THE PROTECTIVE POTENTIAL OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP: A RURAL-URBAN PERSPECTIVE ON INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE AMONG REPRODUCTIVE WOMEN IN INDIA

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Abstract: The study examines the link between Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and property ownership, focusing on land and housing among reproductive women aged 15-49. Additionally, the study assesses the impact of socio-economic factors on the disparities between rural and urban women regarding IPV experiences. Using data from the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 60,541 reproductive women from rural and urban India were analyzed. Multivariate Binary Logistic Regression was employed to explore the association between IPV and property ownership, and the Fairlie Model measured the contribution of socio-economic factors resulting in the rural-urban disparity regarding the IPV experience. Logistic analysis reveals that property ownership was found to be positively associated with IPV among reproductive women. Fairlie decomposition analysis showed that the educational level of respondents (54.78%) and Husbands' or partners' education (27%) variation positively accounted for the rural-urban gap in IPV, followed by the working status of women at 10.91%. Conversely, factors such as women's age group (-1.43) and Geographical region (-10.91%) contribute to narrowing the gap in the prevalence of IPV. Further, the Qualitative research method was chosen because it allows for in-depth understanding of intimate partner violence among reproductive women in India. These findings highlight that regional and cultural factors strongly shape the relationship between property ownership and IPV. Additionally, strengthening amenities in urban as well as rural settings, particularly through cultural activities, and increasing awareness through educational programs might assist in narrowing the gap in the prevalence of IPV risk.

Introduction:

"Property ownership can be a protective factor; it's not a guarantee against violence. Still, violence such as psychological and emotional abuse can occur".

Intimate Partner Violence is a social scourge that can prevent individuals from living peacefully and inflict mental and physical distress (**Mazza et al., 2021**). Globally, violence against women is pervasive as a significant public health concern that violates human rights and has detrimental effects on women's lives, their families, and society at large. The term Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a type of violence that is becoming a widely recognized social and public health problem that refers to any form of abuse that spans social, economic, demographic, and geographic boundaries and encompasses physical, sexual, and emotional

abuse **(Burelomova et al., 2018)**. In India, the national figure is approximately 12%. Nonetheless, according to the National Family Health Survey NFHS-5 (2019-21), 32% of married women between the ages of 18-49 reported having been victims of emotional, sexual, or physical abuse at the hands of their partners. The report highlights that 21% women have been the victim of physical violence since childhood, and 6% of women between the ages of 18-49 have encountered sexual violence during their lives. Furthermore, even during pregnancy, which is supposed to be a period of care and safety, 3% of women in this age range reported experiencing physical violence at least once throughout their pregnancy (NFHS, 2019). These data show the pervasive nature of gender-based violence, which thrives in the private domain, frequently protected by cultural silence and familial constraints. Ironically, while society celebrates women-centric milestones like childbirth, parenthood, and female child education as signs of societal progress, many women's daily lives are nevertheless riddled with violence, neglect, and disrespect. This dichotomy indicates a surface-level acceptance of women's rights that is frequently not accompanied by true structural or attitudinal change. Along with that the frequency and types of intimate partner violence (IPV) vary significantly depending on the type of locale, whether rural or urban. Several socio-demographic factors, such as employment status, level of education, age group, and access to socio-economic services, play a crucial role in influencing the likelihood of IPV **(Edwards, 2015)**. As **Panda and Agarwal (2005)** point out, IPV is largely hidden and underreported, owing to the fact that it happens within the home, where patriarchal values reign supreme and silence is socially imposed. So, even while public discourse may seem to favor women's empowerment, the ongoing violence suggests that deeply held social beliefs and power dynamics continue to undermine women's safety and dignity within their own homes.

In this regard, financial and economic resources play an important role in determining women's vulnerability to IPV. Therefore, materialistic resources are important because they empower women by allowing them to participate in decision-making, which expands their alternatives and reduces their vulnerability of being abused from intimate partners **(Gahramanov et al., 2022)**. Based on several viewpoints, women's socio-economic empowerment, which involves owning houses and land, is directly related to whether or not they are more likely to have experienced intimate partner violence. However, the relationship is complex. On the one hand, socioeconomic empowerment, particularly the ownership of houses and land, is frequently considered as a means of increasing the autonomy of women and reducing her dependency. On the other hand, such empowerment may challenge traditional gender roles, resulting in anger

or violence from male partners who feel their authority is under threat. Property ownership, defined as a person's right to control their economic assets, such as homes and land, has sparked increased interest among researchers and policymakers due to its substantial influence on a person's growth, self-determination, and general well-being. **Waldron, 2016** has noted that Private ownership has gained recognition in recent years as a key component of socioeconomic safety, offering women both material security and psychological resilience, which can help them avoid, reject, or handle violent situations.

Even though a substantial amount of global research has looked at the relationship between property rights and IPV, especially in rural and urban areas, using the mixed methodology research on interpersonal violence is frequently less. A comprehensive research is necessary to completely comprehend the contextual and cultural aspects that mediate this relationship, despite the increased interest in this topic. Therefore, even while property ownership may serve as a barrier against IPV, its real effects are greatly impacted by larger sociocultural norms and power dynamics in homes and communities.

Property ownership is an important dimension of socio-economic protection, which equips individuals with economic and psychological strength to fight back and stand up against the violence. This predictor of interpersonal violence has been the subject of numerous studies, but most of these studies are limited because of its quantitative analysis **(Agarwal et al., 2021; Panda & Agarwal, 2005)**. Therefore, in alignment with the various types of planning programme like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, there is increased concern for gender equality and women's rights in public and private spheres with regard to financial independence, freedom of movement, political participation, acceptance of unequal gender roles, media exposure, access to education, experience of domestic violence, decision-making, resource accessibility, and work contribution. India, one of the world's most populous nations, faces difficult cultural, social, and healthcare issues that affect women's rights to own property, make decisions, and plan their families **(Bayeh, 2016).** This aim of this cross-sectional study is to shed light on the intricate relationship between intimate partner violence and property ownership among reproductive women (15–49) and their sociodemographic backgrounds in rural and urban India. By clearly outlining the objectives, this study can provide valuable insights to policymakers by analyzing the current trends of IPV and finding disparities between rural and urban context of reproductive women in India aged 15-49. This includes a review of the kinds of IPV patterns according to geographical variation as well as their frequency with descriptive statistics. Another goal of the study is to examine the association between socio-

