

MALD THESIS

A Lifecourse Perspective of Intimate Partner Violence in India: What Picture Does the NFHS-3 Paint?

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Abstract

The third National Family Health Survey of India has provided India with its first ever nationally representative data on domestic violence against women. This paper applies a lifecourse perspective to that data in order to understand how and when the major risk factors for intimate partner violence enter the lives of Indian women. Based on survey data. it finds that a preponderance of strong risk factors enter a woman's life very early. Among these factors are: childhood experience of violence, woman's justification of violence, husband's alcohol use, and husband's controlling behavior. The paper also uses a series of nonlinear probit regressions to compare the relative strength of the risk factors presented by the survey data. Holding the findings of its lifecourse perspective and regression equations against a relevant literature review, the paper concludes that the "picture" of intimate partner violence presented by this new survey data is improved but incomplete. Most critically, the lifecourse perspective presented in the paper highlights the fact that the survey fails adequately to account for major transitions in the life of a woman. These transitions include adolescence and the movement from "young bride" to "mother-in-law" status alike. The paper provides concrete suggestions for how a more nuanced attention to the changing dynamics of life stages in the Indian woman's life can increase the value and accuracy of "pictures" of violence produced by future versions of the National Family Health Survey.

Dedication

For Tunu didi and Geeta didi, my "big sisters" in Bengal

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A Note on Terminology

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women states that violence against women takes place in three domains: the family, the community, and (perpetrated or condoned by) the state (UN General Assembly 1993). The present study focuses on the domain of the family, most specifically intimate partner violence (IPV) and sexual violence against women. When the perpetrators involved are family members of the victims, both of these acts fall under the category of domestic violence against women.

Drawing on definitions set forth in the World Health Organization Multi-Country Study of Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women, this paper uses the following definitions of these three terms:

Domestic violence against women: Any act or omission by a family member (most often a current or former husband or partner), regardless of the physical location where the act takes place, which negatively effects the well being, physical or psychological integrity, freedom, or right to full development of a woman. In this paper the phrase "domestic violence" refers exclusively to domestic violence against women.

Intimate partner violence: Any act or omission by a current or former intimate partner which negatively effects the well-being, physical or psychological integrity, freedom, or right to full development of a woman.

Physical violence: The intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing death, injury, or harm. Physical violence includes, but is not limited to, scratching, pushing, shoving, throwing, grabbing, biting, choking, shaking, poking, hair pulling, slapping, punching, hitting, burning, the use of restraints or one's body size or strength against another person, and the use of, or threat to use, a weapon (gun, knife, or object).

Severe physical violence: Physical violence that is likely to lead to external or internal injuries.

Sexual violence: Physical violence of a sexual nature, including the following: (1) being physically forced to have sexual intercourse against one's will; (2) having sexual intercourse because one is afraid of what one's partner might do; and (3) being forced to do something sexual one finds degrading or humiliating.

The specific questionnaire items used to qualify as "emotional violence," "physical violence," and "sexual violence" in the NFHS-3 are included in the Methodology section below.

(WHO 2005)

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CTS	Conflict Tactics Scale

DHS Demographic and Health Surveys

ICRW International Center for Research on Women IIPS International Institute for Population Sciences

IPV Intimate Partner Violence

MLE Maximum Likelihood Estimation NFHS National Family Health Survey

OLS Ordinary Least Squares
VIF Variance Inflation Factor
WHO World Health Organization

I. Introduction

What will die with me when I die, what pathetic or fragile form will the world lose? The voice of Macedonio Fernandez, the image of a red horse in the vacant lot at Serrano and Charcas, a bar of sulphur in the drawer of a mahogany desk?

Jorge Luis Borges, "The Witness"

A picture.

We may rely on a picture to capture and protect a private memory that would otherwise vanish. We may rely on a picture to add vitality and detail to the telling of a story. We may even believe that a picture "is worth a thousand words." But the danger in granting too much power to a picture is that we may conflate it with the reality that it only *represents*. For just as surely as a picture includes certain images inside its boundaries, perhaps in perfectly glorious detail, it also by definition excludes others.

And thus the question arises, "If a picture is worth a thousand words, how much are a thousand words worth?" Or, perhaps more to the point, "which thousand words?"

All research, even the most sophisticated, culturally sensitive, cutting-edge research, can only provide a picture of the reality it is attempting to capture. As it focuses, it also obscures. As it provides answers, it also highlights questions new and old. It can only be with these facts in mind that this research paper shall consider the issue it addresses: intimate partner violence against women in India.

Effort has surged in the last forty years to develop a comprehensive picture of intimate partner violence against women. Researchers from the varied disciplines of sociology, psychology, neurobiology and more have attempted to shed light on this often-invisible crime. In the process, certain pictures of this phenomenon have developed: pictures of drunken and violent husbands, pictures of women trapped in patriarchal societies with no social or legal recourse, pictures of children from violent homes doomed to continue the "life cycle of violence."

All too often, due to the nature and resources of research communities, these pictures have focused disproportionately on the dynamics of white nuclear families in wealthy Western nations. Even the self-consciously feminist among the hundreds of articles on family violence published in the 1970s through the 1990s often failed to consider that women's experiences of violence (and, indeed, the theorized patriarchy that sustains it) might vary by social location and cultural context.

The last decade, however, has seen the research community increase its efforts to include in the picture of intimate partner violence those who were previously excluded: women of various backgrounds from across the world. The emerging picture displays a global crisis; indeed violence against women is now recognized as among the world's most destructive current issues. The World Health Organization's 2005 "Multi-Country Study on Women's

Health and Domestic Violence Against Women," for instance, found prevalence rates of intimate partner violence ranging from 13% to 69% across ten countries. This violence has proven negative impacts on women and children's health, and also associates with significant economic loss for families, communities and nations. Nonetheless, it persists, often in private home spaces that for centuries were assumed to be safe havens for women.

While university and nonprofit research bodies are adding substantially to the accuracy of this global "picture" with small-scale studies, only states have the resources to collect nationally or regionally representative survey data. Spearheaded by the motivation of the Demographic and Health Survey program, many states have begun to include thorough questionnaires addressing domestic violence on regularly administered family health surveys. While such an addition requires careful attention to safety and ethical concerns inherent to the research of violence against women, these larger-scale studies have enormous potential to advance international understanding of the dynamics of that violence.

This research paper uses data from India's third National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), the first ever nationally representative survey of domestic violence in India, in order to paint a new picture of intimate partner violence in that nation. In doing so, it asks three overarching questions. First, it turns to the data to ask, "What are the major risk factors for intimate partner violence in India (according to the NFHS-3), and how do they enter a woman's life?" In addressing this question it will adopt a lifecourse perspective, considering the various risk factors in approximately the chronological order that they enter a woman's life.

With this first "picture" established, the paper will next ask, "How do these risk factors compare and interact with each other?" In addressing this question, it will use nonlinear regressions to calculate a more sophisticated impression of the relationships between the various factors considered and a woman's likelihood of having experienced intimate partner violence.

Third and finally, the paper will independently scrutinize these NFHS-3 findings by asking, "What gaps in the NFHS-3 methodology and findings does the lifecourse perspective highlight?" In answering this question, the paper will draw upon the family violence literature to describe two major life transitions inadequately addressed by the NFHS-3.

Throughout its analysis of these overarching questions, the paper will bring attention not only to the statistical significance but also to the real world implications of its findings. It will achieve this most often through regular reflections on the life stories of two women: Kavita and Shakila.

Before moving to its exploration of the issues iterated above, the paper turns first to a review of its methodology (Section II). Thereafter it shall address the three questions above in turn, with Section III presenting the lifecourse perspective of risk factors for intimate partner violence, Section IV reviewing regression results that facilitate comparison of those

factors, and Section V highlighting two crucial gaps in the "picture" painted by the NFHS. Thereafter follows a brief conclusion and review of references.

All calculations, regressions, tables and graphics presented in this paper are the original work of its author and are not derived in whole or part from any publications of the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS, the coordinating body of the NFHS), ORC Macro, the Government of India or any other sources. Summary reports of various topics included in the NFHS are available for free download, and may supplement the current study for the interested reader. This paper attempts to advance the knowledge created by the survey data and these brief reports, as mentioned above, by: (1) applying a lifecourse perspective to their presentation and analysis, (2) conducting rigorous regression analysis of the relationships they demonstrate, and (3) illuminating the areas of further research inadequately addressed in the survey's current form. The author has undertaken all of these tasks independently.

The NFHS-3 provides India with its first-ever nationally representative survey data addressing the dynamics of domestic violence. And indeed, the "picture" of intimate partner violence it presents brings new and powerful focus to a phenomenon that the research community is far from understanding. Improved though this picture may be, however, it is nonetheless incomplete. Like all "pictures," it highlights certain items while obscuring others. Most critically, the lifecourse perspective presented in this paper highlights the fact that the NFHS-3 fails adequately to account for major transitions in the life of a woman that affect her risk of violence. As such, more nuanced attention to the dynamics of changing life stages in the Indian woman's life would significantly increase the value and accuracy of "pictures" produced by future versions of the NFHS or supplementary studies.

¹ The interested reader is encouraged to visit http://www.nfhsindia.org

II. Methodology

The primary data source for this study is the third National Family Health Survey of India, conducted between 2005 and 2006. NFHS-3 supplements and advances the findings of the first (1992-1993) and second (1998-1999) National Family Health Surveys. The surveys, overseen by the Indian Ministry of Health and Family, provide nationally representative data on various population and health indicators. NFHS data provide the primary (and in most cases, only) state and national estimates of: fertility, family planning, infant/child mortality, reproductive and child health, nutrition of women and children, the quality of health and family welfare services, and socioeconomic conditions (IIPS and ORC Macro 2007).

In order to allow for international comparability, the NFHS survey questionnaires, sample designs, and data collection procedures match those of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) program. While allowing for contextually appropriate adaptations, this program has guided the design of demographic and population surveys in dozens of countries, continuing to build a pool of reliable, representative, and comparable data on the various indicators listed above (Kishor and Kiersten Johnson 2004; IIPS and ORC Macro 2007).

Domestic Violence in the NFHS

The reliable, representative, and comparable nature of the NFHS and all DHS surveys, as Kishor and Johnson have observed, make them "ideal vehicles for studying not only the linkages between domestic violence and health and demographic outcomes, but also the context in which violence takes place" (Kishor and Kiersten Johnson 2004:2). In other words, when one includes domestic violence among many demographic and population characteristics in a survey, one can easily and powerfully test its relationship with any or all of those other contextual factors. These relationships, if strong and clear enough, may provide guidance for intervention strategies to reduce the prevalence of violence.

However, domestic violence presents unique challenges to researchers' ability to ensure the accuracy of their findings, the safety of their subjects, and the ethics of their design. For various reasons, even the most thoughtfully designed survey instruments run the risks of underreporting the prevalence of violence, re-traumatizing their participants, and prompting retaliatory violence by respondents' partners, among many other dangers. While one cannot completely eliminate these risks, it is possible to design and conduct a survey so as to minimize them. In 2005, the World Health Organization and PATH jointly published a report by Mary Ellsberg and Lori Heise titled, "Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists," which outlines current knowledge about how best to ensure accuracy, safety and ethics (2005). While there is not

space in this paper to thoroughly assess the NFHS's data collection procedures from a safety and ethics perspective,² it is crucial to examine the likely accuracy of its findings.

Adoption of Conflict Tactics Scale

One critical step toward ensuring the increased accuracy of the NFHS-3 as compared to the NFHS-2 was the decision to use a modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) for measuring women's experiences of violence. The CTS, created by Murray Straus in the late 1970s, identifies and asks about individual "tactics" of violence in interpersonal conflict. This differs from the alternate practice of asking a catch-all or "gateway" question about violence in general (Straus 1979; Ellsberg and Heise 2005).

Consider the difference in how the NFHS-2 and NFHS-3 address women respondents' experiences of violence. The NFHS-2 used one "gateway" question and two broad follow-up questions. The gateway question asked, "Since you completed 15 years of age, have you been beaten or mistreated physically by any person?" If the respondent answers yes, then the interviewer proceeds to ask two more questions: (1) "Who has beaten you or mistreated you physically?" and (2) "How often have you been beaten or mistreated in the last 12 months?" If the respondent answers no to the gateway question, then the interviewer moves on and there are no other chances for the woman to share her experiences of violence, if they exist (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000).

Referencing the many shortcomings of this approach, Ellsberg and Heise make six recommendations for more accurate measurement of violence, all of which are accomplished by the adapted CTS used in NFHS-3 (about which more presently). The six recommendations are:

- 1. Use broad criteria in defining the study population.
- 2. Provide multiple opportunities to disclose. Do not use "gateway" or "filter" questions.
- 3. Use behaviorally specific acts to ask about violence. Use at least two or three questions per type of violence.
- 4. Be specific about time frames—include at least one recent (last year) and one long-term time frame (since you were 18; since you were married).
- 5. Ask about specific perpetrators and specific contexts to cue the respondent's memory.
- In order to ensure confidentiality and increase disclosure, interview only one woman about violence per household. (Ellsberg and Heise 2005:99)

NFHS-3 accomplishes recommendation 1 by sampling from the population of all women past the age of 14. Previous versions of the NFHS had only interviewed ever-married women. Because this paper deals with intimate partner violence, however, it will focus on

² Readers may take comfort in the knowledge that the NFHS employed WHO/PATH report co-author Mary Ellsberg to design and conduct trainings on safety and ethics for NFHS-3 research staff. A manual from these sessions is available online at: http://www.nfhsindia.org/manuals/DV Training Manual.pdf. It is my belief as the author of this paper, having thoroughly reviewed the data collection trainings, tools, and procedures, that the NFHS-3 was conducted to the highest standards of safety and ethics.

ever-married women. Use of the CTS guarantees that recommendations 2 and 3 will also be met. CTS items use individual acts (e.g. slapping, kicking) rather than value-laden abstractions (e.g. mistreatment, violence). Additionally, it sorts these acts into four "types of violence": emotional, less severe, severe, and sexual. The CTS as used in NFHS-3 flows as follows:

Emotional Violence

Does/did your husband ever:

- a. Say or do something to humiliate you in front of others?
- b. Threaten to hurt or harm you or someone close to you?
- c. Insult you or make you feel bad about yourself?

Less Severe (Physical) Violence

Does/did your husband ever do any of the following things to you?

- a. Slap you?
- b. Twist your arm or pull your hair?
- c. Push you, shake you, or throw something at you?

Severe (Physical) Violence

Does/did your husband ever do any of the following things to you?

- a. Kick you, drag you, or beat you up?
- b. Try to choke or burn you on purpose?
- c. Threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon?

Sexual (Physical) Violence

Does/did your husband ever do any of the following things to you?

- a. Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?
- b. Force you to perform any sexual acts you did not want to? (IIPS and ORC Macro 2007)

Every woman participant answered all eleven of these questions, as well as supplementary questions about: the injuries she may have sustained, how often these events took place, and who other than her husband may have perpetrated them (in alignment with recommendations 4 and 5 above). Indeed as compared to NFHS-2, NFHS-3 added a completely new section and questionnaire for domestic violence, as well as a field procedure for sub-sampling to ensure compliance with recommendation 6 above. This drastic change in the approach to measuring domestic violence between the two surveys means that their resulting data cannot be meaningfully compared nor used to infer trends in the prevalence of domestic violence in India. As we shall see, however, the modified CTS approach in the NFHS-3 produced much higher prevalence rates than those of the gateway approach in the NFHS-2, confirming the warnings and expectations of Ellsberg and Heise (2005).

