



Forms Of Gender Based Violence Experienced By Rural Women: A Case Study Of Kendujhar District

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Abstract:

The issue of gender-based violence (GBV) remains a widespread and ingrained issue in India, and its impact is the strongest on rural women. As an act of violence against people because of their gender, GBV can be in various forms, such as physical violence, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, verbal harassment, and economic deprivation. Conservative patriarchal beliefs, low rates of education access, and overall economic reliance within the rural Odisha state compound this form of violence, whereby it reduces women to an even more vulnerable state. At home, women are typically trapped in domestic abuse, movement is restricted, and they lack financial autonomy, and externally, they are discriminated, harassed and marginalised. This paper discusses the village of Baniajodi in the Kendujhar District of Odisha, and uses a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative data on the rate of violence with qualitative data on lived experiences. The research will also focus on determining the social, cultural, and economic dynamics that continue to perpetuate GBV and on how it has become normalised in everyday life. By means of critical analysis of these trends, the study not only highlights the extent of violence to which rural women are subjected, but also the dire necessity of preventive measures, community education, and policies to be applied to ensure a more secure, fair and even-handed society.

Key Words: Gender, Violence, Women, Kendujhar

Introduction:

Gender-based violence (GBV) is among the most widespread human rights abuses in India, which transcends age, caste, class, and geography. The weight of this violence in Odisha is especially on women in the rural areas, who are frequently inflicted with social marginalisation, cultural subordination, and social neglect. GBV involves various forms of negative behaviours such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and economic deprivation, mainly perpetuated against women due to gender inequalities that have been practised (UN Women, 2022).

Odisha, with a large tribal and rural population, is a complex state with significant gender inequality. Domestic abuse, dowry harassment, child marriage, sexual assault, trafficking, and neglect are some of the worst forms of violence against many of the women in rural areas. Such actions are commonly accepted in communities due to existing culture, social influences, and a lack of knowledge of the law. Inaccessibility to the law and inadequate transport and education further discourage rural women from reporting abuse or seeking justice. Women in Baniajodi village of Kendujhar district are physically, psychologically, socially and economically abused. Domestic conflicts and power imbalances lead to physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, and neglect, which contribute to psychological harm. Social violence entails discrimination, restrictions in mobility and in decision-making, and economic violence includes resource denial and property rights. All these kinds of abuse enable inequality and marginalization.

Although there are legal frameworks at the national and state level that are supposed to protect women, such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006) and other efforts by the Odisha State Commission of Women, there are difficulties in their effective application. Gender norms, social stigma, and lack of institutional support are deep-rooted and still in place, making the voices of many rural women remain silent.

This paper aims to look into different aspects of gender-based violence that rural women face in Odisha, learn how the social and economic factors thrive to perpetuate the vice, and evaluate how the state, civil society, and community can do something to curb the vice and protect and empower rural women in such marginalized communities.

The demographic characteristics of Odisha include a rural, tribal population, with almost 83 per cent living in villages (Census, 2011). In such rural communities, women are structurally disadvantaged due to low literacy levels, early marriages, the absence of property rights, and economic dependence. National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) indicates that more than three out of every ten women in Odisha who had ever been married reported being victims of spousal violence. However, the real figure may be much higher due to underreporting resulting from dishonour, fear, and social pressure.

Types of GBV in rural Odisha are domestic violence, dowry-related abuse, sexual harassment, human trafficking, and witch branding. An example can be given of women in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts who have been accused of witchcraft on many occasions and then publicly shamed or attacked. Cases of minor girl trafficking have also been on the increase in Ganjam and Sundargarh, usually in the pretext of marriage or work (Odisha State Commission for Women, 2023).

Although there are significant legislative protections, including the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), POCSO Act (2012), and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006), enforcement remains low in rural Odisha. Most districts have the Odisha State Commission for Women and One Stop Centres (SAKHI), though they face staffing, logistical, and outreach challenges.

The purpose of this study is to find out the underlying reasons and expressions of gender-based violence in rural women in Odisha, to determine the effectiveness of legal and institutional reactions, and to offer some long-term empowerment and justice solutions. The availability of community-based solutions and the realisation of gender equity in the rural setting are important for dismantling systemic obstacles and for understanding the local socio-cultural context.

