

Since the 1990s, there has been increasing concern about violence against women in general, and domestic violence in particular, in both developed and developing countries. Not only has domestic violence been acknowledged worldwide as a violation of basic human rights, but an increasing amount of research highlights the health burdens, intergenerational effects, and demo-graphic consequences of such violence (United Nations, 1997; Heise et al., 1999; Jewkes, 2002; Campbell, 2002; Kishor and Johnson, 2004; 2006). Domestic violence occurs in all socioeconomic and cultural population subgroups; and in many societies, including India, women are socialized to accept, tolerate, and even rationalize domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences. Violence of any kind has a detrimental impact on the economy of a country through increased disability, medical costs, and loss of labour hours; however, because women bear the brunt of domestic violence, they disproportionately bear the health and psychological burdens as well. Victims of domestic violence are abused inside what should be the most secure environment—their own homes—and usually by the persons they trust most.

Domestic violence was recognized as a criminal offence in India in 1983. The offence chargeable under section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code that relates to domestic violence is any act of cruelty by a husband (or his family) towards his wife. However, until recently, there was no separate civil law addressing the specific complexities associated with domestic violence, including the embedded nature of violence within familial networks, the need for protection and maintenance of abused women, and the fact that punishment and imprisonment for the husband may not be the best resolution in every case. Accordingly, after a decade-long process of consultations and revisions, a comprehensive domestic violence law, known as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, took effect in 2006. Key elements of the law include the prohibition of marital rape and the provision of protection and maintenance orders against husbands and partners who are emotionally, physically, or economically abusive.

In NFHS-3, a module of questions on domestic violence was included as part of the Woman's Questionnaire. Information was collected on different forms of violence experienced by women age 15-49 and their help-seeking behaviour. The module collects detailed information on physical, sexual, and emotional violence perpetrated by husbands against their wives, physical consequences of spousal violence, and when spousal violence was first initiated, as well as information on violence perpetrated by wives against their husbands. In addition, in order to examine the intergenerational effects of domestic violence, information was collected on whether the respondent's father ever beat her mother.

### 15.1 MEASUREMENT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Collecting valid, reliable, and ethical data on domestic violence poses particular challenges because: a) what constitutes violence or abuse varies across cultures and individuals; b) reporting can be affected by the culture of silence that surrounds domestic violence; and c) specific ethical concerns have to be addressed due to the sensitivity of the topic, concerns for the

safety of respondents and interviewers when talking about domestic violence in a familial setting, and the need to protect women who disclose violence. NFHS-3 addressed these concerns by using a module of questions known to increase the validity of domestic violence data; by building into the questionnaire special protections for the respondent; by providing, on request, information on sources of help for abused women; and by providing specialized training for field staff. These precautions are in keeping with the World Health Organization's ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence (World Health Organization, 2001). Details of the NFHS-3 approach to the measurement of domestic violence are given below.

**Use of valid measures of domestic violence.** In NFHS-3, domestic violence is defined to include violence by spouses as well as by other household members. Thus, information was obtained from ever-married women on violence by husbands and by others, and from never married women on violence by anyone, including boyfriends.

International research has shown that spousal violence is one of the most common forms of violence experienced by women. Hence, violence perpetrated by the husband is measured in more detail than violence by other perpetrators. Specifically, violence by husbands is measured by using a greatly shortened and modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Strauss, 1990). The CTS has been found to be effective in measuring domestic violence and can be easily adapted for use in different cultural situations. In NFHS-3, spousal physical and sexual violence is measured using the following set of questions:

(Does/did) your (last) 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?*
- d) *Punch you with his fist or with something that could hurt you?*
- e) *Kick you, drag you or beat you up?*
- f) *Try to choke you or burn you on purpose?*
- g) *Threaten or attack you with a knife, gun, or any other weapon?*
- h) *Physically force you to have sexual intercourse with him even when you did not want to?*
- i) *Force you to perform any sexual acts you did not want to?*

Emotional violence among ever-married women was measured in a similar way, using the following set of questions:

(Does/did) your (last) 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?*

The questions were asked with reference to the current husband for women currently married and with reference to the most recent husband for women formerly but not currently married. Women could respond 'yes' or 'no' to each item. In each instance of a 'yes' response, women were asked about the frequency of the act in the 12 months preceding the survey. A 'yes'

response to one or more of items (a) to (g) above constitutes evidence of physical violence, while a ‘yes’ response to items (h) or (i) constitutes evidence of sexual violence. Note that widowed women, like other ever-married women were asked the questions related to the ever experience of spousal violence; however, unlike other ever-married women, they were excluded from the questions on violence in the past 12 months. Asking widows questions about recent experience of violence was thought to be unnecessary, since most current widows would not have had a living husband for some or all of the 12 month period preceding the survey.

Asking about the experience of specific acts of violence, rather than about the experience of violence in general, has the advantage of removing from the measurement of violence the effect of variations in the understanding and interpretation of what constitutes violence. A woman has to say whether she has, for example, ever been slapped, not whether she has ever experienced any violence. Most women would probably agree on what constitutes a slap, but what constitutes a violent act or is understood as violence, may vary among women, as it does across cultures. In fact, summary terms such as ‘abuse’ or ‘violence’ were also avoided during the NFHS-3 training of interviewers, and not used at all in the title, design, or implementation of the module. This approach of inquiring about a wide range of acts has the additional advantage of giving the respondent multiple opportunities to disclose any experience of violence and of allowing an assessment of the severity of violence.

In addition to the questions asked only of ever-married women, all women, regardless of marital status, were asked about physical violence from persons other than the current or most recent husband with the question: *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?* Women who responded ‘yes’ to this question were asked who had done this to them and the frequency of such violence during the 12 months preceding the survey. All women were also asked: *At any time in your life, as a child or as an adult, has any one ever forced you in any way to have sexual intercourse or perform any other sexual acts?* Women who said ‘yes’ were then asked questions about the age at which this first happened and their relationship with the person who committed the act.

Finally, ever-married women were asked whether they had ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to physically hurt their husband at any time when he was not already beating or physically hurting them. This information allows an estimate of violence initiated by women against their husbands.

Although the use of a CTS-type approach in the measurement of domestic violence is generally considered to be optimal, the possibility of underreporting of violence, particularly of sexual violence, cannot be entirely ruled out in any survey. Caution should always be exercised in interpreting both the overall prevalence of violence and differentials in prevalence between subgroups of the population. While a large part of any substantial difference in prevalence of violence between subgroups is likely to reflect actual differences, differential underreporting across subgroups can also contribute to exaggerating or narrowing the differences in prevalence to an unknown extent.

**Protections for the respondent.** There are three specific protections for respondents built into the questionnaire:

a) One woman only, from among all women in a sample household eligible for interview, was selected for the domestic violence module of questions. In households with more than one eligible woman, the woman administered the module was randomly selected through a specially designed simple selection procedure based on the Kish Grid (Kish, 1965) which was built into the Household Questionnaire. Selecting only one woman for the domestic module even when there are more women eligible for interview, allows the interviewed respondent to keep the information confidential. Security and confidentiality reasons also dictated that men not be asked questions about the experience or perpetration of violence.

b) Informed consent for the survey was obtained from the respondent at the start of the individual interview. In addition, at the start of the domestic violence section, each respondent was read a statement informing her that she was now going to be asked questions that could be personal in nature because they explored different aspects of the relationship between couples. The statement reassured the respondent that her answers were completely confidential and would not be told to anyone else and that no one else in the household would be asked these questions.

c) The domestic violence module was specially designed to allow the interviewer to continue the interview only if privacy was obtained. If privacy could not be obtained, the interviewer was instructed to skip the module, thank the respondent, and end the interview. In India, less than one percent of women selected for interview with the module could not be interviewed because of privacy considerations.

Although most women interviewed do not ask for help, some abused women may ask the interviewer for assistance. To prepare for this possibility, all field organizations involved in the implementation of NFHS-3 were required to put together a list of organizations in their state that assist women in distress. This list was provided to interviewers and interviewers were specially trained to provide this information in a confidential and safe manner when asked by respondents.

**Special training for implementing the domestic violence module.** Even women who want to speak about their experiences of domestic violence may find it difficult to do so because of feelings of shame or fear. The need to establish rapport with the respondent and ensure confidentiality and privacy during the interview is important for all parts of the survey, but is especially critical in ensuring the validity of domestic violence data. Complete privacy is also essential for ensuring the security of both interviewer and respondent. Asking about violence or reporting violence, especially in households where the perpetrator may be present at the time of interview, carries the risk of further violence. Accordingly, in NFHS-3, interviewers were provided training for implementing the domestic violence module based on a training manual specially developed to enable the field staff to collect violence data in a secure, confidential and ethical manner. The main goals of this training were to sensitize field staff to issues of gender and violence; to teach techniques for gender-sensitive interviewing and for building interviewer-respondent rapport and confidence in order to maximize disclosure; to manage safety and ethical concerns that are specific to domestic violence data collection, including ways of obtaining privacy and handling interruptions; and to achieve field staff buy-in for maintaining strict confidentiality.

The rest of this chapter is organized as follows: in Section 15.2 data on the experience of physical and sexual violence for all women, irrespective of marital status are presented. Also discussed in this section is information on the relationship of the perpetrator to the respondent, and for women who report sexual violence, the age at which it first occurred. Section 15.3 provides a discussion of marital control exerted by husbands on their wives through coercive behaviours. Such controlling behaviours are known to be correlated with the exercise of violence. Section 15.4 presents data on spousal violence experienced by ever-married women, along with information on the timing and consequences of the violence. Also discussed here are data on violence by women against their husbands. Finally, Section 15.5 addresses the help-seeking behaviours of abused women.

Note that the approach taken to measuring domestic violence in NFHS-3 is sufficiently different from that taken in NFHS-2 so as to preclude any possibility of comparison of the violence data in the two surveys. This also means that the data from the two surveys cannot be used to provide trends in violence against women.

As mentioned above, security precautions required that only one woman be administered the domestic violence module in each sample household, and that the domestic violence module not be administered if privacy is not achievable. With these restrictions, the resulting sample of women for the domestic violence module is 83,703 (13,999 never married women and 69,704 ever-married women) or 67 percent of the entire NFHS-3 sample of women. Of the 49,682 unweighted de facto women excluded, 40,117 women were not selected for the domestic violence sample because they belonged to households with more than one eligible woman, only 477 (0.6 percent of all women eligible for the module) could not be administered the module because privacy could not be obtained, and 88 could not be interviewed for other reasons. It is noteworthy that 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 (data not shown).

## **15.2 EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE BY WOMEN AGE 15-49**

In this section, women's experience of physical violence since age 15 is discussed, followed by a discussion of their lifetime experience of sexual violence. Indicators of the ever experience of physical or sexual violence are also discussed.

### **15.2.1 Physical Violence since Age 15**

Table 15.1 shows the percentage of women who have experienced physical violence at any time since the age of 15 years—ever and in the previous 12 months—by background characteristics. Thirty-four percent of all women age 15-49 have experienced violence at any time since the age of 15. Nineteen percent of women age 15-49 have experienced violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Notably, the majority (56 percent) of women who have ever experienced violence since the age of 15 have experienced violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Of women who experienced any violence in the past 12 months, one in five reported that they experienced the violence often, and the remainder said that they experienced it sometimes.