Throughout this paper, the label of "All Violence" will refer to women who reported experiencing any of the eleven tactics listed above. The label "Physical Violence" will refer

to women who reported experiencing any of the eight tactics listed under Less Severe and Severe above. The label "Sexual Violence" will refer only to those women who experienced one or both of the tactics listed under Sexual Violence above.

Data and Analysis

Eighteen research organizations conducted the fieldwork for the NFHS-3 under the supervision of IIPS and ORC Macro. A total of 124,385 women age 15-49 and 74,369 men age 15-54 were interviewed, with participants coming from all 29 states. When privacy was achievable, the domestic violence questionnaire was administered to only one woman per household. The resulting subsample for the questions on domestic violence comprised 83,703 women (13,999 never married and 69,704 ever-married), approximately two-thirds of the entire NFHS-3 sample. As the NFHS-3 primary report attests, "the age, residential, educational, religious, caste/tribe, and wealth index distributions of the subsample of women who completed the domestic violence module are virtually identical to the entire NFHS-3 sample of eligible women" (IIPS and ORC Macro 2007:497).

Samples were drawn to be representative at both the state and national level, and therefore each respondent's answers received both state and national weights. This paper draws predominantly from the sample of 69,704 ever-married women, using national weights to produce percentage likelihoods at the national level. When analyzing the effects of a woman's *partner's* characteristics on her likelihood of experiencing violence, it draws from a subsample of 39,257 men whose partners were among the 69,704 ever-married respondents. These men were not interviewed on their perpetration of violence, in order to ensure the safety of women in their household. However the inclusion of these men in the study allows us to include their demographic, health, and attitude indicators among factors that may influence a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence.

It is not within the scope of this paper to produce or analyze differences in domestic violence trends between different *states* in India, although it does include the region of the respondents (broken broadly into the North/East and South/West cultural zones) as a factor of analysis. Thus it uses the national weights for the domestic violence module exclusively. Wherever percentage findings are listed in this paper, the sample size is listed as well with the label "n".

In Section III, the paper uses simple cross tabulation to provide a "picture" of the potential relationship between any individual demographic, health, or attitude factor and the likelihood of violence. The various tables in that section simply show how many women out of a certain demographic group (those who finished secondary school, for instance, or those in the lowest wealth index category) have ever experienced a certain type of violence.

In Section IV, the paper uses a series of probit regressions to assess the comparative strength of the relationships between various factors and a woman's probability of experiencing violence. In every case, the dependent variable is a binary variable representing the woman's experience of that kind of violence. Using the maximum likelihood estimation method, the regression models produce coefficients representing the

marginal change in probability of violence. For instance, a regression coefficient of .09 (because the dependent variable only runs from 0 to 1) is equivalent to a 9% increase, for every unit of change in that independent variable, in the likelihood that the dependent variable will be 1.

The probit model is a nonlinear regression model that assumes the standard normal distribution. In this model, it is impossible to return predicted values of the dependent variable (0 for didn't experience violence, 1 for did) that are lower than 0 or greater than 1. This is a significant advantage of this model over the linear probability model (using ordinary least squares estimation), which would allow for the prediction of impossible values for the dependent variables of concern to this paper.

The independent variables include many binary variables (incl. male vs. female head of household), two categorical variables (incl. level of education completed in five categories from "No education" to "Higher education"), one ordinal variable (age at first marriage), and two interaction terms. The interaction terms acknowledge and account for the multicollinearity of (1) education level and wealth index and (2) urban/rural setting and wealth index. By including these interaction terms, one can identify the *individual* effects of all three variables – education level, wealth index, and urban/rural setting – while also accounting for the potentially significant ways in which they *interact with* each other to influence the likelihood of violence. For instance, thanks to the interaction terms we are able to find whether education level is more or less influential among wealthier respondents. Among the variables studied, these two interactions were the only found to be consistently multicollinear at a significant level.

Why Use a Lifecourse Perspective?

The following section will apply a lifecourse perspective to introduce the various factors that may relate to a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence. By proceeding in fifteen-year intervals, it will place the relevant factors in their approximate developmental context, couching them in the life stages in which they either enter a woman's life or influence her life most strongly. This is a deliberate choice, based on at least the following four reasons:

First, it acknowledges the many, often blurry and simultaneous life transitions that all people experience. Instead of considering only two discrete stages of "childhood" and "adulthood," it acknowledges that additional stages (such as adolescence) and transitions (such as those from early marriage to mothering years and from mothering years to widowhood) both exist and affect dynamics of violence. In this way the lifecourse perspective improves upon simpler ideas of "intergenerational transmission" of violence or social learning theory explanations of the same (Cares 2009:30-31). More discussion of these themes follows in Section V.

Second, it recognizes the particular social importance of life stage changes among women in India. Many authors have written on Indian women's changing levels of empowerment and disempowerment across the life cycle, and ignoring this literature weakens any

conclusions about the dynamics of violence against women in India (Vatuk 1992; Miller 1999; Martin et al. 2002; Fernandez 1997).

Third, it creates space for women's voices. By discussing *lives* as opposed to theoretical abstractions, this perspective increases our ability to listen to women survivors of violence, empathize with their experiences, and identify the crucial *lived* experiences that affect the likelihood of violence.

Fourth, by doing all three of the above, the lifecourse perspective increases the observer's ability to identify the places where even the most convincing data provides an incomplete picture. When dealing with abstractions free from a lived cultural context, it is easy to be swayed by strong regression results or other purely quantitative indicators. On the contrary, this paper begins with the assumption that its quantitative calculations paint at best a small portion of the full picture of domestic violence in India. Thinking about the lived experiences of women, across life stages and transitions, will highlight both the increased clarity and cloudiness that those calculations may provide.

Limitations

In addition to the strengths of this study's data and approach mentioned above (namely, the nationally representative nature of the data, the use of the CTS method to measure violence, and the application of a lifecourse perspective), certain significant limitations remain.

First, the quantitative findings included in this report present a "picture" of relationships between certain factors and the likelihood of experiencing violence. As such, they should be interpreted as relationships alone and not as evidence that any factor *causes* another. The "path" graphics in Section IV are merely interpretations of regression results plotted in a lifecourse sequence and not *causal* paths.

Second, like all studies attempting to measure the prevalence of violence, the findings of the NFHS-3 will tend to *underreport* the true prevalence of violence. There are several well-documented reasons for this, including:

- As Ellsberg and Heise have written, prevalence studies measure the number of women who are willing to *disclose abuse*, not necessarily the actual number of women who have been abused. They write, "to be identified as a victim of abuse in most societies is so shameful that few women report abuse when it has not actually occurred. Women are far more likely to deny or minimize experiences of violence" (Ellsberg and Heise 2005:86).
- Some studies also find that prevalence estimates tend to be higher in smaller, regionally focused studies where more attention is paid to the specific topic of domestic violence and questions are designed to enhance disclosure (Ellsberg et al. 2001; UNFPA 2009).
- Because the NFHS-3 only applies the CTS method when asking about violence committed by a respondent's current or former husband, it is likely to miss or underestimate the prevalence of violence by other potential perpetrators.

• Participants in the survey range from age 15 to 49, with an average age of 29. It is always possible that the younger participants will have experiences of violence *after* completing the survey, even if they hadn't experienced violence beforehand. Thus the overall figure is not as high as it would be if measuring the prevalence for all women who have lived to 49.

When interpreting and applying the findings presented below, one must remember that they present a "picture" only, one that almost certainly underestimates the prevalence of intimate partner violence in India.

III. A Lifecourse Perspective of Intimate Partner Violence in India

Rather than considering all the variables that may or may not affect the likelihood of intimate partner violence as abstractions, this section will consider them in approximately the chronological order they enter a woman's life. At the same time, it will introduce the reader to two women, Kavita and Shakila, whose life stories will unfold in stages as the section proceeds. Kavita and Shakila are invented for the purposes of this analysis, but their stories are based on real women interviewed in previous studies of domestic violence in India. Their presence in this analysis is to remind the reader that the *phenomenon* in question – intimate partner violence in India – affects *people* in diverse and complex ways.

The stories of Kavita and Shakila will also provide crucial insights into the areas where the "picture" of violence presented by the NFHS-3 is incomplete. As their stories begin and develop, the reader is encouraged to pause for a moment in reflection of whether the data presented by the NFHS-3 accounts for that woman's comprehensive experience. If so, then the question follows, "Where can the policy community intervene in this story to reduce these risks?" If not, then the question follows, "What critical questions or topics are missing from the NFHS-3's methods and findings?" Section V will provide space for these questions, reflecting critically upon Kavita and Shakila's stories.

In introducing each variable, this section will draw on the domestic violence literature to propose the expected association, if any, between the variable and the likelihood of violence. When applicable, this may also include theoretical underpinnings of that association, whether expected or actual. The following section will thereafter supplement this chronological review of variables by studying how they *work together* to affect the likelihood of intimate partner violence.

Age 0-14, Childhood and Adolescence

In all societies, the construction of a child's socialized identity begins even before that child is born. Variables of the geographic, religious, ethnic, lingual and cultural setting within which that child is born will, quite apart from any agency on the child's part, play a major role in shaping that child's future. Thus any developmental study in India must begin by recognizing that nation's immense demographic diversity. Truly a continent as much as a country, India's 28 states contain enough variety to prompt one observer to report, "any truism about India can immediately be contradicted by another truism... the singular thing about India is that you can only speak of it in the plural" (Tharoor 2006:8).

Thus the present study of domestic violence against women will account for plurality by acknowledging the potential influence of (1) religion, (2) region, and (3) residence, all of which will have begun their effects upon a girl child's lifecourse before she is born. These factors, among others we shall consider, fall under the category of "sociocultural" context as defined by Lori Heise's integrated ecological framework for the study of violence against women. As we shall see, these *sociocultural* factors, outside of a woman's individual ability

to change or adapt them, interplay with *personal* and *situational* factors to influence the likelihood that she will experience violence (Heise 1998).

Religion

Over 80% of India's population is Hindu, a figure reflected in the NFHS-3 sample. The largest religious minority is the Muslim community, which represents approximately 13% of India's population and the NFHS-3 sample. Despite its minority status domestically, India has the third-largest Muslim population in the world, trailing only Indonesia and Pakistan. The nation also holds smaller but significant Christian, Sikh, Jain, and Tribal religious communities.

A recent study of domestic violence against women in Muslim countries suggests that there may be some religious basis to the patriarchal social context that contributes to the prevalence of this violence (Douki et al. 2003). The authors cite the following passage from the Koran providing support for Muslim respondents seeking to uphold the justification of violence on religious grounds:

Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; as for the women who show rebellion, you shall first enlighten them, then desert them in beds, and you may beat them as a last resort. Once they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great. (Koran IV, 34)

If this finding holds true in India, we may expect to see rates of violence significantly higher in the Muslim community.

Yet the recent Sachar Committee Report on the Status of the Muslim Community in India provides a contradictory perspective, suggesting that the historical experience of Muslims in India as socioeconomically excluded "second-class citizens" may be a more apt explanation for any trend of violence that should exist within that community. Furthermore, this report would consider any conclusion suggesting a particularly *Islamic* origin of domestic violence (such as that iterated in the aforementioned article) as another element of a media-fueled caricature of the Muslim community. "The obsessive focus on select cases of [abused] Muslim women passionately discussed in the media," Sachar writes, "results in identifying the Muslim religion as the sole locus of gender injustice in the [Indian] community" (Sachar 2006).

Preliminary NFHS-3 findings fail to settle this debate.³ As the table below shows, the Muslim community has slightly higher prevalence rates of all types of violence than the Hindu community, and significantly higher rates than the Christian or Sikh respondents in the sample. Yet Sachar's observation that the Muslim community is not the sole locus of

³ Please see the following section for a more complete analysis of the role of religion in affecting the likelihood of a woman's experiencing domestic violence.

gender injustice is certainly upheld, as the overall prevalence of violence among Hindus is 39.7%. The prevalence rate is at least 25% for other religious communities.

RELIGION	Hindu	Muslim	Christian	Sikh	Other
Experienced any kind of violence n=68,572	39.70%	43.01%	33.60%	25.32%	39.94%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=68,576	37.07%	40.80%	30.92%	23.52%	37.59%
Individual Types of Violence					
Emotional Violence n=68,584	15.88%	15.88%	13.92%	11.03%	19.48%
Less Severe Violence n=68,578	34.75%	38.23%	29.94%	22.79%	36.33%
Severe Violence n=68,579	11.82%	13.33%	11.68%	7.47%	10.38%
Sexual Violence n=68,584	9.70%	13.41%	6.05%	5.82%	4.90%

At the moment we see a small positive association between being born into a Muslim family and the likelihood of lifetime experience of violence. This is only a preliminary finding, however, and does not yet account for the other variables mentioned in this paper.

Region

While a detailed comparative analysis of the dynamics of intimate partner violence in all 28 states of India is outside the scope of this paper, the sample of the NFHS-3 was nonetheless designed to allow for state-representative conclusions. In analyzing these results, one finds drastic variation in the prevalence of intimate partner violence across states. Prevalence rates for all types of violence range from 6.2% in mountainous Himachal Pradesh (the only state with a prevalence below 10%) to 59.9% in Bihar in the northern plains (the only state with a prevalence above 50%).

The assignment of socio-cultural "regions" in India is extremely subjective in its nature, as even the smallest states in this massive nation contain incredible diversity (and, indeed, populations rivaling many nations in the world). Nonetheless this paper shall apply a cursory separation between the North/East cultural region and South/West cultural region. The South/West region shall include the states of traditionally Dravidian linguistic "South India" (Karnataka, Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu) along with south-central state Andhra Pradesh and western states Gujarat and Maharashtra. The North/East region shall contain the remainder of states, including those in the "Hindi belt," the Northeast states, and the

mountainous states. According to this division, the South/West region accounts for about 43% of the population, leaving 57% in the North/East region.

While the literature certainly cannot suggest that there is a broad region of India where domestic violence against women is absent, it may nonetheless predict that the North/East region provides a cultural context more conducive to domestic violence (Miller 1999). Comparisons of the NFHS-3's state and regional data uphold this prediction. The contiguous North/East states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkand and West Bengal range in prevalence from 36.9% up to Bihar's aforementioned 59.9%, for instance, while the contiguous South/West states of Kerala, Goa, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh range from 16% to 35%. The table below shows the comparative prevalence rates by region.

REGION	North/East	South/West
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	43.21%	35.17%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	40.84%	32.36%
Individual Types of Violence		
Emotional Violence n=69,432	15.88%	15.72%
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	37.53%	31.46%
Severe Violence n=69,427	12.64%	10.96%
Sexual Violence	13.76%	4.92%

n=69,432

The North/East region has higher prevalence rates for all types of violence, with a particularly stark prevalence of sexual violence as compared to the South/West region. To be sure, it isn't the peculiarities of geography or climate that are producing these major differences in prevalence of violence between the North/East and South/West regions in India. Cultural as well as socioeconomic factors may very well play a role; we shall examine this possibility in the following section.

Residence

The WHO Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women shows that in all study countries, the prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence were higher in rural or "province" locations than in urban locations (WHO 2005).

This aligns with previous studies in India, which place the highest prevalence of violence in rural settings (Kishor and Kiersten Johnson 2004). This is a frequent, although not uniform finding, as ICRW in 2000 reported that prevalence of violence in urban *slums* in India matches and may even exceed rural prevalence rates (ICRW 2000b).

