

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

Women's demographic and health-seeking behaviour is associated with several characteristics including their age, marital status, religion, and caste. Modernizing influences such as education and exposure to mass media are also important catalysts for demographic and socioeconomic change. In addition, women's status and autonomy are critical in promoting change in reproductive attitudes and behaviour, especially in patriarchal societies (Dyson and Moore, 1983; Das Gupta, 1987; Jeffery and Basu, 1996). The National Population Policy, 2000, of the Government of India identifies the low status of women in India, typified by factors such as discrimination against the girl child and female adolescent, early age at marriage, and high rates of maternal mortality, as an important barrier to the achievement of population and maternal and child welfare goals (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2000).

This chapter presents a profile of the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of ever-married women age 15–49 who were identified in the NFHS-2 Household Questionnaire as eligible respondents for the Woman's Questionnaire. In addition, data are presented on the extent to which women in Kerala enjoy autonomy as measured by their participation in household decisionmaking, freedom of movement, and access to money they can spend as they wish. Finally, data on women's attitudes towards the acceptance of spousal violence under specific circumstances and their experience of physical violence are discussed.

3.1 Background Characteristics

Table 3.1 presents the percentage distribution of ever-married women age 15–49 by age, marital status, coresidence with husband, education, religion, caste/tribe, work status, and husband's education. The proportion of respondents in five-year age groups increases from 3 percent in the age group 15–19 years to 19 percent in the age group 25–29 years, and then falls steadily to 13 percent in the age group 45–49 years. The initial increase reflects the increasing share of ever-married women in these age groups. The decline after age 25–29 (an age by which most women have been married) reflects the normal pyramid shape of the population's age distribution. One-third of respondents are in the prime childbearing ages of 20–29. The very small share of the age group 15–19 is due to the relatively high age at marriage in Kerala. The age distribution of respondents in urban and rural areas is similar with only a slightly higher proportion in the age group 15–24 in rural areas (17 percent) than in urban areas (13 percent).

Ninety-three percent of respondents are currently married, 3 percent are widowed, 2 percent are separated, and 1 percent each are divorced or deserted. The distribution of respondents by marital status varies only marginally by urban-rural place of residence. Fifteen percent of currently married women in Kerala are not coresident with their husbands, much higher than in the country as a whole (5 percent). This shows that more than one out of five ever-married women in Kerala are not currently living with a husband.

The educational levels of respondents and their husbands have an important influence on demographic and health-seeking behaviour. Thirteen percent of ever-married women age 15–49 in Kerala are illiterate, compared with 58 percent in India as a whole. The level of illiteracy for

Table 3.1 Background characteristics of respondents

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15–49 by selected background characteristics, according to residence, Kerala, 1999

Background characteristic	Residence			Number of women	
	Urban	Rural	Total	Weighted	Unweighted
Age					
15–19	1.7	3.5	3.1	89	85
20–24	11.1	13.4	12.8	370	366
25–29	18.5	19.4	19.2	553	551
30–34	19.6	17.9	18.3	527	531
35–39	18.5	17.9	18.0	520	521
40–44	16.7	15.1	15.4	445	448
45–49	13.9	13.0	13.2	381	382
Marital status					
Currently married	94.1	92.4	92.8	2,675	2,678
Widowed	3.2	3.4	3.4	97	97
Divorced	0.9	1.4	1.3	36	36
Separated	0.9	2.1	1.8	53	51
Deserted	0.8	0.7	0.8	22	22
Co-residence with husband					
Living with husband	80.6	78.1	78.6	2,268	2,273
Not living with husband	13.5	14.3	14.1	407	405
Not currently married	5.9	7.6	7.2	209	206
Education					
Illiterate	8.0	13.9	12.6	362	352
Literate, < primary school complete	6.8	10.0	9.3	267	262
Primary school complete	16.5	22.2	20.9	603	592
Middle school complete	19.2	16.5	17.1	493	498
High school complete	27.3	23.7	24.6	709	715
Higher secondary complete and above	22.0	13.6	15.6	449	465
Religion					
Hindu	61.2	48.3	51.3	1,478	1,501
Muslim	21.0	36.1	32.6	941	916
Christian	17.7	15.5	16.0	462	465
Sikh	0.1	0.0	0.0	1	1
Jain	0.0	0.0	0.0	1	1
Caste/tribe					
Scheduled caste	6.2	9.5	8.7	252	246
Scheduled tribe	0.8	1.2	1.1	32	31
Other backward class	48.9	41.4	43.1	1,244	1,256
Other	44.1	47.9	47.0	1,356	1,351
Work status					
Working in family farm/business	1.5	2.6	2.4	69	67
Employed by someone else	14.5	17.7	16.9	489	482
Self-employed	7.6	5.1	5.7	163	169
Not worked in past 12 months	76.4	74.6	75.0	2,163	2,166
Husband's education					
Illiterate	4.4	8.8	7.7	223	216
Literate, < primary school complete	8.6	14.1	12.8	370	360
Primary school complete	19.1	24.9	23.6	680	669
Middle school complete	20.8	17.4	18.2	524	530
High school complete	26.5	22.0	23.1	665	674
Higher secondary complete and above	19.8	12.6	14.2	411	424
Missing	0.7	0.2	0.4	10	11
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0	NA	NA
Number of women					
Weighted	667	2,217	2,884	2,884	NA
Unweighted	846	2,038	2,884	NA	2,884

NA: Not applicable

women declined in Kerala from 16 percent at the time of NFHS-1 to 13 percent at the time of NFHS-2. Illiteracy has declined for both rural women (from 17 percent to 14 percent) and urban women (from 13 percent to 8 percent) between the two surveys. Among women who are literate, almost half (46 percent) have completed at least high school, up from only one-quarter at the time of NFHS-1. Forty-nine percent of urban respondents have completed at least high school, compared with 37 percent of rural respondents.

Although 13 percent of women are illiterate, only 8 percent of their husbands are illiterate, down from 10 percent in NFHS-1. The slight decline in illiteracy for husbands is due to declines in illiteracy in both urban areas (from 8 percent to 4 percent) and rural areas (from 11 percent to 9 percent). At the other educational extreme, 37 percent of women have husbands who have completed at least high school (up from 23 percent in NFHS-1), and the percentage is much higher in urban areas (46 percent) than in rural areas (35 percent).

Fifty-one percent of the respondents in Kerala are Hindu, 33 percent are Muslim, and 16 percent are Christians. Notably, the share of Muslim respondents has risen since NFHS-1 when only 27 percent of respondents were Muslim. The proportion Muslim is higher in rural areas (36 percent) than in urban areas (21 percent), whereas the proportion Hindu is higher in urban areas (61 percent) than in rural areas (48 percent) and Christians are about equally represented in urban and rural areas. Forty-three percent of respondents belong to the other backward classes, 9 percent belong to the scheduled castes, and only 1 percent belong to the scheduled tribes. Almost half of women (47 percent) do not belong to any of these groups.