Table 15.1 Experience of physical violence					
Percentage of women age 15-49 who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 and percentage who have experienced physical violence during the 12 months preceding the survey, by background characteristics, India, 2005-06					
Background characteristic	Percentage who have ever experienced physical violence since age 15 <sup>1</sup>	Percentage who have experienced physical violence in the past 12 months			Number of women
		Often	Sometimes	Often or sometimes	
<b>Age</b>					
15-19	20.7	2.8	11.7	14.5	16,617
20-24	30.8	4.1	15.8	19.9	15,427
25-29	38.1	5.2	18.3	23.5	13,832
30-39	39.4	4.6	16.4	21.0	22,542
40-49	37.7	3.1	12.4	15.5	15,286
<b>Residence</b>					
Urban	28.3	2.9	12.0	14.9	27,371
Rural	36.1	4.4	16.4	20.9	56,332
<b>Education</b>					
No education	44.3	5.7	19.9	25.6	34,138
<5 years complete	39.1	4.7	17.2	21.9	6,600
5-7 years complete	32.4	3.7	15.1	18.7	12,557
8-9 years complete	26.0	2.9	12.3	15.2	11,700
10-11 years complete	21.3	1.9	8.7	10.6	8,683
12 or more years complete	14.3	0.8	5.2	6.0	10,023
<b>Employment (past 12 months)</b>					
Not employed	29.1	3.2	13.4	16.6	47,720
Employed for cash	39.6	4.9	17.3	22.2	24,079
Employed not for cash	39.1	5.1	16.4	21.6	11,880
<b>Marital status</b>					
Never married	16.1	1.4	8.1	9.5	16,477
Currently married	37.4	4.7	17.5	22.1	62,652
Married, <i>gauna</i> not performed	14.9	0.7	5.6	6.3	568
Widowed	37.9	0.3	1.4	1.7	2,692
Divorced/separated/deserted	66.1	11.0	13.2	24.2	1,314
<b>Household structure<sup>2</sup></b>					
Nuclear	35.7	4.2	16.4	20.5	43,551
Non-nuclear	31.2	3.7	13.5	17.2	40,152
<b>Religion</b>					
Hindu	33.7	3.9	14.9	18.8	67,426
Muslim	34.6	4.9	16.2	21.1	11,396
Christian	27.8	3.0	13.8	16.7	2,039
Sikh	26.1	1.5	11.9	13.3	1,492
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	40.9	4.1	14.4	18.5	681
Jain	12.6	1.4	3.9	5.3	264
Other	36.3	2.8	18.2	21.0	333
<b>Caste/tribe</b>					
Scheduled caste	41.7	4.9	19.0	23.9	15,609
Scheduled tribe	39.3	5.5	19.0	24.5	6,866
Other backward class	34.1	4.0	15.1	19.0	32,938
Other	26.8	3.1	11.4	14.5	27,582
Don't know	28.5	1.6	15.5	17.2	466
<b>Wealth index</b>					
Lowest	44.5	6.6	20.9	27.5	14,763
Second	41.8	5.5	19.6	25.1	15,997
Middle	35.9	4.3	16.2	20.5	16,790
Fourth	29.7	2.8	12.7	15.5	17,499
Highest	19.2	1.3	7.3	8.6	18,654
Total	33.5	4.0	15.0	18.9	83,703

Note: Total includes women with missing information on education, employment (past 12 months), religion, and caste/tribe, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> Includes physical violence in the past 12 months.

<sup>2</sup> Nuclear households are households comprised of a married couple or a man or a woman living alone or with unmarried children (biological, adopted, or fostered) with or without unrelated individuals.

By age, the prevalence of physical violence is lowest, at 21 percent, for women age 15-19, followed by 31 percent for women age 20-24 and 38-39 percent for women in the older age groups. The prevalence of violence in the past 12 months has an inverted U-shaped relationship

with age, with the highest prevalence (24 percent) found for women age 25-29 and the lowest (15-16 percent) for the youngest and oldest women. Women age 25-29 are also somewhat more likely to experience violence often. However, among women who have ever experienced violence at some time since the age of 15, the youngest women (age 15-19) are most likely, at 70 percent, to have experienced violence in the past 12 months and the oldest women (age 40-49) least likely, at 41 percent, to have done so. Rural women are more likely than urban women to have ever experienced physical violence since the age of 15, and to have experienced it in the past 12 months.

Differentials in prevalence by women's education are substantial. Forty-four percent of women with no education have experienced violence at some time since the age of 15, and 26 percent have experienced violence in the past 12 months. These proportions decline steadily with education, and the corresponding proportions for women who have completed 12 or more years of education are 14 percent and 6 percent, respectively. The percentage of women often experiencing violence in the past 12 months also declines with education, from 6 percent for women with no education to 1 percent for women who have the highest level of education. However, among women who have experienced violence since the age of 15, there is much less variation in the experience of violence in the past 12 months across educational levels (from 58 percent among women with no education to 50 percent among women with 10-11 complete years of education and 42 percent among women with the highest level of education). Women who were employed at any time in the past 12 months have a much higher prevalence of violence (39-40 percent) than women who were not employed (29 percent), although the corresponding differential in the experience of violence in the past 12 months is much smaller (22 percent for women employed in the past 12 months, compared with 17 percent for women who were not employed).

Two-thirds of currently divorced, separated, or deserted women have experienced violence at some time since age 15, twice the national average. Currently married women and widowed women have a much higher prevalence of violence (37 and 38 percent) than never married women or women whose *gauna* has not yet been performed (16 and 15 percent). This is not surprising since spousal violence for women age 15-49 is the most common form of domestic violence. The prevalence of violence does not vary by household structure.

Differentials by religion and caste/tribe status are large. Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist women report the highest level of violence (41 percent), followed by Muslim and Hindu women (34-35 percent), and Sikh and Christian women (26-28 percent); Jain women report the lowest levels of violence (13 percent). Prevalence of violence is also much higher among women belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes than among women who do not belong to these categories. While variation in violence in the past 12 months by religion and caste/tribe has a similar pattern, the differentials are much smaller.

Differentials across wealth quintiles are also large. The prevalence of the experience of physical violence since the age of 15 declines sharply and steadily with increasing wealth status from 45 percent for women in the lowest wealth quintile to 19 percent for women in the highest wealth quintile. The corresponding decline in the experience of violence in the past 12 months is from 27 percent among women in the lowest quintile to 9 percent among women in the highest

quintile. Notably, among women who have experienced violence since the age of 15, the proportion that have experienced violence in the past 12 months does not vary as much by wealth status. Sixty-two percent of women in the lowest quintile who have experienced violence since the age of 15 have experienced violence in the past 12 months, and this proportion declines slowly to 45 percent among women in the highest quintile. Thus, it is evident that even among the wealthiest groups, one of every five women has ever experienced physical violence, and among those who have experienced violence, almost half have experienced violence in the recent past.

Among women who reported having experienced any physical violence at some time since the age of 15, Table 15.2 identifies who committed the violence by providing the nature of the relationship between the perpetrator of the violence and the respondent. Data are shown separately by current marital status of the respondent, although the violence being reported by ever married women may have occurred before, during, or after having been married. Since women could have experienced violence at the hands of more than one person, the percentages do not sum to 100.

As expected, almost all ever-married women who have experienced violence report a current or former husband as the person who inflicted violence. Eighty-five percent of ever-married women who have experienced violence since the age of 15 have experienced it from their current husband. Only 2 percent mention a mother-in-law as the perpetrator. Never married women and women whose *gauna* has not been performed mainly report family members, particularly mothers, as the person committing the violence. Notably, about one in seven of these women report violence at the hands of a teacher.

### 15.2.2 Lifetime Sexual Violence

NFHS-3 included two sets of questions on sexual violence. The first set asked only ever-married women about sexual violence by the current husband if currently married and the most recent husband if currently divorced, separated, deserted or widowed. The second asked all women, regardless of marital status, whether they had ever, as a child or as an adult, experienced sexual violence. Sexual violence here includes being forced to have sexual intercourse or perform any other sexual acts against one's own will. Table 15.3 shows that 9 percent of all women age 15-49 report having experienced sexual violence at sometime during their lifetime.

Table 15.2 Persons committing physical violence

Among women age 15-49 who have experienced physical violence since age 15, percentage who report specific persons who committed the violence, according to the respondent's marital status, India, 2005-06

Person	Marital status			Total
	Ever married	Married, <i>gauna</i> not performed	Never married	
Current husband	85.3	(4.9)	na	77.0
Former husband	7.3	(0.0)	na	6.6
Current boyfriend	0.0	(0.0)	0.1	0.0
Former boyfriend	0.0	(4.9)	0.5	0.1
Father/step-father	4.4	(29.5)	26.6	6.6
Mother/step-mother	8.9	(64.3)	57.1	13.7
Sister/brother	4.7	(19.6)	36.3	7.8
Daughter/son	0.1	(0.0)	0.5	0.1
Other relative	1.4	(3.4)	3.0	1.5
Mother-in-law	1.9	(0.0)	na	1.7
Father-in-law	0.6	(0.0)	na	0.6
Other in-law	1.5	(0.0)	na	1.3
Teacher	1.7	(16.3)	14.9	3.0
Employer/someone at work	0.0	(0.0)	0.1	0.0
Police/soldier	0.0	(0.0)	0.1	0.0
Other	0.2	(0.0)	0.8	0.3
Number of women	25,337	85	2,656	28,078

na = Not applicable

( ) Based on 25-49 unweighted cases.



Ten percent of currently married or widowed women, 1 percent of never married women, and 2 percent of women whose *gauna* has not yet been performed report have experienced sexual violence. However, compared not only with women in other marital statuses, but also with all other subgroups in the table, it is divorced, separated, or deserted women have the highest prevalence of sexual violence (25 percent).

Five percent of women age 15-19 report having experienced sexual violence, the lowest rate among all the age groups. Ten percent of rural women have experienced sexual violence, compared with 6 percent of urban women. The prevalence of sexual violence declines sharply with education from 12 percent among women with no education to less than 5 percent of women with at least 10 years of education. As in the case of physical violence, women who were employed (either for cash or not for cash) during the 12 months preceding the survey have a somewhat higher prevalence of sexual violence (10 percent) than women not employed (7 percent). According to religion, Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist and Jain women have the lowest prevalence of sexual violence (3 and 4 percent) and Muslim women the highest (11 percent), followed by Hindu women (8 percent). Prevalence of sexual violence is somewhat higher for the scheduled castes (11 percent) and scheduled tribes (10 percent) than for women not belonging to the scheduled castes and tribes (7-9 percent). As with physical violence, prevalence is highest among women in the poorest wealth quintile (13 percent) and declines steadily with increasing wealth to a low of 4 percent among women in the highest quintile.

Table 15.4 gives the percent distribution of women who have experienced sexual violence by age at first experience of sexual violence. For the majority of women who report sexual violence, the information on age at first experience of sexual violence is not known. This is because a significant proportion (73 percent) of reported sexual violence occurred in the current or most recent marriage and the age at initiation of such violence was not determined. Thus, the data in the table largely reflect the age at which non-marital sexual

Table 15.3 Experience of sexual violence

Percentage of women age 15-49 who have ever experienced sexual violence, by background characteristics, India, 2005-06

Background characteristic	Percentage who have ever experienced sexual violence	Number of women
<b>Age</b>		
15-19	4.5	16,617
20-24	8.6	15,427
25-29	10.2	13,832
30-39	10.2	22,542
40-49	8.5	15,286
<b>Residence</b>		
Urban	5.9	27,371
Rural	9.7	56,332
<b>Education</b>		
No education	12.1	34,138
<5 years complete	10.5	6,600
5-7 years complete	8.1	12,557
8-9 years complete	6.0	11,700
10-11 years complete	3.7	8,683
12 or more years complete	2.3	10,023
<b>Employment (past 12 months)</b>		
Not employed	7.4	47,720
Employed for cash	9.7	24,079
Employed not for cash	10.1	11,880
<b>Marital status</b>		
Never married	1.1	16,477
Currently married	10.1	62,652
Married, <i>gauna</i> not performed	1.8	568
Widowed	9.7	2,692
Divorced/separated/deserted	24.6	1,314
<b>Household structure<sup>1</sup></b>		
Nuclear	8.5	43,551
Non-nuclear	8.5	40,152
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	8.3	67,426
Muslim	10.9	11,396
Christian	5.8	2,039
Sikh	4.6	1,492
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	2.8	681
Jain	3.9	264
Other	9.3	333
<b>Caste/tribe</b>		
Scheduled caste	11.0	15,609
Scheduled tribe	10.2	6,866
Other backward class	7.4	32,938
Other	7.8	27,582
Don't know	8.7	466
<b>Wealth index</b>		
Lowest	13.2	14,763
Second	11.1	15,997
Middle	8.8	16,790
Fourth	6.8	17,499
Highest	3.7	18,654
Total	8.5	83,703

Note: Total includes women with missing information on education, employment (past 12 months), religion, and caste/tribe, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> See Table 15.1, footnote 2 for definition.

violence first occurred. These data suggest that, among women reporting sexual violence not committed by the current or most recent husband, sexual violence typically first occurs in the age group 15-19. However, a significant proportion also occurs before age 15. Specifically, for one in five women who reported any sexual violence not committed by the current or most recent husband, the violence first occurred before women were 15 years of age. Notably, among the youngest women reporting sexual violence, the proportion who have experienced violence before age 15 is 12 percent or about one in four of those who report violence by someone other than a current or most recent husband.

