Domestic Violence among Women in Context of their Cognitive Style, Caste Prejudice, Religiosity, Working Status and Cultural Affiliation

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on 100 tribal and 100 non-tribal women equal in respect of working and non-working dimension selected from Jharkhand and Bihar. The purpose of the study was to compare their proneness to domestic violence in respect of cognitive style, caste prejudice, religiosity, cultural affiliation, working and non-working dimensions. For the purpose, it was hypothesized that (i) FI and FD, (ii) high and low caste prejudiced groups, (iii) high and low religiosity groups, (iv) working and non-working status groups and (v) tribal Vs non-tribal groups will differ significantly on domestic violence measure. Cognitive style caste prejudice, religiosity and domestic violence were measured using Witkin's Embeded Figure Test. Singh's and Prasad's Caste Prejudice Scale, Singh's and Prasad's Religiosity Scale and Kumar's Domestic Violence Scale respectively. Besides, a PDS was used to get other necessary informations relating to the respondents. The scales were employed on the respondents and data were obtained, analysed and treated using t-ratio. The results confirmed the hypotheses. It was concluded that domestic violence is attributed by cognitive style, caste prejudice, religiosity, cultural affiliation and working non-working dimensions. It is concluded that (i) Field dependent respondents are more prone to domestic violence than their field independent counterpart respondents, (ii) High caste prejudiced respondents are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than their counterparts belong to low caste prejudiced group, (iii) Low religious group of respondents are more prone to domestic violence than their counterparts belonging to high religious group of respondents, (iv) Non-working

women are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than their counterparts belonging to working group and (v) Tribal women respondents are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than their non-tribal counterparts.

KEY WORDS

Domestic Violence, Women, Tribal, Caste.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence (DV) is a pervasive social issue that affects individuals across various cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographical locations. It involves a pattern of abusive behavior, typically within an intimate partner relationship, and can manifest in physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or economic harm. Although it is often considered a private matter, domestic violence has profound societal implications, affecting individuals, families, and entire communities. The consequences of domestic violence are far-reaching, ranging from physical injuries to long-term psychological trauma. Understanding the psychosocial correlates psychological, social, and environmental factors that contribute to domestic violence is critical for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Psychosocial correlates refer to a complex set of factors that influence an individual's behavior, emotions, and interactions within society. These factors can include personal psychological conditions such as mental health disorders, personality traits, and emotional regulation, as well as social elements like family dynamics, cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and social support. Each of these variables can either exacerbate or mitigate the occurrence of domestic violence, influencing both the perpetrators and victims of abuse.

One significant psychological correlate of domestic violence is mental health, particularly conditions like depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Research indicates that individuals suffering from mental health disorders or substance use problems are at higher risk for perpetrating or experiencing domestic violence. For example, individuals who are depressed or have mood disorders may resort to violence as a means of coping with frustration or a perceived lack of control. Similarly, substance abuse, particularly alcohol or drugs, can lower inhibitions and increase aggression, making violence more likely. These conditions often distort an individual's perception of relationships and hinder their ability to regulate emotions, making them more prone to abusive behavior.

Another key psychosocial factor is the history of abuse in an individual's family or childhood. Individuals who grow up in homes where domestic violence is present are more likely to either become perpetrators or victims of abuse in their adult relationships. This cyclical pattern of violence is often attributed to learned behaviors, where children internalize abusive behaviors as normal or acceptable methods of dealing with conflict. Additionally, children exposed to domestic violence may suffer from long-term psychological effects such as low self-esteem, difficulty forming healthy relationships, and challenges in emotional regulation. These early life experiences contribute to the perpetuation of domestic violence across generations.

Cultural and societal norms also play a critical role in shaping attitudes toward domestic violence. In some cultures, gender inequality and patriarchal structures contribute to the normalization of violence against women. Social norms that endorse male dominance, control, and entitlement over women may encourage abusive behaviors and justify violence in relationships. Moreover, rigid gender roles can prevent both men and women from seeking help or discussing their experiences of violence. For example, men who are victims of domestic violence may feel embarrassed or emasculated to report abuse due to societal expectations of male strength and dominance. This societal silence can perpetuate the cycle of abuse, as victims may not have access to necessary resources or support.

Social support networks, or the lack thereof, are another crucial psychosocial factor influencing domestic

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violence. Individuals who lack supportive social networks or are isolated from family and friends are at greater risk of experiencing prolonged abuse. Social isolation can make it harder for victims to leave abusive relationships or seek help. In contrast, a strong support system can provide the emotional and practical resources needed to escape abusive situations. Social support not only helps buffer the emotional toll of domestic violence but also offers the victim access to practical help, such as housing, legal assistance, or financial support, enabling them to break free from the cycle of violence.

Lastly, socioeconomic status is an important factor in the prevalence of domestic violence. Financial stress, unemployment, and poverty have been consistently linked to an increased risk of domestic violence. Economic hardship can exacerbate feelings of frustration, powerlessness, and stress, leading to abusive behavior in relationships. Conversely, individuals with higher socioeconomic status may have more access to resources that can protect them from or mitigate the effects of domestic violence.