Three-quarters of respondents in Kerala (75 percent) did not participate in work other than their regular housework during the 12 months preceding the survey. Two percent of women work on a family farm or in a family business, 6 percent are self-employed, and 17 percent are employed by someone else. The proportion of women employed is similar in urban and rural areas.

3.2 Educational Level

Table 3.2 presents the percent distribution of ever-married women age 15–49 by the highest level of education attained, according to age, religion, caste/tribe, and husband’s education. The educational distribution of women in different age groups illustrates the progress in the spread of education over a period of about three decades. The level of illiteracy among ever-married women in Kerala, as already noted, is relatively low (13 percent). As expected, the level of illiteracy is much lower among younger than older women. Notably, illiteracy declines from 20 percent among women age 35–49, to 3 percent among women age 20–24 and 0 percent among women age 15–19. At the other end of the educational spectrum, the proportion of women who have completed at least high school, is more than two times as high among women age 15–19 (58 percent) as among women age 45–49 (24 percent). The level of illiteracy is highest among Muslim women (17 percent), followed by Hindu women (12 percent), and is lowest among Christian women (5 percent). Illiteracy levels are particularly high among scheduled-tribe women (38 percent) and scheduled-caste women (24 percent).

Fifty-one percent of women with illiterate husbands are themselves illiterate. This implies that almost half of women married to illiterate men are not themselves illiterate. Indeed, in Kerala, at each level of husband’s education, half or more of women have an equal or a higher

Table 3.2 Respondent's level of education by background characteristics

Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15–49 by highest level of education attained, according to selected background characteristics, Kerala, 1999

Background characteristic	Respondent's level of education						Total percent	Number of women
	Illiterate	Literate, < primary school complete	Primary school complete	Middle school complete	High school complete	Higher secondary complete and above		
Age								
15–19	0.0	0.0	16.9	25.0	46.7	11.3	100.0	89
20–24	2.6	4.5	17.6	21.0	33.0	21.4	100.0	370
25–29	6.1	3.9	18.2	18.2	30.8	22.9	100.0	553
30–34	9.3	6.0	22.0	18.4	23.9	20.5	100.0	527
35–39	20.3	12.9	22.1	12.9	20.8	11.0	100.0	520
40–44	20.0	13.2	21.5	18.2	18.4	8.6	100.0	445
45–49	19.7	18.9	25.2	12.6	15.5	8.0	100.0	381
Religion								
Hindu	12.0	7.3	18.3	16.2	28.8	17.3	100.0	1,478
Muslim	17.4	14.8	27.5	17.8	15.9	6.6	100.0	941
Christian	4.6	4.4	15.8	18.5	28.3	28.5	100.0	462
Caste/tribe								
Scheduled caste	23.9	12.3	16.6	19.1	21.3	6.9	100.0	252
Scheduled tribe	(38.0)	(17.6)	(9.3)	(18.8)	(6.9)	(9.4)	100.0	32
Other backward class	12.8	9.6	23.1	18.2	23.7	12.6	100.0	1,244
Other	9.7	8.3	20.0	15.6	26.4	20.1	100.0	1,356
Husband's education								
Illiterate	51.2	17.0	18.8	6.4	6.0	0.5	100.0	223
Literate, < primary school complete	25.7	23.5	30.8	10.4	8.1	1.4	100.0	370
Primary school complete	13.1	12.5	35.6	19.1	17.9	1.7	100.0	680
Middle school complete	8.5	5.9	20.0	32.3	27.9	5.4	100.0	524
High school complete	2.1	3.2	13.0	17.3	42.2	22.1	100.0	665
Higher secondary complete and above	0.7	0.5	2.3	5.9	28.1	62.4	100.0	411
Total	12.6	9.3	20.9	17.1	24.6	15.6	100.0	2,884
Note: Total includes 2 women belonging to other religions and 10 women with missing information on husband's education, who are not shown separately. () Based on 25–49 unweighted cases								

level of education as their husband. For example, 42 percent of women whose husbands have completed high school (but not higher secondary school) have themselves completed this level of schooling and another 22 percent have completed at least higher secondary school. Sixty-two percent of women whose husbands have completed at least higher secondary school have also achieved this level of education.

3.3 Age at First Marriage

Table 3.3 provides information on age at first marriage for all women in Kerala. The table shows the percentage of women who first married by specified exact ages and the median age at first marriage and first cohabitation by current age and residence. The median age at first marriage/cohabitation with husband for a cohort of women is the age by which 50 percent of the cohort marries/cohabits. The median age at first marriage in Kerala for women age 25–49 is 20 years and is two years higher in urban areas (22 years) than in rural areas (20 years). (The

Table 3.3 Age at first marriage								
Percentage of women married by specific exact ages, median age at first marriage, and median age at first cohabitation with husband, according to current age and residence, Kerala, 1999								
Current age ¹	Percentage ever married by exact age						Median age at first marriage	Median age at first cohabitation with husband
	13	15	18	20	22	25		
URBAN								
15–19	0.0	0.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NC	NC
20–24	0.0	0.6	8.7	25.6	NA	NA	NC	NC
25–29	0.0	0.5	8.5	31.0	43.6	69.3	22.8	22.8
30–34	0.6	3.7	16.5	38.8	52.0	77.7	21.7	21.7
35–39	0.6	3.6	16.7	33.5	50.9	74.3	21.9	22.1
40–44	0.6	3.3	15.3	34.6	54.1	73.5	21.5	21.5
45–49	0.0	2.4	24.9	49.9	66.8	75.7	20.0	20.1
20–49	0.3	2.3	14.4	34.7	NA	NA	NC	NC
25–49	0.4	2.6	15.7	36.7	52.4	73.9	21.7	21.7
RURAL								
15–19	0.0	0.7	NA	NA	NA	NA	NC	NC
20–24	0.0	3.8	19.7	42.3	NA	NA	NC	NC
25–29	0.9	4.3	27.6	44.4	62.8	81.1	20.5	20.6
30–34	0.5	4.7	27.5	50.5	67.0	81.8	20.0	20.1
35–39	1.3	7.0	35.7	58.7	71.5	86.2	19.1	19.2
40–44	1.6	7.5	32.5	56.0	72.2	88.4	19.5	19.7
45–49	0.8	7.1	32.6	54.2	70.8	87.1	19.4	19.6
20–49	0.8	5.5	28.7	50.2	NA	NA	20.0	NC
25–49	1.0	6.0	30.9	52.2	68.4	84.5	19.8	19.9
TOTAL								
15–19	0.0	0.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NC	NC
20–24	0.0	3.1	17.0	38.1	NA	NA	NC	NC
25–29	0.7	3.4	23.0	41.2	58.3	78.5	20.9	20.9
30–34	0.5	4.5	24.8	47.6	63.3	81.1	20.3	20.4
35–39	1.2	6.2	31.1	52.7	66.7	83.5	19.7	19.8
40–44	1.4	6.4	28.1	50.5	67.6	84.6	20.0	20.1
45–49	0.6	5.9	30.7	53.1	69.7	84.1	19.6	19.7
20–49	0.7	4.7	25.2	46.4	NA	NA	NC	NC
25–49	0.9	5.1	27.1	48.4	64.5	82.0	20.2	20.3
NA: Not applicable								
NC: Not calculated because less than 50 percent of women age 15–19, age 20–24, and age 20–49 have married or started living with their husband by the start of the age group.								
¹ The current age groups include both never-married and ever-married women.								

median age at first marriage could not be calculated for women age 15–19 and 20–24 because more than half of women in these age groups were not married at the time of the survey). The median age at first marriage in Kerala was constant at about 20 years till recently, rising to 21 years only for women age 25–29.