**Table 15.4 Age at first experience of sexual violence**  
Percent distribution of women age 15-49 who have experienced sexual violence by age at first experience of sexual violence, according to current age, India, 2005-06

Age	Age at first experience of sexual violence						Total	Number of women
	Less than age 10	Age 10-14	Age 15-19	Age 20-49	Not determined/ don't know <sup>1</sup>	Missing		
15-19	2.1	9.8	32.2	na	55.3	0.7	100.0	751
20-24	0.0	4.4	18.3	7.3	69.8	0.3	100.0	1,324
25-29	0.2	4.6	10.5	8.4	76.2	0.2	100.0	1,413
30-39	0.4	3.9	10.3	8.3	77.1	0.0	100.0	2,308
40-49	0.0	4.3	10.6	11.3	73.5	0.2	100.0	1,293
Total	0.4	4.8	14.2	7.8	72.6	0.2	100.0	7,090

na = Not applicable  
<sup>1</sup> Includes women who report having ever experienced sexual violence committed only by their current husband if currently married or most recent husband if widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted. For these women, the age at first experience of sexual violence is not known.

Table 15.5 shows the perpetrators of sexual violence according to women's marital status and age at first experience of violence. The table shows that although the vast majority of ever-married women reporting any sexual violence have experienced such violence at the hands of a husband, 2 percent report sexual violence by a relative, 1 percent report sexual violence by a friend/acquaintance, and about half a percentage point each, report sexual violence by a boyfriend, an in-law, a family friend, or a stranger. Never married women who have experienced sexual violence have most often been abused by a relative (27 percent), a friend/acquaintance (23 percent), a boyfriend (19 percent), a stranger (16 percent), and a family friend (8 percent).

**Table 15.5 Persons committing sexual violence**  
Among women age 15-49 who have experienced sexual violence, percentage who report specific persons committing sexual violence according to age at first experience of sexual violence and current marital status, India, 2005-06

Person	Marital status		Age at first experience of sexual violence			Total
	Ever married	Never married	<15 years	15 years or higher	Don't know <sup>1</sup>	
Current husband	87.5	0.0	47.1	75.1	91.0	85.2
Former husband	7.9	0.0	8.0	5.5	8.3	7.7
Current/former boyfriend	0.4	19.2	2.2	2.9	0.1	0.9
Father	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0
Step father	0.0	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Other relative	1.7	26.7	18.6	5.7	0.2	2.4
In-law	0.4	1.5	0.0	1.1	0.2	0.4
Own friend/acquaintance	1.0	22.9	10.2	4.3	0.1	1.6
Family friend	0.4	7.6	4.6	1.4	0.0	0.6
Teacher	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0

*Continued...*

Table 15.5 Persons committing sexual violence—*Continued*

Person	Marital status		Age at first experience of sexual violence			Total
	Ever married	Never married	<15 years	15 years or higher	Don't know <sup>1</sup>	
Employer/someone at work	0.2	3.0	1.3	0.8	0.0	0.2
Police/soldier	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Priest/religious leader	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stranger	0.5	15.6	7.8	2.1	0.0	0.9
Other	0.1	1.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.1
Number of women	6,900	190	371	1,566	5,144	7,090

Note: Total includes women with missing information on age at experience of sexual violence, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> Includes women who report having ever experienced sexual violence committed only by their current husband if currently married or most recent husband if widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted. For these women, the age at first experience of sexual violence is not known.

Among women for whom the age at first sexual abuse is known, 371 were younger than 15 years when they were first abused. Almost half (47 percent) of this small number of women, say that their current husband was the perpetrator of the violence and 8 percent say that it was a former husband. Among women who first experienced sexual violence before age 15, significant proportions say that the violence was perpetrated by a relative (19 percent) or by a friend or acquaintance (10 percent). Among women who first experienced sexual violence after age 15, husbands are by far the most common perpetrators of sexual violence.

### 15.2.3 Physical or Sexual Violence

Table 15.6 shows the percentage of women who have experienced different combinations of physical and sexual violence for India as a whole, according to selected background characteristics and by state. Thirty-four percent have experienced physical violence and 27 percent have experienced physical violence but not sexual violence; 9 percent have experienced sexual violence and 2 percent have experienced sexual violence but not physical violence; and 7 percent have experienced both physical and sexual violence. Overall, in India 35 percent of women age 15–49 have experienced physical or sexual violence; this proportion is 40 percent for ever-married women and 17 percent for never married women. Both types of violence are higher in rural than in urban areas.

The proportion of women who have experienced only physical violence, as well as those who have experienced both physical and sexual violence, or have experienced physical or sexual violence, increases with age till the age group 30–39, but then declines somewhat for the oldest age group. Sexual violence only does not increase linearly with age and is highest for women in the age-groups 15–19 and 20–24.

Women’s experience of the different types of violence varies greatly by state. In all states, however, physical violence alone tends to be the most common form of violence. Sexual violence rarely occurs without physical violence. Any sexual violence (with or without physical violence) ranges from 1 percent in Himachal Pradesh and Meghalaya to 16 percent in Tripura, 17 percent in Bihar and Rajasthan, and 18 percent in West Bengal. The prevalence of any violence

**Table 15.6 Experience of different forms of violence**

Percentage of women age 15-49 who have experienced different forms of violence by residence, age, marital status, and state, India, 2005-06

State	Physical violence only	Sexual violence only	Physical and sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence
<b>India</b>	26.9	1.8	6.7	35.4
<b>Age</b>				
15-19	18.0	1.8	2.7	22.5
15-17	18.6	1.4	1.6	21.6
18-19	17.2	2.4	4.2	23.8
20-24	24.7	2.4	6.2	33.2
25-29	29.7	1.9	8.4	39.9
30-39	30.8	1.7	8.5	41.1
40-49	30.5	1.3	7.2	39.0
<b>Residence</b>				
Urban	23.5	1.1	4.8	29.4
Rural	28.5	2.1	7.6	38.3
<b>Marital status</b>				
Ever married	29.7	2.1	8.3	40.1
Never married	15.7	0.8	0.3	16.9
<b>North</b>				
Delhi	14.9	0.2	1.4	16.5
Haryana	23.4	1.4	4.3	29.0
Himachal Pradesh	4.1	0.3	1.1	5.6
Jammu & Kashmir	10.1	0.9	1.9	12.9
Punjab	25.0	1.0	4.9	30.9
Rajasthan	27.5	4.6	12.6	44.6
Uttaranchal	22.1	0.4	4.2	26.8
<b>Central</b>				
Chhattisgarh	24.0	0.8	5.3	30.1
Madhya Pradesh	37.0	1.4	8.4	46.8
Uttar Pradesh	30.3	1.1	6.7	38.1
<b>East</b>				
Bihar	38.9	2.9	13.8	55.6
Jharkhand	23.5	2.1	9.2	34.8
Orissa	24.5	3.5	8.2	36.2
West Bengal	19.9	6.2	12.2	38.3
<b>Northeast</b>				
Arunachal Pradesh	25.1	2.8	7.5	35.5
Assam	24.7	2.2	9.6	36.5
Manipur	28.8	2.1	7.9	38.9
Meghalaya	14.6	0.4	1.0	16.0
Mizoram	22.9	0.5	2.1	25.5
Nagaland	12.9	3.1	3.0	19.0
Sikkim	16.8	1.6	2.4	20.9
Tripura	28.9	2.5	13.2	44.7
<b>West</b>				
Goa	12.5	0.6	1.8	15.0
Gujarat	20.7	2.2	4.8	27.8
Maharashtra	27.2	0.3	1.7	29.2
<b>South</b>				
Andhra Pradesh	29.9	0.5	3.4	33.8
Karnataka	16.7	0.2	2.9	19.9
Kerala	12.6	1.3	3.4	17.3
Tamil Nadu	36.1	0.0	2.5	38.7

(physical or sexual) is least in Himachal Pradesh, at 6 percent, followed by Jammu and Kashmir (13 percent) and Goa (15 percent). Any violence is most common in Bihar (56 percent), followed by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Tripura (45-47 percent).

### 15.3 MARITAL CONTROL

Certain male behaviours meant to keep tight control over women, particularly wives, have been identified in the literature as risk factors for violence (Campbell et al., 2003; Kishor and Johnson, 2004). Accordingly, NFHS-3 sought information on six controlling behaviours that may be manifested by husbands, by asking each ever-married respondent the following: whether her husband is jealous or angry if she talks to other men; frequently accuses her of being unfaithful; does not permit her to meet her female friends; tries to limit her contacts with her family; insists on knowing where she is at all times; and does not trust her with money. For currently married women these questions refer to their current husband and for formerly married women to their most recent husband. Table 15.7 shows the percentage of women who have been subjected to these behaviours, according to background characteristics. The most common behaviour of all the behaviours asked about is jealousy or anger if the wife talks to other men. This behaviour is experienced by a quarter of ever-married women (26 percent). The next most commonly experienced controlling behaviours asked about are the wife not being trusted with money (18 percent) and the wife not being allowed to meet her female friends (16 percent). However, few women have husbands who show a significant number of these behaviours: only 12 percent of women have husbands who display three or more of these behaviours, and 57 percent have husbands who display none of them.

Table 15.7 Degree of marital control exercised by husbands

Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 whose husband has ever demonstrated specific types of controlling behaviours, according to background characteristics, India, 2005-06

Background characteristic	Percentage of women whose husband:						Husband displays 3 or more of the specific behaviours	Husband displays none of the specific behaviours	Number of women
	Is jealous or angry if she talks to other men	Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful	Does not permit her to meet her female friends	Tries to limit her contact with her family	Insists on knowing where she is at all times	Does not trust her with any money			
<b>Age</b>									
15-19	33.6	11.7	19.3	12.3	16.1	20.9	17.2	49.5	4,643
20-24	27.7	8.2	15.9	10.3	12.7	18.5	12.7	56.3	11,642
25-29	27.1	8.7	16.1	9.8	12.7	18.0	12.4	55.9	13,006
30-39	25.8	8.5	15.9	10.0	11.2	18.8	12.0	57.5	22,191
40-49	23.5	7.7	14.9	8.7	10.4	17.1	10.4	59.8	15,175
<b>Residence</b>									
Urban	20.5	6.4	14.3	8.0	9.3	17.1	9.6	63.7	20,441
Rural	29.0	9.4	16.6	10.7	13.0	18.9	13.3	54.0	46,217
<b>Education</b>									
No education	32.3	10.8	16.5	11.4	13.4	19.3	14.5	51.5	32,024
<5 years complete	28.3	9.7	19.7	11.6	14.8	21.2	14.8	53.1	5,647
5-7 years complete	25.7	8.1	15.8	9.8	11.8	17.9	12.1	57.8	9,900
8-9 years complete	21.0	6.1	15.1	8.6	10.8	17.2	9.8	61.9	7,585
10-11 years complete	17.2	4.3	13.8	6.8	8.4	16.6	7.9	65.5	5,440
12 or more years complete	9.6	2.6	12.4	4.5	6.2	14.0	5.0	73.8	6,059
<b>Employment (past 12 months)</b>									
Not employed	23.6	6.7	15.2	9.1	10.9	18.1	10.7	59.3	37,020
Employed for cash	28.0	11.5	17.2	11.3	13.5	18.8	14.5	55.6	19,668
Employed not for cash	33.8	9.1	16.3	10.1	12.5	18.3	13.2	50.8	9,958
<b>Marital status</b>									
Currently married	26.0	7.8	15.6	9.4	11.4	18.0	11.6	57.3	62,652
Widowed	24.8	9.9	15.2	9.4	12.5	17.6	12.9	59.9	2,692
Divorced/separated/deserted	50.7	38.1	32.3	31.3	33.7	36.1	39.5	31.8	1,314
<b>Marital duration<sup>1</sup></b>									
Married only once	25.7	7.7	15.5	9.3	11.2	17.9	11.4	57.6	61,395
0-4 years	24.3	7.4	15.5	8.6	11.7	17.7	11.5	59.5	11,411
5-9 years	26.7	7.6	15.6	10.1	12.0	17.7	12.1	56.8	12,261
10+ years	25.8	7.8	15.4	9.3	10.8	18.0	11.2	57.3	37,723
Married more than once	37.9	14.8	22.5	15.1	21.0	23.2	21.1	45.2	1,258

Continued...

