

## Socio-Cultural Determinants of Domestic Violence against Women: A Case Study of Pakistan

**Zubaida Zafar, PhD (Principal Author)**

Assistant Professor Sociology, Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore

Email: [zubaida.zafar@vu.edu.pk](mailto:zubaida.zafar@vu.edu.pk)

**Ms. Maria Jafar (Corresponding Author)**

Lecturer Sociology, Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore.

Email: [maria.jafar@edu.vu.pk](mailto:maria.jafar@edu.vu.pk)

**Nasim Khan Mahsud, PhD**

Assistant Professor Sociology, Allama Iqbal Open University-AIOU Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: [nasim.khan@aiou.edu.pk](mailto:nasim.khan@aiou.edu.pk)

**Arfan Latif, PhD**

Assistant Professor Sociology, University of Okara, Pakistan

[arfanlatif9292@uo.edu.pk](mailto:arfanlatif9292@uo.edu.pk)

**Nasir Iqbal, PhD**

Assistant Director of Quality Enhancement Cell, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Pakistan

Email: [nasiriqbal190@gmail.com](mailto:nasiriqbal190@gmail.com)

**Mazhar Islam, PhD**

Assistant Professor of Sociology, Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore.

Email: [mazhar.islam@vu.edu.pk](mailto:mazhar.islam@vu.edu.pk)

**Abstract:** *This research delves into the socio-cultural determinants influencing domestic violence against women in the specific context of Pakistan. With a focus on understanding the intricate interplay of societal and cultural factors, the study employs a qualitative research design incorporating primary and secondary data sources. Secondary data, sourced from books, research articles, and reports, provides a comprehensive backdrop to domestic violence in South Asia and Pakistan. Primary data is gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants, including affected women, social activists, and university students.*

*The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of domestic violence in Pakistan, encompassing physical, psychological, economic, and sexual dimensions. The patriarchal societal structure, coupled with factors like limited education and social stigmatization, emerges as significant contributors to domestic violence. Cultural influences, deeply entrenched in traditions and practices, play a pivotal role in triggering violence against women, particularly in rural and backward areas. The research also sheds light on the shortcomings of existing legal and family support systems in addressing domestic violence*

*in Pakistan.*

*In response to these insights, participants provide recommendations for addressing the issue, including cultural reforms, prohibition of traditional marriage practices, enhanced religious education, legal reforms, and increased educational and employment opportunities for women. Despite certain limitations such as a small sample size and a focus on Lahore, the study contributes valuable insights into the socio-cultural dynamics influencing domestic violence against women in Pakistan, enriching the broader discourse on gender-based violence in the region.*

**Keywords:** *Socio-Cultural, Determinants, Domestic Violence, Women, Pakistan*

### **Introduction**

Men and women are two vehicles of a human society because their collaboration is pre-requisite to run a smooth social system. If both of them cooperate with each other, it will have positive implications on the family system and future generation. But contrary to that, if there is a weak connection between husband and wife, it will not only affect the family system but also lead to improper socialization process of their children.

The women had been a marginalized community throughout the establishment of human society. Men dominated socio-economic spheres which minimized the role of women. The women had been under the supervision of the males and confronted different issues. Domestic violence is one of the critical gender-related issues. Although the modern societies developed a proper legal mechanism to control the domestic violence and granted equal status to both men and women, the practices are contrary to local and international provisions (Maqsood et al, 2015).

The domestic violence is not an issue related to specific locality of region rather it has encompassed the whole globe. All of the developed, developing and under-developed countries are facing the domestic violence against the women. The highly democratic countries i.e., New Zealand, UK, US, and France and also confronting the issues of gender-based violence and the victims are the women. Likewise, the domestic violence is also an issue for Pakistan. Pakistan is a male dominant society where the males are leading are fields of social and economic life. The women are facing domestic violence whose intensity varies from society to society. The women in the urban areas are not as much affected as those of rural areas. The urban people are modernized while rural communities are still attached to traditional male dominant social and cultural norms where the women are supposed to confine themselves within the boundary of the homes.

Domestic violence means the socio-economic, cultural and educational inequalities against the women. It includes the violence against the women by her family, husband or in-laws. The domestic violence may adopt different ways i.e., physical violence, psychological torture, and refrain them from their constitutional and legal rights like education and property share. The domestic violence in the modern era also includes not to allow the educated women to do a job, forced marriages, childhood marriage,

and honor killing (Abdullah, 2002).