Although rates of urbanization are increasing, India's population remains predominantly rural. Some 67% of the NFHS-3 sample lives in the "countryside," with only 11% living in large cities or capitals. Two middle categories of "towns" and "small cities" hold 13% and 9% of the population, respectively.

The NFHS-3 shows a strong association between type of residence and the likelihood of violence, with 28.7% of residents in large cities reporting experiences of violence as compared to 42.9% in the countryside. The rates of violence for those living in "small cities" or "towns" fall within this range, suggesting a linear relationship between residential

location and likelihood of violence (see table below). Again, however, all variables must be accounted for before the strength or nature of the relationship can be definitively known.

RESIDENCE	Capital, large city	Small city	Town	Countryside
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	28.72%	32.62%	36.17%	42.89%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	26.35%	30.50%	33.83%	40.21%
Individual Types of Violence				
Emotional Violence n=69,432	11.53%	12.29%	15.69%	16.90%
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	25.40%	28.99%	32.03%	37.56%
Severe Violence n=69,427	7.17%	9.61%	11.40%	13.00%
Sexual Violence n=69,432	5.38%	8.13%	8.45%	11.14%

While we have only begun to examine the many factors that influence the likelihood of violence in a woman's life, it is evident that differences in religious, regional, and residential context may significantly influence that likelihood.

In addition to (or, rather, *in interaction with*) these *sociocultural* factors are the *personal* factors of education level and childhood experience of violence. We now turn to a discussion of these two factors before moving to the next life stage.

Education

Although mandated by law, a full primary and secondary education is outside the grasp of a great share of India's population. Among women surveyed in the NFHS-3, 41% had never completed primary school (labeled "No Education" below). An additional 14% had completed only primary school. 37% reported finishing secondary school, leaving only 7% who had finished some higher education.

Both international and India-only studies of domestic violence find a strong relationship between educational accomplishment and vulnerability to violence (WHO 2005; Jejeebhoy 1998b, 1998a; Kishor and Kiersten Johnson 2004; ICRW 2000b). While education level is certainly connected with socioeconomic status and opportunity (about which more later), it may also be the case that women with higher education, as the WHO hypothesizes, "have

a greater range of choice in partners and more ability to choose to marry or not, and are able to negotiate greater autonomy and control of resources within the marriage" (2005).

The table below shows the prevalence rates of different types of violence for respondents who fall into these four educational categories.

EDUCATION LEVEL	No education	Primary	Secondary	Higher
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,414	49.05%	42.42%	28.99%	12.51%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,418	46.50%	39.76%	26.45%	9.99%
Individual				
Types of Violence				
Emotional Violence n=69,427	19.20%	17.38%	11.64%	5.57%
Less Severe Violence n=69,420	44.31%	37.06%	24.01%	9.00%
Severe Violence n=69,422	15.96%	13.19%	6.88%	1.65%
Sexual Violence n=69,427	12.43%	10.90%	7.12%	2.06%

The table shows a clear linear association between education level and probability of experiencing violence, with higher levels of education associating negatively with the experience of violence. Indeed the probability of experiencing violence among those with no education is fully four times as large as the probability that higher education graduates will experience violence.

Childhood Experience of Violence

Violence in the family of origin has many well-documented negative effects on children. Even when children are not the victims of violence themselves, growing up in the presence of violence can prompt or exacerbate a variety of social, psychological, emotional, behavioral and academic problems in children (Kitzman 2003; Margolin and Gordis 2000).

Of primary concern to our analysis, children witnesses of domestic violence have consistently proven to be at higher risk of both perpetrating and experiencing this violence as adults (Gil-Gonzalez et al. 2008; Ehrensaft et al. 2003; Doumas, Margolin, and John 1994; Stith et al. 2000). Drawing most centrally upon Bandura's social learning theory as an explanation, this phenomenon is often called the "intergenerational transmission of domestic violence" or the "life cycle of violence" (Cares 2009).

A crucial insight from social learning theory applicable to the present study is that children need not necessarily be victimized by violence in order to "learn" that violent behaviors are appropriate ways to resolve conflicts or interact with loved ones. In fact those children who only witness violence may be more at risk for future perpetration or victimization than those victimized as children (Stith et al. 2000). This allows us to proceed with confidence in testing the "intergenerational transmission of violence" in the NFHS-3, using the responses to the survey question "As far as you know, did your father ever beat your mother?"

CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE	Father beat mother	Father did not beat mother	Out of all respondents to the violence questionnaire, 209
Experienced any kind of violence n=64,331	62.17%	32.86%	that their father had beater mother. The table below co
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=64,336	59.53%	30.30%	experience of violence amo group to the experience of those unaware of any parer The prevalence of violence
Individual Types of Violence			group who had witnessed witheir parents' relationship staggering. This is the first
Emotional Violence n=64,343	28.48%	12.41%	factor producing a probabil
Less Severe Violence n=64,338	57.24%	28.15%	in India who knows of vi between her parents wil be victim to violence her
Severe Violence n=64,339	22.78%	8.85%	The following sections will
Sexual Violence n=64,344	17.24%	7.79%	particular attention to this influential factor and its pro

he domestic % reported n their ompares the ong this violence of ental violence. e among the violence in is truly t individual ility over that a woman lence on average, elf.

ll pay apparently redictive

ability. Section V will also suggest ways to increase an understanding of how childhood experiences so significantly influence adult experiences.

SNAPSHOT: Age 0 to 14



Factors

- **Religion**: Prevalence rates range from 25% to 40%, with rates in the Muslim community slightly higher than those in the Hindu community.
- **Region**: The states in the North and East of the country have moderately higher prevalence rates than those in the South and West, although this is not true for every possible comparison of states.
- **Residence**: Prevalence rates range from 29% to 43%, with rates increasing as one moves from capital cities to small towns to the countryside.
- **Education**: Prevalence rates range from 13% to 49%, with the highest prevalence rates among those who never went to school.
- **Childhood Experience of Violence**: Among women whose fathers beat their mothers, 62% will go on to experience violence in their own marriages.

Stories

- A baby girl, Kavita, was born to a Hindu family in a village in a state in the northern plains. While her birth was not greeted with as much fanfare as if she had been a boy, she still created excitement within her family, especially among her big sisters. From an early age, Kavita enjoyed hearing and telling stories. She took to school more naturally than her sisters, with particularly high marks in reading. As they did with her sisters, however, Kavita's parents pulled her out of school after the primary level because their village had no secondary school; Kavita's father didn't like the idea of his daughters walking five kilometers to school every day and besides, "educating a girl is just watering your neighbor's garden." Kavita grew up only seeing her father occasionally, as he migrated for work to a North Indian metropolis. Sometimes when he was home she could hear her parents fighting, and a few times she saw bruises on her mother's face. Her mother would never talk about the fighting.
- Around the same time, a baby named Shakila was born to a Muslim family of
 modest means in a South Indian metropolis. Shakila's parents' was an arranged
 marriage, but the couple cultivated a great appreciation for one another and
 greeted Shakila's arrival as a gift. Shakila was quiet and caring, diligent in studies if
 not academically gifted. Shakila's parents sacrificed so that she could stay in school
 and finish a bachelor's degree, even as most of the girls in the neighborhood were
 getting married. At the age of 25, Shakila decided that she was ready to get married
 and asked her parents to find her a suitable match. She never once observed
 physical violence between her parents.

Age 15-29, Marriage and Early Adulthood

In the next life stage, we shall move on to consider the dynamics of a woman's marriage and early adulthood that may influence the probability that she has experienced or will experience violence. This section will consider the following types of factors:

- Situational (woman's age at marriage)
- *Personal* woman (woman's justification of violence)
- Personal man/husband (husband's justification of violence, husband's childhood experience of violence, husband's alcohol use, and husband's controlling behavior)
- Sociocultural (family wealth index)

The section will proceed with these factors in the order they appear above.

Age at Marriage

Although Indian law forbids marriage for any woman under the age of 18, more than one-fifth (21%) of NFHS-3 respondents were married by the age of fourteen. This proves how necessarily imprecise a study of "life stages" must be, as indeed a vast amount of women would include marriage as a "childhood" factor. Whenever it occurs, however, marriage is a major life transition for a girl or woman, especially in more traditional locations where the woman thereafter moves into her in-laws' home, perhaps rarely or never to see her birth family again. As such, the moment of marriage marks an intuitive location to begin an analysis of a woman's "early adulthood."

In addition to the 21% married at fourteen or younger, a total of 60% of NFHS-3 respondents were married by age 17, and 86% by age 20. Less than one half of one percent of respondents were married after the age of 29.

The expected interactions between marriage age, women's empowerment, and domestic violence are complex. The earlier a marriage occurs, the more likely it is to be the result of parents' arrangement, still a ubiquitous practice in India, and thus indicative of lower social empowerment of the woman involved. Thus any violence in the relationship may be a result more of a disempowering (or already violent) social milieu than of a causal relationship with the woman's age. At the same time, however, a younger married woman will also have less life experience and resources to resist or recognize violence, thus increasing her risk.

Although the theoretical underpinning is complex and interconnected with many other factors, international and India-based studies suggest that women married earlier are more at risk of violence than those married later (Kishor and Kiersten Johnson 2004; ICRW 1999, 2000a, 2000b). The NFHS-3 upholds these findings. Among women married under 15, 46% have experienced physical or sexual violence. Among women married at 20 or over, 21% have experienced physical or sexual violence. The table below breaks the NFHS-3 sample into evenly distributed quartiles based on marriage age. Those married in the youngest quartile have a 48.3% probability of experiencing violence as opposed to those in the oldest quartile whose probability of violence is 23.8%.

AGE AT MARRIAGE	Youngest	Younger	Older	Oldest
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	48.28%	43.84%	36.61%	23.79%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	45.80%	41.23%	34.05%	21.08%
Individual Types of Violence				
Emotional Violence n=69,432	19.70%	16.72%	13.87%	10.81%
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	43.23%	38.73%	31.83%	19.53%
Severe Violence n=69,427	15.70%	13.02%	10.05%	6.80%
Sexual Violence n=69,432	13.03%	11.50%	8.36%	5.47%

One of several variables that both represents itself and acts as a proxy for women's empowerment, "age at marriage" proves to have a strong relationships with a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence.

Woman's Justification of Violence

Another particularly complex variable is a woman's justification of violence. As much of a comment on the social mores with which a woman was raised as anything, it is difficult to determine the theoretical relationship between this justification and the actual experience of violence. In its multi-country study, for instance, the WHO found that women who justified a husband's right to abuse his wife in one of six situations were more likely to have experienced violence themselves. The direction of this relationship remains unclear, however. As the WHO posits, "This may indicate that women learn to 'accept' violence in circumstances where they themselves are victims, or that women who see violence as 'normal' are more likely to enter or remain in violent relationships" (WHO 2005:10).

In the NFHS-3 Domestic Violence questionnaire, women respondents were asked the following series of questions about situations in which they may or may not justify a husband's violence against his wife:

Sometimes a husband is annoyed or angered by things that his wife does. In your opinion, is a husband justified in hitting or beating his wife in the following situations:

- a. If she goes out without telling him?
- b. If she neglects the house or the children?
- c. If she argues with him?

- d. If she refuses to have sex with him?
- e. If she doesn't cook food properly?
- f. If he suspects her of being unfaithful?
- g. If she shows disrespect for in-laws?

56% of all women respondents justified violence in one or more of these situations, and for the remainder of this analysis they shall comprise the "justifies violence" group. Women were most likely to justify violence in case g, in the event of disrespect to in-laws. 41% of

, ,	istified violence in that case. Next
JUSTIFICATION OF Justifies Doesn't highest w	as a 35% justification rate for
MOLENCE Violence Leading Violence	g the house or children. Women
Evnerienced any	•
KIIII DI VIDIEILE 45.0270 52.5070	t likely (at 14%) to justify
n=64,331 Violence i	n case d, when a wife refuses to
have sex y	with her husband.
Experienced	
physical or sexual 42.56% 30.42% The table	to the left shows the difference in
violence	
1	ce of violence between those who
	y type of violence and those who
<i>Individual</i> don't.	
Types of Violence	
Emotional Violence	-hia analysia has only sonsidered
10.1070	this analysis has only considered
	onnected to the individual life of
Less Severe the woma	an in question. It now introduces
Violence 40.26% 28.14% factors re	elating to men and husbands into
11-04,550	ersation. Before closing with a
	G
14.18% 9.04%	ation of a family's wealth index as
a contribu	uting factor toward risk of
Sexual Violence violence,	this section turns to a man's
n=64,344 11.23% 8.47% justificati	

experience of violence, alcohol use, and controlling behavior. To calculate the relationship between these factors and a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence, it draws from the slightly smaller sample of NFHS-3 respondents whose husbands/partners⁴ were also interviewed (n=39,257 couples).

Man's Justification of Violence

Men responded to the same questions about the justification of violence as their wives did, and with similar results. As compared to 55% of women, only 49% of men justified violence in one or more of the situations above. Men and women agreed about the

⁴ In order to maintain the safety of all female respondents, male participants were not asked specifically about their experiences as perpetrators and/or victims of violence. Male respondents answered questions primarily about demographic and health topics, supplemented with the scale of "justification of violence" and "childhood experience of violence" questions. Although Ellsberg and Heise (2005) advise against interviewing both men and women in the same household about violence, some researchers believe that if thoughtfully and innovatively designed (with respondents' safety as the utmost priority), such methods may increase the complexity and accuracy of research findings. At present, the only studies pursuing such methods are much smaller in scope than the NFHS.

situations in which violence is most justified however, as men were most likely also to justify violence in cases of disrespect to in-laws (36% justify) and neglect to children or house (31% justify). 7% of men responded that beating is justified if a wife refuses sex.

The table to the right reports the percentage likelihood of a man's wife reporting different types of violence based on whether he justifies violence in any of the situations above. The figures are similar to, although less stark, as those based on women's justification of violence.

Man's Childhood Experience

We have already seen that women whose fathers beat their mothers have a 62% probability of experiencing violence, by far the biggest risk factor in childhood (superseding education, religion, and region).

Given that men are most often perpetrators of intimate partner violence, we might expect that *boys* who witness

MAN'S JUSTIFICATION OF VIOLENCE	Justifies Violence	Doesn't Justify Violence
Wife experienced any kind of violence n=30,526	43.37%	34.02%
Wife experienced physical or sexual violence n=30,526	40.62%	31.83%
Individual Types of Violence		
Emotional Violence n=30,532	16.17%	12.43%
Less Severe Violence n=30,528	38.93%	30.34%
Severe Violence n=30,531	13.00%	9.76%
Sexual Violence n=30,532	8.26%	6.97%

violence will be even more likely to enact that violence later in life than their sisters. And, indeed, the literature on this relationship is far more robust than the literature linking girls' childhood experiences to their future risk of IPV victimization.

For a 2008 study, Gil-Gonzalez et al. reviewed 314 papers from the social and behavioral sciences, clinical medicine and life sciences literature testing this relationship (between men's childhood experiences and IPV perpetration). Nine of ten papers chosen for "systematic review" by the authors reported significant relationships between these two variables. These studies included subjects in many countries. The NFHS-3, then, has the potential to confirm or deny that this relationship also exists in India.

Among all men surveyed, 29% reported knowledge of their fathers beating their mothers. The likelihood of experiencing violence of these respondents' *wives* is displayed in the table below. As expected, the wives of men whose fathers beat their mothers are far more likely to report violence than the wives of husbands who were not aware of violence between their parents. While the relationship certainly appears to be strong, the striking finding is that women's childhood experiences of violence are far more predictive of future violence than those of men.