Table 15.7 Degree of marital control exercised by husbands—Continued

Background characteristic	Percentage of women whose husband:						Husband displays 3 or more of the specific behaviours	Husband displays none of the specific behaviours	Number of women
	Is jealous or angry if she talks to other men	Frequently accuses her of being unfaithful	Does not permit her to meet her female friends	Tries to limit her contact with her family	Insists on knowing where she is at all times	Does not trust her with any money			
<b>Number of living children</b>									
0	27.0	10.2	17.1	10.9	14.6	18.9	14.1	56.4	7,530
1-2	23.2	7.6	14.9	9.0	10.8	17.2	11.0	60.9	29,164
3-4	28.6	8.9	16.6	10.3	12.2	19.1	12.8	54.2	22,244
5+	32.0	9.2	16.8	11.1	12.6	19.8	13.3	50.5	7,720
<b>Household structure<sup>2</sup></b>									
Nuclear	26.3	8.7	15.3	9.6	11.5	17.8	12.0	57.6	33,989
Non-nuclear	26.6	8.3	16.6	10.1	12.3	18.9	12.4	56.2	32,669
<b>Religion</b>									
Hindu	26.4	8.4	15.8	9.5	11.4	18.1	11.9	57.3	54,208
Muslim	29.1	9.3	16.8	12.8	14.8	19.8	14.4	52.3	8,795
Christian	18.0	7.4	9.8	6.3	10.4	11.8	8.6	69.5	1,500
Sikh	22.1	5.2	19.9	5.1	11.7	21.9	10.9	59.2	1,115
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	19.1	12.2	22.8	16.7	15.4	30.8	18.5	51.9	537
Jain	10.7	3.2	20.7	2.3	5.1	22.7	5.1	66.4	190
Other	27.1	8.6	13.2	10.2	25.6	15.6	12.6	50.6	245
<b>Caste/tribe</b>									
Scheduled caste	29.7	10.5	17.6	10.7	12.9	20.2	14.1	53.7	12,701
Scheduled tribe	31.3	12.0	17.6	11.0	15.3	18.9	16.0	52.7	5,562
Other backward class	27.2	8.2	13.6	9.8	11.1	16.1	11.5	58.3	26,438
Other	22.2	6.6	17.4	9.1	11.4	19.9	10.9	58.3	21,393
Don't know	31.0	16.1	17.4	16.2	18.2	16.6	18.5	53.6	375
<b>Wealth index</b>									
Lowest	33.9	12.4	17.2	12.8	15.4	19.8	16.0	49.3	12,815
Second	32.1	10.8	17.9	11.6	14.2	20.6	15.0	50.1	13,384
Middle	28.8	10.0	16.0	10.5	12.3	17.9	13.0	55.6	13,386
Fourth	23.0	6.5	14.6	8.8	10.8	17.0	10.5	60.9	13,444
Highest	14.8	3.0	14.0	5.8	7.1	16.6	6.8	68.1	13,628
Total	26.4	8.5	15.9	9.9	11.9	18.3	12.2	56.9	66,658

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women. Total includes women with missing information on education, employment (past 12 months), religion, and caste/tribe, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> Currently married women only.

<sup>2</sup> See Table 15.1, footnote 2 for definition.

The proportion of women whose husbands show three or more controlling behaviours declines with age. Husbands of the youngest married women (15-19 years) appear to be the most controlling, with 34 percent reporting that their husbands are jealous or angry when they talk to other men; 21 percent reporting that their husbands do not trust them with money; and 19 percent reporting that their husbands do not permit them to meet their female friends. While rural women are more likely to report controlling behaviours by their husbands than urban women, the differentials tend to be relatively small. The proportion of women experiencing controlling behaviours also tends to decline with increasing education and wealth, and is higher for women who are employed, particularly if employed for cash, than if they are not employed. Differentials by religion and caste/tribe are also evident.

Most of the behaviours asked about are most evident for women who have been married more than once or who are currently divorced, separated, or deserted. Only 11 percent of currently married women who have been married only once report that their husbands display three or more of the behaviours asked about, compared with 21 percent of women who have been married more than once (and are currently married), and 40 percent of women who are divorced, separated, or deserted. The proportion of women reporting controlling behaviours by their husbands does not vary by duration of marriage for women married only once. In general,

most of the behaviours are somewhat less common for women with 1-2 children, than for women with no children or 3 or more children.

## 15.4 SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

Spousal violence refers to violence perpetrated by partners in a marital union. Since spousal or intimate partner violence is the most common form of domestic violence for women age 15-49, the NFHS-3 collected detailed information on the different types of violence—physical, sexual, and emotional—experienced by women at the hands of their current or most recent husbands. Focusing on the most current/recent spouse permits a better understanding of current risk of spousal violence.

In NFHS-3, ever-married women were asked about seven sets of acts of physical violence by their current or most recent husband, two of sexual violence, and three of emotional violence. Although specific acts are labeled here as constituting physical, sexual, or emotional violence for purposes of discussion, there is no implication that an act of physical violence will not entail emotional violence or that an act of sexual violence does not entail physical violence.

### 15.4.1 Physical, Sexual, or Emotional Spousal Violence

Table 15.8 and Figure 15.1 show the percentage of ever-married women who report different types of acts committed by their current husband if currently married or most recent husband if not currently married. Note that since the different types of violence are not mutually exclusive, women may report experiencing multiple forms of violence. Widows were not asked about spousal violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Type of violence	Ever	In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>		
		Often	Sometimes	Often or sometimes
<b>Physical violence</b>				
Any form of physical violence	35.1	4.6	16.8	21.4
Pushed her, shook her, or threw something at her	13.6	1.6	6.6	8.2
Slapped her	34.0	3.8	16.3	20.1
Twisted her arm or pulled her hair	15.4	1.9	7.3	9.2
Punched her with his fist or with something that could hurt her	10.9	1.4	5.0	6.4
Kicked her, dragged her, or beat her up	11.5	1.4	5.1	6.6
Tried to choke her or burn her on purpose	2.2	0.4	0.8	1.2
Threatened her or attacked her with a knife, gun, or any other weapon	1.2	0.2	0.5	0.7
<b>Sexual violence</b>				
Any form of sexual violence	10.0	1.7	5.5	7.2
Physically forced her to have sexual intercourse with him even when she did not want to	9.5	1.5	5.3	6.9
Forced her to perform any sexual acts she did not want to	4.6	0.9	2.4	3.4
<b>Emotional violence</b>				
Any form of emotional violence	15.8	2.9	8.3	11.2
Said or did something to humiliate her in front of others	13.1	2.1	7.0	9.1
Threatened to hurt or harm her or someone close to her	5.4	0.9	2.7	3.6
Insulted her or made her feel bad about herself	8.2	1.7	4.1	5.7

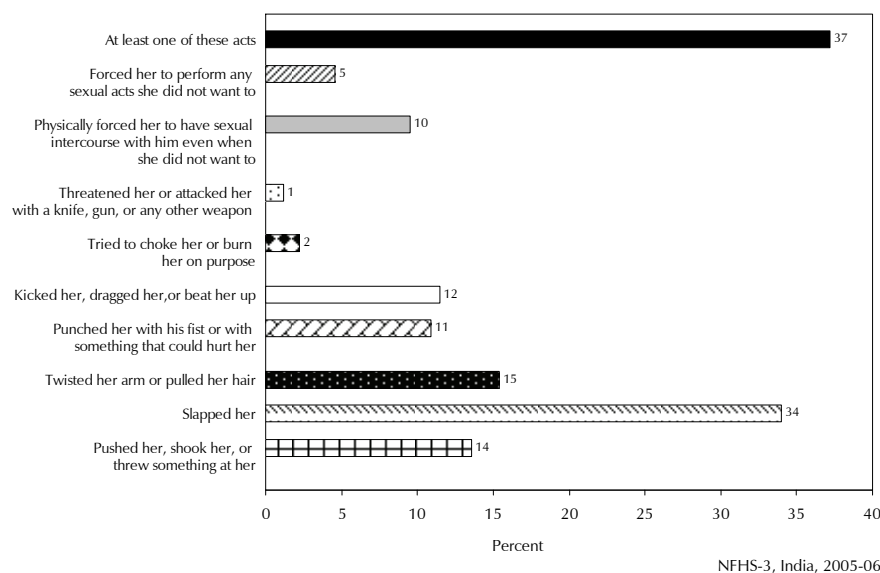
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Type of violence	Ever	In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>		
		Often	Sometimes	Often or sometimes
Any form of physical and/or sexual violence	37.2	5.6	18.3	23.9
Any form of physical and sexual violence	7.9	2.1	4.2	6.3
Any form of physical and/or sexual violence and/or emotional violence	39.7	6.7	20.2	26.9
Any form of physical and sexual violence and emotional violence	4.2	1.7	2.0	3.6
Number of ever-married women	66,658	63,966	63,966	63,966

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated or deserted women.  
<sup>1</sup> Excludes widows.

Slapping is the most commonly reported act of physical violence. Thirty-four percent of ever-married women report being slapped by their current or most recent husband, and 20 percent of ever-married women (except widows) report having been slapped in the 12 months preceding the survey. The next most common acts of physical violence experienced by women involve having hair pulled or arms twisted (15 percent) and being pushed shaken or having something thrown at them (14 percent). Twelve percent of women report having been kicked, dragged, or beaten up, and 2 percent report that their husbands tried to choke or burn them on purpose. Overall, 35 percent of women report having experienced physical violence at the hands of their current or most recent husband.

**Figure 15.1 Forms of Spousal Violence Experienced by Ever-married Women**



Ten percent of women report experiencing one or both types of acts of sexual violence; most of these women report experiencing the violence in the last year. Being physically forced to have sexual intercourse is more common (10 percent) than being forced to perform any other sexual acts that she did not want to perform (5 percent).



Sixteen percent of ever-married women report having experienced emotional violence. Thirteen percent said that their husband had said or done something to humiliate them in front of others, 8 percent said that their husband had insulted them or made them feel bad about themselves, and 5 percent said that their husband threatened to hurt or harm them or someone close to them. The majority reporting any emotional violence also experienced the violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Overall, 37 percent of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence, and 40 percent have experienced spousal physical, sexual or emotional violence. Smaller proportions of women report experiencing both spousal physical and sexual violence (8 percent), as well as spousal physical and sexual and emotional violence (4 percent). Large differentials exist by background characteristics in the proportions of women who experience different forms of violence as shown in Table 15.9.