“According the UN Declaration, domestic violence is any type of verbal, physical, psychological, emotional, sexual and economic violence or threat of violence which is generally perceived against the women. Accordingly, any coercive deprivation of rights and personal freedom also falls under the broad category of domestic violence”.

In accordance to the above UN Declaration explanation, it is obvious that all of the physical, emotion, verbal or sexual sufferings of the women fall under the category of domestic violence. The women that are suffering from the family abuses, educational and property rights’ deprivation are termed as the victim of domestic violence which has extended its jaws across the globe. This article is intended to explore domestic violence against women in South Asia with special reference to Pakistan.

### **Research Objectives**

Following are the major objectives of the current study.

- To explore different contours of domestic violence against women.
- To trace out the domestic violence against women in South Asia.
- To find out social and cultural determinants of domestic violence against women in Pakistan.

### **Methodology**

The current research is based on purely qualitative research design. The topic of domestic violence against women requires the extensive understanding through variety of data collection. The current study is based on both primary and secondary data collection. The secondary data was collected from different sources i.e., books, research articles, research reports, and other sources. The secondary data provided the deep understanding of the topic in relation to South Asia, global and Pakistani perspectives regarding the domestic violence against women. Furthermore, the researcher collected primary data from the key informants through well-established interview guides. Sample size of the study was 10 including 5 affected women of domestic violence, 2 social activists and 3 master level female university students. The collected data was analyzed through thematic analysis which comprehended the deep insight of domestic violence against women in Pakistan.

### **Defining Domestic Violence against Women**

Domestic violence against women is an abstract concept which involves different sub-concepts. It is defined differently by the different authors. Following are a few comprehensive definitions of domestic violence against women.

“Domestic Violence against Women is a pattern of assaultive and coercive behaviors, including physical, sexual and psychological attacks, as well as economic coercion that adults or adolescents use against their intimate partners” (Schechter & Ganley, 1995).

Similarly, Peraica et al., (2020) defined “Domestic Violence against Women as domestic abuse (DA), family violence (FV), family abuse (FA), and intimate partner violence (IPV)

in the form of partner abuse or family maltreatment, etc.”

A working group of World Health Organization (WHO) defined Domestic Violence against Women “as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, male development or deprivation”.

According to the aforementioned definitions, it is obvious that domestic violence against women includes physical, psychological, sexual or economic abuse of the women. These definitions also explain that such violence is mainly triggered by the spouse/partner, family or in-laws. Domestic violence against the women also shows the dominant nature of the males that want to enforce their unlawful will on the women to satisfy themselves.

### **Forms of Domestic Violence**

The domestic violence involves different forms. Following are a few prominent forms of domestic violence against women.

#### **Physical Violence**

Physical violence is the foremost form of domestic violence against the women. This type of domestic violence is normally found in the backward and traditional societies where the people do not have much educational and legal awareness. The males perceive it as their right to physically abuse the women. The women are also normally uneducated in such social settings so they don't know about their legal rights and face the regular physical violence (Zakar et al, 2016).

Physical violence involves the different ways such as hair pulling, beating, punching, honor killing, burning, murder, acid attacks, dowry deaths and so on. Physically refraining the girls from going to schools and also forbidding them to do a job where the physical pressure is involved also come under the physical violence. The women of the developing and under-developed countries regularly face such type of violence where they are also engaged in exchanging the women through watta-satta matrimonial bonds. In Pakistan, such type of domestic violence is found across the country but the specific physical violence through exchanging of women is normally found in the backward areas of the Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan and KPK through traditional rituals like watta-satta, wani and ghagh etc (Qaisrani et al, 2016).

#### **Psychological Violence**

Psychological violence is more dangerous than the physical violence because the physical violence is explicitly visible to the others rather psychological violence is hidden. None knows about the condition that a woman is suffering from psychological torture. Such type of violence involves mental torture, dehumanizes, public humiliation, intimidate, threatening, regular criticism and demoralizing the self-esteem of the women. In such type of domestic violence, the victim starts to die from the inner sides

because there are such matters that a woman cannot even share with others. Hence, under the psychological violence the victim is mainly mentally targeted by the family, in-laws or husband. In many cases, the victims of psychological violence committed suicide.

