

Legislating Empowerment: Anti-Domestic Violence and Women's Income in China

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This paper

- Impact of domestic violence legislation on women's income
- Economic empowerment resulting from legislative actions against domestic violence
- Importance of addressing domestic violence through legislation

Understanding Domestic Violence

- **Domestic Violence (Intimate partner violence or domestic abuse)**
- **Prevalence globally:** approximately **1/3** of women have suffered from domestic violence, with **18%** encountering it in the past 12 months (United Nations, 2020).
- Most studies focus on the determinants of the incidence and intensity of domestic violence
 - Gender Wage Gap (Aizer, 2010)
 - Job Opportunities (Bhalotra et al. 2021)
 - Economic Abuse (Anderberg et al, 2016; Adams et al, 2024)

Global Legislative Actions

- Global movement to enact comprehensive legislation on domestic violence began in the 1980s (World Bank, 2024)
- Significant progress, with **almost 87%** of the world's countries now having implemented legislative measures to combat domestic violence

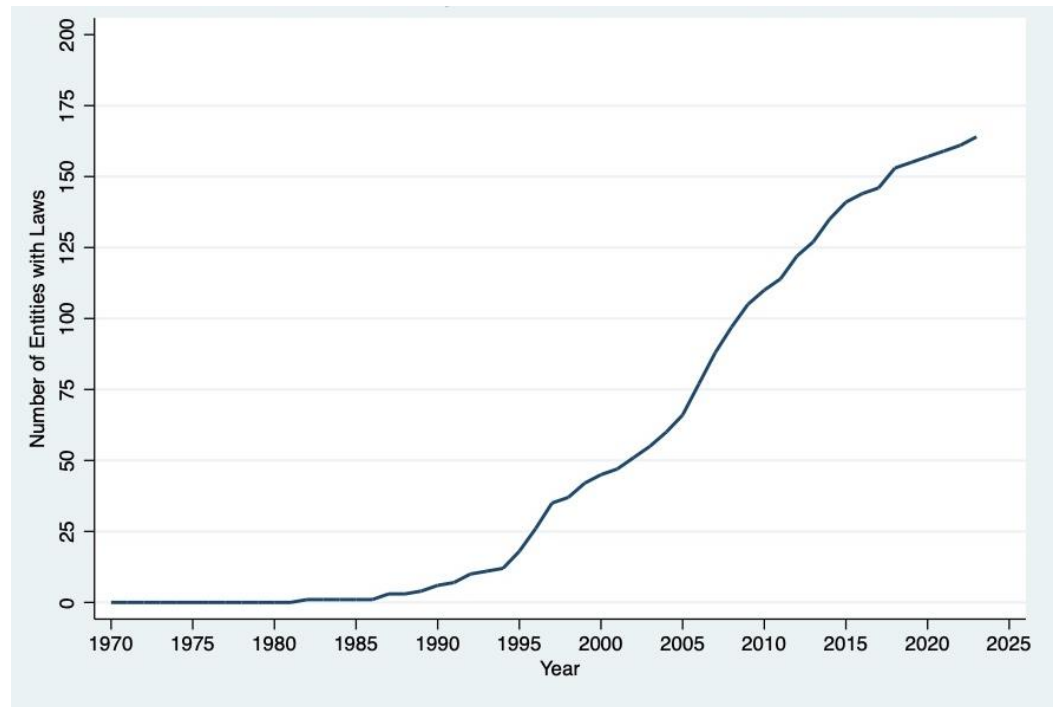


Fig.1 Global Trend of Countries or Regions enacted DV Laws

Global Legislative Actions

- Limited legal protection: **14%** of all women and girls living in countries with robust legal protection in 2022 (United Nations, 2023).
- Effectiveness of such legislations mostly focus on tendency of domestic violence (Stevenson and Wolfers, 2006)
- Countries with domestic violence legislation have lower rates of intimate partner violence than those without such legislation (9.5% compared to 16.1%) (United Nations, 2024)

Contribution

- Literature on domestic violence
- Assesses the impact of institutional change on women's welfare.
- Evidence for evaluating the effectiveness of domestic violence legislation.

