Economic Dependency And Domestic Violence: A Socio-Economic Analysis Of Women's Autonomy And Abuse Prevalence In Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Economic dependency constitutes a fundamental structural determinant perpetuating domestic violence against women, constraining exit options from abusive relationships and reinforcing power asymmetries within patriarchal household structures. While substantial scholarship documents domestic violence prevalence globally, systematic empirical examination of economic dependency's specific role in enabling, sustaining, and exacerbating spousal abuse in Indian contexts remains limited, particularly regarding how financial autonomy intersects with violence exposure and resistance capacity. This study examines the relationship between economic dependency and domestic violence among women in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, employing quantitative cross-sectional methodology with primary data collected from 200 women through structured questionnaires. The sample comprised 100 victims of domestic violence identified through Protection Officers, NGO referrals, and police records, alongside 100 general respondents from the same geographic area selected through systematic random sampling, ensuring comparative analysis across victim and non-victim populations. Data collection occurred across both urban (Guntur Municipal Corporation) and rural mandals (Mangalagiri, Tenali) representing diverse socioeconomic contexts. Statistical analyses employed descriptive statistics, chi-square tests examining associations between economic status and violence prevalence, and t-tests comparing financial autonomy levels between victim and non-victim groups. Findings reveal that 78% of domestic violence victims were financially dependent on husbands compared to 42% among general respondents, demonstrating significant association between economic dependency and abuse vulnerability (χ^2=28.64, p<0.001). Mean monthly personal income among victims (₹2,847±1,523) was significantly lower than non-victims (₹6,214±2,836), t(198)=10.47, p<0.001, indicating economic deprivation among abuse survivors. Among employed women, only 23% of victims controlled their own earnings compared to 67% of non-victims, revealing that employment alone insufficient without financial autonomy. Cross-tabulation demonstrates that 82% of women lacking independent income reported severe physical violence compared to 34% among economically independent women. Regression analysis identifies economic dependency (β=0.418, p<0.001), decision-making autonomy (β=-0.327, p<0.001), and control over personal earnings (β=-0.285, p=0.002) as significant predictors of domestic violence severity, collectively explaining 54.7% variance (R^2=0.547). Results establish economic dependency as primary vulnerability factor requiring targeted interventions through financial inclusion, skill development, entrepreneurship support, and legal provisions ensuring women's property rights and income control to mitigate domestic violence risk and enhance exit capacity from abusive relationships.

Keywords: Economic dependency, domestic violence, financial autonomy, women's empowerment, gender-based violence, Andhra Pradesh, income control

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Economic Dependency as Structural Violence Determinant

Domestic violence against women constitutes a pervasive global public health crisis affecting approximately one in three women worldwide, transcending geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic boundaries while generating profound physical, psychological, reproductive, and economic consequences for survivors, their children, families, and communities. While multiple factors contribute to domestic violence perpetration and persistence—including patriarchal gender norms, alcohol abuse, childhood violence exposure, and weak legal enforcement—economic dependency emerges as a fundamental structural determinant that uniquely constrains women's capacity to resist, escape, or prevent abuse.

Economic dependency refers to women's reliance on male partners for financial resources necessary for basic survival, creating power asymmetries where abusers leverage financial control as an abuse tactic, restricting access to money, preventing employment, confiscating earnings, and creating debt obligations. This dependency operates through multiple mechanisms: first, it reduces women's bargaining power within households, limiting their influence over decisions and increasing tolerance for abuse; second, it eliminates exit options by making independent survival economically unfeasible; third, it generates psychological dependence through internalized beliefs that economic survival requires tolerating abuse; fourth, it isolates women from external support by restricting financial resources needed to access legal services, shelters, or alternative housing.

Feminist economic theory conceptualizes economic dependency as a form of structural violence embedded within patriarchal capitalist systems that systematically exclude women from property ownership, wage labor, credit access, and inheritance rights while simultaneously relegating them to unpaid domestic and care work. This exclusion creates material conditions enabling male dominance and violence, transforming economic systems into mechanisms of gender subordination.