demographic factors and Intimate partner violence with a special emphasis on ownership of property (house and land). It helps to examine the effects of sociodemographic variables on the experience of IPV, including the respondents' age, education, religion, region, and socioeconomic background characteristics. Gaining knowledge about how these factors interact with different forms of intimate partner violence and its intimate association with property ownership can help to identify socio-economic obstacles along with catalysts of women's overall life satisfaction and healthy well-being. By assessing the gap between rural and urban women in the context of the relationship between IPV experience and property ownership among reproductive women can help identify potential contributions of the background predicted factors to the outcome of IPV, along with the relationships between the prevalence of IPV and property ownership. This entails evaluating how well different forms of IPV and property are affected by background and geographical factors to avoid the gap as well as reduce the discrepancy situation in low-income countries like India.
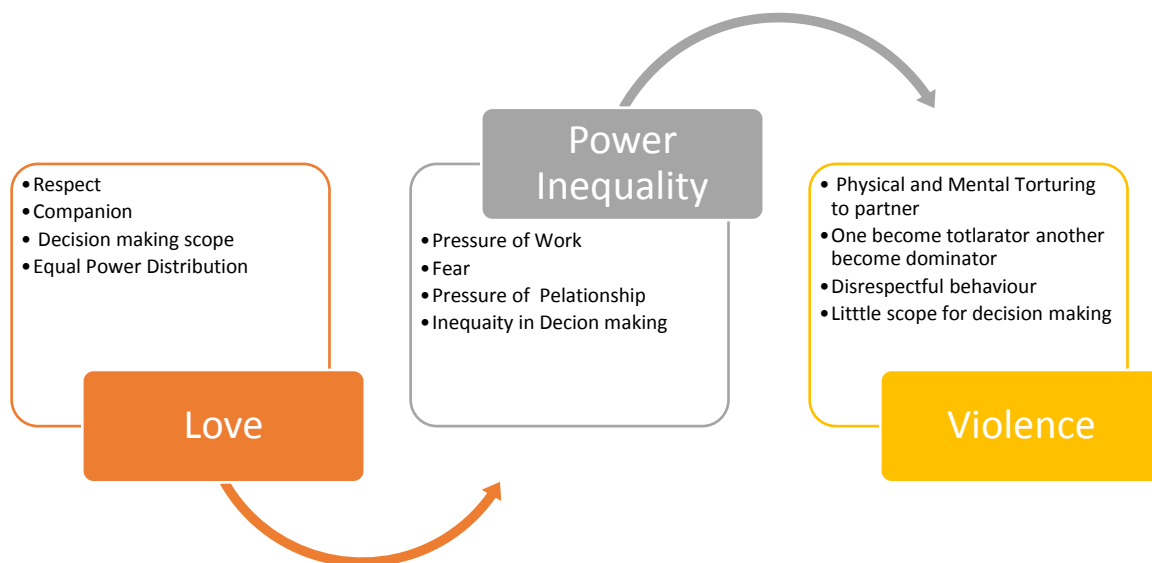

Fig 1: Imbalance of personal and societal power, thereby creating the situation of Intimate Partner Violence

Data and Methodology:

A mixed-method approach was adopted, with quantitative data derived from NFHS-5(2019-21), and qualitative insights gathered through purposively sampled (Snowball sampling) from rural-urban regions across different areas.

Data Source

Using data from the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-2021, the study analyses the relationship between IPV and property ownership among 60,541 reproductive women in both urban and rural India (**IIPS & ICF, 2021**). Along with that, interviews were conducted during 12- 28 June, 2025, and prepared notes of responses. At the commencement of the interview, they were informed that the recorded data would be kept solemnly confidential. It was also informed that their participation was completely voluntary, and they could withdraw from the investigation at any time before thematic analysis was conducted. A total of 23 respondents proceeded through the survey schedule, whereas 5 respondents did not finish. The interviews were conducted through semi semi-structured questionnaire prepared by Google Form in English.

Table 1: Interview guide

Q1	Demographic enquiries as
	1.1 Residence
	1.2 Caste
	1.3 Education
	1.4 Age
	1.5 Have you own any property?
	1.6 What is the type of that ownership?
Q2	Have you faced any violence?
Q3	If yes, which type of violence have you faced?
Q4	Kindly share the story of lived experience of intimate violence.

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and interviewer SB reviewed the subset of 6 transcripts for accuracy. Tran's scripted data were analysed using the Template Analysis Technique (**King, 2004**). This technique involves six steps: (i) Repetitive reading of the transcripts to acquire familiarity with the data, (ii) Initial Coding of the data (iii) explanation of relationships (e.g. hierarchical wherein sub-codes nested are within primary codes; (iv) Creation of an initial version of the template; (v) Implementation of the coding template and amendments if necessary; (vi) Development of a final version of the template and its application to the rest of the dataset (**Brooks et al,. 2015**). The entire process carried through after primarily familiarizing with the data, which has been processed through generating initial code, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming the theme according to its relevance of context. On the recorded data, we applied a coding process, starting with the development of categories and their sub-categories.

Outcome variable:

The outcome variable is IPV which is determined by women's ever exposure to violence perpetrated by their partner, which can take the form of physical, emotional, or sexual violence. A series of questions were posed to the women aged 15-49 in NFHS-5 to gather information about violence committed by the current or most recent husband. By keeping WHO's ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence, NFHS-5 measured physical and sexual violence by using a set of questions - (Does/did) your (last) husband ever do any of the following things to you: a) push you, shake you, or throw something at you? b) Twist your arm or pull your hair? c) Slap 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) Physically force you to perform any other sexual acts you did not want to? j) Force you with threats or in any other way to perform sexual acts you did not want to? For each item, women could respond 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, a 'yes' response to item (a) to (g) constitutes evidence of physical violence and (h) to (j) constitutes evidence of sexual violence. Emotional violence among ever-married women was measured 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? A 'yes' response constitutes evidence of emotional violence (**IIPS & ICF, 2021**).

The responses from all of the aforementioned forms of violence were combined to create a composite variable for this study, which was then dichotomised into a binary variable where "0" indicates no experience of violence and "1" indicates the experience of any form of violence, including physical, emotional, and sexual violence.