The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1978 fixed the minimum age at marriage for women in India at 18 years. Table 3.3 shows that ages at marriage below 18 years are still not uncommon in Kerala. One-fourth of all women age 20–49 (14 percent in urban areas and 29 percent in rural areas) were married at ages below 18 years. The proportion married before age 18 has been falling over time, but even among the age group 20–24, 17 percent were married before the legal minimum age at marriage. Very early ages at marriage are relatively rare, however. Only 5 percent of all women were married by age 15 years.

3.4 Exposure to Mass Media

In NFHS-2, women were asked questions about whether they read a newspaper or magazine, watch television, or listen to the radio at least once a week, and whether they visit the cinema or theatre at least once a month. Table 3.4 gives information on women's exposure to these forms of mass media by selected background characteristics.

In Kerala, the majority of women (88 percent) are regularly exposed to one or more of these media. As expected, the percentage not regularly exposed to any media is higher among rural women (14 percent) than among urban women (4 percent). Media exposure is much lower

Table 3.4 Exposure to mass media						
Percentage of ever-married women age 15–49 who usually read a newspaper or magazine, watch television, or listen to the radio at least once a week, who usually visit a cinema/theatre at least once a month, or who are not regularly exposed to any of these media by selected background characteristics, Kerala, 1999						
Background characteristic	Exposure to mass media					Number of women
	Reads a newspaper or magazine at least once a week	Watches television at least once a week	Listens to the radio at least once a week	Visits the cinema/theatre at least once a month	Not regularly exposed to any media	
Age						
15–19	65.1	53.2	77.8	12.3	11.7	89
20–24	73.3	66.3	74.2	23.1	8.3	370
25–29	72.2	66.2	71.2	15.8	7.9	553
30–34	68.5	63.9	72.0	13.6	9.5	527
35–39	55.8	58.4	65.7	7.1	16.6	520
40–44	59.5	57.1	70.1	9.2	15.0	445
45–49	54.6	64.7	72.5	4.3	11.4	381
Residence						
Urban	74.3	82.5	74.4	17.6	4.3	667
Rural	61.2	56.3	69.9	10.5	13.7	2,217
Education						
Illiterate	0.0	37.6	51.6	7.3	37.7	362
Literate, < middle school complete	55.3	48.6	67.3	7.0	14.4	871
Middle school complete	71.4	64.0	69.8	9.2	7.7	493
High school complete and above	87.9	79.8	80.3	18.7	2.8	1,158
Religion						
Hindu	66.5	72.7	74.1	17.5	7.6	1,478
Muslim	53.6	40.9	66.1	5.0	21.3	941
Christian	78.4	72.9	70.8	9.4	4.2	462
Caste/tribe						
Scheduled caste	49.6	68.8	62.6	16.9	16.8	252
Scheduled tribe	(33.0)	(54.6)	(60.4)	(26.6)	(17.4)	32
Other backward class	63.0	60.2	71.2	12.8	12.2	1,244
Other	68.8	63.3	72.6	10.3	9.8	1,356
Standard of living index						
Low	36.0	42.8	51.6	12.4	27.1	448
Medium	59.8	55.1	70.1	11.5	12.6	1,590
High	87.3	86.5	82.8	13.2	1.3	846
Total	64.2	62.4	70.9	12.1	11.5	2,884

Note: Total includes 2 women belonging to other religions, who are not shown separately.
() Based on 25–49 unweighted cases

among illiterate women, women from households with a low standard of living, Muslim women, and women from the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes than among other women. Thirty-eight percent of illiterate women are not exposed to any media, compared with only 3 percent of women who have completed at least high school. The percentage not regularly exposed to any media is 27 percent among women from households with a low standard of living and only 1 percent among those from households with a high standard of living. Media exposure does not vary consistently with age, being relatively low only among women age 35–44. Almost one-fifth each of scheduled-caste and scheduled-tribe women are not regularly exposed to any media.

With regard to the different types of media, 71 percent of women said that they usually listen to the radio at least once a week (unchanged from NFHS-1), 64 percent said that they read a newspaper or magazine at least once a week, and 62 percent said that they watch television at least once a week (up sharply from 42 percent in NFHS-1). Exposure at least once a month to the theatre or cinema has declined to 12 percent in NFHS-2 from 18 percent in NFHS-1. Television has the greatest reach in urban areas, whereas radio has the greatest reach in rural areas; overall, however, exposure to all forms of media is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. In general, exposure to each of the different forms of media tends to be higher among women age 34 or less than among older women and tends to increase with education and with household standard of living. Overall, however, Table 3.4 shows that mass media, an important means of spreading health and family welfare messages, as well as exposing women to modern views in general, is reaching the majority of women in all population sub-groups in Kerala.

3.5 Women's Employment

Labour force participation not only gives women an opportunity to earn income, but also exposes them to the outside world and to authority structures and networks other than kin-based ones (Dixon-Mueller, 1993). In a developing country such as India, however, where women's workforce participation is often motivated by poverty, these benefits are likely to be mediated by the social context of women's work and their total work burden (Bardhan, 1985; Desai and Jain, 1994). In addition, the empowering effects of employment for women are likely to depend on their occupation, the continuity of their workforce participation, and whether they earn income. It is generally expected that women who work at a regular job, who earn money, and who perceive that their contribution is a substantial part of total family earnings are more likely to be empowered than other employed and unemployed women (Youssef, 1982; Sen, 1990; Mahmud and Johnston, 1994). The National Population Policy adopted by the Government of India in 2000 (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2000) explicitly recognizes the importance of women's paid employment in achieving the goal of population stabilization in India and also specifies measures to encourage paid employment and self-employment of women.