1.2 Indian Context: Economic Marginalization and Gendered Violence

India presents a particularly compelling context for examining economic dependency-violence linkages given pervasive gender economic disparities. Despite constitutional equality guarantees and economic liberalization, women's labor force participation remains among the world's lowest at 24% (2021-22), concentrated primarily in informal agricultural and domestic sectors with minimal wage protection or social security. Women own merely 10-15% of land and property despite comprising nearly half the population, while financial inclusion gaps persist with only 51% of women possessing bank accounts compared to 71% of men.

These economic exclusions intersect with patriarchal family structures emphasizing male authority, female subordination, and son preference, creating conditions where economic dependency reinforces and is reinforced by social norms positioning women as dependents rather than autonomous economic actors. Dowry practices further entrench dependency by transferring wealth from brides' families to grooms while providing brides minimal ownership or control, simultaneously creating economic burdens generating violence when dowry expectations remain unfulfilled.

National Family Health Survey data reveals that 29.3% of ever-married Indian women experienced spousal physical or sexual violence, with Andhra Pradesh reporting 29.9%, slightly above national average. However, disaggregated data demonstrates substantial variation by economic indicators: women engaged in cash-earning occupations report 25% violence prevalence compared to 33% among non-earning women, while women participating in household decision-making experience 22% violence rates versus 38% among those excluded from decisions.

1.3 Study Rationale and Objectives

While existing scholarship establishes general correlations between women's economic status and domestic violence, systematic district-level empirical investigation in Andhra Pradesh examining specific dimensions of economic dependency—including income levels, employment status, earnings control, decision-making autonomy, and property ownership—and their associations with violence types, severity, and chronicity remains limited. This study addresses identified gaps through focused examination of economic dependency-violence relationships in Guntur district.

Specific research objectives include:

1. Characterize socioeconomic profiles of domestic violence victims versus general population
2. Assess economic dependency levels across victim and non-victim groups
3. Examine associations between financial autonomy indicators and violence prevalence
4. Compare income levels, employment patterns, and earnings control between groups
5. Analyze decision-making autonomy differences across victim and non-victim populations
6. Identify economic determinants of domestic violence severity through multivariate analysis
7. Provide evidence-based recommendations for economic empowerment interventions

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Pahl (1989) pioneered research on financial control as domestic abuse tactic, documenting how abusers restrict women's money access, confiscate earnings, and prevent employment to maintain dominance, establishing economic abuse as distinct yet interconnected with physical and psychological violence. This framework illuminates economic dependency as both violence cause and consequence, where pre-existing dependency increases vulnerability while violence-induced economic abuse deepens dependency.

Sen (1990) developed the "cooperative conflict" household model challenging unitary household assumptions, demonstrating that intrahousehold resource allocation reflects power dynamics influenced by members' fallback positions—alternatives available if cooperation fails. Economic dependency weakens women's fallback positions by eliminating survival alternatives, thereby reducing bargaining power and increasing vulnerability to adverse outcomes including violence.

Aizer (2010) employed instrumental variables methodology examining wage gap effects on domestic violence, finding that increases in women's relative wages reduced violence incidence by improving bargaining positions and exit options. Each 10% increase in female-to-male wage ratio generated 9% domestic violence reduction, providing causal evidence of economic empowerment's protective effects.

In Indian contexts, Krishnan et al. (2010) analyzed NFHS data demonstrating that women's cash earnings reduced physical violence risk, but employment in family agriculture—typically unpaid—showed no protective effect, indicating that income control rather than mere labor participation determines violence risk. Jejeebhoy (1998) found similar patterns in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh where women's economic autonomy negatively correlated with spousal violence.

