

---

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN RURAL ODISHA

**DR.PRAGYAN MOHANTY**

---

**Abstract:** Violence against women continues to be a global epidemic that kills tortures and maims, physically, psychologically, sexually and economically. According to a new report from the World Health Organisation (WHO), 35% of women worldwide have experienced violence and 30% violated by intimate partners. Violence against women is on the rise in today's society and presents an unfavorable picture of the status of women in India. It shows that the Indian mindset is completely patriarchal when it comes to dealing with women, as violence is the most common and widely used mechanism or factor to control women in any given class, community or nation. This research paper tries to understand the depth domestic violence has spread its roots in our society by examining it from the National and the State perspectives. The State Odisha is a very traditional state and this research paper tries to present an overview of Domestic Violence and examine its prevalence in Rural Odisha.

**Keywords:** Crime, Discriminations, Empowerment, Gender bias, Human rights, Violence

---

**Introduction:**

**Domestic Violence:** Women face gender discrimination in all aspects of their lives and there is no exceptions within in family as well. Gender inequality and domestic violence are an integral part of every woman's traditional culture and an inevitable part of their life. Over 40% of Indian women have experienced domestic violence at some point in their married lives.

Domestic violence against women is a wide spread problem and is a type of a crime that is the most under-recorded and under-reported. The inferior or secondary status of women is as responsible for the prevalence of this problem as much as the patriarchal mindset and orthodox society. Crimes against women in any part of India are difficult to assuage especially the rural areas of a backward state like Odisha, Where the study has taken place. Crimes related to violence against women in Odisha increased during 2011, Odisha is placed 11<sup>th</sup> in the list of the states ranked as per crime against women as per NCRB report 2005. According to the department of statistics, dowry related suicidal death cases of dowry torture, other cases of torture and crimes against women are raised in 2011 in comparison to 2010. There were 127 dowry related suicidal cases during 2011 against 46 in 2010. 975 other cases of torture were registered in 2011 against 836 in the previous year and as many as 4,450 cases of other crimes against women registered during 2011 against 1,019 in 2010. According to the report of NFHS-3 around 20% of women in Odisha have reportedly been assaulted by their husbands. As per data during 2009, out of 2481 violence against women cases dowry related violence constitutes 749 (30%). According to the department statistics, while 1,025 cases of rape were registered in the state during 2010, the number increased to 1,112 during 2012. However, there was a slight reduction in number of cases of murder with rape and cases of murder with dowry torture during 2011.

The study has been conducted in the rural area of Baruna, a village of Kendrapada district of Odisha. The village has total population 2450 of which male 1241 and female 1209. Out of which SC population is 968. The ratio of SC male and female is 493 and 475 respectively. Child population (0-6 age of years): The child population in this village is 173 of which boys are 92 and girls are 81. The number of respondents taken for the study was only 18 due to the stigma attached to domestic violence victims.

The age profile of these 18 respondents is 18-24(16.66%), 25-30(38.88%), 31-35(11.11%), 36-40 (16.66%), more than 40 years (16.66%). And the religion profile is Hinduism is at the highest at (94.44%) and Islamism (5.55%) and Christianity (NIL). Where as the Caste which is an important variable is GENERAL (33.33%), OBC (50%), SC (11.11%), ST (NIL), MINORITIES (5.55%). And the educational profile is, Illiterate (11.11%), below primary (11.11%), primary (27.77%), middle (5.55%), high school (11.11%), and intermediate (27.77%), B.ED (5.55%). The Marital status of these respondents is as follows Unmarried (NIL), Married (88.88%), widowed (NIL), Separated (5.55%) and Divorce (5.55%). Domestic violence is more pronounced among married women in any area although single unmarried take the burn of it as well but as it is more visible among married women thus, only the married and divorced women were taken as respondents in this research. Occupations give status to a person. Present occupation is also an important variable which determines the level of their status in society. Housewife (72.22%), daily wage laborer (16.66%), petty business (NIL), farmer (5.55%), teacher (5.55%). The husbands occupation is an important variable and (27.77%) were service holders, daily wage labour (11.11%), farmer (16.66%), petty business (38.88%), and (5.55%) were drivers.

When these women were asked if they had ever faced domestic violence, shockingly 88.33 per cent of them

answered in affirmative. The source of violence was usually the husband as, 66.66% of women suffer from domestic violence from their husband, 11.11% of women say that their mother-in-law initiates such violence, 5.55% of women say she faces domestic violence for her brother in-law and 16.66% women say that they are tortured by other family members as well.

