utilized to examine the association between IPV and the independent and control variables. Odds ratios were computed to reveal significant associations between the variables. Women may be less likely to report sexual violence than other instances of violence, therefore rare events logistic regression was used to prevent skewness in analysis of sexual violence. Data management such as recoding and initial analysis were performed using SPSS, but statistical modeling was carried out using Stata 13.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 features the lifetime prevalence of physical, emotional, and sexual violence among married women in India. About twenty eight percent (27.75%) of married women reported experiencing some form of physical violence in their lifetime. Interestingly, fewer women reported experiencing emotional violence in their lifetime, with only 12.05% of the married women sampled reporting emotional violence. The incidence of sexual violence was reported by 6.35% of women. Incidents of their husband exhibiting controlling behaviors were reported by 47.68% of the women sampled. Summary statistics for the independent and control variables are available in Table 2. Frequencies are reported for all categorical variables, whereas for continuous variables, minimum and maximum values as well as their means and standard deviations were displayed.

Table 1: Distribution of Married Women in India Who Reported Experiencing Physical, Emotional, or Sexual Violence or Controlling Behaviors in their lifetime

Variable	Percent	N
Dependent Variables		
Physical Violence		
Yes	27.75%	17,059
No	72.25%	44,437
Emotional Violence		
Yes	12.05%	7,411
No	87.95%	54,085
Sexual Violence		
Yes	6.36%	3,909
No	93.64%	57,587
Controlling Behaviors		
Yes	47.68%	29,324
No	52.32%	32,172
N= 61,496		

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Married Women in India

Variable	Percent	N		Percent	N
Independent Variables			Control Variables		
Women's Employment			Wealth Index		
No	76.2%	46,840	Poorest	19.2%	11,796
Yes	23.8%	14,656	Poorer	21.1%	12,953
Justification of Wife Beating			Middle	20.8%	12,774
Not acceptable under any circumstance	57.9%	35,593	Richer	20.0%	12,303
Acceptable in at least one situation	42.1%	25,903	Richest	19.0%	11,670
Educational Attainment			Residence		
No Education	32.6%	20,061	Urban	29.3%	18,024
Primary	14.5%	8,894	Rural	70.7%	43,472
Secondary	43.3%	26,640	Age		
Higher	9.6%	5,901	15-19	2.5%	1,547
Earnings			20-24	13.9%	8,567
Respondent Alone	17.8%	2,611	25-29	21.9%	13,441
Respondent and Husband/Other	65.5%	9,602	30-34	21.0%	12,908
Husband Alone/Someone Else	16.7%	2,453	35-39	17.2%	10,580
		N=14,666	40-44	12.6%	7,746
Decision Index			45-49	10.9%	6,707
Minimum	3		Husband's Alcohol Consumption		
Maximum	12		Does not drink	69.1%	42,522
Mean	8.439		Does drink alcohol	30.9%	18,974
Standard Deviation	1.579		Religion		
			Hindu	75.5%	46,440
			Muslim	13.2%	8,124
			Christian	6.5%	3,965

Table 1: Continued

			Other	4.8%	2,967
			Children		
			Minimum	0	
			Maximum	3	
			Mean	2.27	
			Standard Deviation	1.42	
N=61,496					

Bivariate Analysis

Cross-tabulations of the dependent and categorical independent variables revealed statistically significant associations between physical violence and all covariates. Looking at emotional violence, all variables are statistically significant given an alpha level of .05 and significance values of .0001. The Pearson chi-square values are much larger for physical violence than emotional violence. In regard to sexual violence, bivariate analysis reveals statistically significant association between the dependent variable and all key independent variables. Finally, looking at the cross-tabulations between controlling behaviors and the categorical covariates revealed statistically significant associations among each.

The variables measuring age, number of children, and the decision-making index are continuous and therefore, independent samples t tests were conducted to determine the bivariate associations for these variables that were not categorical. In regard to physical violence, utilizing Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances are not assumed given that all three continuous variables were statistically significant at the .05 level. Moving on to emotional violence, number of children and the decision-making index were both statistically significant at the .05 level given significance values of .0001. The association between age and emotional violence was not statistically significant with a significance value of .421. For sexual violence, once again all three continuous variables were statistically significant and therefore equal variances are not assumed. Finally, the independent samples t-test for controlling behaviors revealed statistically significant associations for the variables measuring age, number of children and the decision-making index. The Pearson chi-square values from the cross-tabulations and the t values from the independent samples t-test are available in the table below. With the exception of age, all associations were found to be statistically significant. As a result, there are no

asterisks in the table denoting statistical significance, only an “n.s.” next to age to denote that the association was not statistically significant.