	1	<u>-</u>
MAN'S CHILDHOOD	Man's Father Beat	Man's Father Didn't
EXPERIENCE	Mother	Beat Mother
Wife experienced any kind of violence n=28,117	45.90%	35.27%
Wife experienced physical or sexual violence n=28,117	43.83%	32.80%
Individual Types of Violence		
Emotional Violence n=28,123	16.57%	12.98%
Less Severe Violence n=28,119	42.44%	31.15%
Severe Violence n=28,122	14.38%	10.15%
Sexual Violence n=28,123	8.45%	6.92%

Several complex factors may be at play in sustaining this dynamic, and due to the scarcity of this finding in the literature they may be specific to the Indian sociocultural context. The regressions in the following section will test whether other factors such as education level and wealth index may be influencing this "intergenerational transmission." The surest conclusion, however, is that this dynamic deserves focused followup study. Section V below will provide suggestions for how the NFHS-3's approach to the transition from childhood to adulthood can become more nuanced and accurate.

Husband's Alcohol Use

A 2000 multi-site household survey study of domestic violence in India by ICRW found that over 50% of women whose husbands got drunk once per week reported that he had also hit, kicked, or beat them (ICRW 2000b). Similar findings are also common in international studies of domestic violence (Felitti et al. 1998; Jewkes, Levin, and Penn-Kekana 2002).

39% of men respondents to the NFHS-3 say they use alcohol, while 33% of women say their husbands use alcohol. In order to maintain the largest possible sample size, the table below compares percentage likelihoods of experiencing violence for those women who do and don't report that their husbands drink.

HUSBAND'S ALCOHOL USE	Husband drinks	Husband doesn't drink
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,374	54.80%	32.35%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,379	52.39%	29.71%
Individual Types of Violence		
Emotional Violence n=69,387	23.98%	11.79%
Less Severe Violence n=69,381	50.44%	27.27%
Severe Violence n=69,383	20.65%	7.62%
Sexual Violence n=69,388	14.63%	7.67%

The table on the previous page shows that over half of women whose husbands drink have also experienced some kind of violence. Along with woman's childhood experience of

violence, this is the only factor yet to relate with a *majority* of women also experiencing violence. In the following section we shall attempt to determine whether this effect weakens at all when factors are assessed together.

Husband's Controlling Behavior

Women respondents to the NFHS-3 were also asked whether their husbands displayed certain controlling behaviors that, while not qualifying as emotional violence, nonetheless indicate a patriarchal relationship style. While "patriarchy" is hard to measure reliably and comparatively, many studies have indeed found that highly patriarchal societies condone violence against women more than egalitarian societies (Bhanot and Senn 2007; Heise 1998; Ahmed-Ghosh 2004). The NFHS-3 asked its female participants about six behaviors in an attempt to determine the controlling inclinations of their husbands. The questionnaire reads,

HUSBAND'S CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR	Husband displays controlling behavior	Husband doesn't display controlling behavior	Please tell me if these apply to your relationship with your (last) husband.
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	55.75%	27.66%	He is/was jealous or angry if you talk to other men
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	52.50%	25.63%	 He frequently accuses/accused you of being unfaithful
Individual Types of Violence			He does/did not permit you to meet your female Simulation
Emotional Violence n=69,432	26.83%	7.47%	friends • He tries/tried to limit your contact with your
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	49.57%	23.83%	family • He insists/insisted on
Severe Violence n=69,427	19.50%	6.18%	knowing where you are at all times • He does/did not trust
Sexual Violence n=69,432	16.63%	4.93%	her with money

43% of women surveyed said that their husband had done one or more of these acts, while 12% said that he had done three or more of these acts. The table below compares the likelihood of violence among the aforementioned 43% and the remainder of the sample.

The comparison is stark indeed. The likelihood of experiencing violence among those whose husbands seek to "control" them is more than double that of those who don't report controlling behavior. That pure magnitude of the relationship is notable as well. Like only two previous factors, controlling behavior is associated with a greater-than-50% likelihood of experiencing violence. On average, then, a woman whose husband displays one of the controlling behaviors above will have also experienced physical or sexual violence.

Wealth Index

Given its complex interactions with other factors, a family's wealth can have diverse effects upon a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence. Of particular relevance to the current case, for instance, Rani and Bonu found that increased wealth predicted less acceptance of intimate partner violence in several Asian countries, including India (2009). Another study, this time focused specifically on a South Indian village, found that violence is less likely in wealthier families because they can afford dowries large enough to satisfy in-laws (Srinivasan and Bedi 2007). The following section shall consider explicitly how wealth interacts with residential setting and educational achievement to affect dynamics of violence. But at present we turn to the relationship between wealth in the marriage home and the likelihood of violence therein.

Rather than using rudimentary calculations of income or expenditure (both historically unreliable survey items), the NFHS-3 uses a weighted, scientific calculation of 33 assets and household characteristics⁵ to assign each household a "Wealth Index" ranking. The entire sample of families is divided into quintiles of equal size based on Wealth Index, from Poorest to Richest. The table below displays the percentage of women in each Wealth Index category who also report having experienced violence.

WEALTH INDEX	Poorest	Poorer	Middle	Richer	Richest
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	52.11%	49.05%	42.51%	35.14%	20.93%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	49.30%	46.24%	40.25%	32.81%	18.32%
Individual Types of Violence					
Emotional Violence n=69,432	20.75%	19.85%	17.06%	13.21%	8.56%
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	46.50%	43.73%	37.82%	30.60%	16.84%
Severe Violence n=69,427	16.94%	15.78%	13.93%	9.80%	3.85%
Sexual Violence n=69,432	14.44%	12.53%	10.40%	8.31%	4.47%

⁵ The NFHS-3 wealth index is based on the following 33 assets and housing characteristics: household electrification; type of windows; drinking water source; type of toilet facility; type of flooring; material of exterior walls; type of roofing; cooking fuel; house ownership; number of household members per sleeping room; ownership of a bank or post-office account; and ownership of a mattress, a pressure cooker, a chair, a cot/bed, a table, an electric fan, a radio/transistor, a black and white television, a colour television, a sewing machine, a mobile telephone, any other telephone, a computer, a refrigerator, a watch or clock, a bicycle, a motorcycle or scooter, an animal-drawn cart, a car, a water pump, a thresher, and a tractor.

Of the factors that have thus far entered a woman's life (and this analysis), only Education Level produces a wider range in probabilities of having experienced violence. As the table shows, women in the poorest quintile are some 31% more likely to have reported experiencing violence than those in the richest quintile. And as only a very few factors have done, membership in the poorest quintile also predicts violence at a rate over 50%. Without accounting for interactions with other factors, then, the average woman in the poorest Wealth Index quintile will have experienced some kind of violence at the hands of her current or previous husband.

Similarly, Wealth Index is second only to Education Level as a protective factor, as 21% of women in the richest quintile have experienced violence. This is not to say that violence is *rare* or anything other than a crisis within this community; indeed a 21% rate of violence exceeds many national averages reported in the WHO multi-country study often mentioned above (2005). We have seen both Education Level and Wealth Index to be extreme risk and protective factors, but these remain two sides of a coin nonetheless pandemic in its nature.

SNAPSHOT: Age 15 to 29



Factors

- **Age at Marriage:** The risk of violence decreases as age at marriage increases. Those in the youngest-married quartile have a 48% probability of having experienced violence.
- Woman's Justification of Violence: Those women who justify violence in certain situations have a 46% probability of having experienced violence as compared to a 32% probability among those who do not justify violence.
- Man's Justification of Violence: Wives of men who justify violence have a 43% probability of having experienced violence. By a slight margin, a woman's own justification seems to be a higher risk factor than her husband's attitude about violence.
- Man's Childhood Experiences: 46% of women whose husband's fathers beat their mothers
 have also reported experiencing violence, as compared to 35% of the remaining population.
 Here again, a woman's childhood experience proves a greater risk factor than her partner's.
- Man's Alcohol Use: 55% of women whose husbands drink have experienced violence, as compared to 32% of women whose husbands do not drink.
- Man's Controlling Behavior: 56% of women whose husbands practice controlling behaviors have experienced violence, as compared to 28% of women whose husbands do not practice controlling behavior.
- Wealth Index: The risk of violence decreases as Wealth Index increases, with 52% of women in the poorest quintile having experienced violence as compared to 21% of women in the richest quintile.

Stories

- Kavita was married at 16, around the same time as many of her friends in the village. Her husband was many years older and like Kavita's father migrated to a metropolis to work. Whenever he was home, however, he spent a lot of time drinking with his friends in a nearby town. Having seen violence in her childhood home as well, Kavita considers it a normal part of a marriage relationship. Because of the remittances that her husband sends home, however, the family maintains a modest, "middle" level of wealth. Because of this, Kavita's parents (whom she only sees once per year) and friends consider her particularly lucky.
- After she finished her Bachelor's degree, Shakila's parents convinced her to marry a boy from the neighborhood at the age of 25. They had known the boy's family for many years and watched him grow into a very respectful, professionally motivated man. Shakila's husband was very observant of his religion and thus did not drink alcohol. Shakila kept her parents updated about her young marriage, and relied on their advice whenever she and her husband disagreed. The two families often gathered to celebrate festivals together.

Age 30-44, Motherhood, Work, and Adulthood

Again, for most women the life transition from "early marriage" into "motherhood" will not occur at a perfectly predictable 15-year interval. Indeed many of those married very early are also likely to become mothers in their late teens. Fully 70% of all mothers in the NFHS-3 sample gave birth for the first time at or before age 20. Taking a more long-term view of the life stage in which mothering duties occupy a great portion of a woman's life, though, it is reasonable to expand to and include her thirties. 40% of mothers in the NFHS-3 sample had had at least three children, thus guaranteeing at least two full decades in which young children will be in the home.

In this section we consider two more individual factors about women's lives – motherhood and work for pay – and test their relationship with the likelihood of violence. The complex issue of empowering vs. disempowering social settings re-emerges here and will form the background to much of the analysis of a woman's mothering and working years.

Motherhood

71% of women in the NFHS-3 sample had given birth at least once, the vast majority of those at a very young age. The table below compares these women's experiences of violence to those who had not given birth.

MOTHERHOOD	Has given birth	Has not given birth	The particularly noteworthy
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	40.92%	29.78%	observation in this table is not that having a child is a significant risk factor. Indeed the rates of
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	38.40%	26.88%	violence among those women who have given birth to children are very close to the rates of the entire sample. Rather, in this table
Individual			one sees that those women who
Types of Violence Emotional Violence			have <i>not</i> given birth have
n=69,432	16.16%	12.86%	significantly reduced likelihoods of having experienced violence.
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	36.29%	23.16%	It may be, then, that the ability to decide not to have children is one
Severe Violence n=69,427	12.37%	8.08%	indicator of women's "empowerment" that shares a
Sexual Violence n=69,432	9.99%	9.85%	significantly negative relationship with the probability of experiencing violence. If this

relationship is indeed true, there may also be an indication that it holds true only for physical and emotional violence, not sexual violence. The rates of experiencing sexual violence are nearly identical for both mothers and non-mothers. This contradicts some

research that finds pregnancy as a risk factor for rape or sexual violence (Heise 1998; WHO 2005).

Total Children Born

To extend our understanding of the relationship between motherhood and violence, we shall also consider the number of children born as a potential factor affecting the prevalence of intimate partner violence. If, as we have observed above, the ability to decide not to have children is a potential marker of a protective level of women's empowerment, then perhaps those women who have given birth many times will prove more disempowered and more at risk for violence than those with only one or two children.

The distribution of mothers in the sample by number of children was as follows:

• One child: 17% of mothers

Two children: 27%Three children: 22%Four children: 14%

• Five or more children: 15%

The table below compares the risk for violence among these five groups of mothers.

TOTAL CHILDREN BORN	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Experienced any kind of violence n=63,253	31.91%	34.97%	41.84%	45.40%	52.57%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=63,256	29.10%	32.27%	39.40%	43.08%	50.31%
Individual Types of Violence					
Emotional Violence n=63,264	13.51%	14.08%	16.88%	17.69%	19.38%
Less Severe Violence n=63,258	26.14%	30.13%	37.46%	40.96%	48.75%
Severe Violence n=63,258	8.59%	9.96%	12.39%	13.61%	17.98%
Sexual Violence n=63,263	9.16%	8.04%	9.72%	11.17%	12.82%

As expected, the probability of having experienced violence increases greatly as one moves from mothers of fewer to more children. The relationship with sexual violence, however, does not move in as neatly a linear fashion, which also reflects the findings above about motherhood in general. As a proxy for disempowerment, then, the number of children that a woman gives birth to seems to be a strong predictor of physical and/or emotional violence. Those women whose husbands, families or communities do not demand that they

give birth to many children seem to be more protected from violence than those who are free to choose to limit their births.

Work for pay

To complement this analysis of a *disempowering* factor, we now turn to a factor historically understood to be empowering for women: the ability to work for pay and contribute to the family's income. As Fernandez helpfully reiterates, however, the notion that working outside the home is a liberating factor may speak only to the experiences of middle and upper class women who historically hadn't needed to pursue that work (1997). "Rarely are poor women restricted to the home," she writes, "being forced by economic necessity to work outside the home as maids, as nannies, or in low-skilled, low-paid wage labor" (Fernandez 1997:437).

Thus, like many of the variables included above, a woman's work status and its relationship to violence is complex and mediated by several other factors. Still, worldwide "women's empowerment" programming (including the enormously popular women-focused microfinance projects suddenly ubiquitous in the developing world) often rests on the assumption that women's employment and income-earning have the potential to benefit her life and the lives of her children.

WORK FOR PAY	Respondent currently working	Respondent not working	According to NFHS-3 data, however, this assumption may be faulty if not
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,297	45.37%	36.37%	patently false. The table to the left shows that women currently working
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,301	42.63%	33.92%	for pay (37% of the NFHS-3 sample) are significantly more likely to have also reported experiencing violence than those who are not currently
Individual Types of Violence			working. At the same time, however, not working does not seem to offer much protection, as the rates among
Emotional Violence n=69,310	19.44%	13.61%	those women are only slightly lower than the population averages.
Less Severe Violence n=69,303	40.84%	31.34%	This leaves us with a complex and unpredictable picture of women's
Severe Violence n=69,305	15.72%	9.62%	empowerment. While the ability to choose whether or not to have
Sexual Violence n=69,310	10.41%	9.72%	children seems to be a significant protective factor for women, working

for pay counter-intuitively increases their risk of experiencing violence.

The next section will include work status in its probit regressions, which will provide increased nuance as to how this factor relates in its strength to the others we have considered.

SNAPSHOT: Age 30 to 44



Factors

- **Motherhood:** The ability to choose not to have children may be a protective factor, as the probability of violence among this group is 30% as compared to 41% among mothers.
- Total Children Born: Mothers of more children are more at risk for violence than mothers of fewer children. Among mothers of five or more children, 52% have experienced violence. 32% of mothers of one child have experienced violence.
- Work for Pay: Respondents currently working reported a 45% likelihood of having experienced violence as compared to a 36% likelihood for those not working.