Outcome Variable	Covariates	Main Predictor
• Intimate Partner Violence	• Property Ownership • Educational Level • Age Group • Decision Making • Working status • Religion • Number of Children • Caste • Geographical Region • Numbr of Household Member • Husbands or Partner Education	• Property Ownership

Fig:2 Details of Variables

Predictors:

The key predictor variable is women's property ownership, was created after merging two variables: owns a house alone or jointly, and owns land alone or jointly. The national survey asked whether they own any house either alone or jointly with someone else, and own any agricultural or non-agricultural land either alone or jointly with someone else, categorized under does not own, alone only, jointly only, and both alone and jointly. The women who responded "does not own" any of these questions were considered 'no ownership' and, therefore, were taken as 'no' and coded "0". Those who responded "alone only or jointly only or both alone and jointly" to all options were coded "1" as they were considered "yes they have any one form of ownership," which is considered as the main predictor of the regression model.

Along with the property ownership as the main predictor of the study, the Education level (no education, primary, secondary, or higher), Age group (below 25, 25-35, 35-45, and over 45 years); Decision making (Independently, jointly Dependently), Working status (Yes/No), Religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and others), Number of Children (No child, single, more than 1), Caste(scheduled caste [SC], scheduled tribe [ST], no caste no tribe, others, Region(North, south, east, west, northeast, central), Number of household members(less than

3, 3-5, more than 5), and Husband's or Partner's Education(no education, primary, secondary, or higher).

Statistical Analysis

Multivariate Binary Logistic Regression is employed to explore the association between the outcome and exposure variables. Additionally, the Fairlie Model is applied to measure the impact of socioeconomic factors on the disparity between urban and rural women regarding the relationship between IPV and property ownership **(Rahimi et al.,2021).**

Apart from that, the qualitative research method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of intimate partner violence among reproductive women in India. How does any social space, superimposed on the physical space, deal with the help of personal experiences of the respondents? The research team consisted of two female researchers (RD & S) and one mentor (SB). SB is an experienced professor with expertise in gender studies. Sakshi has good Q1 publications on issues as gender space, gender disparity, exploring the Interplay between Contraceptive Practices and Pregnancy Loss at the regional and national level. RD, the lead author, is an evolving geographer with significant research work in gender studies developed during her academic training and publishing collaboratively with S and SB. All three authors are affiliated with Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

| Familiarizing with the Data | Generating Individual Code | Searching for Theme | Reviewing the theme | Defining and Naming the Theme |

Fig: 3 Figuring out of Qualitative survey

Result

Table: 2 Socio-demographic differentials of Respondents of Rural and Urban Settings

Background Variables	Total Respondents		Rural		Urban	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Property Ownership						
No	30,267.32	49.99	20,256.88	47.65	10,010.44	55.51

Yes	30,274.03	50.01	22,251.48	52.35	8,022.544	44.49
Education level						
No education	17,390.76	28.73	14,397.47	33.87	2,993.293	16.60
Primary	8,494.126	14.03	6,613.559	15.56	1,880.566	10.43
Secondary	27,627.85	45.63	18,429.03	43.35	9,198.8206	51.01
Higher	7,028.617	11.61	3,068.309	7.22	3,960.308	21.96
Age Group						
Below 25	10,713.66	17.70	14,397.47	19.53	2,410.119	13.37
25-35	22,263.33	36.77	6,613.559	36.31	6,829.307	37.87
35-45	20,905.09	34.53	18,429.03	33.44	6,691.722	37.11
Over 45	6,659.2699	11.00	3,068.309	10.72	2,101.84	11.66
Decision making						
Independent	1,360.441	2.38	947.04121	2.35	413.39976	2.46
Jointly	37,261.42	65.27	25,917.74	64.39	11,343.68	67.37
Dependent	18,468.47	32.35	13,387.11	33.26	5,081.36	30.18
Working status						
No	42,841.41	70.76	29,638.32	69.72	13,203.09	73.22
Yes	17,699.94	29.24	12,870.04	30.28	4,829.9	26.78
Religion						
Hindu	46,030.8	76.03	32,635.058	76.77	13,395.74	74.28
Muslim	7,727.124	12.76	4,855.735	11.42	2,871.389	15.92
Christian	3,897.206	6.44	2,803.528	6.60	1,093.678	6.06
Others	2,886.228	4.77	2,214.045	5.21	672.183212	3.73
Number of Children						
No child	36,640.15	60.52	25,015.95	58.85	11,624.2	64.46
Single Child	15,182.18	25.08	10,869.62	25.57	4,312.56	23.91
More than 1	8,719.019	14.40	6,622.79	15.58	2,096.228	11.62
Caste						
Schedule caste	11,924.83	20.78	8,763.036	21.78	3,161.791	18.43
Schedule Tribe	9,645.914	16.81	8,017.0694	19.92	1,628.844	9.50

OBC	24,060.59	41.92	16,431.79	40.83	7,628.794	44.48
None of them	11,398.92	19.86	6,781.952	16.85	4,616.97	26.92
Don't know	362.66704	0.63	246.6019	0.61	116.06514	0.68
Region						
North	11,451.61	18.92	7,663.2998	18.03	3,788.314	21.01
Central	12,863.83	21.25	9,814.447	23.09	3,049.382	16.91
East	10,638.1	17.57	8,437.744	19.85	2,200.3523	12.20
Northeast	9,028.376	14.91	6,965.293	16.39	2,063.083	11.44
West	6,227.345	10.29	3,490.538	8.21	|2,736.8066	15.18
South	10,332.09	17.07	6,137.043	14.44	4,195.051	23.26
Number of household members						
Less than 3	3,297.186	5.45	2,291.884	5.39	1,005.302	5.57
3-5	35,153.78	58.07	23,752.86	55.88	11,400.92	63.22
More than 5	22,090.38	36.49	16,463.619	38.73	5,626.763	31.20
Husband's or Partner's Education						
No education	10,649.173	17.59	8,781.522	20.66	1,867.651	10.36
Primary	8,595.733	14.20	6,596.599	15.52	1,999.134	11.09
Secondary	32,133.16	53.08	22,472.1	52.87	9,661.061	53.57
Higher	8,940.3972	14.77	4,497.147	10.58	4,443.25	24.64
Don't know	222.89419	0.37	161.00209	0.38	61.892102	0.34