Table 3: Bivariate Associations

<u>Bivariate Associations with Physical Violence</u>		<u>Bivariate Associations with Emotional Violence</u>	
Pearson Chi-Square		Pearson Chi-Square	
Residence	239.354	Residence	37.191
Wealth	2283.66	Wealth	702.435
Religion	273.68	Religion	61.417
Drinks	4386.932	Drinks	2023.445
Education	2038.934	Education	619.485
Employment	516.855	Employment	301.009
Justification	2068.939	Justification	915.884
Earnings	726.891	Earnings	203.43
Independent Samples t-Test		Independent Samples t-Test	
Age	-7.571	Age	-4.816 n.s
Children	-30.037	Children	-15.06
Decision Index	5.139	Decision Index	7.461
<u>Bivariate Associations with Sexual Violence</u>		<u>Bivariate Associations with Controlling Behaviors</u>	
Pearson Chi-Square		Pearson Chi-Square	
Residence	75.125	Residence	209.301
Wealth	646.645	Wealth	1270.613
Religion	22.107	Religion	476.761
Drinks	1443.969	Drinks	852.487
Education	407.261	Education	793.378
Employment	165.271	Employment	75.119
Justification	594.652	Justification	1675.536
Earnings	124.584	Earnings	76.896
Independent Samples t-Test		Independent Samples t-Test	
Age	1.81	Age	11.194
Children	-12.227	Children	-13.376
Decision Index	9.593	Decision Index	15.88

Lifetime Physical Violence

Table 3 displays the nested binary logistic regression models with lifetime physical violence as the dependent variable. Each model includes all control variables and one key independent variable with odds coefficients reported for each variable. The first model tests the first hypothesis to examine the effect of education on physical violence. In this model, all variables are statistically significant with the exception of the Christian religion variable. An odds ratio of .826 indicates that controlling for other variables in the model, for each additional level in educational attainment, the odds of married women experiencing physical violence decreases by 17.4%. Model 2 explores the impact of women's employment on lifetime physical violence. Controlling for other variables, the odds of experiencing physical violence are 33.5% (OR=1.335) higher for women who are currently employed than those who are not. It is interesting to note that while employment was hypothesized to be a protective factor as an indicator of empowerment, the opposite was found to be true. Model 3 examines the effect of women's approval attitudes towards IPV on physical violence. Controlling for other variables, the model suggests that the odds of ever experiencing physical violence are two times higher (OR=2.102) for women who approve of wife beating in any situation than for those who do not. Model 4 examines the effect of women's role in household decision making on physical violence. Controlling for other variables, for each additional unit increase in women's decision-making power, the odds of experiencing physical violence decrease by 4.2%. The findings from the full regression model (Model 5) remain consistent with the nested models reported previously, with all four independent variables remaining statistically significant. The effect of each independent variable on physical violence decreases slightly when all variables are included in the model.

Table 4: Odds Coefficients of Logistic Regressions to Predict Lifetime Experience of Physical Violence (n=61,496)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Age	0.982**	0.996	0.999	1.012	0.975***
Residence	0.85***	0.852***	0.839***	0.850***	0.827***
Wealth	0.819***	0.772***	0.779***	0.766***	0.834***
Children	1.113***	1.138***	1.143***	1.139***	1.12***
Religion					
Hindu	1.616***	1.627***	1.500***	1.597***	1.498***
Muslim	1.509***	1.636***	1.365***	1.55***	1.35***
Christian	0.961	0.881*	0.810***	0.905	0.854**
Drinks	3.243***	3.231***	3.203***	3.294***	3.165***
Education	0.826***				0.845***
Employment		1.335***			1.286***
Justification			2.102***		2.046***
Decision Index				0.958***	0.967***