Legal Framework Applicable in Odisha

A national law is applied in Odisha, which tends to define domestic violence as physical, emotional, sexual, verbal and economic abuse. This act allows victims to pursue protection orders, residence orders, financial support, child custody, and damages. It also ensures access to free medical assistance and legal services, and the aggrieved woman is entitled to live in the common household, whether or not it is owned. But despite these legal provisions, major implementation gaps still exist in the state. The duties

of Protection Officers are often too many, and as a result, they take too long to provide prompt relief and support to victims (PWDVA, 2005).

Every organisation and institution should establish an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) to address sexual harassment claims. Universities and state departments in Odisha have started vigorously strengthening awareness campaigns, training, and grievance redressal mechanisms. These have been stepped up, specifically in the light of more recent events, which pointed to the need to have more robust institutional accountability and support systems (POSH) Act, 2013.

Crimes of gender-based violence, such as rape under Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, are also country-specific and are applicable in all states, Odisha being no exception. In February 2025, the Orissa High Court raised concerns about extending rape laws to cases involving false promises of marriage, stressing the importance of respecting women's sexual autonomy and distinguishing between failed and deceitful relationships. In the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) of 2024, certain punishments were provided against sexual intercourse that was received under false pretences, and the maximum punishment was 10 years. However, state courts have emphasised the need for cautious judicial discretion to avoid misuse and ensure fairness (BNS).

The regulation grants special rights to child victims of sexually transmitted violence, such as obligatory reporting of the offences and the right to fast-track trials. In a recent instance in Jajpur, Odisha, the rape of a 16-year-old girl was sentenced under the POCSO Act and the IPC, which led to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment. The court also awarded ₹2 lakh as compensation to the survivor (POCSO Act, 2012).

In Odisha, child marriage is prevented by the state rules, according to which child marriage is defined as a union of girls aged under 18 and boys aged under 21 years. District collectors and specified Child Marriage Prohibition Officers are responsible for implementing. Such officials have the authority to act proactively and petition the court to annul such marriages or to provide maintenance to the sufferers (Act, 2006).

Institutional & State-Level Support Systems

Odisha State Commission on Women is a statutory body formed in 1993 to address complaints, conduct investigations, provide counselling to victims, and advise the government on issues affecting women. The Department of Women and Child Development has One Stop Centres in all 30 districts of Odisha that provide 24-hour integrated services, including legal, medical, psychosocial, and police services. These services can be called by the helpline number 181. There are also support systems, such as the SAMPARK Help Desk, the legal aid hotline, and the child helpline number 1098, to provide assistance to distressed women and children.

History of Gender-Based Violence

The history of gender-based violence is just as long as the history of human civilisation itself. Since ancient times and on every continent, societies have been founded on patriarchal norms that have provided men with power and privilege at the expense of women and other gender minorities. Gender-based violence, demarcated as acts of destruction against people because of their gender, has always been used in the past in order to sustain this power imbalance. It is not only physical and sexual violence, but also mental control, economic reliance, and cultural isolation.

Women, living in ancient societies, such as in Mesopotamia, Greece, and India, were generally regarded as the property of men, initially their fathers, and then their husbands. Marriage was not about mutual agreement or love but about domination, partnership, and relocation of property. Women barely had any or no rights to their bodies, property or decisions. Sexual violence, including marital rape or forced consummation of marriage, was an accepted norm that hardly came under scrutiny. Domestic abuse was regarded as a personal issue, and there was minimal or no societal or legal intervention. These hierarchies were mirrored and supported by the legal and religious codes of these periods. The Hindu

text on social law, the Manusmriti, in India, with its rigid rules of conduct, defined the role of women as requiring them to obey the authority of men at all times, regardless of age. It established the myth that a woman was incapable of acting outside the control of men, hence the social norms that perpetuated gender-based violence over the centuries.

With the development of society, the essence and reasons of violence against women have changed and remained. Sati (immolation of widows on the pyres of their husbands), child marriage and the devadasi system were practised and became established during the medieval and feudal periods. More specifically, sati was praised as a gesture of the most extreme fidelity, and the devadasi system was a rationale of ritualised sexual exploitation of young girls in temples. Women were compelled to live in purdah (seclusion) and were denied mobility and access to education, health and life in general in many parts of the Indian subcontinent. These cultural norms, which are closely connected with religion, family honour, and caste, allowed and normalised the systemic dehumanisation and abuse of women.