Table 2 represents the prevalence of Intimate Partner violence, including a comparison of the socio-demographic background characteristics of rural and urban women with a proxy of Property ownership. Owning property, such as land and house, is more prevalent among rural women 52.35 % than among urban women 44.59%. Around 45.63% of women have secondary education in the nation of India. Urban women are significantly more educated in comparison to rural counterparts. The majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-45(73%). The breakdown of decision-making also makes a valuable disparity between the rural and urban disparities on Intimate partner violence. Independent decision is very less prevalent among

Indian women, but joint decision is more common among urban women (67.37%), whereas rural women believe in dependent decision33.26%. Approximately 30% of women in India are working in nature. The highest 76.03 % of women are from a Hindu background, followed by Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and others. Women from rural India have more than 1 child, whereas urban women favor having no children. SC/ST castes are more prevalent in rural areas. Urban respondents are more concentrated in north, central, south, and west India, where rural women are concentrated in central, east, and northeast India. Large families (more than 5) are more common in rural settings, and nuclear families tend to be higher among urban families. Highly educated male partners have been found in rural areas (24.64 %), but most women's husbands or partners have secondary education (53.08%).

Table 3: Logit result of IPV

IPV	Unadjusted OR (Model-1)	95% Confidence Interval Lower	Upper	Adjusted Odds Ratio (Model-2)	[95% Confidence Interval Lower	Upper
Residence						
Rural						
Urban				0.998	0.952699	1.047057
Property Ownership						
No						
Yes	1.195***	1.155	1.236	1.111***	1.070188	1.154229
Educational Level						
No education						
Primary				0.930**	0.876802	0.987641
Secondary				0.758***	0.720068	0.798704
Higher				0.475***	0.43426	0.520822
Age Group						
Below 25						
25-35				1.195***	1.131156	1.262903
35-45				1.134***	1.064334	1.208719
over 45				1.150**	1.059394	1.248897
Decision making						
Independent						
Jointly				0.656***	0.580903	0.741239
Dependently				1.069	0.94541	1.210771
Working status						
No						
Yes				1.447***	1.388481	1.508125
Religion						
Hindu						
Muslim				0.907**	0.84929	0.968731

Christian				0.592***	0.538296	0.651854
others				0.714***	0.646945	0.790136
Number of Children						
No child						
single child				1.0171	0.96877	1.067841
more 1				1.119187***	1.05297	1.189567
Caste						
Schedule caste						
schedule tribe				0.826***	0.77628	0.88083
obc				0.863***	0.821092	0.907749
None of them				0.757***	0.710401	0.807522
don't know				0.737393**	0.578272	0.940298
Region						
North						
central				1.899***	1.783138	2.022792
east				2.146***	2.009728	2.291942
northeast				1.625***	1.497793	1.763941
west				1.280***	1.184007	1.384803
south				2.184***	2.039802	2.338879
Number of Households-member						
<3						
3-5				1.043012	0.962597	1.130146
more than 5				1.044246	0.957467	1.138891
Husbands' or partners' Education						
primary				0.989	0.92761	1.054672
secondary				0.833***	0.787715	0.881202
higher				0.649***	0.597061	0.707101
don't know				0.700**	0.501657	0.978399

Estimation from the logistic regression:

Tables 3 and 4 present the unadjusted and adjusted odds ratios for the predictor of Intimate partner violence, along with a proxy of Property ownership. Model 1 is a basic model that represents the relationship between ownership of property and IPV. In this model women with property have higher odds of experiencing IPV (OR: 1.195, 95%CI:1.155-1.236). Model 2 reveals the adjusted odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals (95% CI) after controlling for the other variables. Women who own property also faced an 11% higher likelihood of IPV (AOR = 1.111, CI: 1.07-1.15, p<0.001). Higher education plays a pivotal role in the protection of IPV. Highly educated women lesser a lower risk of IPV (*AOR = 0.475, 95%CI: 0.43-0.52, p<0.001*). The likelihood of IPV increases with increasing age. But the peaking of the risk of

IPV has been found between the 25-35 age groups. Women between 25-35 (AOR: 1.195),35-45 (AOR-1.134), and over 45 (AOR: 1.150) are more likely to face IPV risk compared to women under <25. Participation in decision-making lowers the risk of IPV. Result shows that in comparison to independent decisions, women who have taken part in joint decisions have faces 35% lower likelihood of IPV. Surprisingly, working women are at higher risk of IPV (AOR = 1.447, 95%CI 1.38-1.508, p<0.001). IPV risks are lower among non-Hindu women. Women from a Christian background faced the lowest likelihood of IPV *(AOR = 0.592, 95% CI 0.53-0.65, p<0.001)*, followed by Muslim women (AOR = 0.907, 95% CI: 0.84- 0.96, p<0.01). Having a child is a risky factor for IPV in India. Women who have more than 1 child are at a higher risk of IPV. More children lead to 1.11 times more likelihood of experiencing IPV (AOR = 1.119, 95%CI: 1.05-1.189, p<0.001). Caste-wise, women are more prone to the risk of IPV. The risk of IPV varies according to geographical region. South (AOR: 2.184, 95%CI:2.03-2.33, p<0.001) and East (AOR:2.146:2.146, 95%CI:2.00-2.29; P<0.001) Indian women have the highest risk of IPV. All the geographical region reveals a significantly higher risk of Ipv compared to the northern parts. Husbands' or partners' education shows the impact on IPV. Highly educated women's partners lower the risk of IPV (AOR: 0.649; 95% CI: 0.59-0.70;p:<0.001).