Table 3.5 provides information on these aspects of women's employment for ever-married women age 15–49 according to residence. In Kerala, three out of four women (75 percent) report that they did not work during the 12 months preceding the survey, aside from doing their own housework. Women's employment is much lower in Kerala than in India as a whole (39 percent), as well as in the other southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka (52–59 percent). Current employment of women, at 23 percent, is marginally lower than current employment at the time of NFHS-1, at 25 percent. A similar proportion of urban and rural women are employed. Among women who worked during the 12 months preceding the survey, the majority (58 percent) worked throughout the year and the majority earned cash for

Table 3.5 Employment			
Percent distribution of ever-married women age 15–49 by employment characteristics, according to residence, Kerala, 1999			
Employment characteristic	Urban	Rural	Total
Employment status			
Currently working	22.1	23.4	23.1
Worked in past 12 months (not currently working)	1.4	2.1	1.9
Not worked in past 12 months	76.4	74.6	75.0
Continuity of employment¹			
Throughout the year	67.2	54.8	57.5
Seasonally/part of the year	23.8	35.5	32.9
Once in a while	9.1	9.7	9.6
Type of earning¹			
Cash only	89.9	84.4	85.6
Cash and kind	1.5	3.9	3.4
Kind only	1.5	1.6	1.6
Not paid	7.0	10.1	9.4
Occupation¹			
Professional	23.8	12.8	15.2
Sales worker	5.5	2.5	3.1
Service worker	3.0	1.9	2.2
Production worker	25.7	18.4	20.0
Agricultural worker	11.5	40.5	34.2
Other worker	30.0	23.7	25.1
Don't know/missing	0.5	0.2	0.3
Earnings contribution to total family earnings²			
Almost none	9.3	5.2	6.1
Less than half	49.0	49.8	49.6
About half	25.8	30.5	29.5
More than half	9.9	7.8	8.2
All	6.0	6.7	6.5
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of women	667	2,217	2,884
Number of employed women ¹	157	564	721
Number of women earning cash	144	498	642
¹ For currently working women and women who have worked in the past 12 months			
² For women earning cash			

their work (86 percent). Nine percent of women who work are not paid at all for their work. The proportion of employed women working throughout the year is higher in urban areas (67 percent) than in rural areas (55 percent).

Working women in Kerala are most likely to be agricultural workers, production workers, or professionals. The occupational distribution of working women shows a similar diversity in both urban and rural areas. Urban working women are most likely to be in production (26 percent) or professional occupations (24 percent), whereas rural women are most likely to be agricultural workers (41 percent), however.

In NFHS-2, women who earned cash for their work in the 12 months preceding the survey were asked how much their earnings contribute to total family earnings. Fifteen percent of these women say that their earnings account for more than half of total family earnings, including 7 percent who say that the family is entirely dependent on their earnings. Another 30 percent report that they contribute about half of total family earnings. The proportion that

contribute half or more of their total family earnings is slightly higher in rural areas (45 percent) than in urban areas (42 percent). Only 6 percent of all women earning cash say that their earnings are a negligible part of total family earnings.

3.6 Women's Autonomy

Education, work participation, and exposure to mass media are some of the means by which women gain status and autonomy, both important aspects of their empowerment. To measure women's autonomy and empowerment more directly, NFHS-2 asked about women's participation in household decisionmaking, their freedom of movement, and access to money that they can spend as they wish. Women's autonomy is likely to have a significant impact on the demographic and health-seeking behaviour of couples by altering women's relative control over fertility and contraceptive use, and by influencing their attitudes (for example, attitudes towards the sex composition of children) and abilities (for example, the ability to obtain health services for themselves and their children) (Sen and Batliwala, 1997).

In order to measure women's participation in household decisionmaking, NFHS-2 asked women to report who in their households makes decisions about the following: what items to cook, obtaining health care for themselves, purchasing jewellery or other major household items, and their going and staying with parents or siblings. The survey also asked women who earn cash who decides how the money they earn is spent. Table 3.6 gives the percent distribution of the person (or persons) who makes each of the specified household decisions, according to residence.

As expected, ever-married women in Kerala are most likely to participate in the decision about what items to cook: 57 percent of women make this decision on their own and another 24 percent make this decision jointly with their husband or someone else in the household (see Figure 3.1). One in every five women, however, is not involved at all in decisions about what to cook. Twenty-seven percent of women are not involved at all in decisions about seeking health care for themselves, 37 percent are not involved in decisions about purchasing jewellery or other major household items, and 40 percent are not involved in decisions about going and staying with parents or siblings. Among these three types of decisions, the decision that women are most likely to take on their own is the decision about their own health care (55 percent). There are no sharp differences by residence in the proportions of women participating in the different types of decisions.

Twenty-three percent of women who earn cash report that only their husbands or only others make the decision about how the money they earn will be used. Forty-two percent of the women make this decision on their own and 35 percent make the decision together with their husband or someone else. The proportion of working women who make this decision alone is much higher in urban areas (51 percent) than in rural areas (40 percent).

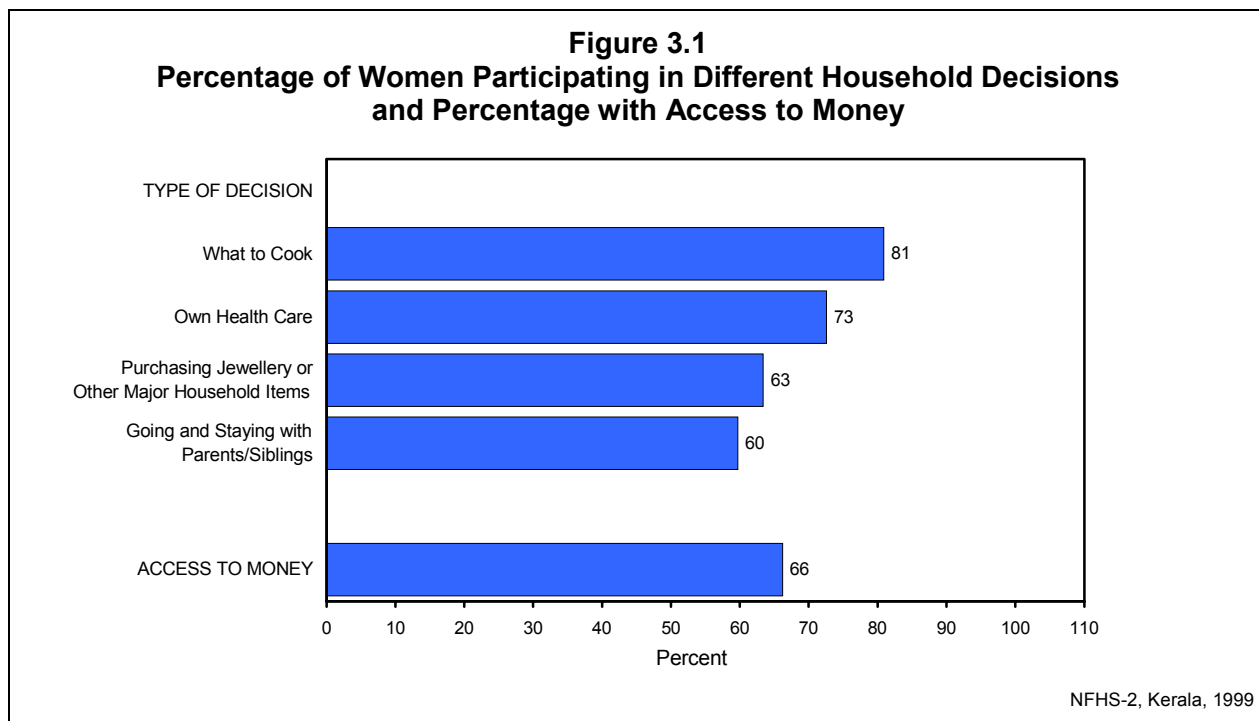
Women's involvement in decisionmaking, alone or jointly with others in the household increases with age, suggesting that autonomy also increases with age (Table 3.7). Specifically, among women age 30 and over, only 3–5 percent do not participate in any decisionmaking, compared with 28 percent among women age 15–19.