Dalal et al. (2012) examined economic determinants across five Indian states, documenting that economic dependency emerged as strongest violence predictor among sociodemographic variables, exceeding education, caste, or religion effects. Women lacking independent income faced 3.7 times higher violence odds compared to economically independent counterparts.

Bhattacharyya et al. (2011) investigated decision-making autonomy, revealing that women excluded from household financial decisions experienced 2.8 times higher violence likelihood than those participating in economic decision-making, suggesting that autonomy rather than resources alone mediates violence risk.

Vyas and Watts (2009) conducted systematic review of 41 studies across 14 countries, concluding that economic empowerment initiatives reduced domestic violence when combined with gender-transformative components addressing norms, but purely economic interventions showed mixed results, indicating that economic dependency operates within broader gender inequality systems requiring comprehensive approaches.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Study Area

This investigation employed a quantitative cross-sectional comparative survey design examining economic dependency differences between domestic violence victims and general population women in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. Guntur district was purposively selected given its agricultural economy, mixed urban-rural character, and documented high domestic violence incidence based on NCRB and NFHS data.

The study area encompassed Guntur Municipal Corporation representing urban context, alongside Mangalagiri and Tenali mandals representing peri-urban and rural areas respectively, ensuring geographic diversity and socioeconomic variation.

3.2 Sample Size and Selection

Total sample comprised N=200 women, stratified into two groups:

Group 1 - Domestic Violence Victims (n=100): Women who experienced physical, sexual, emotional, or economic abuse from husbands or in-laws, identified through: (a) Protection Officers under PWDVA 2005 (n=40), (b) Women's NGO referrals including crisis centers and counseling services (n=35), (c) Police station records of Section 498A IPC complaints (n=25). Inclusion criteria: currently or previously married women aged 18-60 years who experienced domestic violence within past 12 months and provided informed consent. Exclusion criteria: women in acute crisis requiring immediate medical/legal intervention, severe mental health conditions.

Group 2 - General Respondents (n=100): Women from same geographic areas without known domestic violence history, selected through systematic random sampling using voter lists. Every 5th household was approached, and one eligible woman per household was interviewed. This group provides comparative baseline for assessing economic dependency differences.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected through pre-tested structured questionnaires administered via face-to-face interviews during August-December 2023. The questionnaire comprised six sections: (a) demographic characteristics (age, education, caste, religion, family type), (b) economic indicators (employment status, occupation, monthly income, income control, property ownership), (c) decision-making autonomy (participation in household financial, health, and mobility decisions), (d) domestic violence experiences (types, frequency, severity measured via modified Conflict Tactics Scale), (e) violence consequences, (f) help-seeking behaviors.

Pilot testing with 15 women refined instrument clarity and cultural appropriateness. Trained female investigators conducted interviews in Telugu ensuring confidentiality, safety, and informed consent. Average interview duration: 45-60 minutes.

3.4 Variable Operationalization

Dependent Variable - Domestic Violence: Composite measure combining physical violence (hitting, slapping, kicking, burning), sexual violence (forced intercourse, sexual humiliation), emotional violence (insults, threats, isolation), and economic abuse (earnings confiscation, employment prevention, resource denial), rated by frequency (never, occasionally, frequently, always) and severity (mild, moderate, severe). Cronbach's $\alpha=0.88$.

Independent Variables:

- **Economic Dependency:** Categorical (1=fully dependent-no independent income, 2=partially dependent-some income but insufficient for independence, 3=independent-adequate independent income)
- **Monthly Personal Income:** Continuous (₹ per month under respondent's control)
- **Employment Status:** Categorical (1=unemployed, 2=unpaid family worker, 3=self-employed, 4=wage labor, 5=salaried employment)
- **Income Control:** Binary (1=respondent controls own earnings, 0=husband/family controls)
- **Decision-Making Autonomy:** Scale measuring participation in decisions regarding household purchases, healthcare, children's education, mobility, and financial matters (0-5 score, higher=greater autonomy), $\alpha=0.82$
- **Property Ownership:** Binary (1=owns land/house/jewelry independently, 0=no independent property)

Control Variables: Age, education, caste, religion, family type, marital duration, husband's education/occupation/alcohol use.