**Table 15.9 Spousal violence by background characteristics**

Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 by whether they have ever experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their husband, according to background characteristics, India, 2005-06

Background characteristic	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
<b>Age</b>						
15-19	12.5	25.3	13.1	30.8	33.9	4,643
20-24	14.4	32.3	10.5	35.2	37.6	11,642
25-29	16.3	36.3	10.4	38.2	40.6	13,006
30-39	16.5	37.3	10.1	39.0	41.5	22,191
40-49	16.5	35.7	8.2	37.1	39.9	15,175
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	13.4	29.1	7.3	30.4	32.7	20,441
Rural	16.9	37.7	11.2	40.2	42.9	46,217
<b>Education</b>						
No education	19.2	44.4	12.5	46.4	49.0	32,024
<5 years complete	18.9	39.5	11.7	42.0	44.8	5,647
5-7 years complete	15.4	32.6	9.7	35.2	37.7	9,900
8-9 years complete	11.9	26.0	8.3	28.8	31.3	7,585
10-11 years complete	9.6	19.3	4.9	20.8	23.4	5,440
12 or more years complete	6.2	11.0	2.7	12.3	14.7	6,059
<b>Employment (past 12 months)</b>						
Not employed	12.7	29.9	9.1	32.3	34.6	37,020
Employed for cash	20.7	41.9	11.1	43.5	46.3	19,668
Employed not for cash	17.7	40.8	11.4	43.0	46.0	9,958
<b>Marital status</b>						
Currently married	15.0	34.5	9.7	36.7	39.2	62,652
Widowed	16.7	35.0	9.5	36.6	38.1	2,692
Divorced/separated/deserted	50.6	62.3	24.4	63.5	68.4	1,314
<b>Marital duration<sup>1</sup></b>						
Married only once	14.9	34.2	9.6	36.4	38.9	61,395
0-4 years	10.2	21.0	8.7	24.7	27.2	11,411
5-9 years	14.6	34.2	10.1	36.7	39.2	12,261
10+ years	16.4	38.2	9.7	39.9	42.4	37,723
Married more than once	23.8	47.7	16.3	49.3	52.1	1,258
<b>Number of living children</b>						
0	13.5	24.4	10.3	27.9	30.8	7,530
1-2	14.4	30.2	8.7	32.5	35.1	29,164
3-4	17.5	40.1	10.8	42.0	44.4	22,244
5+	18.6	48.9	12.6	50.2	52.5	7,720
<b>Household structure<sup>2</sup></b>						
Nuclear	16.7	38.5	10.2	40.3	42.7	33,989
Non-nuclear	14.8	31.5	9.9	33.9	36.6	32,669

*Continued...*

Table 15.9 Spousal violence by background characteristics—Continued

Background characteristic	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
<b>Religion</b>						
Hindu	15.9	34.9	9.8	37.1	39.7	54,208
Muslim	15.9	38.2	13.5	40.8	43.0	8,795
Christian	13.9	30.3	6.0	30.9	33.6	1,500
Sikh	11.0	22.8	5.8	23.5	25.3	1,115
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	24.5	44.6	2.9	44.8	47.2	537
Jain	6.3	11.1	4.8	12.3	13.9	190
Other	19.5	41.9	10.1	42.6	45.7	245
<b>Caste/tribe</b>						
Scheduled caste	19.0	43.3	12.8	45.6	47.9	12,701
Scheduled tribe	20.9	41.8	11.4	43.7	47.0	5,562
Other backward class	15.7	36.0	8.7	37.6	40.4	26,438
Other	12.7	27.3	9.6	30.0	32.3	21,393
Don't know	14.3	28.9	10.8	29.9	31.7	375
<b>Wealth index</b>						
Lowest	20.7	46.6	14.5	49.3	52.0	12,815
Second	19.8	43.9	12.6	46.2	49.0	13,384
Middle	17.0	38.0	10.5	40.2	42.5	13,386
Fourth	13.2	30.8	8.3	32.8	35.1	13,444
Highest	8.6	16.9	4.5	18.3	20.9	13,628
<b>Respondent's father beat her mother</b>						
Yes	28.5	57.4	17.4	59.6	62.2	12,346
No	12.4	28.3	7.8	30.3	32.8	49,201
Don't know	18.0	46.5	13.4	49.7	52.1	5,041
Total	15.8	35.1	10.0	37.2	39.7	66,658

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated or deserted women. Total includes women with missing information on education, employment (past 12 months), religion, caste/tribe, and whether respondent's father beat her mother, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> Currently married women only.

<sup>2</sup> Table 15.1, footnote 2 for definition.

Prevalence of physical or sexual violence, as well as emotional, physical or sexual violence, does not vary greatly by age for women age 20-49, but is somewhat lower for women age 15-19. Prevalence of such violence is higher in rural areas than in urban areas; however, even in urban areas, 30 percent of women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence. Differentials in the prevalence of spousal violence are particularly large by education, with 46 percent of women with no education having experienced physical or sexual violence, compared with 12 percent of women with 12 or more completed years of education. Employed women experience higher rates of physical or sexual violence (43-44 percent) than women who are not employed (32 percent). Divorced, separated, and deserted women report much higher rates of violence (64 percent) than widowed or currently married women (37 percent). This is to be expected since a husband's violent behaviour is often an important reason for ending a marriage. Notably, rates of physical or sexual violence by the current husband among currently married women are higher for women who have been married more than once (49 percent) than for women in their first marriage (36 percent). Notably, the prevalence of violence increases with marital duration and with number of children. One in two women with five or more children report having experienced spousal physical or sexual violence.

Prevalence by religion shows that the rates are highest for Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist women, women belonging to the 'other' religion category, Muslim women, and Hindu women. Jain women experience the lowest levels of violence. By caste/tribe, rates of violence are highest for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women. However, even though women not belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, or other backward classes have a lower prevalence, nearly one out of three of these women have experienced spousal physical or sexual violence. Prevalence of spousal physical or sexual violence declines sharply with the wealth index from a

high of 49 percent for women in the lowest wealth quintile to a low of 18 percent for women in the highest wealth quintile. Despite the differentials by wealth, these data suggest high rates of all forms of violence in even the wealthiest households.

The contextual and intergenerational aspect of spousal violence is clear from the fact that women whose mothers were beaten by their fathers are twice as likely to report all forms of violence as women whose mothers were not beaten by their fathers. In fact, women who report that their fathers beat their mothers have a higher prevalence of physical or sexual violence (60 percent) than women in any other population subgroup.

Table 15.10 shows the differentials in prevalence of the different forms of violence by the characteristics of the husband and the marriage. Also shown are prevalence levels by selected indicators of women's empowerment. Increases in husband's education shows a clear negative association with prevalence of violence, but it has less of an effect on lowering the prevalence of violence than do increases in women's own education. Only 12 percent of women who had 12 or more years of education report experiencing physical or sexual violence, compared with 21 percent of women whose husbands have completed 12 or more years of education.

Table 15.10 Spousal violence by husband's characteristics and empowerment indicators						
Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who have ever suffered emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their husband, according to his characteristics, marital characteristics, and selected empowerment indicators, India, 2005-06						
Background characteristic	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
<b>Husband's education</b>						
No education	20.5	45.2	12.8	47.2	49.8	18,207
<5 years complete	19.7	43.8	13.0	45.7	48.4	5,728
5-7 years complete	16.7	38.2	10.4	40.5	42.8	10,589
8-9 years complete	15.2	34.2	10.4	36.6	39.2	10,342
10-11 years complete	12.5	27.7	8.1	29.9	32.4	9,317
12 or more years complete	8.9	18.9	4.9	20.8	23.6	11,867
<b>Husband's alcohol consumption</b>						
Does not drink	12.1	28.0	7.9	30.3	32.9	45,838
Drinks/never gets drunk	18.1	43.8	15.0	47.3	50.3	3,506
Gets drunk sometimes	20.5	46.8	11.6	48.5	50.6	12,816
Gets drunk very often	38.6	67.6	23.6	68.6	71.5	4,395
<b>Spousal age difference<sup>1</sup></b>						
Wife older	16.1	34.6	8.0	36.9	40.9	1,364
Wife is same age	14.8	31.0	8.4	33.6	37.3	1,508
Wife 1-4 years younger	14.5	34.7	9.7	36.7	39.2	24,270
Wife 5-9 years younger	15.1	34.3	10.1	36.5	39.0	25,369
Wife 10+ years younger	15.8	34.9	9.2	37.1	39.6	9,959
<b>Spousal education difference</b>						
Husband better educated	15.0	34.1	9.7	36.4	39.0	34,674
Wife better educated	14.5	29.7	9.0	31.9	34.4	9,849
Both equally educated	10.0	21.4	6.0	23.3	25.5	6,153
Neither educated	20.6	46.0	12.8	47.8	50.4	15,373
Don't know/missing	17.7	36.2	15.0	39.5	43.0	609
<b>Number of marital control behaviours displayed by husband<sup>2</sup></b>						
0	7.5	23.9	5.0	25.6	27.7	37,953
1-2	20.0	44.1	12.7	46.8	49.8	20,567
3-4	36.9	60.2	23.2	63.0	66.7	6,327
5-6	68.9	77.6	39.1	80.9	84.7	1,810
<b>Number of decisions in which women participate<sup>3</sup></b>						
0	13.9	32.9	11.6	36.1	38.3	12,672
1-2	15.7	35.9	11.0	38.3	40.8	16,679
3-4	15.1	34.4	8.4	36.1	38.8	33,301

Continued...

Table 15.10 Spousal violence by husband's characteristics and empowerment indicators—*Continued*

Background characteristic	Emotional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emotional, physical, or sexual violence	Number of women
<b>Number of reasons for which wife-beating is justified<sup>4</sup></b>						
0	12.4	28.2	8.4	30.4	32.3	29,317
1-2	17.0	38.7	10.5	41.0	43.7	13,403
3-4	20.4	42.0	11.6	44.0	47.7	11,731
5-6	18.4	40.5	11.8	42.7	45.7	7,044
7	17.9	41.4	11.9	42.8	45.3	5,163
<b>Number of reasons given for refusing to have sexual intercourse with husband<sup>5</sup></b>						
0	13.7	31.0	7.2	32.4	34.8	7,204
1-2	18.7	38.7	12.0	41.2	44.0	12,981
3	15.3	34.6	9.9	36.8	39.3	46,473
Total	15.8	35.1	10.0	37.2	39.7	66,658

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women. Total includes women with missing information on husband's education and husband's alcohol consumption and women who do not know their husband's level of education, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> Currently married women only.  
<sup>2</sup> See Table 15.7 for list of marital control behaviours included.  
<sup>3</sup> Currently married women only. See Table 14.12 for list of decisions included.  
<sup>4</sup> See Table 14.15.1 for list of reasons given for which wife beating is justified.  
<sup>5</sup> See Table 14.17.1 for list of reasons given for refusing to have sexual intercourse with husband.

Women whose husbands drink alcohol have significantly higher rates of violence than women whose husbands do not drink at all; emotional violence is three times as high, physical violence is more than two times as high, and sexual violence is four times as high for women whose husbands are frequently drunk, compared with women whose husbands do not drink. Notably, the prevalence of emotional, physical, or sexual violence, at 72 percent, for women whose husbands are frequently drunk is also much higher than for women whose husbands drink alcohol but are either never or only sometimes drunk (50-51 percent). The high prevalence of spousal violence even among women whose husbands do not consume alcohol indicates that alcohol consumption is not the only explanation for the high prevalence of spousal violence in India.

The prevalence of spousal violence does not vary much with spousal age difference; however, prevalence does vary greatly by spousal educational difference. Couples in which both husband and wife are equally educated have the lowest prevalence of physical or sexual violence (23 percent) and couples in which neither the husband nor the wife is educated have the highest prevalence (48 percent). Couples in which the husband is better educated than the wife have a somewhat higher prevalence (36 percent) than couples in which the wife is better educated (32 percent). As expected, the number of marital control behaviours exhibited by husbands is strongly and positively associated with the prevalence of violence. Twenty-six percent of women whose husbands report none of the six marital control behaviours asked about (see Table 15.7) report experiencing physical or sexual violence, compared with 81 percent of women whose husbands display five to six of these behaviours.

As discussed in Chapter 14, NFHS-3 collected information to construct indicators of women's empowerment. One indicator is constructed from the number of decisions in which women participate among four different categories of decisions: one's own health care, major household purchases, purchases for daily household needs, and visits to one's own family and

relatives. Two indicators are constructed from gender role attitudes: one is agreement with seven different reasons to justify a husband beating his wife (namely, if the wife goes out without telling him, if she neglects the house or children, if she argues with him, if she refuses to have sex with him, if she does not cook the food properly, if he suspects her of being unfaithful, and if she shows disrespect for her in-laws), and the other is agreement with three different reasons to justify a wife's right to refuse sex with her husband (namely, when she knows her husband has a sexually transmitted disease, when she knows her husband has sex with other women, and when she is tired or not in the mood). The expectation is that women who participate in household decisions and have egalitarian gender-role attitudes are more empowered, and hence less likely to experience violence.

The data in Table 15.10 show no clear difference by women's decision-making power in the prevalence of violence, but do suggest that women who agree with one or more reasons for refusing sex with their husbands (37-41 percent) are more likely to experience physical or sexual violence than women who do not agree with any reason for refusing sex (32 percent). Women who say that wife beating is justified for any of the seven reasons asked about have a higher prevalence of all forms of violence than women who do not agree with any of the reasons asked about. For example, the prevalence of physical or sexual violence for women who agree with one or more reasons justifying a husband beating his wife is 41-44 percent, compared with 30 percent for women who do not agree with any reason. The differential according to women's agreement with wife beating is higher for physical violence than for sexual violence.