The proportions of women not involved in any decisionmaking and involved in each of the different decisions do not vary greatly or systematically by education, caste/tribe, or

Table 3.6 Household decisionmaking						
Percent distribution of ever-married women by person who makes specific household decisions, according to residence, Kerala, 1999						
Household decision	Respondent only	Husband only	Respondent with husband	Others in household only	Respondent with others in household	Total percent
URBAN						
What items to cook	56.8	3.4	6.1	15.8	17.8	100.0
Obtaining health care for herself	52.5	19.9	16.1	7.4	4.0	100.0
Purchasing jewellery or other major household items	22.2	27.8	30.3	8.3	11.4	100.0
Going and staying with her parents or siblings	20.4	30.9	32.6	8.8	7.2	100.0
How the money she earns will be used ¹	50.7	18.2	27.9	1.1	2.2	100.0
RURAL						
What items to cook	56.6	3.0	5.6	16.0	18.8	100.0
Obtaining health care for herself	55.2	20.0	12.4	7.4	4.9	100.0
Purchasing jewellery or other major household items	20.3	25.6	31.1	11.2	11.8	100.0
Going and staying with her parents or siblings	20.5	29.6	31.4	10.9	7.7	100.0
How the money she earns will be used ¹	39.9	22.3	31.0	2.0	4.8	100.0
TOTAL						
What items to cook	56.6	3.1	5.7	15.9	18.6	100.0
Obtaining health care for herself	54.6	20.0	13.3	7.4	4.7	100.0
Purchasing jewellery or other major household items	20.7	26.1	30.9	10.5	11.7	100.0
Going and staying with her parents or siblings	20.5	29.9	31.7	10.4	7.6	100.0
How the money she earns will be used ¹	42.3	21.4	30.3	1.8	4.2	100.0
¹ For women earning cash						

household standard of living. Women who work for cash are more likely to be involved in each type of decision, except the decision about what to cook, than working women who did not work for cash or women who were not employed at all. Nonparticipation in decisionmaking is higher among Muslim women (11 percent) than among Hindu (6 percent) or Christian (5 percent) women.

NFHS-2 also collected information on two other dimensions of women's autonomy, namely, women's freedom of movement and their access to money that they can spend as they wish. With regard to freedom of movement, respondents were asked whether they need permission to go to the market and to visit friends or relatives. Women's access to spending



money was measured by asking respondents, ‘Are you allowed to have some money set aside that you can use as you wish?’

Table 3.7 shows that freedom of movement is limited for a majority of ever-married women in Kerala. Only 48 percent of women say they do not need permission to go to the market and 38 percent say they do not need permission to visit friends or relatives. Nonetheless, women in Kerala have much more freedom of movement than in India as a whole. In India as a whole, only 32 percent of women do not need permission to go to the market and 24 percent do not need permission to visit friends or relatives.

Freedom of movement in Kerala increases substantially with age. For example, only 28 percent of women age 15–19 do not need permission to go to the market, compared with 57–59 percent of women age 40–49. Freedom of movement tends to decline with education, but is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Muslim women have much less freedom of movement than Hindu and Christian women. Freedom of movement is also relatively high among scheduled-caste and scheduled-tribe women and among women living in households with a low standard of living. Women who earn cash have more freedom of movement than other women.

There is substantial variation in women’s access to money by background characteristics. Overall, 66 percent of women say that they are allowed to have some money set aside that they can spend as they wish. Access to money tends to increase with age, from 50 percent of women age 15–19 to 70 percent of women age 45–49. The percentage of women with access to money is higher in urban areas (72 percent) than in rural areas (64 percent). Access to money also increases sharply with education (from 56 percent of illiterate women to 76 percent of women who have completed at least a high school education) and with the standard of living (from 63 percent of women from households with a low standard of living to 80 percent of women from households with a high standard of living). Muslim women are less likely to have access to

Table 3.7 Women's autonomy

Percentage of ever-married women involved in household decisionmaking, percentage with freedom of movement, and percentage with access to money by selected background characteristics, Kerala, 1999

Background characteristic	Percentage not involved in any decision-making	Percentage involved in decisionmaking on:				Percentage who do not need permission to:		Percentage with access to money	Number of women
		What to cook	Own health care	Purchasing jewellery, etc.	Staying with her parents/siblings	Go to the market	Visit friends/relatives		
Age									
15–19	27.8	39.4	56.2	48.7	36.9	27.5	14.5	50.3	89
20–24	16.9	59.1	63.3	50.7	48.9	33.6	24.9	62.4	370
25–29	8.9	75.6	69.0	56.7	51.1	39.1	28.9	65.4	553
30–34	4.6	82.6	75.1	65.2	63.7	48.5	38.3	68.8	527
35–39	4.5	89.5	74.9	71.5	65.8	52.7	41.8	66.4	520
40–44	3.0	91.8	77.6	68.1	64.7	59.4	48.4	66.8	445
45–49	2.8	92.8	78.0	69.6	68.4	57.1	50.7	69.9	381
Residence									
Urban	6.8	80.7	72.6	63.9	60.3	57.7	44.6	72.0	667
Rural	7.3	81.0	72.5	63.2	59.6	44.7	35.8	64.4	2,217
Education									
Illiterate	4.5	88.2	78.9	69.9	66.1	53.1	44.2	56.2	362
Literate, < middle school complete	6.2	84.0	72.2	62.3	60.0	47.9	39.3	58.8	871
Middle school complete	9.3	80.4	65.9	56.7	54.5	48.8	37.8	63.0	493
High school complete and above	7.9	76.6	73.7	65.0	59.8	45.4	34.8	76.1	1,158
Religion									
Hindu	5.8	82.7	72.6	65.5	62.2	55.7	43.0	72.6	1,478
Muslim	10.8	75.1	73.5	57.6	54.4	34.6	30.7	52.6	941
Christian	4.6	87.2	70.4	68.2	62.6	48.9	35.8	73.3	462
Caste/tribe									
Scheduled caste	5.3	82.9	69.2	63.2	59.2	58.3	45.8	67.4	252
Scheduled tribe	(3.5)	(80.2)	(76.6)	(65.3)	(67.3)	(59.3)	(38.7)	(66.5)	32
Other backward class	8.1	78.2	70.3	58.5	55.5	49.0	37.5	63.6	1,244
Other	6.9	83.1	75.1	67.8	63.6	44.3	36.7	68.3	1,356
Cash employment									
Working for cash	3.0	87.7	76.2	74.4	72.0	62.1	50.6	76.5	642
Working but not for cash	5.6	89.7	67.2	67.9	59.5	44.7	35.0	74.7	79
Not worked in past 12 months	8.5	78.6	71.7	59.9	56.1	43.6	34.2	62.8	2,163
Standard of living index									
Low	6.7	82.6	71.2	64.8	62.2	55.4	44.4	62.8	448
Medium	7.4	79.9	72.9	61.9	58.0	44.8	34.9	60.0	1,590
High	7.1	81.9	72.7	65.3	61.8	49.2	40.0	79.5	846
Total	7.2	80.9	72.6	63.4	59.7	47.7	37.9	66.2	2,884