Stories

- **Kavita's** husband and parents were very eager for a baby boy, and finally Kavita gave birth to a son after having two daughters. Kavita watched as many women in her village participated in a new microfinance program in which they took out loans to buy materials with which to stitch quilts for sale. Kavita's husband and in-laws considered this program for the poorer families in the village and thus didn't allow her to participate. When she wasn't required for kitchen duties, Kavita loved telling stories to her children at nighttime.
- Shakila and her husband saved for the first years of their marriage to be sure that they could support a child when they had one. In her early thirties, Shakila gave birth to a daughter. She had to take a year off of work to stay home with the child, but eventually she returned to her job at the newspaper while the baby girl stayed home with Shakila's mother and father in law.

Age 45+, Late Adulthood

The final life stage of "late adulthood" allows some perspective on the lifecourse and major transitions that have come earlier. Of the fifteen factors included thus far, thirteen may potentially enter a woman's life by the first year of her marriage, which for many women happens in the late teens. The conditions (at least those included in the NFHS-3 data) that influence violence, then, may be disproportionately situated in a woman's childhood and adolescence.

Yet the lack of newly arriving risk factors for violence does not necessarily mean that older women are less at risk of suffering violence. In this life stage we shall consider three more variables, all of which come into particular focus during late adulthood. First, we shall discuss the impact of age (an individual factor) on likelihood of violence to determine which of the life stages we have studied holds the most risk for women. Second, we will consider the family structure of the married home (a situational factor), with a brief discussion of the dynamics of nuclear and non-nuclear families in the Indian context. Third and finally, we shall test the relationship between the sex of the head of household (an individual and/or situational factor) and likelihood of a woman's experiencing violence.

Age

The age distribution of the NFHS-3 sample represents the population of India as a whole. As such, it contains a substantial "youth bulge," as some 69% of the survey participants are under age 35; fully 20% of the total sample falls between age 15 and 19. The average age of a respondent was 29.

The lifecourse analysis thus far aligns with many previous studies of domestic violence in that it identifies several risk factors for violence within a woman's earliest life stages. We have seen childhood factors such as the presence of violence in the parental relationship associate strongly with the likelihood of future IPV, as do many individual factors of the husband (which enter a woman's life at marriage, often completed before age 20). A casual conclusion from this disproportionate distribution of risk factors across the lifespan could be that a woman is at greatest risk for violence earlier in life.

This conclusion finds much support in the literature. Indeed in addition to the increased likelihood of violence among young brides, many studies conclude that violence is most likely to enter a marriage within its first five years (WHO 2005). Many factors may contribute to this trend. As the WHO reports, "This pattern may reflect in part that younger men tend to be more violent than older men, and that violence tends to start early in many relationships... also in some settings, older women have greater status than young women, and may therefore be less vulnerable to violence" (2005:8).

Section V below will explore the increasing social and family status of women as they age in more detail. Nonetheless, the table below shows that women between the ages of 25 and 29 are most likely to have recently experienced violence.

AGE	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49
Experienced physical violence in last 12 months n=83,703	14.5%	19.9%	23.5%	21.0%	15.5%

While this group is below the mean age of all respondents, it is somewhat higher than the mean age of marriage. Thus it is inconclusive in its examination of the pattern observed by the WHO and others. Indeed the group between the ages of 40 and 49 is more likely to have experienced violence than the group between the ages of 15 and 19, a finding that apparently contradicts the notion that older women's higher social status serves as a protective factor. All in all, the differences in likelihood of experiencing violence by age are not vast enough to supersede factors we have tested previously, including education, wealth, and others.

Family structure

It is particularly common in India for families to live in extended- or joint-family households. Within this system, a young bride moves in with her husband's parents and assists in the care of both her parents-in-law and the children of any brothers or sisters-in-law.

FAMILY STRUCTURE	Nuclear family	Non-nuclear family	wniie it ma
Experienced any kind of violence n=67,237	43.18%	36.77%	that the proposition that the proposition of the pr
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=67,241	40.78%	34.03%	a protectiv the literatu support for
Individual Types of Violence			Martin et a scholars su (1997), Me
Emotional Violence n=67,249	16.83%	14.74%	Raj et al. (2
Less Severe Violence n=67,243	38.80%	31.54%	dynamics of that are str
Severe Violence n=67,244	13.52%	10.57%	family scen
Sexual Violence n=67,249	10.06%	9.86%	The NFHS- puzzling in

While it may seem intuitive that the presence of additional potential "observers" in a joint family household may serve as a protective factor for women, the literature shows little or no support for this theory (see Martin et al. 1999). Instead, scholars such as Fernandez (1997), Mehrotra (1999), and Raj et al. (2006) have documented particular dynamics of domestic violence that are strengthened in joint family scenarios.

The NFHS-3 data is thus puzzling in this regard. While some 47% of women reported

living in non-nuclear households, the prevalence of emotional and physical violence was somewhat *lower* among these women. While the rates of sexual violence show no differentiation, the data on emotional and physical violence seem to contradict the findings mentioned above (Fernandez 1997; Mehrotra 1999; Raj et al. 2006). Section V below shall attempt more fully to place the NFHS-3 findings within the context of literature on violence in extended families in India.

Head of household⁶

As a final factor of analysis, we acknowledge that as women age, the chance that they shall become "heads of household," whether by widowhood, divorce, or other means, increases. Of those interviewed for the NFHS-3, 14% reported living in female-headed households. Thus the vast majority of women live in households wherein a man is identified as "the person who bears the chief responsibility for managing the affairs of the household" (Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India 2007).

If one accepts that a male-headed household may be a proxy indicator of patriarchal family values, then the literature would certainly suggest that violence is more likely in those settings (Bhanot and Senn 2007; Ahmed-Ghosh 2004). Nonetheless the data in the table to the right show that those living in female-headed households have a slightly higher likelihood of having experienced violence. Whereas the figures associated with male-headed households reflect the Indian national averages almost identically, the naming of a woman as head of household appears to be a slight risk factor.

To be sure, this is far from a refutation of the patriarchal nature of maleheaded households. On an international

HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	Male-headed household	Female-headed household
Experienced any kind of violence n=69,419	39.40%	42.26%
Experienced physical or sexual violence n=69,423	36.77%	40.23%
Individual Types of Violence		
Emotional Violence n=69,432	15.42%	18.57%
Less Severe Violence n=69,425	34.50%	37.89%
Severe Violence n=69,427	11.42%	15.39%
Sexual Violence n=69,432	9.67%	12.05%

scale, India's average household contains a very high level of violence. Rather, the observation that female-headed households contain higher likelihoods of domestic violence provides helpful dissonance against the assumption that legally-recognized female authority would serve to protect women. It appears that this female authority does not protect women. It may also indicate, with previous factors in mind, that particularly *disempowered* or *at-risk* women may be more likely to become heads of household than their more protected peers.

⁶ "Head of household" is a legal designation falling on one member of each household in India. It is defined by the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India as "a person who is recognized as [head of household] by the household. She or he is generally the person who bears the chief responsibility for managing the affairs of the household and takes decision on behalf of the household. The head of household need not necessarily be the oldest male member or an earning member, but may be a female or a younger member of either sex. In case of an absentee de jure 'Head' who is not eligible to be enumerated in the household, the person on whom the responsibility of managing the affairs of household rests was to be regarded as the head irrespective whether the person is male or female." It is unclear why such duties must fall upon only one person in a household, an omission indicative of a patriarchal social structure.

SNAPSHOT: Age 44+



Factors

- Age: The highest risk for having recently experienced violence falls between the ages of 25 and 29.
- **Family Structure:** Those living in non-nuclear family households have a slightly lower likelihood of experiencing violence than those living in nuclear family households.
- **Head of Household:** Those living in female-headed households have a slightly higher likelihood of experiencing violence than those in male-headed households.

Stories

- Kavita watched her grown daughters get married and move into nearby villages, and eventually her son brought a new young wife into the house as well. After her mother and father in law passed away, Kavita felt less pressure to complete all the household work. Instead, she started assigning a lot of this work to her son's new wife, just as her mother in law had done to her. When Kavita's husband's parents passed away, Kavita relaxed a lot more and started urging her son to have children, hoping that the spirits of young children would carry her through her last years.
- Shakila's daughter was a very diligent student, but unlike her mother's instincts for
 journalism she was particularly adept at maths and sciences. As such she bonded a
 lot with her father and followed in his footsteps by applying to engineering school.
 After her in-laws passed away, Shakila retired from the newspaper to look after the
 family home, but the house felt empty with her daughter away at college. Into their
 later years, Shakila and her husband harbored dreams of their daughter getting a
 job outside India, and perhaps of following her somewhere abroad.

IV. Net Determinants of Violence: The Pictures Become Paths

It is abundantly clear that a woman faces risk factors for violence at the individual, situational, and sociocultural levels at all stages of her life. Having considered these pictures of violence for various subgroups of the Indian population, we will now move to a more sophisticated analysis of the comparative strength of those relationships. In doing so, this section presents a series of probit regression results accounting for the influence of various factors on a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence. The probit model is a nonlinear regression model that assumes the standard normal distribution. For ease of interpretation, the coefficients listed in the tables represent the marginal effect on the probability of experiencing violence for a change in each independent variable (calculated at the mean of that variable's distribution). This is an effort to produce more intuitive results for the reader than the log-likelihood coefficients produced by the probit model itself.

The section proceeds in four parts: (1) it presents and briefly discusses regression results for the experience of *any* kind of violence, (2) it presents and briefly discusses regression results for the experience of *physical violence*, (3) it presents and briefly discusses regression results for the experience of *sexual violence*, and (4) it returns to the life stories of Kavita and Shakila to transform the "pictures" we have seen of their experiences into the "paths" of their changing probabilities of experiencing violence.

Throughout its assessment of these econometric calculations, this paper will consider not only the "statistical significance" of various relationships but also the *real-world* magnitude and significance of those relationships. The lifecourse perspective shall prove particularly useful in this regard and transition us nicely into the following section, which examines two of the major real-world shortcomings of the NFHS-3 results.

Regression and Discussion: All Violence

The regression table below shows the results of three regressions on the probability of a woman experiencing any kind of violence.

Model 1 includes only the factors which produced the highest and lowest likelihoods of violence in the previous section. These include three factors that may significantly increase a woman's risk of experiencing violence (Childhood Experience of Violence, Husband's Alcohol Use, and Husband's Controlling Behavior) as well as two factors that may significantly decrease a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence (Education Level and Wealth Index). Perhaps, at first glance, the reader of the previous section is tempted to consider the three former factors as the most powerful determinants of violence. This temptation would be significantly substantiated if these variables maintain a strong association with violence when they are calculated alone *and* in conjunction with many other potentially influential variables. The same is true for the *protective* ability of education level and wealth index. For this reason we shall begin by testing these potentially-strongest factors on their own before moving on to introduce other variables.

Model 2 includes all the women's demographic, experiential and attitude variables⁷ discussed in the previous section, but does not explicitly account for any interaction between pairs of these variables. Any significant change in the coefficients of the variables included in Model 1, now that the fully array of variables is present, will be instructive.

Model 3 includes all the aforementioned variables along with two interaction terms: (1) between Urban Setting and Wealth Index and (2) between Education Level and Wealth Index. The coefficients of these terms will show whether and how these variables interact with and influence each other. For instance, a strong negative interaction term between Education Level and Wealth Index may indicate that as education and/or wealth increase, the effect of each becomes a stronger preventative factor for the experience of violence. As mentioned earlier, these were the only two interactions which, according to the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) method, were significantly and consistently multicollinear. The inclusion of the interaction terms and the centering of the variables included in interaction terms are efforts to improve the accuracy and "goodness of fit" of the regression model. A significant change in these coefficients, a reversal of their direction, or a major increase in the pseudo R-squared will all be instructive.

(see regression results on the following page)

⁷ Because the subsample of women whose partners were also interviewed is significantly smaller than the total sample of women respondents, the variables coming from men's interviews (Men's Childhood Experience of Violence, Men's Justification of Violence) have been left out of these regressions. By maintaining the most observations as possible from the sample of women who completed the domestic violence questionnaire, the regression results maximize their accuracy and maintain their weighted calculation of national representativeness.

Probit (Maximum Likelihood Estimation) Regression Results: Marginal Effects on Likelihood of Experiencing ANY Violence

	Model 1 Model 2 Coefficient Coefficient (Standard Error) (Standard Error)		Model 3 Coefficient (Standard Error)	
Binary Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence if woman displays this characteristic. (i.e2384 = 23.8 % increase in probability of violence.)			
Childhood Experience of Violence	.2384 (.0000)	.2386 (.0000)	.2355 (.0000)	
Husband's Alcohol Use	.1842 (.0000)	.1867 (.0000)	.1853 (.0000)	
Husband's Controlling Behavior	.2463 (.0000)	.2348 (.0000)	.2348 (.0000)	
Muslim Family		.0658 (.0000)	.0627 (.0000)	
North/East Region		.0647 (.0000)	.0669 (.0000)	
Urban Setting		.0327 (.0000)	.0408 (.0000)	
Woman's Justification of Violence		.0713 (.0000)	.0677 (.0000)	
Motherhood		.0831 (.0000)	.0857 (.0000)	
Working for Pay		.0346 (.0000)	.0355 (.0000)	
Nuclear Family		.0291 (.0000)	.0301 (.0000)	
Male Head of Household		.0092 (.0000)	.0085 (.0000)	
Categorical Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence for every categorical increase in level of education or wealth index. (i.e0575 = 5.8% decrease in probability for every additional level of schooling completed)			
Level of Education	0575 (.0000)0337 (.0000)0348		0348 (.0000)	
Wealth Index	0397 (.0000)	0392 (.0000)	0526 (.0000)	
Ordinal Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence for every year increase in woman's age at first marriage.			
Age at Marriage		0081 (.0000)	0074 (.0000)	
Interaction Terms	Used to calculate effects of urban setting, wealth index, and education level in interaction with one another. Please see explanation in text below.			
Urban Setting + Wealth Index			0183 (.0000)	
Level of Education + Wealth Index			0155 (.0000)	
Average Predicted Probability	37.1%	37.3%	37.1%	
n	61,347	61,347	61,347	
Pseudo R-Squared	.1500	.1598	.1612	

The following are among the most salient insights/observations emerging from this first series of regressions:

- The effects of (1) Childhood Experience of Violence, (2) Husband's Alcohol Use and (3) Husband's Controlling Behavior are significant and strong, even when accounting for all the other variables in our analysis. As compared to those who have not witnessed violence in the childhood home, those from violent homes have a 23.6% higher probability of experiencing violence themselves. Those women whose husbands drink have an 18.5% higher probability of experiencing violence than those whose husbands don't. Those women whose husbands display controlling behavior(s) have a 23.5% higher probability of experiencing violence than those whose husbands don't. Thus in conjunction with each other, these three factors account for more than 65% of a woman's potential variance in probability of violence according to this model (Model 3 above).
- Urban Setting and Wealth Index interact significantly and strongly, producing the real world effect that living in an urban area can be either a risk or preventative factor for violence depending on Wealth Index. For those in the "poorest" Wealth Index category, living in an Urban Setting produces a 4.1% increase in the probability of experiencing violence, while for those in the "richest" Wealth Index category, living in an Urban Setting produces a 3.2% decrease in the probability of experiencing violence. This finding adds critical nuance absent from the last section, which may have prompted the conclusion that urban residents are always safer than rural residents. This interaction also shows that on average, women in the same Wealth Index category have a 1.8% lower probability of experiencing violence if they live in an Urban Setting.
- Education Level and Wealth Index interact significantly and strongly, producing the real world effect that these two variables multiply the protective influence of one other. Changes in Wealth Index can account for up to an additional 6.2% decrease in the probability that women with the same Education Level will experience violence. Likewise, changes in Education Level can account for up to an additional 6.4% decrease in the probability that women in the same Wealth Index category will experience violence.
- All of the variables included have statistically significant relationships with the probability of experiencing violence, although only a few present changes at a significant "real world" level. The very minor increase in the pseudo R-squared score as the number of variables increased indicates that those additional variables are not adding much to the model's ability to predict movement in the likelihood of experiencing violence. Furthermore, most of these additional factors, including religion, region, working for pay and nuclear family setting are dwarfed in their associative effects by the strongest variables in the model. The change in risk associated with belonging to a male-headed household, furthermore, is insignificant at less than 1%.