Despite the large differentials in prevalence of violence by background, spousal, and marital characteristics, the data in Tables 15.9 and 15.10 provide evidence that the experience of domestic violence is not confined to minorities or vulnerable groups of the population. Even among women who belong to the highest wealth quintile or women whose husbands have higher education, one in five women have experienced physical or sexual violence. The characteristic that appears to have the most significant protective effect is high levels of education for women.

#### **15.4.2 Frequency of Spousal Emotional and Physical or Sexual Violence**

The frequency of spousal violence is an indication of the extent to which domestic violence is a current or recurring problem. Table 15.11 shows the percent distribution of currently married, divorced, separated, or deserted women who report emotional violence and who report physical or sexual violence by the frequency with which they have experienced violence from their current or most recent husband in the 12 months preceding the survey, by selected background characteristics. For each of the two types of violence (emotional and physical or sexual), women are classified into a frequency group based on the highest frequency of any of the reported acts of violence that constitute the specific type of violence.

Table 15.11 shows that 72 percent of women who have ever experienced emotional violence by their current or most recent husband experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, and 19 percent of them did so often. Similarly, 65 percent of women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence by their current or most recent husband have experienced such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, and 15 percent have experienced such violence often.

Table 15.11 Frequency of spousal violence among those who report violence

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 (excluding widows) who have ever suffered emotional violence committed by their husband by frequency of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey and percent distribution of ever-married women age 15-49 (excluding widows) who have ever suffered physical or sexual violence committed by their husband by frequency of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, according to background characteristics, India, 2005-06

Background characteristic	Frequency of emotional violence in the past 12 months				Number of women	Frequency of physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months				Number of women
	Often	Some-times	Not at all	Total		Often	Some-times	Not at all	Total	
<b>Age</b>										
15-19	26.9	55.7	17.4	100.0	579	25.2	63.1	11.7	100.0	1,413
20-24	19.0	56.5	24.5	100.0	1,639	17.9	58.8	23.3	100.0	4,073
25-29	19.8	57.1	23.0	100.0	2,022	16.4	54.7	28.9	100.0	4,857
30-39	18.8	53.0	28.3	100.0	3,443	14.4	46.4	39.1	100.0	8,275
40-49	14.9	49.1	36.0	100.0	2,227	10.4	37.8	51.8	100.0	5,103
<b>Residence</b>										
Urban	19.8	51.6	28.6	100.0	2,540	14.7	47.2	38.1	100.0	5,928
Rural	18.2	54.4	27.4	100.0	7,370	15.4	50.1	34.5	100.0	17,793
<b>Education</b>										
No education	17.1	54.7	28.1	100.0	5,746	15.3	48.9	35.7	100.0	14,172
<5 years complete	21.9	52.5	25.5	100.0	1,008	16.8	47.9	35.3	100.0	2,260
5-7 years complete	20.6	51.5	27.9	100.0	1,448	14.9	51.1	34.0	100.0	3,348
8-9 years complete	21.7	53.3	25.0	100.0	866	15.4	52.3	32.3	100.0	2,128
10-11 years complete	19.7	52.2	28.1	100.0	484	14.5	47.0	38.5	100.0	1,085
12 or more years complete	16.3	52.2	31.5	100.0	358	9.6	50.1	40.3	100.0	729
<b>Employment (past 12 months)</b>										
Not employed	17.8	55.1	27.1	100.0	4,518	14.5	51.3	34.2	100.0	11,673
Employed for cash	20.3	52.4	27.3	100.0	3,688	15.7	48.7	35.6	100.0	7,885
Employed not for cash	17.1	52.7	30.2	100.0	1,705	16.2	45.2	38.6	100.0	4,160
<b>Marital status</b>										
Currently married	18.6	56.1	25.3	100.0	9,275	15.2	50.5	34.4	100.0	22,915
Divorced/separated/deserted	19.3	17.9	62.8	100.0	635	16.3	18.0	65.7	100.0	807
<b>Number of living children</b>										
0	26.0	47.3	26.7	100.0	970	20.8	57.0	22.3	100.0	2,023
1-2	18.5	54.0	27.5	100.0	3,915	15.3	52.8	31.9	100.0	9,058
3-4	18.7	54.2	27.1	100.0	3,662	15.2	46.9	37.9	100.0	8,926
5+	13.3	56.0	30.6	100.0	1,363	12.1	42.8	45.1	100.0	3,715
<b>Marital duration<sup>1</sup></b>										
Married only once	18.4	56.1	25.5	100.0	8,983	15.0	50.4	34.6	100.0	22,295
0-4 years	21.2	62.8	16.0	100.0	1,146	21.2	64.6	14.2	100.0	2,804
5-9 years	20.7	56.2	23.1	100.0	1,759	16.3	58.5	25.3	100.0	4,485
10+ years	17.3	54.8	28.0	100.0	6,078	13.5	45.3	41.1	100.0	15,006
Married more than once	22.8	58.6	18.5	100.0	292	18.9	54.1	26.9	100.0	619
<b>Household structure<sup>2</sup></b>										
Nuclear	18.0	55.9	26.1	100.0	5,349	14.7	49.6	35.7	100.0	13,152
Non-nuclear	19.3	51.1	29.5	100.0	4,562	15.9	49.1	35.0	100.0	10,570
<b>Religion</b>										
Hindu	18.3	53.5	28.2	100.0	8,082	14.8	48.9	36.3	100.0	19,190
Muslim	20.4	54.8	24.9	100.0	1,334	17.7	50.9	31.3	100.0	3,489
Christian	18.6	62.7	18.7	100.0	191	15.0	58.2	26.8	100.0	425
Sikh	13.2	58.1	28.7	100.0	115	11.8	58.5	29.7	100.0	246
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	24.7	37.7	37.6	100.0	122	12.5	38.3	49.2	100.0	226
Jain	*	*	*	100.0	12	(15.4)	(44.0)	(40.6)	100.0	23
Other	16.3	63.7	20.0	100.0	43	10.9	57.3	31.8	100.0	100
<b>Caste/tribe</b>										
Scheduled caste	19.0	53.8	27.2	100.0	2,263	14.6	49.7	35.7	100.0	5,527
Scheduled tribe	19.5	58.1	22.4	100.0	1,077	17.3	53.0	29.6	100.0	2,300
Other backward class	16.7	53.2	30.1	100.0	3,936	14.4	48.3	37.3	100.0	9,557
Other	20.9	52.0	27.1	100.0	2,555	16.2	49.1	34.7	100.0	6,145
Don't know	21.4	62.9	15.7	100.0	45	8.7	54.3	37.0	100.0	105
<b>Wealth index</b>										
Lowest	18.7	54.5	26.8	100.0	2,471	17.5	50.9	31.7	100.0	6,029
Second	19.6	56.2	24.2	100.0	2,498	16.1	51.4	32.5	100.0	5,912
Middle	20.4	52.0	27.6	100.0	2,167	15.8	48.4	35.8	100.0	5,129
Fourth	18.0	52.4	29.7	100.0	1,656	12.2	47.9	39.9	100.0	4,231
Highest	13.8	51.6	34.6	100.0	1,119	11.2	45.6	43.1	100.0	2,421
Total	18.6	53.7	27.7	100.0	9,910	15.2	49.4	35.4	100.0	23,722

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women. Total includes women with missing information on employment in past 12 months, religion, and caste/tribe, who are not shown separately.

( ) Based on 25-49 unweighted cases.

\* Percentage not shown; based on fewer than 25 unweighted cases.

<sup>1</sup> Currently married women only.

<sup>2</sup> See Table 15.1, footnote 2 for definition.

Among those who have ever experienced spousal emotional violence or physical or sexual violence, those in the 15-19 age group are more likely than older women to have experienced such violence in the past 12 months and to have experienced the violence often. Differentials by residence, education, and employment in these indicators are small. For example, among women who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence, 60 percent of women with at least 12 completed years of education experienced violence in the 12 months preceding the survey, compared with 62-68 percent of women in the remaining educational groups. The share of women experiencing violence frequently in the 12 months preceding the survey varies even less by education.

As expected, frequency of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey among women who report experiencing the violence ever, is higher for currently married women than for women who are divorced, separated, or deserted. However, currently married women who have been married more than once are somewhat more likely to have suffered the violence in the past 12 months and to have experienced the violence often, than currently married women who are in their first marriage. Among women who report violence, those with no children are more likely than women with children, particularly five or more children, to have experienced recent violence and to have experienced the violence often. This is particularly true for women reporting physical or sexual violence, suggesting that not having children may be a reason for which women are being abused.

Differentials by religion, caste/tribe, and wealth in the proportions of women reporting emotional violence or physical or sexual violence are much smaller for violence in the 12 months preceding the survey than in the proportions reporting the ever experience of such violence. Only among women in the wealthiest quintile are the proportions that experienced emotional violence or physical or sexual violence in the past 12 months relatively low. The frequency of such violence in the past 12 months is also relatively low in this wealth quintile.

#### **15.4.3 Timing of the Onset of Spousal Violence**

To study the timing of the onset of marital violence, NFHS-3 asked ever-married women who reported physical or sexual violence by their husband, how many years into the marriage the first incidence of violence occurred. Table 15.12 shows the percent distribution of ever-married women by the number of years between marriage and the first time they experienced physical or sexual violence by their current or most recent husband, according to current marital duration and residence.

Table 15.12 shows that in the majority of cases, in both rural and urban areas, if violence occurs at all, it is usually initiated early in the marriage. Almost one-fourth of all ever-married women (23 percent) experienced physical or sexual violence within the first two years of marriage (19 percent in urban areas and 24 percent in rural areas). One-third (32 percent) experienced violence in the first five years of marriage. Calculations based only on women who report ever experiencing spousal violence suggest that, for the majority (62 percent) of these women, violence was initiated within the first two years of marriage. Among currently married

Table 15.12 Onset of spousal violence

Percent distribution of ever-married women by number of years between marriage and first experience of physical or sexual violence by their husband, if ever, according to marital status, marital duration, number of unions, and residence, India, 2005-06

Marital status and duration	Years between marriage <sup>1</sup> and first experience of violence							Don't know/missing <sup>1</sup>	Total	Number of women
	Experienced no violence	Before marriage	<1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-9 years	10+ years			
<b>URBAN</b>										
<b>Currently married</b>	70.6	0.3	5.1	12.9	7.8	1.9	1.1	0.4	100.0	19,154
Married only once	70.9	0.2	5.0	12.8	7.8	1.9	1.1	0.4	100.0	18,829
Marital duration										
<1 year	90.3	0.4	8.5	na	na	na	na	0.8	100.0	605
1-2 years	82.2	0.1	8.8	8.2	na	na	na	0.7	100.0	1,435
3-5 years	75.8	0.2	4.9	15.0	3.6	na	na	0.4	100.0	2,219
6-9 years	71.2	0.3	4.0	15.2	8.3	0.9	na	0.1	100.0	2,948
10+ years	67.4	0.2	4.7	12.9	9.8	2.8	1.8	0.4	100.0	11,623
Married more than once	54.6	1.1	11.1	19.5	9.9	2.4	1.4	0.1	100.0	324
Widowed/divorced/separated/deserted	55.1	0.4	13.1	16.8	9.8	2.4	2.2	0.2	100.0	1,287
Total	69.6	0.3	5.6	13.1	7.9	1.9	1.2	0.4	100.0	20,441
<b>RURAL</b>										
<b>Currently married</b>	60.2	0.2	6.8	17.2	10.5	2.8	1.7	0.7	100.0	43,499
Married only once	60.4	0.2	6.7	17.0	10.5	2.8	1.7	0.7	100.0	42,565
Marriage duration										
<1 year	84.6	0.1	13.8	na	na	na	na	1.5	100.0	1,599
1-2 years	74.4	0.3	12.2	11.2	na	na	na	1.9	100.0	3,216
3-5 years	62.8	0.3	8.3	22.7	4.7	na	na	1.1	100.0	5,048
6-9 years	59.7	0.2	6.5	20.1	10.8	2.0	na	0.7	100.0	6,602
10+ years	56.9	0.2	5.4	16.9	13.5	4.0	2.7	0.4	100.0	26,100
Married more than once	49.4	0.2	7.9	23.9	12.6	4.0	1.9	0.0	100.0	933
Widowed/divorced/separated/deserted	54.6	0.2	11.1	17.1	11.3	3.3	1.9	0.4	100.0	2,718
Total	59.8	0.2	7.0	17.2	10.6	2.8	1.7	0.7	100.0	46,217
<b>TOTAL</b>										
<b>Currently married</b>	63.4	0.2	6.3	15.9	9.7	2.5	1.5	0.6	100.0	62,652
Married only once	63.6	0.2	6.2	15.7	9.6	2.5	1.5	0.6	100.0	61,395
Marital duration										
<1 year	86.1	0.2	12.3	na	na	na	na	1.3	100.0	2,204
1-2 years	76.8	0.2	11.2	10.3	na	na	na	1.5	100.0	4,651
3-5 years	66.8	0.3	7.3	20.4	4.4	na	na	0.9	100.0	7,267
6-9 years	63.2	0.2	5.8	18.6	10.0	1.7	na	0.5	100.0	9,550
10+ years	60.2	0.2	5.1	15.7	12.3	3.6	2.4	0.4	100.0	37,723
Married more than once	50.8	0.4	8.8	22.8	11.9	3.6	1.8	0.0	100.0	1,258
Widowed/divorced/separated/deserted	54.8	0.3	11.7	17.0	10.8	3.0	2.0	0.3	100.0	4,005
Total	62.8	0.2	6.6	15.9	9.8	2.6	1.5	0.6	100.0	66,658