In conclusion, domestic violence is a multifaceted problem that is deeply influenced by various psychosocial correlates. Psychological conditions, such as mental health disorders and substance abuse, combined with familial and societal factors, significantly impact the occurrence and severity of domestic violence. Understanding these correlates is crucial for developing more effective interventions, support systems, and preventive measures that can address the root causes of domestic violence and break the cycle of abuse. By examining the psychosocial factors that influence domestic violence, society can better support victims and work toward eliminating this harmful and persistent issue.

Review of Literature

Briere, J., & Jordan, C. E.[1] (2004) discussed the multifaceted effects of domestic violence on women, highlighting the psychological, physical, and emotional consequences. It emphasizes the importance of considering both individual and psychosocial factors in the treatment of survivors and suggests that domestic violence is not just a result of personal relationships but is also influenced by broader cultural and societal issues. Dutton, D. G.[4] (2006) in his book challenges traditional views of domestic violence by integrating psychological theories and empirical evidence. He explores how certain personality traits, such as borderline or narcissistic tendencies, can correlate with abusive behavior. His work underscores the importance of understanding the psychological and social factors that perpetuate violence in intimate relationships. Capaldi, D. M., & Clark, M. A.[2] (2003) examined the relationship between childhood experiences and adult domestic violence. The authors discuss how early exposure to violence or abuse increases the likelihood of becoming involved in abusive relationships later in life. The review also explores the cyclical nature of domestic violence, where individuals who have been abused may either become perpetrators or continue to tolerate abuse as adults. Vaughn, M. G., & Litschge, C.[10] (2012) systematically reviewed various risk factors for domestic violence in women, including socioeconomic status, psychological disorders, and childhood trauma. It emphasizes how factors like depression, anxiety, and substance abuse increase the vulnerability of women to experience intimate partner violence, both as victims and perpetrators. Heise, L.[5] (1998) presented an ecological model of domestic violence that considers multiple levels of influence, including individual, relationship, community, and societal factors. This comprehensive framework highlights the interconnectedness of psychological and social factors that shape abusive behaviors, offering a more holistic view of domestic violence and its causes. Carter, R. L., & Kinzler, K. A.[3] (2006) explored the role of social support in domestic violence situations. It emphasizes that a lack of social support and isolation significantly contributes to the continuation of abuse. Conversely, having a supportive network can act as a protective factor, helping victims to escape abusive relationships or cope with the trauma. Miller, E., & Decker, M. R.[7] (2015) reviewed the extensive health consequences of intimate partner violence, noting that victims often suffer from both physical and psychological conditions, such as chronic pain, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) This review connects the psychosocial effects of abuse, showing how mental health disorders are both a consequence and a correlate of domestic violence. Stark, E., & Flitcraft, A.[9] (1996) examined the intersection

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of domestic violence and women's health, focusing on how both the social and psychological factors contribute to the ongoing victimization of women. They argue that violence is not just an isolated event but a pattern of control and manipulation, with deep psychosocial underpinnings that influence women's physical and mental well-being. O'Leary, K. D.[8] (2007) reviewed focuses on the dynamics of psychological and physical aggression in couples. It addresses the role of individual psychological factors, such as anger issues and personality disorders, in contributing to domestic violence. The review also highlights how early family life and relationship stressors can affect the likelihood of aggression in int.0imate partnerships. Lenton, E. A., & McBride, A. M.[6] (2001) explored how cultural norms and values impact domestic violence dynamics. It shows that certain cultural practices and beliefs about gender roles and authority contribute to the normalization of domestic violence in various societies. The review also delves into how cultural perceptions of masculinity and femininity shape the behavior of both victims and perpetrators of violence. Walsh, F.[11] (2006) reviewed the concept of resilience in the context of family dynamics, focusing on how families can cope with and recovers from the impacts of domestic violence. The review underscores the importance of emotional regulation, family support systems, and community resources in helping victims of domestic violence heal and reduce the risk of future abuse.

These reviews collectively highlight the diverse psychosocial factors contributing to domestic violence. By understanding the interplay between mental health, childhood experiences, societal norms, social support, and socioeconomic status, these studies provide a comprehensive view of the complexity of domestic violence and offer insight into the development of more effective intervention strategies.

Objectives

It was intended to compare women's proneness towords domestic violence in context of FI Vs FD, high and low caste prejudiced, high and low religious, working Vs non-working and tribal Vs non-tribal groups respectively.

Hypothesis

There will be significant difference between women groups belonging to (i) FI and FD, (ii) high and low caste prejudiced groups, (iii) high and low religiosity groups, (iv) working and non-working status groups and (v) tribal Vs non-tribal groups on domestic violence measure.

Method of Study

Sample

The study was conducted on a incidental-cum-purposive sample of 80 tribal and 80 non-tribal women equal in number in respect of working and non-working dimensions also who were selected from Jharkhand and Bihar using purposive sampling

Research Tools

(i) Witkin's Embeded Figure Test was used to measure cognitive style of the respondents in terms of field independence and field dependence.