Regression and Discussion: Physical Violence

The second series of regressions tests the relationship between the various factors we have studied and the likelihood of experiencing physical violence (in either the "less severe" or "severe" subcategory). These models also seek to affirm the strength of the strongest apparent factors, while also attempting to measure the magnitude with which different types of violence move together. The descriptions of the three models are as follows:

Model 1, as in the last series of regressions, considers only those five factors found to have the most striking cross-tabulated relationships with violence: Childhood Experience of Violence, Husband's Alcohol Use, Husband's Controlling Behavior, Wealth Index, and Education Level. Once again we will be able to determine the lasting strength of these variables once we have included the whole array of lifetime variables available.

Model 2 mimics Model 3 from the previous series of regressions, including all variables included in the previous section as well as the interaction terms between Urban Setting, Wealth Index, and Education Level. Because "less severe" and "severe" physical violence comprise such a large proportion of the reports of "all violence," we might expect these findings to look similar to those in Model 3 above. Any notable deviations will be instructive.

Model 3 includes all the variables in Model 2, with the addition this time of "Emotional Violence" as a potential predicting factor for physical violence. The coefficient produced on this variable will show the increase in probability of experiencing physical violence among those women whose husbands enact emotional violence against them. In this way we can determine the strength and magnitude with which these two forms of violence move together, if at all.

(see regression results on the following page)

Probit (Maximum Likelihood Estimation) Regression Results: Marginal Effects on Likelihood of Experiencing (Less Severe and Severe) PHYSICAL Violence

	Model 1 Model 2 Coefficient Coefficient (Standard Error) (Standard Error)		Model 3 Coefficient (Standard Error)	
Binary Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence if woman displays this characteristic.			
Childhood Experience of Violence	.2339 (.0000)	.2299 (.0000)	.2000 (.0000)	
Husband's Alcohol Use	.1897 (.0000)	.1893 (.0000)	.1678 (.0000)	
Husband's Controlling Behavior	.2204 (.0000)	.2110 (.0000)	.1469 (.0000)	
Muslim Family		.0647 (.0000)	.0664 (.0000)	
North/East Region		.0460 (.0000)	.0565 (.0000)	
Urban Setting		.0483 (.0000)	.0437 (.0000)	
Woman's Justification of Violence		.0577 (.0000)	.0531 (.0000)	
Motherhood		.1069 (.0000)	.1100 (.0000)	
Working for Pay		.0393 (.0000)	.0298 (.0000)	
Nuclear Family		.0371 (.0000)	.0383 (.0000)	
Male Head of Household		.0060 (.0000)	.0117 (.0000)	
Emotional Violence			.4806 (.0000)	
Categorical Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence for every one categorical increase in level of education or wealth index.			
Level of Education	0640 (.0000)0424 (.0000)		0433 (.0000)	
Wealth Index	0343 (.0000)	0508 (.0000)	0471 (.0000)	
Ordinal Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence for every year increase in woman's age at first marriage.			
Age at Marriage		0077 (.0000)	0076 (.0000)	
Interaction Terms	Used to calculate effects of urban setting, wealth, and education level in interaction with one another. Please see explanation in text below.			
Urban Setting + Wealth Index		0155 (.0000)	0149 (.0000)	
Level of Education + Wealth Index		0177 (.0000)	0181 (.0000)	
Average Predicted Probability	31.6%	31.6%	31.9%	
n	61,350	61,350	61,350	
Pseudo R-Squared	.1546	.1679	.2459	

The following are among the most salient insights/observations emerging from this second series of regressions:

- Women who have experienced emotional violence are far more likely to also experience physical violence than those who have not experienced emotional violence. As Model 3 above shows, women whose husbands enact emotionally violent behaviors have a 48% higher probability of experiencing physical violence than those women free of emotional violence. The magnitude of this coefficient is more than double that of any other factor in the model; as such it provides significant evidence that these two types of violence move together.
- Childhood Experience of Violence, Husband's Alcohol Use and Husband's Controlling Behavior still have the strongest coefficients among all variables considered in the "lifecourse," but the gap between these factors and the rest shrinks when Emotional Violence is considered. Husband's Controlling Behavior showed the sharpest decrease in influence once emotional violence was considered, perhaps because these two variables are so similar in nature (indeed, some may consider some of the controlling behaviors listed as "emotional violence," even if the NFHS-3 does not). Both Childhood Experience of Violence and Husband's Alcohol Use lost about 2 percentage points in their predictive power of physical violence once emotional violence was included in the analysis.
- As before, Urban Setting, Education Level and Wealth Index interact significantly and strongly with one another; this effect is not tempered when moving from Model 2 to Model 3. Thus regardless of the presence of emotional violence, the interaction of these three variables has incredible potential to influence the likelihood that a woman respondent will have experienced violence. As before, Urban Setting can become a risk or preventative factor based on Wealth Index. And as before, Wealth Index and Education Level can each add some six percentage points in protective influence to the other factor.
- The effects of Religion, Region, Motherhood, Family Structure and Head of Household maintained their magnitude or increased when moving from Model 2 to Model 3. In the "better fit" model, then, these factors had a stronger relationship with violence than we were previously able to see. None of the effects has enough real world influence to surmount the most predictive variables (see above) but nonetheless their increase is noteworthy. The Male Head of Household variable is particularly interesting for appearing as a risk factor in this case, whereas in the previous section women appeared slightly safer in male-headed households.

Regression and Discussion: Sexual Violence

The following page uses the same three regression models to estimate the relationship between various variables and the likelihood that a woman had experienced sexual violence. The only difference in this case is that for Model 3, both emotional and physical violence are included as potential influences on the likelihood of an experience of sexual violence. An interpretation of findings follows on the subsequent page.

Probit (Maximum Likelihood Estimation) Regression Results: Marginal Effects on Likelihood of Experiencing SEXUAL Violence

	Model 1 Coefficient (Standard Error)	Model 2 Coefficient (Standard Error)	Model 3 Coefficient (Standard Error)	
Binary Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence if woman displays this characteristic.			
Childhood Experience of Violence	.0564 (.0000)	.0599 (.0000)	.0229 (.0000)	
Husband's Alcohol Use	.0455 (.0000)	.0517 (.0000)	.0199 (.0000)	
Husband's Controlling Behavior	.0966 (.0000)	.0807 (.0000)	.0364 (.0000)	
Muslim Family		.0327 (.0000)	.0211 (.0000)	
North/East Region		.0720 (.0000)	.0638 (.0000)	
Urban Setting		.0047 (.0000)	0026 (.0000)	
Woman's Justification of Violence		.0102 (.0000)	.0029 (.0000)	
Motherhood		0012 (.0000)	0147 (.0000)	
Working for Pay		.0043 (.0000)	0025 (.0000)	
Nuclear Family		0017 (.0000)	0052 (.0000)	
Male Head of Household		0075 (.0000)	0060 (.0000)	
Emotional Violence			.0675 (.0000)	
Physical Violence			.1078 (.0000)	
Categorical Variables	Interpret as % change in proi increase in level of education	bability of experiencing violence or wealth index.	e for every one categorical	
Level of Education	0080 (.0000)	0009 (.0000)	.0038 (.0000)	
Wealth Index	0120 (.0000)	0121 (.0000)	0058 (.0000)	
Ordinal Variables	Interpret as % change in probability of experiencing violence for every year increase in woman's age at first marriage.			
Age at Marriage		0023 (.0000)	0012 (.0000)	
Interaction Terms	Used to calculate effects of urban setting, wealth, and education level in interaction with one another. Please see explanation in text below.			
Urban Setting + Wealth Index		0025 (.0000)	0012 (.0000)	
Level of Education + Wealth Index		0059 (.0000)	0038 (.0000)	
Average Predicted Probability	7.6%	6.8%	5.1%	
n	61,347	61,347	61,347	
Pseudo R-Squared	.0990	.1334	.2284	

The following are among the most salient insights/observations emerging from this third series of regressions:

- The most influential factors that predict sexual violence are not the same as those that predict emotional and physical violence. The five strongest variables that appear in all three "Model 1"s return far lower coefficients in a regression on sexual violence than they did in regressions on all violence and physical violence. In Model 3 above, these factors are superseded by the variables of violence as well as religion and region.
- Residents in the North/East region are 6% more at risk for sexual violence than those in the South/West region, even when accounting for all other variables. This variable was one of very few that did not shrink in magnitude once the variables of violence were considered in Model 3 above.
- Women who have experienced emotional violence and/or physical violence are significantly more likely also to have experienced sexual violence than those women who have not. Again, the regressions show that the different types of violence move together. An experience of any "level" of violence, beginning even with a husband's controlling behaviors, significantly increases the likelihood that a woman will experience the next, "more severe" level of violence, moving up the chain from emotional to physical to sexual violence.
- Many variables significantly related to emotional and physical violence display no "real world" effect on the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence. The coefficient for Work for Pay changed direction (from + to –) in the move from Model 2 to Model 3. Thus we can conclude that this variable bears little or no impact on the likelihood of experiencing sexual violence. We can draw a similar conclusion about Male Head of Household, Woman's Justification of Violence, and Nuclear Family, all of whose coefficients indicate that their concomitant increase in probability of experiencing violence is less than 1%. While Motherhood was a significant risk factor for emotional and physical violence, in this analysis (even in Model 2, before other forms of violence are considered) it changes direction and loses its magnitude.
- Nonetheless, these various factors increase a woman's likelihood of experiencing sexual violence by increasing her likelihood of experiencing other kinds of violence. While the coefficients above may be smaller than those we have seen before, the reality is that nonetheless risk abounds in relation to all these factors. By influencing a woman's likelihood of experiencing emotional or physical violence, as we see in the large coefficients for those two factors in Model 3 above, the previous factors contribute to and strengthen the path from one type of violence to another.

These first findings will inform the sections that follow, where Kavita and Shakila's stories shall be updated to factor in their differential probabilities of having experienced violence. After considering how the "pictures" of their stories become "paths" of changing probabilities of violence, the paper assesses the extent to which these pictures and paths represent reality.

The Pictures Become Paths: Kavita and Shakila's Experiences of Violence

The use of regression formulas can further enhance our understanding of the dynamics of violence by allowing us to input interesting values for all of the variables and calculate the predicted probability of violence that results. While acknowledging that the regression model it draws from is imperfect, this section inputs variables representing the experiences of Kavita and Shakila to calculate their predicted probabilities of ever experiencing violence at each life stage.

To maximize our ability to capture the likelihood that these women will experience violence, we shall use a regression equation from our calculations of the likelihood of experiencing *any* kind of violence. Among those three regression models (see page 43), the one that presented the best fit to the NFHS-3 data was Model 3. The graphics that follow result from inputting the variables that represent Kavita and Shakila's experiences into that model and then calculating its predicted value. In the case of the "childhood" and "marriage and early adulthood" life stages, where not all of the variables have yet entered the woman's life, the equation was calculated using the *mean* values of the remaining variables.

Although, as we have seen, some of the factors that influence a woman's likelihood of experiencing violence have already entered her life before she is born (including religion, region, and residence), the model's average predicted probability of violence is 37.1%. Thus the reader may compare the predicted probabilities below to this "baseline" percentage as predicted by the model in use. Also, because we know the actual percentage of women who have experienced *any* kind of violence exceeds 39%, it is likely that our probabilities (using a model with a mean prediction of 37.1%) underestimate the actual experiences of women like Kavita and Shakila. This is in addition to the several other reasons we have to suspect underreporting, as enumerated in the methodology section.

Kavita

Childhood



On average, according to our regression model, a woman with Kavita's childhood experiences has a 54.7% probability of experiencing violence in her life. Thus by the time she has even thought about getting involved in an intimate relationship, she has encountered enough risk factors that, on average, that relationship will turn violent. Of all the factors increasing Kavita's likelihood of violence, having grown up in a home where her father beat her mother is the most influential. Her low level of education as well as residence in the North/East of the country also put her in subcategories of the Indian population with higher risk of experiencing violence.

Marriage and Early Adulthood



By the time the characteristics of Kavita's husband and attitude about violence are factored in, her predicted probability of violence has shot up to 65.2%. Thus nearly 2 in 3 women in Kavita's shoes will, according to this particular model, experience violence at some point in their lives. This figure occurs too in a family in the middle wealth index, in a religion not stigmatized within the country for its oppression of women, and in a relationship where the husband is away from home most of the time and thus unable to enact controlling behaviors. Thus the risks created by justifying violence and marrying early to a man who drinks alcohol, are substantial enough to significantly exacerbate the already high-risk scenario Kavita was in when she emerged from childhood.

Motherhood and Late Adulthood



By the time the last chapters of Kavita's story have been written, there is a 62.9% chance that she would have experienced violence at some point during that story. This figure is slightly smaller than the figure from her early adulthood, representing the minuscule influence of not working and living in a non-nuclear home. This figure may be slightly low, as we know that the fact that Kavita has had *three* children may actually increase her likelihood of experiencing violence (the model only includes motherhood as a binary variable, however). Nonetheless, even at this probability level, if every woman in India matched Kavita's life variables, then the number of women experiencing violence would be higher than the entire population of the United States (Census of India 2001).

Final Snapshot: According to the picture provided by the NFHS-3 data, 62.9% of women matching Kavita's life story will have experienced some kind of violence in their lives.

Shakila

Childhood



Shakila avoided many of the strongest risk factors in this first stage of life: she never witnessed her father beat her mother, and she stayed in school long enough to finish a higher degree. To be sure, her 31.3% predicted probability of violence compares quite favorably to that of Kavita, who already had a 54.7% lifetime chance of experiencing violence using only the childhood variables. But this favorable light fades in the absence of comparison. Truly it is a dire observation (as well as a potential indictment of the overstatement of the "intergenerational transmission of violence" theory) that nearly one in three women who complete higher education and grow up in nonviolent homes will nonetheless experience violence at some point in their lives. The fact that Shakila is born to a Muslim family cannot account for this lasting risk, as that variable represents an inconsequential portion of the predicted probability.

Marriage and Early Adulthood



Shakila's parents close attention to the situation of her marriage contributes greatly to the reduction in probability of violence by the end of her early adulthood: by waiting until her mid-twenties to marry Shakila, and by choosing a son-in-law who does not drink nor practice controlling behavior, Shakila's parents helped reduce her lifetime probability of violence by about half. Furthermore, for reasons not accounted for explicitly by NFHS variables, Shakila also does not justify violence. The predicted risk of violence has shrunk for all these reasons, but it remains troublingly high, reaffirming the fact that violence occurs at high rates even when families appear to be "doing everything right."