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women.

na = Not applicable

<sup>1</sup> Includes women for whom the timing of the first experience of violence and duration of marriage are inconsistent.

women married only once, 22 percent report experiencing violence in the first two years of marriage; this proportion is higher at 32 percent among currently married women married more than once and at 29 percent among widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women.

#### 15.4.4 Physical Consequences of Spousal Violence

In NFHS-3, ever-married women reporting spousal physical or sexual violence were asked about the physical consequences of the violence. Specifically, they were asked if, as a consequence of what their husbands did to them, they ever had any of four different sets of



injuries: 1) cuts, bruises or aches; 2) severe burns; 3) eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or minor burns; and 4) deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth or any other serious injury. Table 15.13 shows the percentage of ever-married women who report any spousal physical or sexual violence by the different types of physical injuries sustained, according to the type of violence ever experienced and residence. Among all ever-married women who reported ever experiencing physical or sexual violence, 36 percent report cuts, bruises, or aches, 9 percent report eye injuries, sprains, dislocations or burns, 7 percent report deep wounds, broken bones, broken

Table 15.13 Injuries to women due to spousal violence						
Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who have experienced specific types of spousal violence by types of injuries resulting from what their husband did to them, by residence according to the type of violence and whether they have experienced the violence ever and in the 12 months preceding the survey, India, 2005-06						
Type of violence experienced	Percentage of women who have had:					Number of ever-married women
	Cuts, bruises, or aches	Severe burns	Eye injuries, sprains, dislocations, or burns	Deep wounds, broken bones, broken teeth, or any other serious injury	Any of these injuries	
URBAN						
<b>Experienced physical violence</b>						
Ever	35.5	2.1	9.3	6.7	36.9	5,943
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	41.2	2.3	11.5	7.6	42.9	3,344
<b>Experienced sexual violence</b>						
Ever	47.0	4.4	17.5	13.1	49.1	1,497
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	44.3	4.0	17.1	11.6	46.2	974
<b>Experienced physical or sexual violence</b>						
Ever	34.2	2.0	8.9	6.4	35.6	6,212
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	38.6	2.2	10.6	7.0	40.1	3,672
<b>Experienced physical and sexual violence</b>						
Ever	56.1	5.4	21.3	16.0	58.7	1,229
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	60.7	5.7	24.9	17.2	63.3	647
RURAL						
<b>Experienced physical violence</b>						
Ever	39.4	1.8	9.4	7.0	41.1	17,421
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	44.4	2.3	11.4	8.3	46.6	10,335
<b>Experienced sexual violence</b>						
Ever	42.1	2.5	15.7	11.7	44.7	5,143
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	39.9	2.6	15.0	11.3	42.7	3,660
<b>Experienced physical or sexual violence</b>						
Ever	37.2	1.7	8.8	6.6	38.8	18,560
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	41.0	2.1	10.4	7.6	43.0	11,647
<b>Experienced physical and sexual violence</b>						
Ever	53.1	3.3	20.0	15.0	56.4	4,004
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	54.3	4.0	21.7	16.4	58.3	2,348
TOTAL						
<b>Experienced physical violence</b>						
Ever	38.4	1.9	9.4	6.9	40.0	23,364
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	43.6	2.3	11.4	8.1	45.7	13,680
<b>Experienced sexual violence</b>						
Ever	43.2	3.0	16.1	12.0	45.7	6,640
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	40.8	2.9	15.5	11.4	43.5	4,635
<b>Experienced physical or sexual violence</b>						
Ever	36.4	1.8	8.9	6.5	38.0	24,772
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	40.4	2.1	10.5	7.5	42.3	15,319
<b>Experienced physical and sexual violence</b>						
Ever	53.8	3.8	20.3	15.2	56.9	5,232
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	55.7	4.4	22.4	16.6	59.4	2,995

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women.  
<sup>1</sup> Excludes widows

teeth, or other serious injury, and 2 percent report severe burns. All of these percentages are higher for women who reported violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Notably, 38 percent of women experiencing physical or sexual violence report having experienced at least one of these groups of injuries; the corresponding proportion for women who reported violence in the 12 months preceding the survey is 42 percent. Women in urban areas who experience sexual violence are more likely, and those who experience physical violence are less likely, than their rural counterparts to report each of the different sets of injuries. However, rural women who experience physical or sexual violence are somewhat more likely to report one or more types of injuries than urban women (39 percent, compared with 36 percent).

Women who have experienced both physical and sexual violence are at the highest risk of injury; 57 percent of them report one or more types of injury. Among women who report having experienced both physical and sexual violence in the past 12 months, 59 percent suffered one or more types of injury. The proportions who report having one or more types of injury is higher among women who report ever experiencing sexual violence (46 percent) than those who report ever experiencing physical violence (40 percent). These data attest to the very high incidence of injuries resulting from domestic violence and show that at least one in seven ever-married women age 15-49 in India have suffered injury resulting from acts of spousal violence.

### 15.4.5 Spousal Violence by State

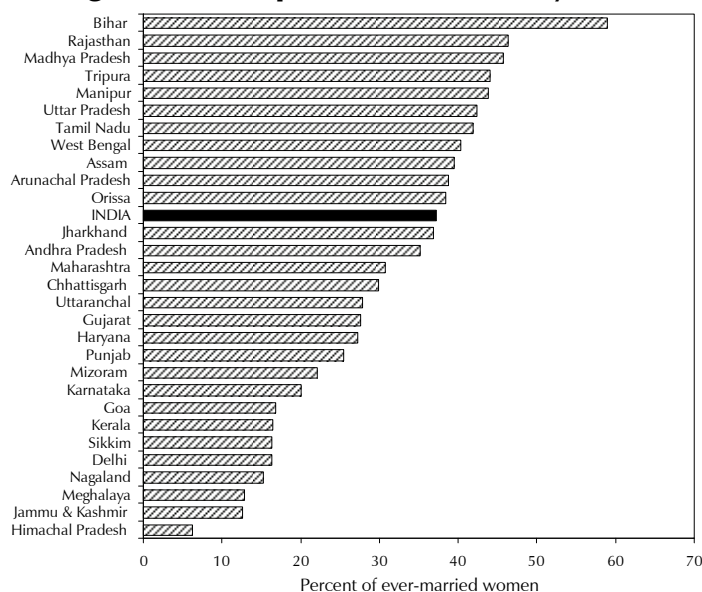
Table 15.14 gives the percentages of ever-married women who have experienced different types of spousal violence by state. The most common form of violence in all states is physical violence. Sexual violence is reported least often in most states. The only exceptions are West Bengal, where the prevalence of sexual violence is much higher than the prevalence of emotional violence, and Manipur where the two are equally prevalent. Sexual violence is most common in West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Bihar where the prevalence is twice the national average.

The prevalence of physical or sexual violence ranges from 6 percent in Himachal Pradesh and 13 percent in Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya, to 46 percent in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and 59 percent in Bihar (Figure 15.2). Other states with 40 percent or higher prevalence of spousal physical or sexual violence include Tripura, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Assam. For most states, the proportion of ever-married women who have experienced emotional or physical or sexual violence is only slightly higher than those who have experienced physical or sexual violence.

State	Percentage who have experienced:				
	Emo- tional violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical or sexual violence	Emo- tional or physical or sexual violence
<b>India</b>	15.8	35.1	10.0	37.2	39.7
<b>North</b>					
Delhi	4.9	16.1	2.1	16.3	17.2
Haryana	8.7	25.5	7.1	27.3	28.0
Himachal Pradesh	3.8	5.9	1.8	6.2	6.9
Jammu & Kashmir	8.9	11.5	3.9	12.6	15.1
Punjab	10.7	24.4	7.2	25.4	26.7
Rajasthan	22.9	40.3	20.2	46.3	50.2
Uttaranchal	8.9	27.3	6.1	27.8	29.8
<b>Central</b>					
Chhattisgarh	12.7	29.2	6.9	29.9	32.3
Madhya Pradesh	22.5	44.0	11.0	45.7	49.1
Uttar Pradesh	16.1	41.2	9.4	42.4	45.0
<b>East</b>					
Bihar	19.7	55.6	19.1	59.0	60.8
Jharkhand	18.0	34.7	12.5	36.9	40.9
Orissa	19.8	33.5	14.7	38.4	41.2
West Bengal	12.3	32.7	21.5	40.3	41.8
<b>Northeast</b>					
Arunachal Pradesh	16.6	37.5	9.5	38.8	43.0
Assam	15.6	36.7	14.8	39.5	42.1
Manipur	13.9	40.7	14.0	43.8	46.2
Meghalaya	7.1	12.6	1.6	12.8	15.0
Mizoram	11.0	22.0	2.0	22.1	25.1
Nagaland	12.6	14.0	3.0	15.3	21.3
Sikkim	10.2	14.8	4.8	16.3	18.8
Tripura	22.8	40.9	19.0	44.1	46.6
<b>West</b>					
Goa	12.0	16.5	2.8	16.8	19.6
Gujarat	18.5	25.7	7.5	27.6	33.8
Maharashtra	17.5	30.6	2.0	30.7	33.4
<b>South</b>					
Andhra Pradesh	13.3	35.0	4.1	35.2	36.8
Karnataka	8.1	19.5	4.0	20.0	21.5
Kerala	10.1	15.3	4.8	16.4	19.8
Tamil Nadu	16.8	41.9	3.2	41.9	44.1

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women.

Figure 15.2 Spousal Violence by State



## 15.4.6 Violence Initiated by Women against Husbands

Violence by husbands against their wives is not the only form of spousal violence; women are also sometimes the perpetrators of violence. In most cultures, however, the level of spousal violence initiated by wives is only a fraction of the level of spousal violence initiated by husbands. To measure spousal violence by women, NFHS-3 asked ever-married women *Have you ever hit, slapped, kicked, or done anything else to physically hurt your (last) husband/partner at times when he was not already beating or physically hurting you?* Women who respond yes to this question are asked about the frequency of such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. Table 15.15 shows the percentage of ever-married women who have ever initiated violence against their current or most recent husband, and the percentage of ever-married women (excluding widows) who say that they initiated spousal violence in the 12 months preceding the survey by background, spousal, and marital characteristics.