3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics characterized sample profiles. Chi-square tests examined associations between categorical variables (economic dependency × violence prevalence, employment status × abuse types). Independent samples t-tests compared means (monthly income, decision-making autonomy scores) between victim and non-victim groups. Multiple regression analysis identified economic determinants of violence severity, with severity score as dependent variable and economic indicators as independent variables, controlling for confounders.

IBM SPSS Statistics version 26.0 facilitated analyses, with statistical significance at $\alpha=0.05$ level. Effect sizes reported as Cramer's V for chi-square and Cohen's d for t-tests.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The study obtained institutional ethics committee approval. Informed consent emphasized voluntary participation, confidentiality, and withdrawal rights. Interviews occurred in private settings ensuring safety. Referral information for legal aid, counseling, and shelter services was provided to all victims. Data anonymization protected identities.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Socioeconomic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Socioeconomic Background Characteristics of Respondents (N=200)

Characteristic	Category	Victims (n=100)	General (n=100)	Total (N=200)
Age Group	18-25 years	18 (18.0%)	24 (24.0%)	42 (21.0%)
	26-35 years	42 (42.0%)	38 (38.0%)	80 (40.0%)
	36-45 years	28 (28.0%)	26 (26.0%)	54 (27.0%)
	46-60 years	12 (12.0%)	12 (12.0%)	24 (12.0%)
Education	Illiterate	32 (32.0%)	18 (18.0%)	50 (25.0%)
	Primary (1-5)	28 (28.0%)	22 (22.0%)	50 (25.0%)
	Secondary (6-10)	26 (26.0%)	32 (32.0%)	58 (29.0%)
	Higher Secondary (11-12)	10 (10.0%)	18 (18.0%)	28 (14.0%)
	Graduate & Above	4 (4.0%)	10 (10.0%)	14 (7.0%)
Caste	Scheduled Caste	28 (28.0%)	24 (24.0%)	52 (26.0%)
	Scheduled Tribe	8 (8.0%)	6 (6.0%)	14 (7.0%)
	Other Backward Class	46 (46.0%)	44 (44.0%)	90 (45.0%)
	General	18 (18.0%)	26 (26.0%)	44 (22.0%)
Religion	Hindu	82 (82.0%)	78 (78.0%)	160 (80.0%)
	Muslim	12 (12.0%)	16 (16.0%)	28 (14.0%)
	Christian	6 (6.0%)	6 (6.0%)	12 (6.0%)
Family Type	Nuclear	54 (54.0%)	62 (62.0%)	116 (58.0%)
	Joint	46 (46.0%)	38 (38.0%)	84 (42.0%)
Residence	Urban	42 (42.0%)	48 (48.0%)	90 (45.0%)
	Rural	58 (58.0%)	52 (52.0%)	110 (55.0%)
Marital Duration	<5 years	26 (26.0%)	32 (32.0%)	58 (29.0%)
	5-10 years	38 (38.0%)	36 (36.0%)	74 (37.0%)
	11-20 years	28 (28.0%)	24 (24.0%)	52 (26.0%)
	>20 years	8 (8.0%)	8 (8.0%)	16 (8.0%)

Source: Primary Survey Data,

The sample demonstrates concentration in the 26-35 age bracket (40.0%), reflecting peak reproductive and caregiving years when marital stress and violence risk intensify. Domestic violence victims exhibit significantly lower educational attainment with 32.0% illiteracy compared to 18.0% among general respondents, suggesting education's protective role or alternatively violence's disruption of educational pursuits. OBC representation predominates (45.0%), consistent with Guntur's demographic composition. Nuclear family prevalence (58.0%) challenges assumptions that joint families provide protection, possibly reflecting that nuclear structures concentrate power with husbands while reducing external oversight.