Some changes were brought about by the colonial era. The British rule in India had a handful of legal reforms by the colonial administration to check blatantly violent practices. An example is the Sati Regulation Act of 1829, which was a legal prohibition of widow immolation following several years of campaigns by activists such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy. In the same manner, the Age of Consent Act of 1891 increased the age at which girls could consent to sex, and the Child Marriage Restriction Act of 1929 aimed at stopping child marriage. These laws, however, were frequently poorly implemented and met opposition from conservative communities. Besides, the British legal system had little connection to the reality experienced by the Indian women in rural and traditional contexts.

Alongside these legal changes were the work of social reformers like Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, who supported widow remarriage, and Savitribai Phule, who supported the education of women and the rights of Dalit women. The movements were instrumental in providing the basis of feminist thinking in India, although GBV was still prevalent and approved in society in many forms.

Gender equality became a constitutional right in 1947, when India attained independence. Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution ensured equality before the law and outlawed sex discrimination. But the equality promise came into conflict with the continuation of the traditional norms and practices. Forms of gender-based violence during the post-independence era persisted in the form of dowry harassment, domestic violence, marital rape (yet to be considered a crime) and honour killings. In the 1970s and 1980s, the number of dowry-related deaths and bride burnings drastically increased in both urban and rural regions. Although in 1961 the Dowry Prohibition Act was enacted, dowry demands grew more violent, and legal amendments in the 1980s were necessary to provide criminal penalties for dowry-related harassment and deaths under Sections 304B and 498A of the Indian Penal Code.

The Mathura rape case was a case in 1972 that brought a big change to the feminist movement in India. Mathura was a young tribal girl who was raped under the custody of the police, but the culprit police officers were acquitted by the Supreme Court on the basis of implied consent. This popular outcry led to enormous protests and made the government amend rape clauses within the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1983. The amendments reversed the onus of proving rape in cases involving custodial rape and provided the opportunity for more victim-sensitive processes during rape trials.

This carried on into the 1990s, when the Supreme Court released the Vishaka Guidelines in 1997 in the wake of the gang rape of Bhanwari Devi, a grassroots worker in Rajasthan. These rules spelt out what constitutes sexual harassment in the workplace and outlined the proprietors' duty to provide women with a safe working environment. This formed the basis of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, which was enacted in 2013.

Perhaps the most seismic shift in the national conversation around gender-based violence came in 2012, with the Nirbhaya gang rape case in Delhi. A 23-year-old paramedic student was brutally raped and murdered on a moving bus by multiple men. The incident shocked the nation's conscience, sparking

mass protests, candlelight marches, and global attention. In response, the Justice Verma Committee was established to recommend changes to existing laws. The Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013 followed soon after, introducing provisions for punishment for new categories of crimes such as stalking, voyeurism, and acid attacks, and enhancing penalties for rape. Fast-track courts were also established to try rape cases swiftly.

Despite these legislative reforms, GBV remains deeply embedded in Indian society. Cultural taboos, fear of social ostracism, victim-blaming attitudes, and distrust of the police and judiciary deter many women from reporting violence. Moreover, marginalized communities such as Dalit, Adivasi, LGBTQ+, and disabled women face intersectional forms of violence and discrimination. In rural and tribal areas, traditional forms of GBV such as witch-branding, child trafficking, forced labour, and sexual exploitation during displacement or migration are common, yet often invisible in mainstream discourse.

In recent years, technology has given rise to new forms of gender-based violence. Cyberstalking, online harassment, doxxing, and the circulation of non-consensual images have become increasingly prevalent, particularly targeting young women and activists. Although legal mechanisms exist, implementation remains weak, and perpetrators often go unpunished.

Need for the Present Study:

One of the most effective and sustainable approaches to reducing gender-based violence (GBV) lies in education and widespread awareness. Schools and universities must act as foundational spaces where gender sensitization is not treated as an optional topic but as an essential component of the curriculum. From a young age, children should be introduced to the concepts of mutual respect, consent, empathy, and gender equality. Education in this context should extend beyond textbooks and classroom theories. It must involve critical thinking exercises, discussions, and real-life examples that challenge existing gender stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes.