Motherhood and Late Adulthood



Shakila's lifetime probability of experiencing violence increases very slightly when accounting for later life factors. By joining the ranks of women working for pay, she has introduced a dynamic that sometimes associates with violence. The relationship is very small indeed, however, increasing the probability by less than one percent. Here too, the data tell us that nearly nothing is enough to avoid the possibility of violence altogether. Shakila was highly educated, in a nonviolent middle-class family, and married a seemingly honest and alcohol-free husband. She worked productively and dedicated herself to being a good mother. Crude though the regression model may be, it nonetheless predicts that even women displaying all these characteristics have a 16.5% probability of experiencing violence. If all women in India were able to live Shakila's life – and that is an unrealistic proposition indeed – then some 80 million Shakilas would nonetheless suffer violence.

Final Snapshot: According to the picture provided by the NFHS-3 data, 16.5% of women matching Shakila's life story will have experienced some kind of violence in their lives.

Insights and Conclusions

The past two sections have relied on NFHS-3 data to paint a picture of intimate partner violence in India. Using both cross-tabulations and nonlinear regressions, we have attempted to estimate the statistical and "real-world" significance of many potential influencing factors. In doing so, we have grounded ourselves in the real experiences of women by proceeding chronologically, applying a lifecourse perspective, and relating the statistical outputs always to the life stories of Kavita and Shakila.

The findings have brought new focus to several salient dynamics of intimate partner violence in India, indeed presenting them at a nationally representative level for the first time ever. Among the most important lessons emerging from this analysis are the following:

A preponderance of risk factors enters a woman's life very early. A disproportionately large amount of the salient factors in this analysis will already be in place by the moment a woman marries. While demographic characteristics (decided even before birth) like religion, region, and residence present significant but smaller positive associations with the likelihood of future violence, the most powerful factors are: Childhood Experiences of Violence, Age of Marriage, Husband's Alcohol Use, and Husband's Controlling Behavior. Thus, for reasons both intuitive and supported by strong evidence in the NFHS-3, the

moment of marriage is a watershed for a young woman: indeed the circumstances of that marriage account for upwards of 70% of her probability of experiencing violence later.

The risk created by witnessing violence in the childhood home is far larger than the protection it provides those who haven't witnessed it. As we have seen in the case of Shakila, even a woman who has completed higher education and was raised in a nonviolent home has, on average, a 31% probability of experiencing violence later in life. This is a reduction from the 39% population average, but its magnitude is not nearly as large as the increased risk that observing violence would associate with. Thus while this childhood factor is important, it does not tell the whole story; this runs contrary to simplistic assertions about the "life cycle of domestic violence." More to the point, NFHS-3 data suggest that childhood carries more potential risk than possibility for protection.

In the Indian context, parents (especially fathers) wield enormous influence in setting the course for a violent or peaceful future for their daughters. Many life decisions often made by individuals in Western countries are taken by parents or families in India. And given the entrenched patriarchy in Indian culture, "parents" most often means fathers. Thus in addition to choosing whether or not to perpetrate violence against his wife, a father in India also has incredible influence over his daughter's education and marriage. A father committed to ensuring a peaceful future for his daughter can: (1) refrain from perpetrating violence against his wife, (2) encourage his daughter to study as long as she wants, (3) teach his daughter that she should not justify violence in any situation, (4) refrain from demanding that his daughter marry young, (5) seek out potential suitors who do not drink, (6) allow for a period of dating and interviews to determine the "controlling" instincts of a potential husband, and (7) require the potential husband to renounce violence. Indeed in most families the father is the primary agent in all of the most influential factors in this analysis. To be sure, that onus transfers in great part to the husband after the wedding day, but the influence wielded by the father is undeniable. As an implication for future practice, then, it is imperative that the movement to end intimate partner violence expands to engage men as allies and agents of influence.

Emotional, physical and sexual violence move with and boost one another. An experience of emotional violence proves an enormous risk factor for physical violence, just as experiences of emotional or physical violence are the strongest available predictors of sexual violence. The transfer from one type of violence to another is staggering. 80% of those who have experienced emotional violence will also experience some kind of physical violence. 34% of those who have experienced less severe violence will also experience severe violence, as opposed to .25% of those who have not. 22% of those who have experienced physical violence will also experience sexual violence, as opposed to 3% of those who have not.

Sexual violence responds differently to the available influences than physical and emotional violence. Whereas Childhood Experience of Violence, Husband's Alcohol Use, and Husband's Controlling Behavior were by vast margins the largest influences on a woman's likelihood of experiencing emotional or physical violence, sexual violence is dominated by other dynamics. In addition to associating strongly with experiences of

emotional and physical violence, sexual violence also seems to occur with greater frequency in North India. Follow-up studies may produce valuable findings by investigating gender attitudes as precursors to sexual violence in North India.

Face-value indicators of women's empowerment often do not associate with reduced likelihood of violence. A simplistic analysis of social science trends may suggest that women working outside the home are more "empowered," and perhaps more protected, than their counterparts who aren't allowed to work. It also makes sense at "face value" that a female-headed household may be a safer place for women. Neither of these assumptions hold true in the Indian context, telling us that the dynamics of empowerment and protection from violence in relation to work and "head of household" status are far more complex.

Intimate partner violence in India is a crisis across all demographic groups. None of the demographic factors included in the analysis (including religion, region, education level, wealth index, and urban setting) were among the most influential variables in increasing the likelihood of experiencing violence. Thus while targeted studies of particularly at-risk regions like Bihar might be warranted, those working to end intimate partner violence can be affirmed in their knowledge that the battleground exists among the rich and poor, urban and rural, educated and uneducated, Muslim and Hindu, North Indian and South Indian. Even the case example of Shakila, whose parents "did everything right," has a probability of experiencing violence larger than some nations. This too emerges from a calculation that we know to be under-representative of the true figure. We have also seen that living in an Urban Setting can change from a protective to a risk factor based on one's Wealth Index, providing further proof that demographic characteristics interact in complex ways, defying simplified modes of single-group stigmatization. Like many studies before it, the NFHS-3 attests to the fact that intimate partner violence belongs to *all* communities in India.

Newly focused though it may be, this picture fails to capture the comprehensive reality of women's risk for IPV in India, however. Like all pictures, it focuses on certain elements while ignoring others, tempting the viewer all the same into believing that it tells the full story.

The following section will attempt to give voice to some of the ways in which Kavita and Shakila's stories were silenced by the NFHS-3's process and findings.

V. Problems with the Paths: Two Major Life Transitions

The NFHS-3 has provided India with its first nationally representative survey data addressing the dynamics of domestic violence. To be sure, especially as compared to data from previous versions of the NFHS, the "picture" and "paths" of domestic violence provided by the NFHS-3 are vastly improved. The overall prevalence of physical violence as measured by the NFHS-3's CTS methodology, for instance, jumped to 37% from 20% in the NFHS-2, which employed the gateway question methodology (IIPS and ORC Macro 2000). While even this number is likely to be too low, the research community can put more faith in the NFHS-3's findings than in any nationally representative studies of the past.

This new "picture" is improved, yes, but it is also incomplete. Our lifecourse perspective has allowed us to consider the most salient explanatory variables in something resembling an intuitive chronological order, but it has also highlighted the NFHS-3 data's inability adequately to account for major life transitions. This section selects two such life transitions, inadequately addressed by the NFHS-3, and explores them in further detail.

First, the NFHS-3 tells us that an experience of domestic violence during childhood is among the strongest predictors of domestic violence perpetration and victimization in early adulthood. Yet this finding is not a guarantee; some who witness violence as children do not become perpetrators or victims. Certainly too, some intermediate variables during adolescence might mitigate the likelihood of childhood witnessing begetting adult perpetration and victimization. This section therefore examines this so-called "intergenerational transmission of domestic violence" to highlight the shortcomings of the NFHS-3's findings relating to the transition **from childhood to early adulthood**.

Second, the NFHS-3 reports that a woman's likelihood of experiencing IPV decreases as she transitions from early to later adulthood. Yet the context of the Indian family provides complexity of gender and generation that the data fail to address. Some literature suggests that as women age and bear (particularly male) children, their social status increases in the Indian extended family. Along with this increase in power comes an increased likelihood of perpetrating or encouraging domestic violence against the younger women in the household. By neglecting to ask critical questions about these and other dynamics of the Indian extended family, the NFHS-3 ignores a potentially important aspect of women's lifetime experience of violence. The second section below attempts to shed light upon these extended family dynamics that influence a woman's transition **from early to late adulthood**.

From Witnessing to Victimization: Who and what "transmits"?

Dating back to the late 1970s, there have been dozens if not hundreds of published studies on the "intergenerational transmission of domestic violence." The majority of these

⁸ For reviews of this literature, the interested reader can consult Stith et al. (2000), Kitzman (2003), and Gil-Gonzalez et al. (2008).

studies find a moderate to strong relationship between witnessing or experiencing domestic violence as a child and becoming part of violent relationships in one's adult life. The frequency of these findings has prompted some scholars to conclude that, "violence in the family of origin is probably the mostly widely accepted risk marker for the occurrence of partner violence" (Kantor and Jasinski 1998).

Bandura's social learning theory is most often applied to explain this phenomenon (Bandura 1977). Stith et al. summarize this theoretical explanation neatly as follows:

According to social learning theory, children learn through direct behavioral conditioning and by imitating the behavior they have observed or seen reinforced in others. Therefore, children who grow up in families in which they witness interparental violence or experience child abuse are more likely to imitate or tolerate these behaviors than are children from nonviolent homes. (Stith et al. 2000:640)

Scholars have also examined these dynamics of "imitation and toleration" from a gendered perspective, producing findings of men and women's differential propensities to imitate and/or tolerate violent behavior as well (Simons et al. 1995; Mihalic and Elliott 1997; Stith et al. 2000). Because it asked both women and men about their experiences of violence in childhood, the NFHS-3 has the potential to add significantly to knowledge about the general and gender-differentiated effects of this experience. To repeat the major meta-analytical point from above, however, the contribution of the NFHS-3 in this regard is improved but incomplete. This section will explore the transition from childhood to early adulthood with the NFHS-3 findings in mind to ask, "Who and what transmits violence?"

What does the NFHS say about this transition?

As we have seen above, the findings of the NFHS-3 align with the popular scholarly observation that experiences of violence in the childhood home are among the strongest predictors of violence in adulthood. 46% of the partners of men who *did* witness spousal abuse in their childhood homes reported experiencing violence at their hands as compared to just 35% of partners of those men who didn't. Thus we have evidence that childhood witnessing of violence seems to increase a man's likelihood to perpetrate violence as an adult.

The far more surprising and significant finding, however, has to do with *women's* childhood experiences. Here we see that a full 62% of women whose fathers abused their mothers also experienced violence in their adult relationships. This figure is vastly higher than the figure of 33% for women whose fathers did not abuse their mothers. Furthermore, the significance of this relationship remains strong even when the various other factors considered in this paper are incorporated into a probit regression. Even accounting for all other factors available within the NFHS-3, a woman who witnesses violence in her childhood home is 23% more likely to experience violence as an adult than a woman who does not witness such violence. Among all factors considered, only a husband's controlling behavior is as strongly related with the likelihood of a woman's experience of violence.

The literature has long hypothesized and often proven that violence in a man's childhood home would increase his likelihood to become a perpetrator and that violence in a woman's childhood home has would increase her likelihood to become a victim of future violence (Cares 2009; Mihalic and Elliott 1997). The NFHS-3, however, is potentially the first study to find that the effect of a woman's childhood experience is this much stronger than the effect of a man's childhood experience.

What is missing?

The NFHS-3's findings are strong and significant, but dangerous in their potential victimblaming implications. Should we really expand the association, as evidenced in the NFHS-3, between violence in the childhood home and later intimate partner violence into an assumption that this "life cycle of violence" is unbreakable? As the lifecourse perspective helpfully reminds us, there are various intermediate factors arising in adolescence that may challenge this assumption.

A small but growing number of scholars are challenging the entrenchment of social learning theory as an adequate explanatory framework for the "international transmission of domestic violence," indeed questioning the appropriateness of the metaphor of "transmission" altogether (Michael P. Johnson and Ferraro 2000). Perhaps other salient factors are more crucial mediators of the likelihood of a child from a violent home to become part of a violent relationship in her or his future, the argue, including the following:

Peer group. As Cares writes, "higher quality of friendships in adolescence is related to reduced intimate partner violence, but that influence is stronger earlier in the transition to adulthood (early 20s) and loses influence later" (2009: 31). In a context like India, where the majority of young women will be married by their early 20s, this factor seems particularly relevant. Research and interventions with young men in both Brazil and India have also found that a man's propensity for interpersonal violence decreases vastly if he has a peer group that promotes nonviolent relationships (Barker 2005; Verma et al. 2006, 2007).

Attitudes. Is it violence itself that is passed from one generation to the next, or attitudes accepting of violence? Or, perhaps, is the presence of attitudes condoning violence a prerequisite for perpetration to pass from one generation to another? The relationships, causal and correlative, between attitudes accepting of violence and the prevalence of violence, have not been adequately tested in the particular context of men and women raised in violent homes (Cares 2009). Some research suggests that the simple acknowledgement that the violence one sees is wrong, coupled with a commitment not to repeat it, makes a drastic difference in the future likelihood of violent experiences (Kaufman and Zigler 1987).

Dating. Although the practice of dating before marriage is exceedingly rare in India, we know (thanks to the disproportionate focus on Western contexts in the family violence literature) that a person's own and observed experiences with dating can have important consequences on one's likelihood of ending up with a violent partner. For instance,

scholarship suggests that witnessing violence in a friend's dating relationships may be a better predictor of an adolescent's own likelihood to perpetrate violence than his/her own experiences of dating violence (Cares 2009; Gover, Kaukinen, and Fox 2008). It is unclear (and thus deserving of research) how India's particular dating culture may influence both its participants' and nonparticipants' propensity for violence.

Gender Norms. In a recent study of South Asian men, Bhanot and Senn found that these men's attitudes about gender norms "fully mediated the relationship between acculturation and attitudes towards violence against women" (Bhanot and Senn 2007:25). It may be, then, that normative gender frameworks are a more important factor to study even than one's attidudes about or justification of domestic violence. The NFHS-3 had no questions on gendered attitudes.

Stress. Whether experienced individually or as a member of one's childhood or adult families, life stresses may be important mediating factors for violence as well. Herrenkohl et al., for instance, reported that "intergenerational transmission" can be either strengthened or disrupted by the level of life stresses on the family (1983).

Parenting. A person's comprehensive experience of being parented, however, is potentially the most important neglected variable in the NFHS-3 design. If observing one parent's violence toward another is such a powerful factor, then certainly other very visible actions of a parent may hold power as well. Parents may well be the mediators of many of the other factors mentioned above. Certainly parents' behaviors and comments will help shape a child's attitudes about violence and gender roles. To cite Kaufman and Zigler again, a parent is particularly well placed to teach a child that even if she sees violence around her, it is not acceptable nor something to be emulated (1987).

Starting from the earliest years, a child learns how to self-regulate his/her emotions, as well as to define the meaning of interpersonal relationships based primarily on family relations and parenting (Gilliom et al. 2002; Kopp 1989; Siegel 1999). Furthermore, studies show that children who have experienced loving, supportive, and responsive caregiving, even if only from one parent, are more likely to develop positive expectations from interpersonal relationships (Sroufe et al. 1999).

Perhaps interpersonal violence is just one among many communication and conflict resolution styles, then, that children can learn to expect within their adult relationships. If children learn to favor peaceful modes of communication, or if they see those behaviors modeled, wouldn't we expect these to be "transmitted" not unlike violence? This, of course, is not to mention that parents are already mediators of many other important factors already included in our analysis, including the age at which their daughter gets married, the level of education she will complete, and perhaps even the drinking habits or attitudes of their daughter's husband (if these factors arise in negotiations about the arrangement of marriage).