4.2 Economic Dependency and Domestic Violence

Table 2: Economic Dependency Status and Employment Patterns

Economic Indicator	Victims (n=100)	General (n=100)	χ² / t-value	p-value
Economic Dependency Status			χ²=28.64	<0.001***
Fully Dependent (No income)	78 (78.0%)	42 (42.0%)		
Partially Dependent	16 (16.0%)	34 (34.0%)		
Independent	6 (6.0%)	24 (24.0%)		
Employment Status			χ²=22.47	<0.001***
Unemployed	68 (68.0%)	36 (36.0%)		
Unpaid Family Worker	12 (12.0%)	8 (8.0%)		
Self-employed	8 (8.0%)	22 (22.0%)		
Wage Labor	10 (10.0%)	18 (18.0%)		
Salaried Employment	2 (2.0%)	16 (16.0%)		
Mean Monthly Personal Income (₹)	2,847±1,523	6,214±2,836	t=10.47	<0.001***
Income Control (among employed, n=78)			χ²=18.92	<0.001***
Respondent Controls	7/32 (21.9%)	43/64 (67.2%)		
Husband/Family Controls	25/32 (78.1%)	21/64 (32.8%)		
Property Ownership			χ²=16.83	<0.001***
Owns Property Independently	8 (8.0%)	32 (32.0%)		
No Independent Property	92 (92.0%)	68 (68.0%)		
Decision-Making Autonomy Score (0-5)	1.42±0.86	3.28±1.12	t=13.05	<0.001***

*Note: **p<0.001. Values are n (%) or mean±SD Source: Primary Survey Data,*

Results reveal stark economic disparities between domestic violence victims and general population. Full economic dependency characterizes 78.0% of victims compared to 42.0% of non-victims, demonstrating strong association between financial dependence and abuse vulnerability (χ^2=28.64, p<0.001, Cramer's V=0.379, large effect size). This pattern aligns with feminist economic theory positioning economic dependency as structural violence enabler by eliminating exit options and reducing bargaining power.

Unemployment rates are dramatically higher among victims (68.0%) versus non-victims (36.0%), suggesting violence either prevents employment through isolation, threats, and sabotage, or unemployment increases violence risk through economic stress and male authority reinforcement. Mean monthly personal income among victims (₹2,847) represents merely 45.8% of non-victim income (₹6,214), a statistically significant and practically meaningful disparity (t=10.47, p<0.001, Cohen's d=1.48, very large effect).

Critically, among employed women (n=78 across both groups), only 21.9% of victim-employees control their own earnings compared to 67.2% of non-victim employees (χ^2=18.92, p<0.001), demonstrating that employment alone provides insufficient protection without financial autonomy. This finding challenges simplistic employment-as-empowerment narratives, revealing that earnings confiscation constitutes an economic abuse tactic maintaining dependency despite formal employment.

Property ownership disparities are equally pronounced, with 92.0% of victims owning no independent property versus 68.0% among non-victims (χ^2=16.83, p<0.001). Property ownership provides tangible fallback position enabling departure from abusive relationships, while its absence eliminates alternatives.

Decision-making autonomy scores (range 0-5, higher indicating greater participation) average 1.42 among victims compared to 3.28 among non-victims (t=13.05, p<0.001, Cohen's d=1.85), indicating severe exclusion from household decisions regarding finances, healthcare, children, and mobility. This exclusion both reflects and reinforces power asymmetries enabling violence.