Note: Total includes 2 women belonging to other religions, who are not shown separately.
() Based on 25–49 unweighted cases

money than Hindu or Christian women. As expected, working women have greater access to money than women who did not work during the past 12 months. Nonetheless, it is notable that at least half of the women in all sub-groups have access to some money that they can use as they wish, and for some groups this proportion is as high as three out of four.

3.7 Women's Educational Aspirations for Children

The desire to invest in improving the quality of children, including investing in their education, is important for bringing about transition to lower levels of fertility and improved health. In order to obtain information on this subject, NFHS-2 asked ever-married women for their opinion about how much education should be given to a boy or a girl. Women's responses to these questions also provide an indication of the degree of son preference prevailing at the time of the survey.

As shown in Table 3.8, a similar proportion (16 percent) of women believe that an education above high school (higher secondary school, graduate and above, or professional degree) is appropriate for boys and for girls. Nonetheless, the proportion who say that girls should be given only a high school education (17 percent) is higher than the proportion who say that boys should be given only a high school education (11 percent). Also, the proportion who say that boys should be given as much education as they desire (63 percent) is higher than the proportion who say this for girls (57 percent). Notably, only 1 percent of women say that girls should not be given any education or should be given education at most to the middle school level. These data suggest that, in keeping with the high levels of education in the state, educational aspirations for both boys and girls are also high in Kerala, although they are somewhat higher for boys than for girls. As expected, rural respondents have lower educational aspirations than urban respondents. Nonetheless, even in rural areas, few women specify educational aspirations at levels less than high school.

Table 3.8 Perceived educational needs of girls and boys			
Percent distribution of ever-married women by their opinion on how much education should be given to girls and boys, according to residence, Kerala, 1999			
Educational level	Urban	Rural	Total
Education for girls			
No education	0.0	0.1	0.1
Primary school	0.0	0.2	0.1
Middle school	0.4	0.9	0.8
High school	7.0	19.6	16.6
Higher secondary school	5.6	6.8	6.5
Graduate and above	7.6	6.1	6.4
Professional degree	2.4	2.6	2.6
As much as she desires	68.3	52.9	56.5
Depends	7.3	9.4	8.9
Don't know	1.5	1.3	1.4
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0
Education for boys			
Middle school	0.0	0.5	0.4
High school	4.8	13.2	11.2
Higher secondary school	4.6	5.8	5.5
Graduate and above	5.0	6.1	5.9
Professional degree	4.5	4.5	4.5
As much as he desires	73.0	60.5	63.4
Depends	6.8	8.5	8.1
Don't know	1.3	0.8	0.9
Total percent	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.8 Domestic Violence: Attitudes and Prevalence

In recent years, there has been increasing concern about violence against women in general, and domestic violence in particular, in both developed and developing countries (United Nations General Assembly, 1991). Not only has domestic violence against women been acknowledged worldwide as a violation of the basic human rights of women, but an increasing amount of research highlights the health burdens, intergenerational effects, and demographic consequences of such violence (Heise et al., 1998; 1994; Jejeebhoy, 1998; Ramasubban and Singh, 1998; Rao and Bloch, 1993). In patriarchal societies such as India, women are not only socialized into being silent about their experience of violence, but traditional norms teach them to accept, tolerate, and even rationalize domestic violence (Jaisingh, 1995; Hegde, 1996; Prasad, 1999). The recent IndiaSAFE multi-site study of family violence in India, conducted at about the same time as NFHS-2, finds violence by husbands to be fairly widespread (International Clinical Epidemiology Network, 2000). Both tolerance of and experience of domestic violence are significant barriers to the empowerment of women, with consequences for women's health, their health-seeking behaviour, their adoption of a small family norm, and the health of their children. In NFHS-2, an attempt was made to assess whether women view wife-beating as justified and to measure the prevalence of violence against women including, but not limited to, violence committed by a woman's husband. Special training was provided to interviewers to sensitize them to the issue of domestic violence and impress upon them the necessity of ensuring privacy when asking these questions.

In order to assess women's attitudes towards wife-beating, the survey asked whether respondents thought that a husband is justified in beating his wife for each of the following reasons: if he suspects her of being unfaithful; if her natal family does not give expected money, jewellery, or other items; if she shows disrespect for her in-laws; if she goes out without telling him; if she neglects the house or children; or if she does not cook food properly. These reasons, which range from reasons that involve suspicions about a wife's moral character to those that may be considered more trivial, such as not cooking properly, were chosen to provide variation in the perceived seriousness of behavioural-norm violation. Table 3.9 gives the percentages of ever-married women who agree with various reasons for wife-beating by background characteristics.

Sixty-one percent of women in Kerala accept at least one reason as justification for wife-beating. Women are most likely to agree that wife-beating is justified if the wife neglects the house or children (47 percent) and least likely to agree that wife-beating is justified if the wife's natal family does not give expected money or other items (3 percent). Thirty-nine percent of women agree that wife-beating is justified if the wife shows disrespect for her in-laws, 38 percent agree that it is justified if the wife goes out without telling her husband, 25 percent agree that it is justified if the wife does not cook food properly, and 22 percent agree that it is justified if the husband suspects the wife of being unfaithful to him.