Table 4 Logistic result of IPV for rural and urban settings by different socio-demographic background characteristics in India, 2019-21

IPV	Odds Ratio Rural (Model-3)	95% CI	Odds Ratio (Urban) (Model-4)	95% CI
Property Ownership				
No				
Yes	1.078***	1.033-1.125	1.236***	1.140-1.339
Highest_level_education				
No education				
Primary	0.937**	0.878-1.000	0.907	0.780-1.055
Secondary	0.764***	0.721696-0.809619	0.7459404***	0.659544-0.843654
higher	0.463***	0.412848-0.519658	0.4922***	0.416-0.581
Age Group				
Below 25				

25-35	1.224***	1.152045-1.302542	1.064	0.938-1.206
35-45	1.170***	1.089417-1.257094	0.993	0.863-1.144
over 45	1.234***	1.125002-1.354173	0.8798	0.734-1.054
Decision making				
Independent				
Jointly	0.679***	0.589-0.781	0.586***	0.459-0.749
Dependents	1.073	0.930-1.238	1.075	0.838-1.380
Working status				
No				
yes	1.450***	1.384-1.519	1.41***	1.287-1.546
Religion				
Hindu				
Muslim	0.939	0.866-1.018	0.859**	0.764-0.965
christian	0.565***	0.508-0.629	0.7594534**	0.611-0.943
others	0.737***	0.661-0.823	0.620296***	0.480-0.800
Number of Children				
No child				
single child	1.019	0.964968-1.077527	1.007	0.907-1.117
more 1	1.105***	1.033143-1.183634	1.180**	1.027-1.356
Caste				
Schedule caste				
schedule tribe	0.858***	0.801-0.918	0.664***	0.556-0.794
Other Backword class(OBC)	0.881***	0.833-0.933	0.796***	0.713-0.888
none of them	0.769***	0.713-0.829	0.705***	0.621-0.800

don't know	0.767*	0.581-1.014	0.616**	0.372-1.021
Region				
North				
central	1.934162***	1.799376-2.079044	1.859***	1.628-2.123
east	2.191046***	2.033565-2.360723	2.096***	1.814-2.422
northeast	1.667482***	1.521034-1.82803	1.530***	1.272-1.840
west	1.348038***	1.229373-1.478158	1.127	0.969-1.311
south	2.2916***	2.113017-2.485277	1.966***	1.727-2.238
Number of Household member				
Below 3				
3-5	1.032087	0.94318-1.129375	1.094	0.916-1.308
more than 5	1.041069	0.944667-1.147308	1.066	0.878-1.295
Husband or Partner Education				
No education				
primary	0.973716	0.908101-1.044072	1.078	0.913-1.273
secondary	0.832056***	0.782813-0.884396	0.868*	0.750-1.004
higher	0.661731***	0.599048-0.730972	0.648***	0.541-0.775
don't know	0.652533**	0.44728-0.951976	0.958	0.464-1.977

Further, the effect of covariates on IPV in rural and urban settings has been presented in the names of model 3 and model 4 in Table 3 separately. The measure used in Table 3 is in the form of an adjusted odds ratio. Logistic model reveals that owning property reduces the likelihood of owning property in urban India, but urban women still face the risk of IPV in spite of owning

property. The highest education is a protective factor for reducing the risk of IPV in both rural and urban areas. The more educated women have lower odds of IPV. Compared with the below 25 age group, women from 25-35, 35-45, and over 45 were more vulnerable to experiencing IPV in rural areas. No clear picture has been recorded in the urban context. Women's contribution to decision-making is an important factor. Like, jointly making decisions reduces the likelihood of IPV in both rural and urban scenarios. Similarly, in both rural and urban areas, working women have higher reporting cases of IPV. Either rural or urban women from a Christian background have a stronger protective effect on IPV. Parity level or number of children is positively associated with the likelihood of IPV in both scenarios. Especially in urban areas, higher and lower caste groups are less likely to experience IPV in comparison with the Scheduled caste community. Geographically region region-wise, IPV vulnerability also varies. Comparison with north India, south, and east India reported the highest odds of IPV. The proximate factor like household size does not intimately associate with the likelihood of IPV in all areas. Husband or Partner Education is also associated with the risk of IPV. Like partners with low educated is related with the higher risk of IPV and highly educated husbands are less likely to perpetuate IPV on women in rural and urban settings.
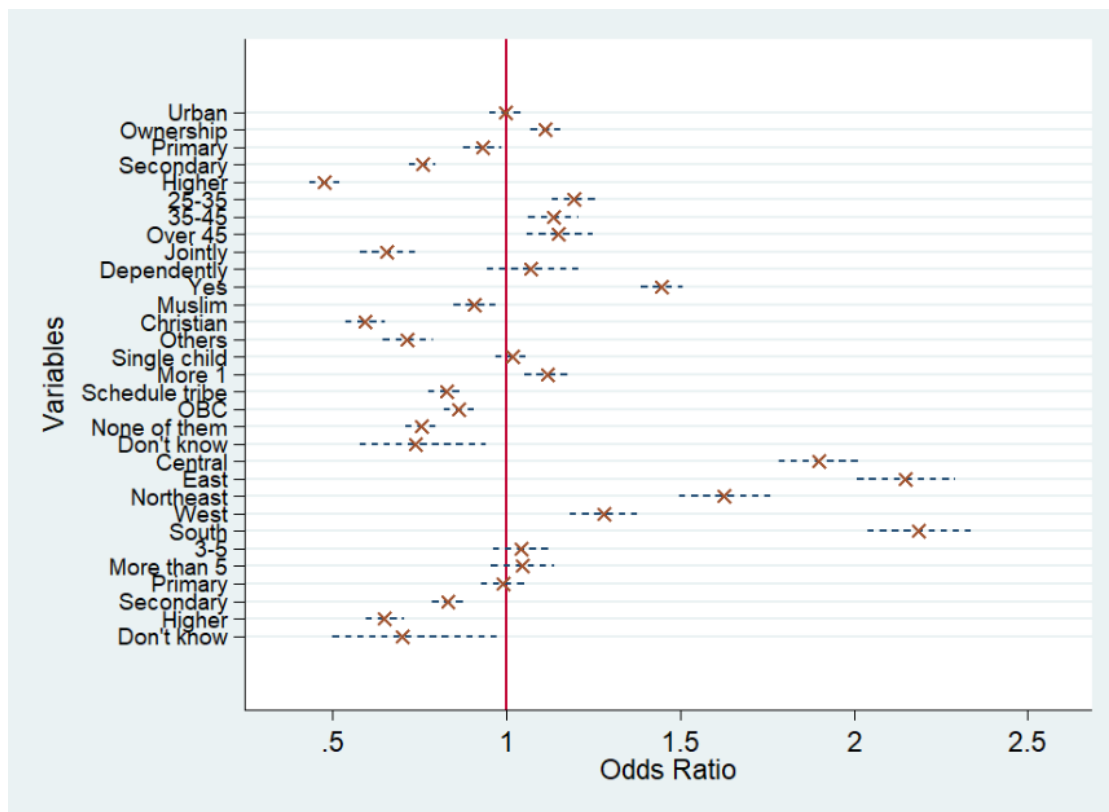