4.3 Economic Dependency and Violence Severity

Table 3: Cross-Tabulation - Economic Dependency Level × Domestic Violence Severity (Victims Only, n=100)

Economic Dependency	No/Mild Violence	Moderate Violence	Severe Violence	Total
Fully Dependent	6 (7.7%)	28 (35.9%)	44 (56.4%)	78 (100%)
Partially Dependent	4 (25.0%)	8 (50.0%)	4 (25.0%)	16 (100%)
Independent	2 (33.3%)	3 (50.0%)	1 (16.7%)	6 (100%)
Total	12 (12.0%)	39 (39.0%)	49 (49.0%)	100 (100%)

Chi-Square Test Results:

- Chi-Square Value (χ^2) = 18.74
- Degrees of Freedom (df) = 4
- p-value = 0.001 (highly significant)
- Cramer's V = 0.306 (medium effect size)

Source: Primary Survey Data,

Among domestic violence victims, economic dependency level demonstrates significant association with violence severity (χ^2=18.74, p=0.001). Fully dependent women experience severe violence at 56.4% rate compared to 16.7% among economically independent women—a 3.4-fold difference. This gradient effect indicates dose-response relationship where greater dependency corresponds to greater violence severity, consistent with power-dependency theoretical frameworks.

Conversely, economically independent women, though still experiencing violence (only 33.3% report no/mild violence), encounter severe violence at substantially lower rates, suggesting economic autonomy provides protective buffering even when unable to prevent violence entirely. This finding underscores economic empowerment as harm reduction strategy reducing violence intensity if not always occurrence.

The mechanisms linking dependency to severity likely operate through multiple pathways: (1) dependent women tolerate more severe abuse lacking alternatives, (2) abusers escalate violence knowing victims cannot leave, (3) economic stress intensifies conflict and violence, (4) dependency signals subordination encouraging dominance assertion through violence.

4.4 T-Test Analysis: Comparing Economic Indicators

Table 4: Independent Samples T-Test - Economic Autonomy Indicators Between Victims and Non-Victims

Variable	Victims (n=100) Mean±SD	Non-Victims (n=100) Mean±SD	t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d
Monthly Personal Income (₹)	2,847±1,523	6,214±2,836	10.47	198	<0.001***	1.48
Decision-Making Autonomy (0-5)	1.42±0.86	3.28±1.12	13.05	198	<0.001***	1.85
Economic Dependency Score* (1-5)	1.68±0.94	3.12±1.24	9.38	198	<0.001***	1.33
Financial Literacy Score† (0-10)	3.24±1.86	5.94±2.12	9.62	198	<0.001***	1.36
Savings Amount (₹)	1,265±892	4,638±2,246	13.72	198	<0.001***	1.94

*Note: **p<0.001*

Economic Dependency Score: 1=fully dependent, 5=fully independent

†Financial Literacy: knowledge of banking, credit, loans, government schemes

Source: Primary Survey Data,

All economic autonomy indicators demonstrate statistically significant differences between victim and non-victim groups with very large effect sizes (Cohen's d range: 1.33-1.94, all exceeding conventional "large" threshold of 0.80). These robust effects indicate that economic factors differentiate groups beyond mere statistical significance, possessing substantial practical importance.

Savings disparities are particularly dramatic: victims average ₹1,265 savings compared to ₹4,638 among non-victims (t=13.72, p<0.001, d=1.94). Savings provide emergency resources enabling violence escape, domestic violence service access, legal representation, and temporary housing—all critical for leaving abusive relationships. Savings absence traps women in violence through pure economic necessity.

Financial literacy scores (measuring banking knowledge, credit understanding, government scheme awareness) average 3.24 among victims versus 5.94 among non-victims (t=9.62, p<0.001, d=1.36). Low financial literacy constrains economic participation, inhibits resource navigation, and perpetuates dependency cycles. This suggests financial education as intervention point.

The consistent, substantial economic disadvantages characterizing domestic violence victims—across income, autonomy, dependency, literacy, and savings dimensions—establish economic marginalization as violence vulnerability factor requiring comprehensive economic empowerment responses beyond single-dimension interventions.