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Lifetime Emotional Violence

Table 4 features the binary logistic regression models that predict the odds of ever experiencing emotional violence among married women in India. The impact of education on emotional violence is again statistically significant with an odds ratio of .880. That is, net of statistical controls, for each additional level in educational attainment, the odds of ever experiencing emotional violence decrease by 12%. When examining the impact of employment on emotional violence, the table reveals an odds ratio of 1.389 which suggests that when controlling for other variables in the model, the odds of ever experiencing emotional violence are 38.9% higher for married women who are employed than for those who are not. The effect of justification of wife beating on emotional violence is slightly lower than the effect it had on physical violence. Controlling for other variables, the odds of ever experiencing emotional violence are 88.7% (OR=1.887) higher for married women who justify wife beating than for those who do not. Looking again at how women's role in household decision making affects emotional violence, for each additional unit increase in responsibility in household decision making, the odds of ever experiencing emotional violence decreases by 7.6%. The full model reveals similar findings to those outlined above with all key independent variables remaining statistically significant.

Table 5: Odds Coefficients of Logistic Regressions to Predict Lifetime Experience of Emotional Violence (n=61,496)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Age	1.006	1.010	1.016	1.034	1.004
Residence	0.836***	0.837***	0.827***	0.83***	0.812***
Wealth	0.855***	0.825***	0.831***	0.818***	0.871***
Children	1.046***	1.06***	1.063***	1.061***	1.05***
Religion					
Hindu	1.647***	1.663***	1.539***	1.613***	1.519***
Muslim	2.178***	2.347***	1.985***	2.177***	1.978***
Christian	1.237*	1.159	1.087	1.2*	1.125
Drinks	2.964***	2.939***	2.892***	3.028***	2.868***
Education	0.8797***				0.905***
Employment		1.389***			1.358***
Justification			1.887***		1.828***
Decision Index				0.924***	0.928***

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Lifetime Sexual Violence

The Penalized Maximum Likelihood Estimation proposed by Firth was utilized to analyze the effect of the covariates on sexual violence given the skewed sample. The results are provided in Table 5 with coefficients being converted into odds ratios. Model 1 supports the education hypothesis and finds that controlling for other variables in the model, for each additional level in educational attainment the odds of married women ever experiencing emotional violence decreases by 11.5% (OR=.885). The effect of employment on sexual violence in Model 2 remains consistent with the effect of employment on other forms of violence; that is, net of statistical controls, the odds of ever experiencing sexual violence is 34.4% (OR=1.344) higher for women who are employed than for those who are not. Approval of wife beating remains a strong predictor of experiencing violence with an odds ratio of 1.966. All

else being equal, the odds of married women ever experiencing sexual violence are 96.6% higher for those who justify wife beating than for those who do not. In consideration of women's role in household decision making, for each additional unit increase in responsibility, the odds of ever experiencing sexual violence decreases by 11% (OR=.890). Finally, looking at the full model, all key independent variables remain statistically significant with minimal change in the odds ratios.

Table 6: Odds Coefficients of Rare Events Logistic Regressions to Predict Lifetime Experience of Sexual Violence (n=61,496)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Age	0.933***	0.935***	0.940***	0.964**	0.936***
Residence	0.908*	0.908*	0.898*	0.895*	0.878**
Wealth	0.826***	0.798***	0.805***	0.792***	0.840***
Children	1.093***	1.107***	1.109***	1.108***	1.098***
Religion					
Hindu	1.341***	1.354***	1.242*	1.294**	1.208*
Muslim	1.589***	1.704***	1.432***	1.558***	1.403**
Christian	1.121	1.056	0.981	1.097	1.021
Drinks	3.207***	3.182***	3.116***	3.295***	3.112***
Education	0.885***				0.916***
Employment		1.344***			1.318***
Justification			1.966***		1.896***
Decision Index				0.890***	0.894***

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Controlling Behaviors

In light of the WHO definition, the fourth dimension of IPV is controlling behaviors. Model 1 in Table 6 of this analysis examines the impact of educational attainment on lifetime experience of controlling behaviors and finds that for each additional level in educational attainment, the odds of ever experiencing controlling behaviors decreases by 10.9% (OR=.891).