Legislative Actions in Asia

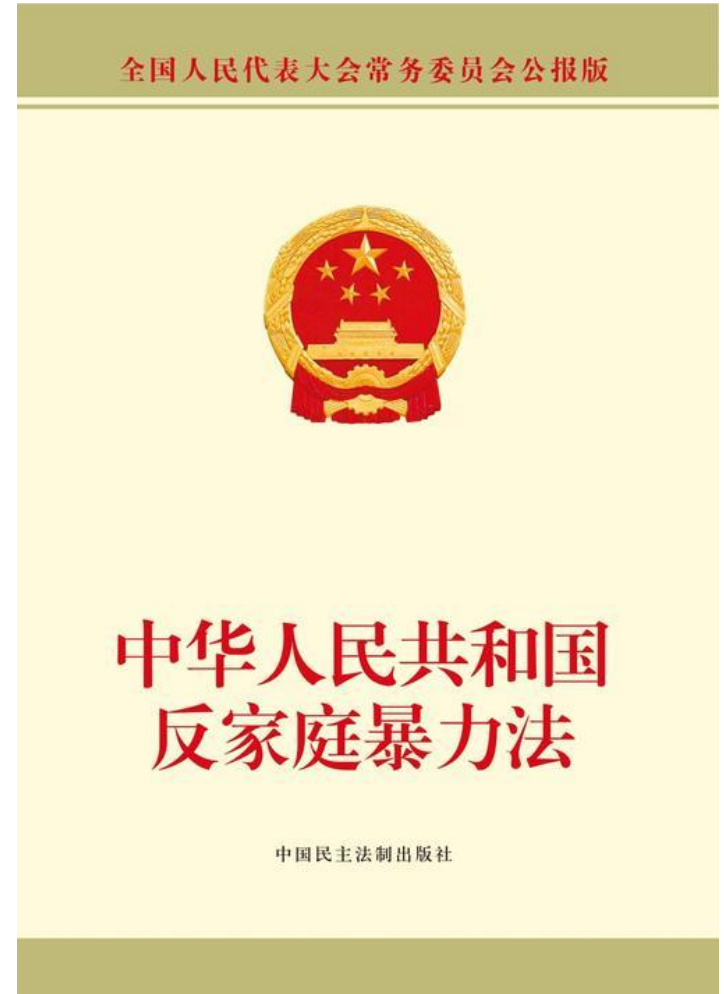
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- 1994 **Domestic Violence Act, Malaysia**
 - 1998 **Punishment Act & Protection Act, South Korea**
 - 2001 **Prevention of Spousal Violence Act, Japan**
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Domestic Violence in China

- Statistics: **35** incidents before seeking police help (Wang, 2015)
- Historical context: Domestic violence seen as private matter; Before the Anti-Domestic Violence Law, two laws cover and prosecute acts of domestic violence (1980, 2005) but neither provides specific legal tools for the authority or the victim to fight against domestic violence.

China's Anti-Domestic Violence Law (ADVL)

- **When:** Enacted in 2015, effective from 2016
- **Why:** First national law addressing domestic violence



Data (China Family Panel Survey, 2012-20)

- Nationally representative (covers 31 provinces), biennial longitudinal survey conducted by the Institute of Social Science Survey (ISSS) of Peking University
- Collects comprehensive data on Chinese communities, families, and individuals.
- Interviews all household members over the age of nine
- Data Collected: Economic activities, education outcomes, family dynamics, migration, health, etc.

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Log (Income)	19675	9.764	1.151	0	14.407
Income (Chinese yuan)	33369	16509.093	28286.252	0	1806000
Treat	61735	.901	.298	0	1
Urban	60954	.485	.5	0	1
Age	63805	41.777	12.961	20	65
Education	62902	1.683	1.333	0	4
Employment status	58668	1.792	1.49	1	9
Social status	57567	2.879	1.046	1	5
Family size	63141	4.49	1.98	1	21

Methodology

- Difference-in-Differences (DID) estimator
- **Groups:** Married women (treatment group) vs. single women (control group)
- Age 20 to 65

$$\text{Log}(\text{Income}_{i,t}) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Treat}_{i,t} \times \text{Post}_t + \beta_2 \text{Treat}_{i,t} + \alpha X_{i,t} + \text{County}_i + \text{Year}_t + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Estimation Results

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Variable	Log (Income)	Log (Income)	Log (Income)
Treat	-0.432*** (0.023)	-0.199*** (0.039)	0.0327 (0.038)
Treat×Post	0.546*** (0.018)	-0.000 (0.043)	0.134*** (0.047)
Urban			0.133*** (0.024)
Age			-0.00693*** (0.001)
Education			0.243*** (0.009)
Employment status			-0.00674 (0.008)
Social status			0.0365*** (0.008)
Family size			-0.00489 (0.005)
Trust			0.0196*** (0.004)
County fixed effects	No	Yes	Yes
Year fixed effects	No	Yes	Yes
Constant	9.939*** (0.020)	9.927*** (0.025)	9.197*** (0.065)
Mean	9.764	9.764	9.764
Observations	19674	19321	17580
R ²	0.050	0.229	0.329
adj. R ²	0.050	0.207	0.310

Note: standard errors are in parentheses. Significance is denoted as: * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. The mean reported in the table is the mean of Log (Income).

Table 1. The Effect of ADVL on Married Women's Annual Income

Conclusion

- ADVL led to significant increase in women's income
- Key role of legislation in women's empowerment
- Need for continuous effort in policy development

Thank you!