Fig: 4 Prevalence of IPV in India

Table 5: Fairlie Decomposition summary results showing the mean difference in IPV Prevalence between rural and urban women in India

Summary of Fairlie Decomposition Model	IPV
Mean prediction among rural women	0.311871
Mean prediction among rural women	0.26089474
Difference	0.05097625
Total Explained	0.04060978
Explained (%)	79.6641
Unexplained (%)	20.3359

Table 6: Fairlie Decomposition gap between urban and rural women on Intimate partner violence along with the socio-demographic background determinants in India

Co- variates (Variables contribution in the gap on the prevalence of IPV)	Coefficient Contribution	P Value	95% Confidence Interval		Contribution (%)
			Lower	Upper	
Property Ownership	0.001688	<0.001	0.001179	0.002196	4.156142
Educational Level	0.02225	<0.001	0.01969	0.024809	54.78902
Age Group	-0.00058	0.046	-0.00115	-9.52E-06	-1.43217
Decision Making	0.001096	<0.001	0.000907	0.001285	2.698119
Working Status	0.004431	<0.001	0.003792	0.005069	10.91018
Religion	0.00018	0.029	1.86E-05	0.00034	0.442012
Number of Children (Parity)	0.000905	0.002	0.000325	0.001484	2.227542
Caste	0.003704	<0.001	0.002565	0.004843	9.120217
Geographical Region	-0.00422	<0.001	-0.00494	-0.0035	-10.3881
Number of Household Member	0.000124	0.59	-0.00033	0.000574	0.30436
Husbands or Partners Education	0.011003	<0.001	0.008841	0.013164	27.09323

Results of the Decomposition analysis

The Fairlie decomposition analysis was conducted to explain the difference in the prevalence of IPV between rural and urban settings (Table:5&6). The explained part reveals that the difference is due to observable factors, and the unexplained part is denoted by the portion that remains after accounting for observable differences. The probability of IPV was higher among the rural women, G=0pr(Y:0|G=0) =31.19 compared with urban women pr(Y:0|G=1) 26.09. Resulting in a difference of 5.10% higher among rural women.
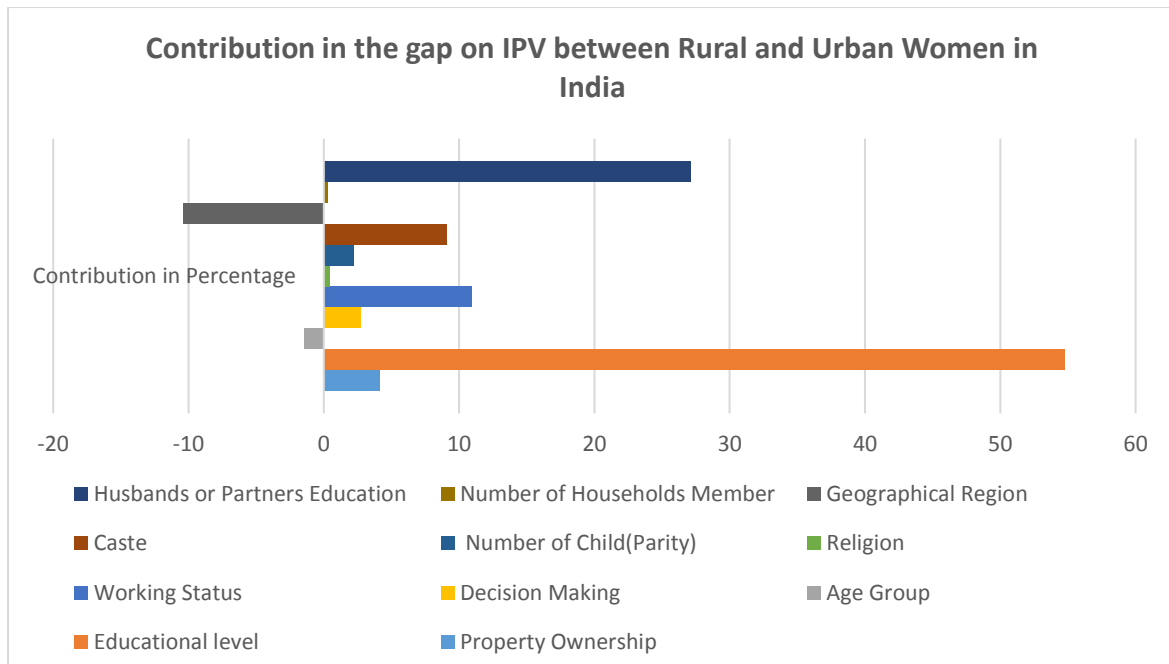
Fig: 5 Details of Decomposition analysis

The majority of the difference (79.66%) is "explained" by measurable factors: education, working status, region, decision-making power, husband's education, etc. These account for most of the gap. 20.33% is "unexplained. This could be due to cultural norms, hidden biases, attitudes towards gender roles, or other unmeasured variables not captured in the model.