Boys and young men, in particular, need to be taught to reject toxic masculinity and embrace alternative, non-violent forms of manhood that value kindness, emotional expression, and equality. Likewise, girls must be empowered to recognize their rights and demand respect in all areas of life. A gender-sensitive education equips students to navigate interpersonal relationships without resorting to or tolerating abuse, thus creating future generations less likely to engage in violent behaviour.

Awareness campaigns within educational institutions should also address common myths surrounding GBV, highlight legal rights, and guide students on how to seek help when needed. Teachers and staff must be trained to identify signs of abuse and respond appropriately, creating a safe environment for students.

Moreover, collaboration between schools and parents is vital. When both educational and familial spaces reinforce gender equality and challenge discrimination, the socialization of young individuals becomes more consistent and effective. As students grow within such empowering environments, the normalization of violence gradually erodes.

In essence, embedding gender equality within educational institutions is not just about knowledge transmission; it is about social transformation. When young minds are shaped by values of dignity, justice, and mutual respect, they become the strongest agents of change in the collective fight against gender-based violence.

The alarming intersection of gender-based violence and suicide in Spain, where 49 women were victims of gender violence in 2022, while 10 male perpetrators died by suicide and 9 others attempted it. He argues that male suicide cannot be separated from gender violence, as the aggressor's reality is often rooted in controlling and dominating the woman he perceives as his possession. Women who experience partner or ex-partner abuse are five times more likely to contemplate suicide compared to those who have not. Gender-based violence significantly affects women's emotional stability and mental health and increases the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviours. For many victims, suicide is seen as the only escape from their suffering. Portillo calls for psychological autopsies to investigate the underlying

causes of male violence and self-harm, emphasizing the interconnected roles of misery, depression, and hopelessness. He also stresses the need to understand psychological concepts like mental colonization, coercive persuasion, and paradoxical adaptation syndrome, while debunking harmful myths such as the notion that love can solve all problems or justify control and dominance (Portillo, 2023).

The South Asian community responded to a peer-led theatre performance depicting a husband's controlling behaviour toward his wife. The study found that while most bystanders approached the wife, the nature of their interactions was shaped by their beliefs about gender roles and relationships. Using inductive coding and iterative visual analysis of videotaped bystander interactions grounded in a theory-driven approach, the researchers highlighted the need for bystander programs to consider the diverse, within-group variations in attitudes and beliefs. These findings underscore the complexity of gender norms in shaping bystander interventions (Yoshi Hama, Hammock, and Baidoun, 2022).

Gender-Based Political Violence Against Women (GBPAW) is a prevalent form of political discrimination that not only harms women but also undermines social justice, including economic redistribution, sociocultural recognition, and political representation. In April 2020, Mexico adopted GBPAW as federal law. During the COVID-19 pandemic, from September 7, 2020, to June 6, 2021, Mexico held its largest electoral process, involving 95 million voters, 21,368 positions, and elections across nearly half the republic's states. For the first time in history, gender quotas mandated equality at local, state, and national levels, contributing to an increase in all forms of political violence, including GBPAW. Despite its importance, GBPAW remains underrepresented in regional scientific discourse and is an emerging theme in the social sciences. This study draws on multidisciplinary research by a team of 26 academics using historical and legal harmonisation indicators, regional indices, over 150 in-depth discussions with experts and female politicians, socio-digital media analysis, and a flexibility study. The Reform Decree of April 13, 2020, is highlighted as a success story, establishing Mexico as having the second-most progressive law globally on GBPAW. However, the study underscores areas for improvement, particularly in affirmative action, substantive equality, and transversal parity (Oswald, 2023).

The domestic violence against women in India is analyzed in its various forms, causes, and potential solutions. The study highlights that domestic violence, encompassing physical, mental, verbal, and economic abuse, is prevalent across many Indian households, affecting women in their roles as daughters, daughters-in-law, and wives. Despite equal rights for men and women being enshrined in human rights principles, women continue to face discrimination in a patriarchal society characterized by male authority and autocratic behaviour. This systemic oppression limits women's understanding of their rights and freedoms, thereby hindering both women's empowerment and the nation's overall progress (Kumar and Devi, 2019).