The association between employment and controlling behaviors was also statistically significant at the .05 level. Similar to the role of employment in predicting other dependent variables, the likelihood of married women ever experiencing controlling behaviors is 11.5% higher (OR=1.115) for women who are employed than for those who are not. Model 3 measures how women’s approval attitudes towards wife beating may influence their husband exhibiting controlling behaviors. An odds ratio of 1.861 indicates that the odds of ever experiencing controlling behaviors are 86.1% higher for women who justify wife beating in any situation than for those who do not. The fourth model again looks at the significance of women’s role in household decision making. Regarding controlling behaviors, for each additional unit increase in responsibility in household decision making, the odds of married women experiencing controlling behaviors decreases by 6.7% (OR=.933). The full nested model reveals findings that are similar to the previous models with slight distinctions. All control and key independent variables remain statistically significant, the odds ratios for employment and the justification index and employment are slightly lower, while the odds ratios for education and the decision-making index were slightly higher.

Table 7: Odds Coefficients of Logistic Regressions to Predict Lifetime Experience of Controlling Behaviors (n=61,496)

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio	Odds Ratio
Age	0.912***	0.922***	0.919***	0.934***	0.914***
Residence	0.963	0.966	0.955*	0.959*	0.942*
Wealth	0.890***	0.857***	0.871***	0.855***	0.903***
Children	1.071***	1.086***	1.089***	1.088***	1.076***
Religion					
Hindu	1.5***	1.4996***	1.412***	1.472***	1.398***
Muslim	1.311***	1.36***	1.1897***	1.313***	1.158*

Christian	0.776***	0.739***	0.682***	0.757***	0.711***
Drinks	1.602***	1.606***	1.56***	1.633***	1.56***
Education	0.891***				0.912***
Employment		1.115***			1.0896***
Justification			1.861***		1.828***
Decision Index				0.933***	0.941***

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Model Exploring Women's Responsibility of Earnings

The variable measuring women's employment found that only 14,659 (23.83%) of the 61,512 women sampled were employed. As a result, only the women who were employed were asked the question whether they had responsibility over their earnings. While the association between the dependent variables and responsibility over earnings was found to be statistically significant in the bivariate analysis, the variable was not statistically significant in the binary logistic regression models for physical or emotional violence, as well as controlling behaviors. The analysis of sexual violence was again conducted using rare events logistic regression to reveal a statistically significant association. This suggests that as women's responsibility over earnings increases, the odds of ever experiencing sexual violence increase by 18.7% (OR=1.187). With the exception of sexual violence, the results indicate that responsibility over earnings is not a significant predictor of lifetime experience of intimate partner violence.

Table 8: Odds Coefficients of Logistic Regressions to Predict Lifetime Experience of IPV

Physical Violence		Emotional Violence		Sexual Violence		Controlling Behaviors	
Variable	Model 1	Variable	Model 1	Variable	Model 1	Variable	Model 1
	Odds Ratio		Odds Ratio				Odds Ratio
Age	1.008	Age	1.006	Age	0.924***	Age	0.934***

Residence	0.951	Residence	0.853**	Residence	0.863	Residence	1.018
Wealth	0.784***	Wealth	0.843***	Wealth	.852***	Wealth	0.863***
Children	1.107***	Children	1.024	Children	1.095***	Children	1.086***
Religion		Religion		Religion		Religion	
Hindu	1.481***	Hindu	1.868***	Hindu	1.1620	Hindu	1.552***
Muslim	1.503***	Muslim	2.77***	Muslim	1.542*	Muslim	1.544***
Christian	0.7799*	Christian	1.377*	Christian	0.847	Christian	0.896
Drinks	3.382***	Drinks	2.943***	Drinks	2.990***	Drinks	1.698***
Earnings	1.050	Earnings	1.013	Earnings	1.187***	Earnings	1.023

*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Intimate partner violence is a pervasive and preventable problem impacting women around the world. While scholars, lawmakers and public officials all agree on the severity of the problem, there is a limited amount of research devoted to finding resolutions. Focusing on women's empowerment as a protective factor, this study examined the effects of education, employment, approval attitudes towards IPV, women's responsibility in household decision making and women's responsibility over their earnings on lifetime experience of IPV against married women in India. Utilizing empowerment theory to guide this research, three of the five hypotheses were found to be supported through analysis of the dependent and key independent variables.

