

K'taka women most vulnerable to spousal violence: NFHS data

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New Delhi: Karnataka tops the list of 17 states and five Union Territories with 44% of women surveyed in the age group of 18-49 years saying they had faced spousal violence at some time, followed by Bihar (40%) and Manipur (39.6%), according to data from Phase-I of National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-20).

NFHS-5 defines spousal violence to include "physical and/or sexual violence". Three more states reported over 30% of women in the 18-49 years age group responding in the affirmative to the question if they had "ever experienced spousal violence". These states are Telangana (36.9%), Assam (32%) and Andhra Pradesh (30%).

Karnataka reported a spike when compared to NFHS-4 (2015-16) when 20.6% women experienced spousal violence. Assam too witnessed a rise when compared to 24.5% in NFHS-4.

Though the figure is high in Manipur, the state reported a decline as compared to 53.2% in the 2015-16 survey. Andhra, Bihar and Telangana also registered a decline in 2019-20 compared to NFHS-4 figures of 43.4%, 43.7% and 42.9% respectively.

Data show 25.2% women in Maharashtra experienced spousal violence, up from 21.3% in 2015-16 while Bengal (27%) showed a decline when compared to

Times View: The spurt in domestic violence across states that the NHS survey shows is a matter of both shame and concern. Violence against women primarily stems from a patriarchal mindset and needs to be addressed through gender-sensitive education in schools and an honest application of the law. Policy framers must take cognizance of the survey and find innovative ways to address this social malaise.

33.1% women falling in this category in NFHS-4.

Kerala had 9.9% of women reporting spousal violence, a decline from 14.3% in 2015-16. J&K (9.6%), Himachal Pradesh (8.3%), Goa (8.3%) and Nagaland (6.4%) fall in the below 10% category with Lakshadweep recording the least (1.3%) number of such women.

The survey in the section of gender-based violence also provides an insight into data on young women in the 18-29 years' age group, who experienced sexual violence by age 18. Child sexual abuse often goes unreported and hence this data is critical. Percentage of women who admitted to having experienced sexual violence by the age of 18 years ranged from 11% in Karnataka, 9.7% in Bengal, 8.7% in Ladakh, 8.3% in Bihar, 8% in Assam and 6.2% in Maharashtra to 1.8% in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and 0.8% in Lakshadweep.