Table: 7 Unheard Indian Voices: Exploring the Dynamics of Intimate Partner Violence behind the closed door of Rural and Urban India

Category Hierarchy	
Intra personal Relationship	*Every time I tried to do something on my own.... whether it was making a small decision or simply expressing what I wanted......he would find a way to harass me. It was as if my independence threatened him. The moment I tried to take control of my own life, his behavior would change.........he'd become angry, dismissive, or controlling. Slowly, I began to feel like my choices didn't belong to me anymore* **(PR-2 Uttar Pradesh).**
Age Gap	**N.A.**
Working status of women	*I was happily married to a young govt. employee. After few days of marriage my husband's family ask for more dowry. Because they want to give dowry to their daughter with my money. But my family can't afford any more. They already lend money for my marriage. So, it is more difficult for them. Later my husband started to quarrel with me on this issue. Now I'm staying with my family*. **(PR-12, Kerela).**
Family Structure	*It is like Silent Scars of my life......Deepanita had once believed marriage meant companionship. But over time, the man she*

	married changed—or perhaps, she had just never seen his true face. It began with small things: mocking her opinions, laughing at her dreams (For example if I say I want to start a business, beside my husbands all persons of my family used to smile except my children.........., controlling who she spoke to. Whenever she voiced her needs or tried to do something for herself—like attending a women's gathering, visiting her parents, or applying for a small business.......he would get angry and initially he thought about his family respect and family status if women (I will start to earn). *one evening............ i was thinking that it is very important to earn at least 5000 to contribute to my family. Now I feel that it is very important to earn respect individually by earning and becoming a part of the decision-making process in the family.*
Time of Violence	*In my family, I have been a victim of physical, verbal, and emotional abuse. During my pregnancy, I was subjected to both physical and verbal violence by my husband. I am currently trying to get a divorce, but he is refusing to cooperate.* **(PR-19, Maharashtra).** *He would often torture me, sometimes with cruel words, other times with physical insults. I had given birth to two daughters, and somehow, that became yet another reason for him to unleash his anger on me. But I couldn't speak up, couldn't resist. I had no income of my own, and that silence.......born of helplessness...........slowly became my prison. (kokhono khono mone hoi beriye chole jai)* **(PR- 17, West Bengal).** *often verbally abuses and behaves rudely ....we the worshippers, sometimes arrive late for worship, sometimes fail to do my work propery he used to torture me verbally (Gali to sobsomoy cholchei)* **(PU- 20, West Bengal)** *I am Gina. Working in hospitality Industry. My husband is fifteen years older than me. After six weeks of dating, we got married without telling any of my family members. Within the first month of marriage, my mind became suicidal because he used to control everything, like when I woke up, what I ate, and what I wore. I was without a phone for for several months after my marriage. He had made me chew up my SIM card and ATM card. He had deleted all my social media accounts. He did not allow me to communicate with anybody without him knowing.I always thought that it was safer to agree with him. especially because after a few days of our conflict, he would shower me with affection. He would give me good compliments. He would buy me a lot of gifts. He would take me out. I ended up being really confused. Actually, I started thinking he loves me a lot. Ek din Diwali night main unko laga ki mereko maa bana di to ye sudhrogi. He raped me that day. Then my baby comes. Such incidents were continuously happening. I have started running away from home to kill myself. I was waiting on the roof of the building to jump off. After thinking about my baby's life. One time when I was breastfeeding my baby, my husband woke up*

	and started hitting me because I tried to leave the house. Now I have broken the relationship with my husband. Now want to have a happy individual life with my husband. (**PU-16 Punjab**)
Habits of Partner	*My husband works in coal factory and he used to drink and come home at night.* (**PU-1Jharkhand**).
Occurrence of Violence	*After 2-3 year I got pregnant then he also used to pressurize me he wants a daughter if there'll be a son, he will leave me. In this way he threats her but hopefully blessed with a baby girl. And after the birth of my daughter the behaviour of my husband got changed and he became polite* *Main to government job karti hu. Saadi ke baad hi unhone bata diye mere ko kuch puch na nhi, kaha jate ho, kitna kamate ho. Sadhi karke laya hu. Garme rehena hain to raho, jo margi wo karo.Mere ko laga ki mere ko freedom de diye. lekin life main kuch ajib hoen laga. Kuch samaj main nhi ate the ki 2 minit badh keya hone bala hain. ekbaar ase chaol main change hua, unko jo chaol pasand tha wo nhi banaya thi, to unno dekkhe ke mere ko achanak thappar mara bacchi thi mere hath main. Turant niche gir geyi hamara baccha. ek din keya hua meri bhai ayi mere ko kuch paisa dene ke liye, wo lene ke liye main niche geyi. job main upor main ayi tob unnone bole ki tomara yaar se milne geyi thi keya? main job bola mera bhai aye the tob unnone bataya ki ye to ledka i hain na. kuch jabab bhi nhi de pathi thi iuki jabab dungi to aur marega. hamesha unse kuch na kuch maar dena habit ho giya tha. bachne ke liye ma ke ghar choli geyi thi lekin firse ma se maafi maang ke unnone mere ko leke aye. fir samme situation. ye sob kuch sahan kiya laga ki kabhi na kabhi inko behaviour sudhar jayegi, achha ho jayega. 15 /16 saal job beti ho geyi meri beti ko bohot gaali de rehe the main job mana kiye pata nhi acchak daar se main gir pori . mentally kuch major attack ho giya . uske baad main divorce ke liye apply kiye. Avi ye lagta hain ki bohot muskil se ye jindegi mila hain usko gawana nhi chaiye.* (**PU-5 Maharashtra**).

Discussion

A country's socioeconomic progress is determined by its the position given to its women. However, behaviors of ground-rooted patriarchy and its consequences create power disparity, which is reflected in discrimination against women and makes them unequal in decision-making, disempowered, and violated. In addition to the present study examines comparing the prevalence of interpersonal violence in rural and urban areas, the current study also seeks to determine whether property ownership is related to interpersonal violence with various socio-demographic characteristics using data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21). The study indicates that the gap in interpersonal violence between rural and urban areas and the risk of intimate partner violence (IPV) are closely linked to factors such as

property ownership, educational attainment, age, decision-making, employment status, religion, number of children, caste, region, household size, and the education of husbands or partners.

Our study finds that the disparity of IPV is highly profound between rural and urban areas. Since 1983, IPV has been recognized as a criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code 498A. Victims receive civil protection under the Protection of Women from Domestic assault Act (PWDVA) 2005, which covers all forms of physical, mental, verbal, sexual, and economic assault (unlawful dowry demands), including marital rape and harassment **(Manna et al., 2024; Mondal & Paul, 2021).**In line with prior studies, the current study showed that hiding violence is easiest in rural isolated locations, where women are mostly tolerators due to low help-seeking behavior and absence of services **(Peek-Asa et al., 2011).**

It is evident from the logistic model that there is not always a negative link between the prevalence of interpersonal violence and property ownership. It is clear that property ownership is a significant safeguard for the socioeconomic stability of an individual's life, but it is not a safeguard against IPV, as it might occasionally be a safeguard for navigating life for psycho-economic solitary individuals and retaining control over them **(Panda & Agarwal, 2005)**.