(ii) Prasad and Singh's Caste Prejudice Scale was used to measure the caste prejudice of the respondents.

(iii) Prasad and Singh's Religiosity Scale was used to measure the religiosity of the respondents.

(iv) Kumar's D. Domestic Violence Scale was used to measure the domestic violence of the respondents.

(v) A PDS was used to get the other necessary information relating to the respondents.

Procedure

The scales were administered on the respondents and data were obtained. The median values for the data obtained in respect of caste prejudice and religiosity were determined. They were classified into high and low groups in respect of caste prejudiced and religiosity groups using their median values. The obtained data

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were treated using t-test.

Results and Interpretation

Table 01: Comparison between women respondents belonging to field dependence and field independence groups in terms of domestic violence

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 158)	p
Cognitive Style	FI	085	18.45	7.09	6.88	<.01
	FD	115	25.61	7.52		

It is clear from table-01 that FI women respondents were found less likely to be exposed (M = 18.45) than FD women respondents (M = 25.61) The t-value was found significant (t = 6.88; df = 158; p<.01) Field-independent women are less prone to be victims of domestic violence because they tend to be more self-reliant, assertive, and capable of making independent judgments. These traits enable them to recognize abusive behavior, resist manipulation, and take action to protect themselves. In contrast, field-dependent women are more socially oriented and reliant on external validation, which can make them more passive, compliant, and vulnerable in controlling or abusive relationships.

Table 02: Comparison between women respondents belonging to high and low caste prejudices groups in terms of domestic violence

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 158)	p
Caste Prejudice	High	125	26.95	6.93	5.94	<.01
	Low	075	20.83	7.12		

It is evident from the results of table-2 that high caste prejudiced women are more pronne (M = 26.95) to domestic violence than low caste prejudiced women (M = 20.83) The t-value was found significant (t = 5.94; df = 158; p<.01) High caste prejudiced women may be more likely to become victims of domestic violence due to rigid adherence to traditional, patriarchal norms that often prioritize male authority and female submissiveness. In such environments, women may internalize gender-based roles and tolerate abuse to maintain family honor or social status. Their caste-based bias may also limit empathy, social openness, or help-seeking from outside their group, reducing support systems and increasing vulnerability to domestic violence.

Table 03: Comparison between women respondents belonging to high and low religiosity groups in terms of domestic violence

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 158)	p
Religiosity	High	135	25.67	7.33	4.89	<.01
	Low	065	31.39	7.92		

The results displayed by table-3 clearly revealed that low religious group of women (M = 31.39) excelled over high religious group (M = 25.67) in terms of domestic violence significantly (t = 489; df = 158; p<.01) Low religiosity group of women may be more likely to become victims of domestic violence because they may lack the community support, moral reinforcement, or structured coping mechanisms often found in religious groups. High religiosity can provide strong social networks, spiritual guidance, and teachings that promote respect, compassion, and family harmony, potentially acting as protective factors. In contrast, low religiosity may correlate with social isolation or lack of moral deterrents against abusive behavior.

Table 04: Comparison between women respondents belonging to working and non-working women groups in terms of domestic violence

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 158)	p
Working Status	Working	100	20.89	6.98	8.43	<.01
	Home Making	100	29.58	7.58		

The results displayed by table-4 clearly revealed that working women were found less likely to be the victim (M = 20.89) of domestic violence than non-working women (M = 29.58; df = 158; p<.01) Working

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women are less likely to be victims of domestic violence because they often have greater financial independence, social exposure, and self-confidence, which empower them to recognize abuse and take action. Employment provides autonomy, external support networks, and a sense of agency that reduce dependency on abusive partners. In contrast, non-working or homemaking women may face economic reliance, social isolation, and traditional role expectations, making them more vulnerable to control and abuse.

Table 05: Comparison between women respondents belonging to tribal and non-tribal women groups in terms of domestic violence

Variables	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-value (df = 158)	p
Cultural Affiliation	Tribal	100	32.46	7.15	6.49	<.01
	Non-tribal	100	25.97	6.97		

Tribal women (M = 32.46) were found more exposed to domestic violence than non-tribal (M = 25.97) The t-value was found significant (t = 6.49; df = 158; p<.01) Non-tribal women are generally less likely to be victims of domestic violence compared to tribal women due to better access to education, legal awareness, social services, and support networks. Non-tribal communities often have more exposure to gender equality norms and institutional mechanisms that discourage abuse. In contrast, tribal women may face socio-economic marginalization, limited legal literacy, and adherence to patriarchal customs, which can normalize or conceal domestic violence and reduce avenues for seeking help.

CONCLUSIONS

Field dependent respondents are more prone to domestic violence than their field independent counterpart respondents. High caste prejudiced respondents are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than their counterparts belong to low caste prejudiced group. Low religious group of respondents are more prone to domestic violence than their counterparts belonging to high religious group of respondents. Non-working women are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than their counterparts belonging to working group. Tribal women respondents are more likely to be the victim of domestic violence than their non-tribal counterparts.

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