Even though the causes of violence can never be truly understood as each individual's mindset is different from the other but certain points stand in focus such as drug abuse and alcoholism, dowry etc, as 33.33% of women think they face domestic violence because of alcoholism, 16.66% of women think for dowry they suffer from violence, 5.55% of women are victimized due to extra marital affairs, 22.22% of women suffer from domestic violence due to their dependent status and 22.22% of women face domestic violence for supremacy of laws over them. Here alcoholism stood out as the most prevalent cause for domestic violence. Blind belief is very prevalent in rural areas, it is a major hindrance in the path of development and women fall prey to this more than men. It was found in this research that phenomenal 83.33 per cent women suffer domestic violence due to the blind beliefs within the family and cultural setup. Dowry is a major evil in India and this rural area in Odisha has not escaped its burn as 50 per cent respondents believe that dowry made domestic violence.

**Conclusion:** Domestic violence further cripples a woman and completely shatters her self esteem, impeding her development and well-being, in short denying her basic human rights. This research showed the anguish these rural women faced due to domestic violence. Some women were denied food (5.5%) and they were even denied medical care (5.56%) when they were sick, and (27.78%) of these respondents were forced to work outside home, many times these respondents were locked out by their partners (80%). Sadly 80 percent respondents even felt that it was either the right of their husband or even their destiny to be facing violence. As it is a taboo topic and a woman feels humiliated to admit they are facing domestic violence they often hesitate in asking for help from relatives and neighbors (50%). These victims of domestic violence (80%) fell ashamed to discuss domestic violence in front of others. All this shows the lack of awareness as 66.67 per cent respondents did not even know about their basic rights or any welfare measures by the government. 85 percent respondents have never filed

a complaint against domestic violence. This study came up with certain points of importance such as:

- (i) There should be a massive campaign against domestic violence. It should be on television, radio, in newspapers in villages it should be anywhere and everywhere that matters.
- (ii) Government should make it compulsory to incorporate the programme in all health care facilities of India for proper screening of all types of domestic violence and abuse. Adequate emergency treatments with rehabilitative measures should be provided by all health professionals should be made aware of domestic violence.
- (iii) NGOs play an important role in counseling and assisting to victims of violence and also raising awareness regarding domestic violence.
- (iv) Women must be made aware about legislations, legal provisions, rights and entitlements while equal rights of women in at family and community level.
- (v) Women must be made aware about legislations, legal provisions, rights and entitlements while equal rights of women in at family and community level.
- (vi) Social change must be initiated to eliminate women's secondary position and lack of decision making.
- (vii) Government also can have crisis centers for violated women in the main health care-centers like Rural Health Centers (RHC), Basic Health Units (BHU) and tertiary hospitals throughout the country.
- (viii) Lastly, a holistic change in the patriarchal mindset of people needs to be achieved through gender sensitization programmes in forms of skits, theater, street plays.

To eradicate domestic violence is not only the responsibility of the government and legal mechanisms but the moral duty of every citizen.

**Acknowledgement:** To work on a theme like Domestic Violence proved to be very difficult in a traditional state like Odisha and would not have been possible without the help of some people. I take this opportunity to thank Ms. Dharitri Rout, my student for her help as researcher for this study. I also thank my family friends and students for their love and support and the publishers of this article and Dr. Ratnakar for his help and support. Last but not the least I thank all the respondents who despite their many reservations opened up to me.

## References:

1. Roy M.K.: Violence Against Women, Publication: Ajay Varma for Commonwealth, Jan 2000
2. Banerjee Sunita: Violence Against Women in Globalization Asia, Publication: Swastik Publication, 2009.

- 
- 3. Bahl Manish: Violence on Women by Men, Publication: G.S.Rawat for Cyber Tech, 2007
  - 4. Aggrawal Dr.Usha: Women and Crime, Publication: Murari Lal & Sons, 2010
  - 5. [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)
  - 6. [www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm](http://www.unfpa.org/gender/violence.htm)
  - 7. [www.medicinenet.com/domestic violence/page 6.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/domestic_violence/page_6.htm)
  - 8. [www.ovw.usdoj.gov/dom violence.htm](http://www.ovw.usdoj.gov/dom_violence.htm)

\*\*\*

Dr.Pragyan Mohanty/Lecturer in Women's Studies/Ravenshaw University/ Cuttack/ Odisha/  
Cuttack Chandi/ P.O-Buxi Bazaar/ In front of Christ College/Cuttack-753001, Odisha  
@-pragyan\_sm@yahoo.co.in/Mob.No-9861151881