The Ministry of Women & Child Development titled *Violence Against Women: A State-Level Analysis in India*, analyzing secondary data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 2016, for all Indian States and Union Territories. The analysis utilised three indices: the Index for Domestic Violence Against Women, the Index for Violence Against Women, and the Index for Atrocities Faced by SC/ST Women. To ensure comparability across states, the crime rate was calculated per lakh women in the population, and each state and Union Territory was scored on a scale of 1 to 100 for each indicator. Rankings were then assigned based on index scores. The Domestic Violence Index revealed forms of violence such as dowry deaths, cruelty by husbands or relatives, familial rape, forced miscarriages, violations of the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), and deaths caused by miscarriage. The Violence Against Women Index included crimes such as kidnapping, trafficking, assault with intent to outrage modesty, acid attacks, rape, dowry deaths, and violations of the Safety of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005). The third index highlighted crimes against SC/ST women, including kidnapping, rape, attempted rape, and insults to modesty. The report concluded that violence against women and girls obstructs the

enjoyment of human rights and hinders India's advancement toward completing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (Khandelwal, 2019).

Objective of the Study:

- To identify and categorize the various forms of gender-based violence experienced by women in Baniajodi village.
- To analyze the underlying causes and contributing factors leading to gender-based violence against Baniajodi village women.

Area of the study:

The present study was conducted in the Kendujhar district of Odisha, specifically focusing on the village of Baniajodi. This region was selected for its predominantly rural setting and the socio-cultural context that shapes women's lived experiences. A total of 50 women respondents from Baniajodi village were selected to participate in the study, providing valuable insights into the types and causes of gender-based violence prevalent in rural communities.

Research Design:

This research design aims not only to document the prevalence and types of violence faced by rural women but also to understand the local context and socio-cultural dynamics that perpetuate such acts. The findings are expected to inform policy recommendations and intervention strategies tailored to the specific needs of rural communities, such as Baniajodi. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to gather comprehensive data.

Sampling Method:

For this study, a combination of stratified random and purposive sampling techniques was employed to ensure the representativeness and relevance of the collected data. Stratified random sampling was used to divide the population of women in Baniajodi village into specific strata based on key demographic characteristics. Purposive sampling was utilized to include participants who had directly experienced or were knowledgeable about gender-based violence.

Procedure of Data Collection:

Data for the study were collected through a field survey conducted in Baniajodi village using a structured interview schedule. Participant observation was employed to gain contextual understanding of the respondents' lived experiences. Primary data were obtained directly from 50 women participants, while secondary data were sourced from relevant reports, academic literature, and government records.

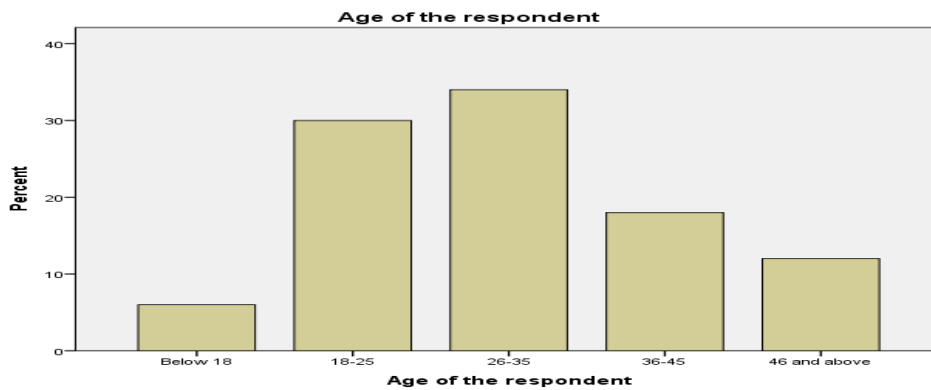
Data Analysis:

Data Analysis on Demographic Profile

Table No. 1: Age of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below 18	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
18-25	15	30.0	30.0	36.0
26-35	17	34.0	34.0	70.0
36-45	9	18.0	18.0	88.0
46 and above	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