Table 3.9 indicates that there are some differences by age, but not by marital duration in women's attitudes towards wife-beating. The proportion of women agreeing with at least one reason for wife-beating is the lowest for women age 15–19 years. The urban-rural differentials in agreement are small, with rural women being only slightly more likely than urban women to agree with at least one reason justifying wife-beating. Agreement with at least one reason justifying wife-beating is lower among women who have completed at least high school (55

Table 3.9 Reasons given for justifying a husband beating his wife

Percentage of ever-married women who agree with specific reasons for justifying a husband beating his wife by selected background characteristics, Kerala, 1999

Background characteristic	Percentage who agree with specific reasons							Number of women
	Percentage who agree with at least one reason	Husband suspects wife is unfaithful	Natal family does not give expected money or other items	Wife shows disrespect for in-laws	Wife goes out without telling husband	Wife neglects house or children	Wife does not cook food properly	
Age								
15–19	54.8	25.5	3.4	39.2	41.2	46.9	21.1	89
20–29	63.0	21.4	3.3	40.5	37.6	48.5	23.8	923
30–39	60.1	22.4	3.4	37.7	37.4	45.2	25.2	1,047
40–49	61.1	20.6	2.4	39.0	38.3	47.4	27.9	826
Marital duration (in years)								
< 5	59.3	20.7	2.2	39.2	35.9	44.6	22.1	555
5–9	61.6	21.0	3.6	38.8	38.4	47.5	25.3	483
10 or more	61.5	22.6	3.0	38.7	37.8	46.7	26.0	1,637
Not currently married	61.6	18.0	4.9	41.3	41.6	54.1	29.2	209
Residence								
Urban	58.2	17.0	2.2	36.7	35.6	44.2	24.5	667
Rural	62.0	23.1	3.3	39.7	38.5	47.8	25.6	2,217
Education								
Illiterate	64.9	22.8	2.7	39.9	42.9	55.3	27.8	362
Literate, < middle school complete	67.2	26.7	3.5	43.0	41.9	53.3	30.9	871
Middle school complete	62.4	21.4	4.1	38.0	37.2	46.6	23.4	493
High school complete and above	54.9	17.6	2.4	36.1	33.5	39.7	21.3	1,158
Religion								
Hindu	60.3	20.0	2.3	36.8	35.9	46.2	25.4	1,478
Muslim	65.1	25.7	4.3	42.7	41.5	52.2	25.6	941
Christian	55.6	18.8	3.0	38.6	36.9	38.9	24.7	462
Caste/tribe								
Scheduled caste	66.6	22.3	3.3	47.1	39.7	48.2	28.1	252
Scheduled tribe	(58.1)	(23.8)	(0.0)	(29.1)	(23.2)	(51.4)	(19.7)	32
Other backward class	66.1	24.1	3.1	40.1	42.2	54.0	27.0	1,244
Other	55.6	19.3	3.0	36.7	33.8	40.2	23.5	1,356
Cash employment								
Working for cash	56.5	21.1	3.1	34.3	32.1	42.6	22.7	642
Working but not for cash	49.2	14.6	0.0	22.5	18.1	28.5	14.5	79
Not worked in past 12 months	63.0	22.1	3.2	41.0	40.3	48.9	26.6	2,163
Standard of living index								
Low	66.1	23.5	3.8	42.8	41.0	51.4	27.9	448
Medium	62.8	22.3	3.3	40.2	40.9	49.9	28.2	1,590
High	55.3	19.5	2.3	34.7	30.4	39.0	18.8	846
Total	61.1	21.6	3.1	39.0	37.8	47.0	25.4	2,884

Note: Total includes 2 women belonging to other religions, who are not shown separately.
() Based on 25–49 unweighted cases

percent) than among women at other levels of education (62–67 percent). The proportion of women who agree that wife-beating is justified declines as the standard of living increases. The difference is greatest between women from households with a low standard of living (66 percent) and women from households with a high standard of living (55 percent). The expectation that

women who work for cash would be less likely than other women to justify wife-beating is not fully borne out for Kerala. Although women who work for cash are more likely than women who did not work in the 12 months preceding the survey to agree with at least one reason justifying wife-beating, it is women who work but not for cash who are least likely to agree with at least one reason. Overall, however, about half or more women in all population sub-groups agree with at least one reason for wife-beating. This finding attests to the widespread socialization of women in norms that give husbands the right to use force to discipline wives who are perceived to be violating traditional gender norms even in this highly literate society.

In order to assess the prevalence of domestic violence, NFHS-2 asked women if they had been beaten or mistreated physically since age 15.¹ Women who reported being beaten or physically mistreated were asked who beat or physically mistreated them. Interviewers recorded all the persons mentioned by the respondent. As mentioned earlier, there is a culture of silence surrounding the topic of domestic violence that makes the collection of data on this sensitive topic particularly difficult. Even women who want to speak about their experience with domestic violence may find it difficult because of feelings of shame or fear. This may be more true if violence occurred recently (for example, in the preceding 12 months) than in the more distant past. In addition, depending on the varied cultural meanings ascribed to different acts, there may be women who do not report their experience of domestic violence because they do not view it as violence or physical mistreatment. For these reasons, NFHS-2 results on the prevalence of domestic violence need to be interpreted with caution.

Table 3.10 presents results on the prevalence of beatings or physical mistreatment since age 15 by women's background characteristics. Prevalence is also shown according to the person(s) who beat or physically mistreated them—their husbands, their in-laws, or other persons (including other relatives).

According to the reports of respondents, 10 percent of women in Kerala have experienced violence since age 15. Eight percent have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husbands, implying that among women who are beaten, three out of four have been beaten by their husbands. Three percent report beatings or physical mistreatment by persons other than the husband and in-laws and less than 1 percent report beatings or physical mistreatment by in-laws.

Women age 15–29 are less likely than older women to have been beaten, but because of their young age they have had less time to be exposed to the risk of being beaten since age 15. Similarly, women who have been married for less than five years are less likely to have been beaten (5 percent) than women who have been married longer (8–11 percent). Notably, women who are not currently married (widowed, divorced, separated, or abandoned women) report the highest rate of violence (22 percent). Urban women (9 percent) are only slightly less likely than rural women (11 percent) to experience violence. Illiterate women (18 percent) are three times as likely to have experienced violence than women who have completed at least high school (6 percent). The prevalence of domestic violence decreases substantially as the standard of living increases. Specifically, 21 percent of women from households with a low standard of living have experienced violence, compared with 10 percent of women from households with a medium standard of living and 4 percent of women from households with a high standard of living. Women from nuclear households are more likely than women from non-nuclear households to

¹The question does not limit women to reporting only domestic violence, but almost all women who report any violence report beatings or physical mistreatment only by husbands or relatives.

Table 3.10 Women's experience with beatings or physical mistreatment

Percentage of ever-married women who have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husband, in-laws, or other persons since age 15, according to selected background characteristics, Kerala, 1999