Table 15.15 Violence by women against their spouse				
Percentage of ever-married women age 15-49 who have committed physical violence against their husband when he was not already beating or physically hurting them ever and in the past 12 months, according to women's own experience of spousal violence and their own and husband's characteristics, India, 2005-06				
Characteristics	Percentage who have committed physical violence against their current or most recent husband			
	Ever	Number of women	In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	Number of women <sup>1</sup>
<b>Woman's experience of spousal physical violence</b>				
Ever	1.8	23,364	1.1	22,421
In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	2.3	13,680	1.7	13,680
Not in past 12 months or not asked <sup>2</sup>	1.1	9,684	0.1	8,742
Never	0.1	43,294	0.1	41,545
<b>Age</b>				
15-19	0.3	4,643	0.3	4,628
20-24	0.5	11,642	0.4	11,571
25-29	0.8	13,006	0.5	12,789
30-39	0.8	22,191	0.4	21,241
40-49	0.8	15,175	0.4	13,736
<b>Residence</b>				
Urban	0.9	20,441	0.5	19,634
Rural	0.7	46,217	0.4	44,332
<b>Education</b>				
No education	0.8	32,024	0.5	30,360
<5 years complete	1.0	5,647	0.5	5,354
5-7 years complete	0.6	9,900	0.4	9,597
8-9 years complete	0.6	7,585	0.3	7,376
10-11 years complete	0.6	5,440	0.4	5,318
12 or more years complete	0.4	6,059	0.3	5,960
<b>Husband's education</b>				
No education	0.9	18,207	0.6	17,181
<5 years complete	1.3	5,728	0.8	5,508
5-7 years complete	0.8	10,589	0.5	10,125
8-9 years complete	0.5	10,342	0.2	10,007
10-11 years complete	0.6	9,317	0.3	9,001
12 or more years complete	0.4	11,867	0.2	11,600
<b>Husband's alcohol consumption</b>				
Does not drink	0.4	45,838	0.2	43,147
Drinks/never gets drunk	0.4	3,506	0.1	3,506
Gets drunk sometimes	1.2	12,816	0.8	12,816
Gets drunk often	3.3	4,395	2.1	4,395
<b>Spousal age difference<sup>2</sup></b>				
Wife older	0.9	1,364	0.8	1,364
Wife is same age	1.1	1,508	0.7	1,508
Wife's 1-4 years younger	0.6	24,270	0.4	24,270
Wife's 5-9 years younger	0.7	25,369	0.4	25,369
Wife's 10+ years younger	0.9	9,959	0.5	9,959

Continued...

Table 15.15 Violence by women against their spouse—*Continued*

Characteristics	Percentage who have committed physical violence against their current or most recent husband			
	Ever	Number of women	In the past 12 months <sup>1</sup>	Number of women <sup>1</sup>
<b>Spousal education difference</b>				
Husband better educated	0.6	34,674	0.3	33,369
Wife better educated	0.9	9,849	0.5	9,553
Both equally educated	0.6	6,153	0.4	6,014
Neither educated	0.9	15,373	0.7	14,484
<b>Household structure<sup>3</sup></b>				
Nuclear	0.9	33,989	0.5	32,705
Non-nuclear	0.5	32,669	0.4	31,261
<b>Religion</b>				
Hindu	0.7	54,208	0.5	51,977
Muslim	0.4	8,795	0.2	8,525
Christian	1.6	1,500	1.0	1,423
Sikh	0.2	1,115	0.2	1,060
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	1.9	537	1.7	499
Jain	0.0	190	0.0	187
Other	2.0	245	1.6	229
<b>Caste/tribe</b>				
Scheduled caste	0.9	12,701	0.7	12,088
Scheduled tribe	1.7	5,562	1.1	5,282
Other backward class	0.6	26,438	0.3	25,443
Other	0.5	21,393	0.2	20,629
Don't know	0.7	375	0.5	342
<b>Wealth index</b>				
Lowest	0.8	12,815	0.6	12,202
Second	0.9	13,384	0.6	12,782
Middle	0.7	13,386	0.3	12,791
Fourth	0.7	13,444	0.5	12,936
Highest	0.4	13,628	0.2	13,255
<b>Respondent's father beat her mother</b>				
Yes	1.7	12,346	1.0	11,820
No	0.5	49,201	0.3	47,281
Don't know	0.8	5,041	0.4	4,803
Total	0.7	66,658	0.4	63,966

Note: Husband refers to the current husband for currently married women and the most recent husband for widowed, divorced, separated, or deserted women. Total includes women with missing information on education, husband's education, husband's alcohol consumption, spousal age difference, spousal education difference, religion, caste/tribe, and respondent's father beat her mother, who are not shown separately.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes widows.

<sup>2</sup> Currently married women.

<sup>3</sup> See Table 15.1, footnote 2 for definition.

Results show that 1 percent of ever-married women report initiating violence against their husbands, and only 0.4 percent initiated such violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. This percentage is higher for women who have experienced spousal violence ever, as well as in the past 12 months (2 percent), than for women who have never experienced such violence (0.1 percent). The prevalence of spousal violence initiated by women is highest, at 4 percent, for women for whom information on alcohol consumption by the husband is not known, followed by women whose husbands often get drunk (3 percent). The only other population subgroups in which at least 2 percent of women report ever initiating violence against their husband, are Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist women, Christian women, women belonging to other religions, women belonging to the scheduled tribes, and women whose fathers beat their mothers. Even among these sub-groups the percentage never exceeds 2. Overall these data show that in India spousal violence initiated by women is a very small fraction of spousal violence initiated by men.

## 15.5 HELP SEEKING

In NFHS-3, all women (married, formerly married, and never married) who reported physical or sexual violence were asked a series of questions about whether and from whom they sought help to try to end the violence. First, women were asked if they had ever sought help; then, the women who said they had sought help, were asked from whom they had sought help. Women who said they had not sought help were asked whether they had ever told anyone about any of the violence they had experienced. Table 15.16 shows the percent distribution of women who have ever experienced any type of physical or sexual violence by their help seeking behaviour and by background characteristics.

Background characteristic	Never sought help		Have sought help from any source	Don't know/missing	Total	Number of women
	Never told anyone	Percentage who told someone				
<b>Residence</b>						
Urban	65.2	8.6	23.6	2.6	100.0	8,046
Rural	66.4	7.3	23.9	2.3	100.0	21,549
<b>Marital status</b>						
Never married	63.7	10.8	21.5	4.0	100.0	2,782
Currently married	67.9	7.3	22.7	2.2	100.0	24,781
Married, <i>gauna</i> not performed	(73.0)	(1.0)	(18.4)	(7.7)	100.0	92
Widowed	61.8	9.2	26.2	2.8	100.0	1,058
Divorced/separated/ deserted	29.1	8.4	60.0	2.5	100.0	882
<b>Education</b>						
No education	66.5	7.8	23.7	1.9	100.0	15,790
<5 years complete	65.9	7.8	24.0	2.3	100.0	2,722
5-7 years complete	63.9	6.6	27.1	2.4	100.0	4,322
8-9 years complete	66.9	8.2	22.3	2.7	100.0	3,270
10-11 years complete	64.3	8.5	22.6	4.7	100.0	1,956
12 or more years complete	69.0	6.8	20.0	4.1	100.0	1,534
<b>Household structure<sup>1</sup></b>						
Nuclear	66.3	7.8	23.7	2.2	100.0	16,260
Non-nuclear	65.9	7.5	24.0	2.6	100.0	13,334
<b>Religion</b>						
Hindu	66.3	7.4	23.8	2.5	100.0	23,962
Muslim	67.3	8.9	22.1	1.7	100.0	4,185
Christian	52.0	13.3	32.1	2.5	100.0	585
Sikh	63.0	4.2	31.1	1.7	100.0	399
Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist	73.6	4.3	18.8	3.3	100.0	281
Jain	(65.5)	(17.3)	(17.2)	(0.0)	100.0	36
Other	47.5	6.6	41.3	4.7	100.0	124
<b>Caste/tribe</b>						
Scheduled caste	64.8	7.0	26.1	2.0	100.0	6,822
Scheduled tribe	65.4	9.5	23.2	1.9	100.0	2,834
Other backward class	65.0	7.8	24.6	2.5	100.0	11,722
Other	69.2	7.3	20.9	2.6	100.0	7,972
Don't know	61.2	8.7	25.9	4.2	100.0	137
<b>Wealth index</b>						
Lowest	67.1	8.0	23.2	1.8	100.0	6,930
Second	64.5	8.0	25.4	2.0	100.0	7,019
Middle	66.1	7.1	24.8	2.0	100.0	6,354
Fourth	65.7	7.3	23.9	3.1	100.0	5,477
Highest	67.8	8.1	20.4	3.7	100.0	3,815
<b>Type of violence</b>						
Physical only	68.1	7.5	21.7	2.7	100.0	22,505
Sexual only	85.3	4.1	7.7	2.8	100.0	1,517
Both physical and sexual	52.7	9.5	36.7	1.0	100.0	5,573

Continued...

Table 15.16 Help seeking to stop violence—Continued

Background characteristic	Never sought help		Have sought help from any source	Don't know/missing	Total	Number of women
	Never told anyone	Percentage who told someone				
<b>Persons who committed the violence</b>						
Current husband only	69.7	6.5	22.0	1.8	100.0	20,200
Any previous husband only	47.9	7.3	43.0	1.9	100.0	1,579
Any husband and others	52.6	13.2	33.8	0.4	100.0	3,012
Own family members only	68.3	9.3	16.1	6.3	100.0	3,753
Person(s) other than husband or own family	55.1	9.8	29.2	5.9	100.0	1,025
Total	66.1	7.7	23.8	2.4	100.0	29,595

Note: Total includes women with missing information on education, religion, and caste/tribe, who are not shown separately.  
 ( ) Based on 25-49 unweighted cases.  
<sup>1</sup> See Table 15.1, footnote 2 for definition.

The table shows that only one in four women have ever sought help to end the violence they have experienced. Two out of three women who have ever experienced violence have not only never sought help, but have also never told anyone about the violence. A large majority of women who have experienced only sexual violence have never told anyone about the violence (85 percent), and only 8 percent have ever sought help. By contrast, 37 percent of women who have experienced both physical and sexual violence and 22 percent who have experienced only physical violence have sought help. Help seeking varies by the type of perpetrator. Women who have experienced violence by a former husband are the most likely to have sought help. This is to be expected since seeking help against spousal violence is likely to be a first step in being able to leave an abusive husband and ending the marriage.

What is also particularly striking about help-seeking behaviour among women who have ever experienced violence is the virtual lack of differentials by most background characteristics, including education and wealth. Overall, the data suggest that neither education nor wealth imply a greater likelihood that women will seek help against violence. There is even some indication that the most educated women and women in the highest wealth quintile are less likely to seek help than less educated or less wealthy women. The largest differentials by background characteristics are found by religion. Jain women (who are least likely to report experiencing any violence) and Buddhist/Neo Buddhist women (who are most likely to report experiencing violence) are the least likely to seek help (17 and 19 percent respectively). Sikh and Christian women are most likely (31 and 32 percent respectively) to seek help.

Abused women most often seek help from their own families. Table 15.17 shows abused women's sources of help, according to the type of violence they had suffered. Seventy-two percent of women who experienced only physical violence and 58 percent of women who experienced only sexual violence mention their own family as a source. The second most common source of help for women who experienced physical violence is the husbands' family (28 percent); by contrast, among women who experienced sexual violence only and sought help, friends are the second most common source of help (34 percent). Only 6 percent of women who suffered sexual violence only and sought help turned to their husband's family. Notably few women seek help from any institutional sources such as the police, medical personnel, or social service organizations.

Table 15.17 Sources from where help was sought

Percentage of women age 15-49 who have ever experienced physical or sexual violence and have sought help from any source by source from which help was sought, according to the type of violence experienced, India, 2005-06

Source	Type of violence experienced			Total
	Physical only	Sexual only	Both physical and sexual	
Own family	71.7	57.7	70.2	71.0
Husband's family	27.6	6.4	31.5	28.4
Husband/last husband	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8
Current/former boyfriend	0.1	3.9	0.1	0.1
Friend	8.3	34.4	10.6	9.4
Neighbour	12.3	4.9	20.1	14.4
Religious leader	0.9	0.0	1.3	1.0
Doctor/medical personnel	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.4
Police	1.5	0.6	3.8	2.1
Lawyer	0.4	0.5	1.0	0.6
Social service organization	0.5	0.0	1.1	0.6
Other	0.8	1.1	1.8	1.1
Number of women	4,884	118	2,047	7,048