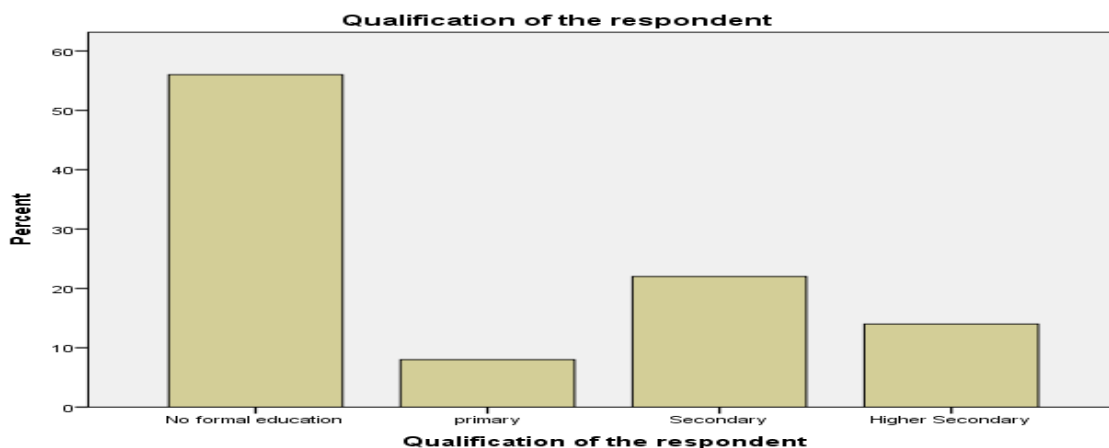
Source: Field Survey



The majority of respondents are between 18–35 years, with 15 (30%) aged 18–25 and 17 (34%) aged 26–35, making this the largest group. Only 3 respondents (6%) are below 18, while 9 (18%) fall in the 36–45 age group. The remaining 6 respondents (12%) are aged 46 and above. In total, all 50 respondents are fully accounted for across the age categories.

Table No. 2 Qualification of the respondent

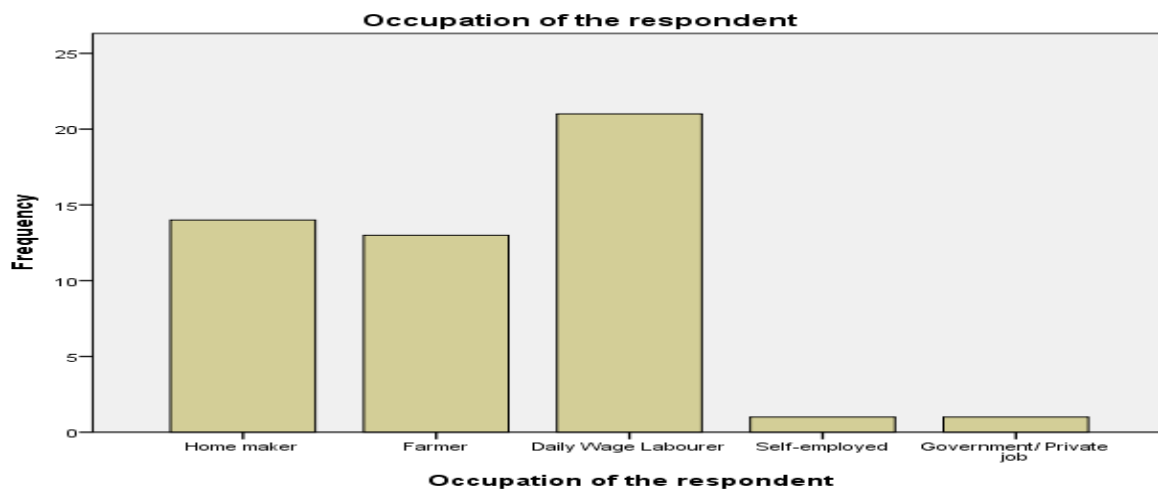
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid No formal education	28	56.0	56.0	56.0
primary	4	8.0	8.0	64.0
Secondary	11	22.0	22.0	86.0
Higher Secondary	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	



The table shows that 56% of respondents have no formal education, indicating a high level of illiteracy. Only 8% have completed primary education, while 22% and 14% have attained secondary and higher secondary education, respectively. This reflects a low level of education among the surveyed group.

Table No. 3 Occupation of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Home maker	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
Farmer	13	26.0	26.0	54.0
Daily Wage Labourer	21	42.0	42.0	96.0
Self-employed	1	2.0	2.0	98.0
Government/Private job	1	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	



The table shows the occupational distribution of 50 respondents. A majority, 42%, are daily wage labourers, followed by 28% homemakers and 26% farmers. Only 2% each are self-employed or employed in government/private jobs. This indicates most respondents are engaged in informal or unskilled labour.