A new picture

More knowledge about the childhood family and peer environment, then, seems critical in expanding our understanding of what and who transmits violence (if we maintain the metaphor of transmission at all). Thus while the NFHS-3 certainly adds compelling evidence to the existing story of childhood influences on adult experiences of violence, this evidence should prompt further investigation rather than hasty conclusions.

With the additional adolescent factors listed above in mind, researchers in India might be able to uncover salient, additional elements of the experiences of women like Kavita and Shakila. Perhaps these might sound something like the quote below, coming from an Indian woman who never learned to acknowledge violence as a child:

It took me many, many years to even figure out that something was wrong... I mean, I knew something was wrong, but I didn't have a name for it. I couldn't talk about it with anybody because these are not things that you discuss with anybody... Once I figured it out, I realized that I had to get out of it. But then, by that time, I had my children, and I realized that I can't just walk out the door. (Mehrotra 1999:628-629)

This quote attests to the experience, perhaps incredibly common in India, of growing up without the ability to recognize a violent intimate relationship for what it is.

What can be done?

Social learning theory is an incomplete explanatory framework for intimate partner violence in India. The framework is simply not sensitive enough to intervening factors that arise during adolescence, among other weaknesses. This suggests that the domestic violence research community should apply other frameworks (most notably the lifecourse or developmental perspective) to the phenomenon of intimate partner violence in India.

It is most likely the case that a broad, nationally representative health and demographic survey like the NFHS is not the ideal medium by which to apply the lifecourse perspective of this issue. Nonetheless, in critically interpreting the NFHS findings, one must come to at least the following two conclusions: (1) that the NFHS's conclusions about the "intergenerational transmission of domestic violence" are weakened by the retrospective (rather than prospective) nature of its data, and (2) that policy recommendations coming from the NFHS-3 alone cannot be said to be "evidence-based."

The research community can address this first issue – of retrospective versus prospective data – by commissioning follow-up studies that address the particular absent variables and methodological weaknesses that we have identified. Ideally, the design of such studies would be prospective to complement the retrospective nature of the NFHS-3 data. Such studies might involve a series of key informant interviews or focus group discussions with children and adolescents at multiple intervals, including questions assessing their attitudes of gender roles, the nature of their peer networks, their experiences with dating, and the

style of parenting they are receiving. While much less expedient in producing findings, this type of patient, prospective analysis of a key life transition will provide the supplementary evidence necessary to illuminate the NFHS-3's strong statistical associations.

It is only with this additional data, sensitive to the many dynamics of the adolescent experience, that policy recommendations citing NFHS-3 findings will be truly "evidence-based." Of course it is difficult to urge caution and patience in the face of such staggering statistics as the ones we have seen. Some critics have sought to debase the "intergenerational transmission" metaphor by highlighting that "the majority of those who witness violence in their childhood home *do not become involved in violent relationships as adults*" (Cares 2009). This is barely true of male respondents to the NFHS-3, but for women it is *not* true: in fact the majority (62%) of Indian women who witness violence in their childhood home *do become involved in violent relationships as adults!*

Yet this staggering finding ought not to prompt hasty policy or program advice, but rather increased attention to and scrutiny of the dynamics of adolescence that sustain this violence. The findings have drawn our attention firmly to one particular life transition; the next step is to identify the processes by which violent attitudes and behaviors "transmit," if indeed that metaphor is appropriate. The attention will be important, the increased understanding crucial, but any presumption that our understanding is now complete could be costly.

From Victimization to Perpetration: The role of extended family members

In addition to its inability to adequately address the transition from childhood to early adulthood, the NFHS-3 also provides an incomplete picture of a woman's transition from early to late adulthood (or, more potently, from young bride status to mother-in-law status). The survey does provide some estimate of a woman's changing likelihood of experiencing violence as she ages. However, it ignores the literature on women's changing social status throughout the life cycle to leave critical questions unasked, especially in relation to the same woman's likelihood to perpetrate or encourage domestic violence as her status increases.

What does the NFHS say about this transition?

The transition in question happens within the particular context of the South Asian extended family. If extended family members contribute to or encourage domestic violence against young women in the Indian context, as research by Fernandez (1997), ICRW (1999), Raj (2006) and others would have us believe, then we would logically expect the first nationally-representative survey of domestic violence in India to report this dynamic. On the contrary, the NFHS-3 paints a stunningly peaceful picture of extended family relations.

First, as we have seen, the findings suggest that violence is more likely to occur in nuclear families (where, presumably, in-laws and relatives are less often present) than in non-nuclear families. Approximately 43% of women respondents living in nuclear households

had reported any kind of violence, while only 37% of respondents in non-nuclear households had experienced violence. This finding aligns with the seemingly intuitive observation that the relative "privacy" of the nuclear family home increases a woman's vulnerability, as no one is present to observe the man's abusive behavior. Previous studies have failed to support this hypothesis, however. Martin et al. write that their 2002 study in Northern India "did not find support for the idea that wife abuse may be more common in more 'private' families, including those who live apart from their in-laws" (Martin et al. 2002:424). Studies with South Asian immigrants in the US also found that living away from one's in-laws did not decrease the likelihood of in-laws encouraging IPV or enacting violence themselves during visits (Raj et al. 2006).

When asked directly about violence perpetrated by extended family members other than their husbands, NFHS-3 respondents in nuclear and non-nuclear households alike gave little suggestion that such violence occurs. Only 1.6% of all respondents reported experiencing violence by relatives other than their partner or former partner, while only one half of one percent of respondents reported that their mothers-in-law had ever abused them.

What is missing?

The lifecourse perspective, combined with awareness of the Indian cultural context, allows us to acknowledge several important observations that might otherwise be missed. First is the obvious but overlooked truth that a lifecourse is not power-neutral. That is, there is a power hierarchy to life stages. And because Indian families are usually from the same caste and class background, the primary factors shaping a woman's power status within her family are gender and generation (Fernandez 1997). As Fernandez writes:

Indian family living is characterized by a general subordination of women to men with regard to property, authority, and decision-making. Within this authority structure, men delegate the supervision of younger women to the older women. Whereas older women are subject to the authority of men, younger women come under the authority not only of men but also of older women. The position of a young daughter-in-law is more restrictive. (Fernandez 1997:8)

Thus the young bride is doubly disempowered: first in relation to the men in the household, and second in relation to the older women in the house, particularly her mother-in-law. Indeed, as Mies has written, the primary relationship of a newly married woman, having moved into her husband's home, is with her mother-in-law, not her husband (Mies 1980). Thus can we trace the following "path" of empowerment for a woman as she makes the transition from "young bride" to "mother-in-law" status: First, she suffers violence and insults as a new bride. Second, with any luck, she mothers a son who will become her ticket to empowerment (although as we have seen, mothering a child also *increases* her likelihood of experiencing violence). When her son is old enough to bring a young bride into the home, the newly empowered mother-in-law *may* transition from disempowered victim of violence to semi-empowered perpetrator or encourager of violence.

This transition into the oppressive "mother-in-law", which one finds everywhere from folk tales to scholarly studies to the popular *saas-bahu*⁹ TV serials in India, aligns with Liddle and Joshi's observation that there is no "identity of interest" among all women by virtue of their sex (Liddle and Joshi 1989). And while the representation of the abusive *saas* in tales and TV shows may rarely go beyond melodramatic bickering, in reality the conflict between a family and its new bride can turn deadly.

Although the NFHS-3 findings seem to dodge the topic altogether, the other, far more tragic side of the *saas-bahu* coin is the Indian epidemic of dowry death. Dowry deaths may be defined as "a bride's suicide or a bride's murder committed by her husband and his family soon after the marriage because of their dissatisfaction with the dowry" (Bumiller 1991:47). The most common method of dowry death is "bride burning," a particularly expedient form of murder that draws little suspicion in its planning (as kerosene is a common household good) and leaves little evidence of wrongdoing in its wake (Ravikant 1999). Furthermore, the phenomenon has its roots and highest prevalence in wealthier families, as the dowry itself (although prohibited by law since 1961), is calculated in proportion to the husband's class, socioeconomic status, education and physical appearance (Mitter 1991). However, even a poor family can be expected to provide "tens of thousands of rupees, household appliances, cars, and other expensive items" (Ravikant 1999:458-459).

Although it draws on traditions of high-status Hindu families, the phenomenon of dowry death has not faded with modernity in India. On the contrary, according to police data, dowry deaths are increasing in their regularity. In the 13 years since the National Crime Records Bureau has begun recording the frequency of reported dowry killings, their number has gone from 4,648 in 1995 to 8,093 in 2007, a 75% increase. This increase coincides with a rise in reported cases of "cruelty by husbands or relatives" from 28,579 to 75,930 (a 166% increase) over the same time period (National Crime Records Bureau 2007). While these figures only represent the prevalence of cases being reported and not the true prevalence of dowry death or domestic violence against women, they are solid evidence that dowry death remains epidemic in Indian society.

Thus, in a cultural paradox left unaddressed by the NFHS-3, it is very possible that the same woman who survived attempts on her life by her husband and in-laws will go on to perpetrate the same oppression against her daughters-in-law, shared sex notwithstanding. As Fernandez summarizes, "Some women go from being victims when they are young daughters-in-law to being batterers when they become mothers-in-law. As contributors to violence, older women align themselves against, rather than with, younger women who marry into their families" (Fernandez 1997:9). This possibility is completely missing from the "paths" produced by the NFHS-3 statistics.

⁹ In Hindi, "saas" means mother-in-law and "bahu" means bride. Indeed the saas-bahu conflict is a cultural institution, a frequent motif of Indian TV dramas, Hindi films, folk songs, and more (Ramanujan 1994).

A new picture

We have seen that even within one nation or region, women's experiences of domestic violence are not universal. Closer examination of the transition from "young bride" to "mother-in-law" status tells us not only that extended family members' attitudes and behaviors will affect dynamics of domestic violence, but also that women themselves may become perpetrators based on entrenched elements of Indian family power structures.

With these lessons in mind, we acknowledge an important lacuna in the NFHS-3 findings. Without adequately addressing the themes of violence by extended family members and oppression by mothers-in-law, the NFHS-3 silences part of the stories of Kavita and Shakila. Had the survey listened, it might have heard testimonies like the following:

I had to wake up at 4 o'clock. I had to scrub all the dishes, make chappatis, cook for the whole big family . . . Each time I made a mistake, [my mother-in-law] used to hit me. She never used to give me to eat or drink. I was starving. (Raj et al. 2006)

[My mother-in-law] used to hold my hair and bang my head to the wall. Sometimes she used to beat me with firewood. I have marks wherever she used to beat me. She burnt me with firewood, too. (Raj et al. 2006)

Or these recalled voices of abusive in-laws:

You are good for nothing. You sit and you eat and you have no shame. And you don't realize how much money and how many dollars you have wasted by not earning and just sitting at home and eating food. (Raj et al. 2006)

It is better for you to die. I will get another daughter-in-law. (Fernandez 1997)

This new picture reveals that late adulthood may not be the haven of peaceful empowerment implied by the NFHS-3, but rather a life stage where women enact and entrench violent family dynamics under which they were victimized earlier in life. Once again, the mode of parenting, this time as a mother-in-law, becomes a crucial mitigating force in the perpetuation of domestic violence.

What can be done?

Acknowledging the prevalence of violence by extended family members in the Indian cultural context, future versions of the NFHS and other research studies should approach questions about non-intimate-partner perpetrators with a CTS-type questionnaire, rather than the gateway question currently employed. At present, the NFHS asks just one question to measure this experience. The question reads, "From the time you were 15 years old has anyone other than your (current/last) husband hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to hurt you physically?" If the respondent answers "yes," then she is asked to name the people who have hurt her in this way. As we have seen, this gateway method, which does

not offer a list of "tactics" or places of violence to trigger the respondent's memory, are very likely to underreport the prevalence of violence.

Designing such an adapted questionnaire would, in the presence of such a strong literature on dowry disputes and domestic violence, be rather easy. In addition to some or all of the original CTS "tactics," the questionnaire could include another scale including the following questions and tactics:

Does/did your mother-in-law ever do any of the following to you:

- Insult the quality or speed of your household work?
- Force you to do household work in the middle of the night?
- Ask for more dowry?
- Insult your mother, father, or other members of your family?
- Blame you for not bearing children or not bearing sons?
- Deny food to you?
- Poison or attempt to poison you?
- Burn or attempt to burn you?

Does/did your mother-in-law direct or encourage your husband to hurt you physically?

Does/did your mother-in-law ever refuse to intervene while your husband was hurting you physically?

All of these questions are based on actual accounts from young women as documented in Abraham (1991), Fernandez (1997), Mehrotra (1999), and Raj et al. (2006) that point out the mother-in-law as the person most likely to perpetrate these particular forms of emotional and physical abuse. Acknowledging the dynamic of mother-in-law abuse will go a long way toward advancing the state of knowledge on domestic violence in India, as well as eliminating assumptions arising from the predominantly Western perspective of family violence literature, most notably that of the lone male batterer.¹⁰

¹⁰ This includes the five assumptions listed by Fernandez, namely the assumptions that: (1) only men – and never women – batter women; (2) women's goals are the same across all life stages; (3) women's oppression is universal; (4) battering is a constant in a woman's life; and (5) families are organized around the husband-wife relationship. All five of these assumptions are called into question by the dynamic of violence by extended family members in India (Fernandez 1997).

VI. Conclusion

India's first nationally representative survey on domestic violence against women has provided the community working to understand and prevent violence with new clarity as well as new cloudiness in its "picture" of that violence. Researchers and practitioners can move forward emboldened with new evidence that intimate partner violence cuts across all demographic and social groups, for instance, and that women's risk of violence starts very early in life. The adoption of the Conflict Tactics Scale in the survey methodology nearly doubled the reported prevalence of violence as compared to the previous NFHS as well, suggesting the drastic urgency of the problem. Furthermore, the survey highlights the potential promise of engaging fathers of daughters in programming to reduce risk factors for violence.

The NFHS falls far short of adequately addressing the transition from childhood to adulthood, however. Factors such as peer group influence, gender attitudes, and stress are conspicuously absent. More shocking still, the NFHS ignores the crises of dowry harassment and dowry death completely, even suggesting that non-nuclear households are *safer* for women than nuclear households. The possibility of abuse by extended family members or mothers-in-law is not addressed with the same nuance as intimate partner violence, seriously limiting the accuracy of the NFHS findings. Future versions of the NFHS and supplementary studies in the interim would do well to shed light upon these presently hidden parts of the landscape of intimate partner violence in India.

Most importantly, the use of the lifecourse perspective side by side with the stories of Kavita and Shakila has constantly reminded us that even a research project as enormous as this one obscures as much as it illuminates. A less critical perspective may have cemented this study as yet another affirming the automatic "intergenerational transmission of domestic violence." Worse still, a different perspective may have used these findings to further stigmatize already-marginalized groups whose risk for violence associates far more with their socioeconomic marginalization than it does with other aspects of their identity.

Thus, like all research, the NFHS-3 has provided its constituents with a valuable "picture." Let this paper serve as a reminder, however, that there are more than a thousand words to be said about dynamics of intimate partner violence in India. May future studies open their ears to these words and their eyes to the broader "pictures" that they will present.

VII. References

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