Background characteristic	Percentage beaten or physically mistreated since age 15	Percentage beaten or physically mistreated since age 15 by:			Number of women
		Husband	In-laws	Other persons	
Age					
15–19	6.7	2.4	0.0	4.3	89
20–29	7.0	3.6	0.1	3.4	923
30–39	11.1	8.7	0.3	3.2	1,047
40–49	13.1	11.1	0.3	2.9	826
Marital duration (in years)					
< 5	5.2	1.8	0.0	3.4	555
5–9	8.1	4.4	0.0	4.2	483
10 or more	11.0	9.1	0.3	2.6	1,637
Not currently married	22.3	17.8	0.5	5.1	209
Residence					
Urban	8.7	5.4	0.1	3.4	667
Rural	10.7	8.2	0.2	3.1	2,217
Education					
Illiterate	18.4	14.7	0.8	4.6	362
Literate, < middle school complete	12.4	9.9	0.4	3.1	871
Middle school complete	9.4	5.9	0.0	3.4	493
High school complete and above	6.4	4.2	0.0	2.8	1,158
Religion					
Hindu	11.1	8.2	0.2	3.8	1,478
Muslim	9.1	6.8	0.2	2.3	941
Christian	9.7	6.9	0.2	3.2	462
Caste/tribe					
Scheduled caste	15.3	12.2	0.0	4.7	252
Scheduled tribe	(13.5)	(6.8)	(3.3)	(6.7)	32
Other backward class	8.5	6.3	0.2	2.8	1,244
Other	10.8	7.9	0.2	3.2	1,356
Household type					
Nuclear household	12.8	10.3	0.2	3.2	1,186
Non-nuclear household	8.4	5.6	0.2	3.2	1,697
Cash employment					
Working for cash	15.1	11.7	0.5	5.1	642
Working but not for cash	13.1	10.4	0.0	2.7	79
Not worked in past 12 months	8.7	6.2	0.1	2.6	2,163
Standard of living index					
Low	20.8	17.4	0.5	5.9	448
Medium	10.4	7.1	0.3	3.5	1,590
High	4.4	3.2	0.0	1.3	846
Living children					
No living children	7.6	4.5	0.0	3.1	302
Only daughters	8.6	6.1	0.2	3.5	574
Only sons	12.3	8.5	0.5	4.3	649
Both daughters and sons	10.5	8.4	0.2	2.6	1,359
Total	10.2	7.5	0.2	3.2	2,884

Note: Total includes 2 women belonging to other religions and 1 woman from a household with no usual members, who are not shown separately.

() Based on 25–49 unweighted cases

experience domestic violence. A similar finding was reported by Visaria (1999) among women in rural Gujarat. Women who are working for cash are more likely than non-working women to experience violence.

It is sometimes suggested that not bearing children and not bearing a son may be important reasons for wife-beating. This supposition is not borne out for Kerala. In Kerala, domestic violence appears to be relatively high among women with only sons (12 percent), and is in fact, higher among these women than among women with only daughters (9 percent). Also, women with no living children are somewhat less likely than women with living children to have experienced violence (8 percent compared with 9–12 percent). This may be due in part to the fact that childless women tend to be younger women, and younger women have a lower prevalence of domestic violence than older women.

The proportions of women who have been beaten or physically mistreated by their husbands according to various background characteristics are similar to the proportions of all women who have experienced domestic violence. This is not surprising since, as already noted, the large majority of women who report beatings are beaten by their husbands. The proportion of women who have been beaten or physically mistreated by other persons is too small to allow a meaningful discussion of differentials by women's background characteristics. Nonetheless, it is notable, that beatings by persons other than a husband or in-laws are reported by some groups of women as often, or even more often, than beatings by husbands. Women reporting violence by others about equally or more frequently as violence by the husband include women age 15–29 and women married 5–9 years.

NFHS-2 asked women who experienced violence since age 15 how often they were beaten or physically mistreated in the 12 months preceding the survey: many times, a few times, once, or not at all. Table 3.11 shows the frequency of beatings in the past 12 months for women who report beatings or physical mistreatment. More than one out of three women (35 percent) who experienced violence were beaten at least once during the 12 months preceding the survey and about one out of four (24 percent) were beaten more than once in this period. As mentioned earlier, largely due to the inherent tendency for underreporting of domestic violence, these results need to be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, the NFHS-2 estimates set a lower bound on the proportion of women experiencing domestic violence in Kerala: *at least* 1 in 10 ever-married women in Kerala have experienced domestic violence since age 15, and *at least* 1 in 28 have experienced domestic violence in the 12 months preceding the survey.

Among women who report being beaten, women who have completed at least high school and women who live in households with a low standard of living are more likely than other women to have been beaten in the 12 months preceding the survey. Multiple beatings in the 12 months preceding the survey among women who have been beaten are also particularly common for women in households with a low standard of living and women who have completed at least high school. In addition, women who have been married 5–9 years and women who have both sons and daughters also report multiple beatings more frequently than most other women.

Table 3.11 Frequency of beatings or physical mistreatment

Percent distribution of ever-married women who report being beaten or physically mistreated since age 15 by frequency of beatings or physical mistreatment in the 12 months preceding the survey, according to selected background characteristics, Kerala, 1999

Background characteristic	Beaten or physically mistreated in the past 12 months				Total percent	Number of women
	Many times	A few times	Once	Not beaten		
Age						
20–29	9.6	18.2	10.9	61.3	100.0	64
30–39	7.6	12.5	12.3	67.6	100.0	117
40–49	9.5	17.9	4.8	67.8	100.0	108
Marital duration (in years)						
< 5	(3.6)	(13.0)	(23.1)	(60.3)	100.0	29
5–9	(10.6)	(19.2)	(12.6)	(57.6)	100.0	39
10 or more	10.5	18.5	9.7	61.3	100.0	180
Not currently married	(2.4)	(2.3)	(4.6)	(90.7)	100.0	47
Residence						
Urban	8.2	19.2	10.9	61.7	100.0	58
Rural	8.7	14.6	10.6	66.2	100.0	238
Education						
Illiterate	4.5	20.0	10.2	65.3	100.0	67
Literate, < middle school complete	9.4	14.5	4.8	71.3	100.0	108
Middle school complete	(6.4)	(6.2)	(12.8)	(74.6)	100.0	46
High school complete and above	12.3	18.6	18.1	51.0	100.0	75
Religion						
Hindu	8.8	14.5	10.8	65.8	100.0	164
Muslim	8.2	12.8	13.6	65.4	100.0	86
Christian	(8.2)	(24.0)	(4.3)	(63.5)	100.0	45
Caste/tribe						
Scheduled caste	(11.6)	(23.1)	(15.3)	(50.0)	100.0	38
Other backward class	9.9	11.8	7.2	71.1	100.0	106
Other ¹	7.0	16.6	12.3	64.2	100.0	146
Household type						
Nuclear household	11.5	17.9	9.9	60.7	100.0	152
Non-nuclear household	5.4	12.8	11.5	70.3	100.0	143
Cash employment						
Working for cash	9.5	14.1	8.1	68.3	100.0	97
Not worked in past 12 months	8.6	16.4	12.5	62.5	100.0	188
Standard of living index						
Low	14.9	18.4	11.9	54.8	100.0	93
Medium	5.8	14.7	10.3	69.3	100.0	165
High	(5.0)	(11.6)	(8.9)	(74.5)	100.0	37
Living children						
Only daughters	2.1	17.7	8.9	71.3	100.0	50
Only sons	2.3	16.1	11.3	70.2	100.0	80
Both daughters and sons	14.9	14.7	9.2	61.2	100.0	143
Total	8.6	15.5	10.6	65.3	100.0	295

Note: Total includes 6 women age 15–19, 4 women belonging to the scheduled tribes, 10 women working but not for cash, and 23 women with no living children, who are not shown separately.

() Based on 25–49 unweighted cases

¹Not belonging to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe, or an other backward class