Along with statistical significance, the regression result reveals that highly educated women, even their partner's education, empowered women in the context of decision-making, tend to experience less intimate partner violence than uneducated and disempowered women. Because these factors could play the role of a proxy for unobserved factors like raising awareness for human rights, fighting ability. However, education is considered as the backbone of society, it can open many doors like cognitive skills and employment prospects, control of lives, resource allocation, etc **(Ahmed & Hyndman-Rizk, 2020; Weitzman, 2018).**

Our regression analysis also revealed that Women between the ages of 25 and 35 are more likely to experience violence, which disagrees with previous studies conducted in the study of Peru **(Burgos-Muñoz et al., 2021)**. It may be attributed that women in their early adult years are more likely to go into marriages because there is less security in the early stage of the relationship, less regulating legitimacy, pregnancy pressure in the homes, and they are sensitive to suffering IPV**(Johnson et al., 2015).**

The survey also found that working women from Hindu backgrounds, women with more than one child, scheduled caste women from the East, and Southeast Indian women were more likely to have experienced abuse. So, it is unusual in Indian society that exposure to the outer world

intensified the partner's violation of nature against his partner. Recently, in Indian society, it has been proposed that economic empowerment in terms of income generation, income control, and participation in work and credit markets is inextricably linked to the prevalence of IPV. Still, it is a little-understood issue, but it could be ascribed to women's economic engagement and being more knowledgeable about their rights, which shifts gender roles and disrupts the consistency of the dominant attitude. Such existing things that are going on contribute to these outcomes **(Sahoo & Raju, 2007)**. The findings indicate that women from Scheduled tribes were less affected by IPV. Women from lower socio-economic classes, such as the Scheduled Tribe, have greater social authority because they participate equally in decision-making with their partners and because their economic independence lesser the likelihood of violence in their households.**(Mal & Saikia, 2024; Mitra, 2008).**

Understanding the relative contributions of different factors to the rural-urban gap in IPV is possible through decomposition analysis. This analysis shows that the current IPV gap between rural and urban areas is mainly due to respondents' educational levels (54.78%) and their husbands' or partners' education (27.09%). This aligns with previous studies conducted in sub-Saharan countries (Nabaggala et al., 2021). It suggests that developing nations, like rural regions of India, are deeply rooted in patriarchy. The social acceptance of gender norms varies greatly between rural and urban areas, which disempowers women socially, economically, and educationally. Consequently, urban women tend to be more aware of their rights than rural women. Additionally, rural areas still face greater disparities in access to quality education due to infrastructure limitations. Thus, it is clear that the functionality of education, awareness, and educational infrastructure disparity in the prevalence of IPV **(Singh et al., 2022).**

Additionally, the model reveals that women's employment status is a significant factor contributing to the widening gap in intimate partner violence (IPV) between rural and urban areas. While employment is often seen as a reliable indicator of women's economic empowerment, it can also provoke violence due to shifting gender norms, which vary across regions. In terms of disparity in access to services, urban areas generally offer more diverse and accessible work opportunities for women, whereas in rural areas, women are often confined to subsistence agriculture with limited economic autonomy **(Peek-Asa et al., 2011).** This disparity in employment scope further deepens the IPV risk gap between rural and urban settings **(Edwards, 2015).**

However, indeed, one of the main causes of the growing disparity in the incidence of intimate partner violence (IPV) between rural and urban areas in India is caste. Compared to women from other caste categories, IPV is more common among Scheduled Caste (SC) women, popularly known as the disadvantage caste group **(Zacharias & Vakulabharanam, 2011)**. These often-disadvantaged SC groups are primarily found in remote, rural locations. where the upper caste system has a higher prevalence of economic and educational backwardness, which increases power inequality, crime, violations, and torturous behavior **(Sharma, 2015).**

The study provides insightful information, yet it deals with a few limitations. The use of secondary data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), which is comprehensive but lacks in capturing the complicated relationship between intimate partner violence (IPV) and property ownership. This emphasizes the necessity to carry out thorough primary field surveys. Additionally, snowball sampling was used in the study's qualitative part, which sought to comprehend the rural-urban discrepancy in IPV via the lens of sociodemographic factors. However, time and resource constraints were the main cause of the relatively smaller sample sizes. In order to provide more broadly applicable and contextually grounded conclusions, future research should aim to broaden both the qualitative and quantitative components and include a larger and more diverse sample, especially in the context of developing countries like India.

Conclusion

Intimate partner violence is a widespread social issue that affects individuals' physical and mental health. The main focus of the study is whether women who own property, such as land and houses, face more violence or not. This implies that women with property are not violated. And what is the prevalence of IPV among rural and urban women, along with the socio-demographic factors. From the logistic model, it is found that Property ownership is positively correlated with the risk of IPV in both rural and urban India, where the percentage of rural is much lower than that is only 7% where in urban parts, which is nearly 23%. The picture will be clear through an incident that happened during a qualitative survey (2025).

"I am constantly slut shamed by my husband. In my neighbourhood also, domestic violence was rife in some households. Either a drunk husband would grip the wife's hair or a perfectly sane husband would beat their wives until they would flee..…... I don't think so. Violence still might take place. Even after my job (I am a school teacher actually), it still didn't prevent me from being constantly slut shamed by my husband. Rather, my

exposure to the outer world intensified my husband's slut shaming. In the rest of the cases, the husband's family wasn't very educated. I think that I have a job or having a property of one's own definitely equips a woman with economic and psychological strength to fight back and stand up against the violence" P-8.

Apart from that, the Fairly model highlighted that the gap in the prevalence of intimate partner violence is highly dependent on regional and cultural factors. The Decomposition model highlighted that educational attainment is highly contributing to the widening of the gap between urban and rural India in the prevalence of IPV, that is, around 55% followed by Husbands' or partners' education (27.09%), caste (9.12%). On the other hand, the geographical region and age group of women have reduced the gap contributed around (-10.38% and (-1.43%). In a culturally diverse country like India, the study highlights and establishes the causal relationship between property ownership and different levels of intimate partner violence. Additionally, it addresses the role of women's socio-economic empowerment, providing valuable insights for policy-making efforts.

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