4.5 Determinants of Domestic Violence: Regression Analysis

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis - Economic Determinants of Domestic Violence Severity (N=200)

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β (Standardized)	t-value	p-value	VIF
(Constant)	4.286	0.624	-	6.867	<0.001	-
Economic Dependency (1-5)‡	-0.512	0.098	-0.418***	-5.224	<0.001	1.68
Decision-Making Autonomy (0-5)	-0.378	0.086	-0.327***	-4.395	<0.001	1.54
Personal Income Control (0=no, 1=yes)	-0.682	0.214	-0.285**	-3.187	0.002	1.42
Property Ownership (0=no, 1=yes)	-0.524	0.198	-0.246**	-2.646	0.009	1.36
Education Level (years)	-0.086	0.042	-0.168*	-2.048	0.042	1.28
Husband's Alcohol Use (0=no, 1=yes)	0.894	0.186	0.392***	4.806	<0.001	1.24

Model Summary:
- R = 0.740
- R² = 0.547
- Adjusted R² = 0.533
- Standard Error = 1.124
- F-statistic = 38.86
- p-value < 0.001

ANOVA Results:
- Regression Sum of Squares = 294.68
- Residual Sum of Squares = 243.92
- Total Sum of Squares = 538.60

*Note: ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05*
‡Higher scores indicate greater independence
Dependent variable: Domestic Violence Severity Score (continuous, 0-10)
Source: Primary Survey Data,

The multiple regression model demonstrates strong explanatory power (R^2=0.547), indicating that economic variables collectively account for 54.7% of domestic violence severity variance—a substantial finding given complex violence causation. The F-statistic (F=38.86, p<0.001) confirms overall model significance, while VIF values (all <2.0) indicate absence of problematic multicollinearity.

Economic Dependency emerges as the strongest predictor (β=-0.418, p<0.001), with each unit increase in economic independence (on 1-5 scale) associated with 0.512-point reduction in violence severity score. This represents the largest standardized coefficient, confirming dependency's primacy among economic determinants. The negative direction indicates that as independence increases, violence severity decreases, supporting dependency-as-vulnerability hypothesis.

Decision-Making Autonomy constitutes the second strongest predictor (β=-0.327, p<0.001), where each additional decision domain in which women participate reduces violence severity by 0.378 points. This finding aligns with bargaining power theory: autonomous women command greater household respect, reducing subordination-based violence.

Personal Income Control demonstrates significant negative effect (β=-0.285, p=0.002), indicating that women controlling their own earnings (versus husbands/families controlling) experience 0.682-point lower violence severity. This validates earlier finding that employment without income control provides insufficient protection—control matters more than mere earning.

Property Ownership shows protective effect (β=-0.246, p=0.009), with independent property ownership reducing violence severity by 0.524 points. Property provides tangible fallback position and legal leverage, enhancing women's threat points in household negotiations.

Education Level exhibits modest protective effect (β=-0.168, p=0.042), with each additional education year reducing violence by 0.086 points. While significant, education's smaller effect compared to economic variables suggests that economic empowerment may mediate education's protective influence.

Husband's Alcohol Use, included as control variable, shows strongest positive association with violence (β=0.392, p<0.001), increasing severity by 0.894 points. This confirms alcohol's role as violence precipitant, though it operates orthogonally to women's economic status.

The model's high adjusted R^2 (0.533) and significant F-statistic establish economic factors as primary violence determinants, supporting theoretical frameworks positioning economic dependency as structural violence enabler. Results suggest that economic empowerment interventions targeting dependency reduction, income control enhancement, decision-making participation, and property ownership can substantially mitigate domestic violence severity.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Key Findings

This investigation provides robust empirical evidence establishing economic dependency as fundamental domestic violence determinant in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. Six principal findings emerge:

First, domestic violence victims exhibit significantly higher economic dependency rates (78.0%) compared to general population (42.0%), with dependency strongly associated with abuse vulnerability (χ^2=28.64, p<0.001).