Women with higher levels of educational attainment and those who have greater responsibility in household decision making were found to be at a lower risk of experiencing IPV. Nested logistic regression models revealed statistically significant associations between all dimensions of IPV and educational attainment. This finding supports the first hypothesis that women who exhibited higher levels of educational attainment would be at lower risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors. This is in line with previous research that viewed education as both a structural and cultural empowering factor by providing women with greater autonomy (Friedman et al., 2015).

The hypothesis stating that women who participated in household decision making would be at lower risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors was also supported through analysis of the nested logistic regression models. This finding is consistent with previous empirical literature that suggests that gender egalitarianism is associated with a reduced risk of violence (Kishor et al., 2004; Xu et al., 2011). However, a recent, similar

study in Pakistan found that while education was negatively associated with IPV, household decision making was actually found to be a risk factor (Murshid et al. 2017). This exemplifies the contradictory findings that are often present when analyzing factors pertaining to empowerment. To account for these ambiguous findings, numerous studies suggest that as empowerment evolves over time to become more normative, empowerment can eventually become a strong protective factor, despite initial negative implications (Koenig et. al. 2003; Murshid et al. 2017; Schuler et al. 2018). In addition, differences in socio-cultural context may in part help explain inconsistent findings.

In consideration of the third hypothesis, women who agreed that a husband was justified in beating his wife under any circumstance were at a greater risk of experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional violence, or controlling behaviors than women who were not supportive of attitudes toward violence against women. Previous literature suggests that tolerant attitudes toward violence against women are often indicative of the prevalent patriarchal norms present in a given society and are often a strong predictor of IPV (Murshid et al. 2017). This study is congruent with such findings in that justification of wife beating has the strongest association with multiple forms of IPV (Begum et al., 2015; Kishor et al., 2004 Schuler et al., 2017).

Two interesting findings emerged in regard to the remaining two independent variables. The fifth hypothesis regarding women's responsibility over earnings was found to be statistically insignificant for all indicators of IPV except sexual violence. In regard to sexual violence, increased responsibility over earnings contradicted the hypothesis and was found to be a risk rather than a protective factor. Similarly, employment was also found to be a risk rather than a protective factor. "Gender display" can be utilized to explain these unexpected findings. Often cited in studies on division of housework, gender display hypothesizes that women who

contradict traditional gender norms often compensate for their deviation through increased contribution in household tasks. To elaborate, women who earn more than their husbands often take on more work at home, despite their increased economic contribution (Mahmud et al.,2014; Sullivan, 2011). Scholars suggest that men's underperformance of housework is a way to reassert traditional masculinity.

In the context of this study, women's responsibility over earnings and employment are two closely linked variables, given that only women who are employed can control over their earnings. In India, women make up less than a quarter of the workforce; as a result, women who are employed are likely to be viewed as violating traditional gender norms. Just as men display their gender through underperformance of housework, men can reassert their dominance through violence as well. As reviewed previously, employment as a risk factor has also surfaced from previous studies, suggesting that women's empowerment may be viewed by some men as challenging patriarchal norms, thus perpetuating violence rather than protecting women from it (Ackerson et al. 2008; Atkinson et al. 2005; Macmillian et al. 1999). These findings underscore the necessity for further research to be conducted to determine how to normalize and routinize women's empowerment such as independent economic behaviors that may protect women from violence.

Like all research, this study is not without limitations. Given the large sample size, small statistical differences may have been amplified to contribute to statistically significant findings. While the large sample size of this study caused some initial concern, it must be reminded that this research has been developed and guided by solid theoretical arguments based on empowerment theory. Moreover, all measures of IPV were self-reported by the female respondent which can result in both false or underreporting. Future research may benefit from

reports from both wives and their husbands or cohabiting partners. Finally, this study utilized a cross-sectional survey dataset, therefore, no causal relationships between empowerment and IPV are implied. To establish appropriate temporal order between empowerment measures and IPV as outcome measures, panel designs via survey research or intervention studies are preferred.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into women's empowerment as a multidimensional protective factor of IPV. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on IPV through exploration of empowerment and IPV in a major middle-income country that is dominated by patriarchal gender norms. Once empowerment has been established as a protective factor, future research endeavors should be devoted to normalizing empowerment and breaking down traditional gender barriers in hopes of eliminating this pervasive social ill.

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