Different Forms of Gender Based Violence:**Table No. 4****Violence Experienced Frequencies**

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$Violence_ Experienced ^a	Physical Violence Experienced	28	20.3%	87.5%
	Sexual Violence Experienced	12	8.7%	37.5%
	Verbal Abuse Experienced	31	22.5%	96.9%
	Psychological Abuse Experienced	17	12.3%	53.1%
	Economic Violence Experienced	32	23.2%	100.0%
	Social Violence Experienced	18	13.0%	56.3%
Total		138	100.0%	431.3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

The most frequently reported type was economic violence, with 32 reports (23.2%), experienced by 100 per cent of cases, implying that all respondents had some type of economic limitation, denial, or financial control. Verbal abuse was the second most common and received 31 responses (22.5%), which influenced 96.9% of cases. It means that almost every participant was verbally insulted, humiliated, or threatened. Physical violence had been given 28 times (20.3), 87.5% had been experiencing it, and as such, it remains a significant means of abuse. The responses to social violence were 18 (13%), and over half (56.3%) had social exclusion, restrictions, or isolation. In 17 cases (12.3%), which were reported, it was psychological abuse, which was experienced by 53.1% of cases, which concerned mental harassment and emotional manipulation. Sexual violence had the fewest responses with 12 (8.7%), yet still impacted 37.5% of cases, meaning that it occurs but in less reported cases than others.

Frequency of different types of violence experienced by respondents:

Table No. 5

Violence Frequency Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$Violence_Frequency ^a	Physical Violence Frequency	4	11.8%	21.1%
	Sexual Violence Frequency	8	23.5%	42.1%
	Verbal Abuse Frequency	8	23.5%	42.1%
	Psychological Violence Frequency	4	11.8%	21.1%
	Economic Violence Frequency	9	26.5%	47.4%
	Social Violence Frequency	1	2.9%	5.3%
Total		34	100.0%	178.9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

The most common one was economic violence, with 9 responses (26.5%) covering close to 50 per cent of the instances (47.4%). This means that financial constraints, resource deprivation, or economic dependence were endemic and recurring problems. The cases of sexual violence and verbal abuse were equally reported, with 8 responses each (23.5), and it affected 42.1 per cent of the cases. This demonstrates that these types of violence were recurrent among a large percentage of the participants. Physical violence was reported 4 times (11.8%), psychological violence was reported 4 times (11.8%), with 21.1% being the proportion of cases potentially being affected with physical and psychological violence, respectively, indicating that even though the two manifested in a smaller proportion, they still manifested in a smaller number than the economic, sexual, and verbal forms. Social violence was the least common, with only 1 response (2.9%), which only impacted 5.3 per cent of cases, indicating that social exclusion or isolation was not as common in terms of recurrence.

Conclusion:

In rural areas, deep-rooted patriarchy, alcohol abuse, and the marginalization of women significantly contribute to gender-based violence. These factors create a culture of dominance, silence, and neglect. Addressing this issue requires challenging societal norms and empowering women at the grassroots level. Sustainable change can only occur through community awareness, education, and strong legal enforcement.

Women have long been fighting for empowerment, yet true empowerment remains distant, especially in addressing gender-based violence. Despite ongoing efforts, many women still face systemic barriers that hinder their safety and dignity. As future bearers and builders of society, their well-being is crucial for sustainable development. Protecting and empowering women is not just a social responsibility but a foundational step toward an equitable future. A society cannot progress if half its population continues to live in fear and marginalisation.

To eliminate the immoral system of gender inequality, it is essential to prioritise both men and women equally in society. Equal opportunities must be provided regardless of gender, ensuring fairness in every aspect of life. Promoting women's participation in both government and private sectors through targeted employment initiatives is crucial. Encouraging women to pursue higher education will further empower

them to contribute meaningfully to societal growth. Gender equality is not merely a goal but a necessity for a balanced and progressive nation. When women are supported and uplifted, they can stand on equal footing with men in every domain. A truly inclusive society thrives only when all its members are given the chance to grow and lead.

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