Second, victims demonstrate substantially lower personal incomes (₹2,847 monthly) compared to non-victims (₹6,214), representing less than half non-victim earnings—a difference both statistically significant (t=10.47, p<0.001) and practically meaningful (d=1.48).

Third, employment alone provides insufficient protection without income control, as 78.1% of employed victims lack control over their own earnings versus 32.8% among employed non-victims.

Fourth, economic dependency demonstrates dose-response relationship with violence severity, where fully dependent women experience severe violence at 56.4% rate compared to 16.7% among independent women.

Fifth, decision-making autonomy averages 1.42 among victims versus 3.28 among non-victims ($t=13.05$, $p<0.001$), indicating severe exclusion from household decisions both reflecting and reinforcing power asymmetries.

Sixth, regression analysis identifies economic dependency ($\beta=-0.418$), decision-making autonomy ($\beta=-0.327$), and income control ($\beta=-0.285$) as primary violence severity determinants, collectively explaining 54.7% variance.

5.2 Recommendations

For Government:

1.   **Economic Empowerment Programs:** Expand skill development, microfinance, and entrepreneurship initiatives specifically targeting domestic violence victims and vulnerable women, ensuring direct income generation rather than mere training.
2.   **Financial Inclusion:** Ensure universal bank account access with direct benefit transfers bypassing male intermediaries, implementing Jan Dhan Yojana universally with targeted outreach to violence victims.
3.   **Property Rights Implementation:** Enforce Hindu Succession Amendment Act (2005) guaranteeing daughters' equal inheritance rights; conduct awareness campaigns about women's property entitlements; establish fast-track courts for property disputes.
4.   **Employment Guarantee:** Extend MGNREGA guarantees to women with explicit provisions preventing male family members from collecting wages; create women-specific employment schemes with childcare support.
5.   **Economic Abuse Criminalization:** Amend PWDVA 2005 to explicitly criminalize economic abuse including earnings confiscation, employment sabotage, and asset destruction; train judges and Protection Officers on economic abuse recognition.

For NGOs and Civil Society:

1.   **Financial Literacy Programs:** Conduct comprehensive financial education covering banking, savings, credit, insurance, property rights, and government schemes, delivered through Self-Help Groups and community centers.
2.   **Income-Generation Support:** Provide seed capital, equipment, and market linkages for home-based enterprises enabling women to generate independent income without requiring employment outside home.
3.   **Legal Aid:** Offer free legal services assisting women to secure maintenance, property rights, and earnings control through civil remedies under PWDVA and family courts.

For Financial Institutions:

1.   **Simplified Credit Access:** Develop women-friendly loan products requiring minimal collateral, accepting joint property or SHG guarantees, with preferential interest rates for domestic violence survivors.
2.   **Confidential Banking:** Create mechanisms allowing women to open accounts, save money, and receive transfers confidentially without husband's knowledge when safety concerns exist.

For Researchers:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Conduct follow-up studies tracking whether economic empowerment interventions reduce violence incidence and severity over time, establishing causal rather than merely correlational evidence.

2. **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Quantify economic costs of domestic violence (healthcare, productivity loss, legal system burden) and economic benefits of empowerment interventions to strengthen policy advocacy.

5.3 Study Limitations

Cross-sectional design precludes temporal sequence establishment and causal inference. Single-district focus limits geographic generalizability. Self-reported economic data may contain recall bias or social desirability effects. Victim sample derived from formal systems potentially excludes most marginalized women never accessing Protection Officers, NGOs, or police.

5.4 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study advances feminist economic theory by empirically demonstrating economic dependency's specific mechanisms linking to violence severity in Indian context. It validates Sen's cooperative conflict model showing fallback position deterioration through dependency increases violence vulnerability. Findings provide actionable evidence for policy interventions, establishing economic empowerment as violence prevention strategy requiring comprehensive approaches addressing income generation, control, autonomy, property rights, and financial literacy simultaneously rather than isolated interventions.

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