The psychological forms of violence include the demands of the more dowry by the husband or in-laws, absence of children or girls only, deprivation of the educational and employment opportunities, and other family issues. All of these factors contribute to the psychological violence which not only suffer their physical condition but also lead to further domestic problems (Qaisrani et al., 2016).

### **Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is another type of domestic violence. This type of violence also adopts different ways through which the victims have to face certain problems. Men and women have specific sexual organs and sexual desires. The sexual desire varies from individual to individual which is the reason that women are also suffering from sexual violence as well. Sexual violence includes the unwanted, forced, unsafe and degrading sex by the partner (Manzoor et al., 2013). A man and woman are bound in matrimonial relations through marriage system but the responsibility lies on each other to keep in mind each other's needs and desires. The happy marriage is the only where both take care of each other. But again, in the male-dominant and traditional societies, the women are considered the second-class citizens. The males consider the females as their personal property like a dummy which leads to sexual violence against the women.

### **Economic Violence**

The domestic violence against the women does not restrict to physical and psychological dimensions only rather it also includes the economic field as well. According to UN Declaration and the local provisions, both men and women are equal. They can get education and do a job or run a business but in the perspective of the third world countries, the women are not given much liberty to step out of the house doors for getting education or engaging in the fiscal activities (Khan et al., 2011). In the backward areas in the countries like Pakistan, the girls are even not allowed to go to schools due to their typical mindset they think they are born just to serve the male members. The situation is more pathetic in the under-developed countries. Hence, economic violence against the women/girls involves preventing them from acquisition of the resources and to put restrictions on them to run a business or fiscal activity. In Pakistan, again the majority of the women are unable to do a job due to family pressure (Hadi & M. Ullah, 2015).

### **Factors of Domestic Violence**

There are number of factors involved in domestic violence against women. Following are some prominent factors in accordance to Pakistani society.

#### **Lack of Education**

Lack of education is the foremost factor contributing to domestic violence against women in Pakistan.

Education plays a key role in shaping the personalities according socially approved ways. This is education which tells the individuals how to give respect to all members of society (Dalal, 2008). An educated man does not involve in gender-based violence rather he pays tribute to the women because one of them is his mother or sister. But contrary to that, the traditional people generally living in rural areas have limited level of education take part in such socially disproved actions. The same condition applies to the women as well because an educated woman does not bear such domestic violence because when she realizes such situation, prefers to get divorce from such individual (Abrar et al., 2010).

### **Patriarchal Society**

Another leading factor to domestic violence against women in Pakistan is the male-dominant society where the males have leading roles in routine life. All of the major fields i.e., education, social, economic are controlled by the male members. The females are almost excluded from these responsibilities and they are confined to the domestic deeds only. In such social setting, male members consider themselves all in all and think that they have right of domestic violence against the females (Aftab et al, 2011).

### **Cultural Norms**

Cultural norms are also contributing to domestic violence against women in Pakistan. Under the patriarchal system, the cultural values and traditions also grant more respect to the men as compared to the women. In the typical societal thinking, physical and abusive violence against the women is considered the normal matter. The females themselves are contributing to such formation because they push their sons to maintain dominance over their wives. In such cultural setup, abusing and torturing the women is termed as bravery. So, the domestic violence against the women prevails in countries like Pakistan (Ali et al., 2007).

### **Economic Dependency**

When the economic responsibilities are laid on the shoulders of males only, the females become dependent on them. All of their needs are dependent on their husbands so they have to rely on the males. In such conditions, it depends on the males that how they treat with women. In most of the cases the males do not give appropriate budget to the women which creates sense of deprivation among the women and leads to psychological violence (Ali et al., 2011). On the other hand, if the women are educated and do jobs, they have lower chances to be victim of gender-based violence.

### **Traditional Marriage Practices**

Traditional marriage system is practiced in the rural areas. In the Punjab, the culture of watta satta marriage still prevails in such a modern era. Under this marriage system, generally women become the victim of in-laws' domestic violence. The women have to bear all types of physical, psychological and economic violence so that her brother's marriage may maintain. Such marriage system is brutal for those women who become the victim of the traditional minded society. Similarly, vani is another form of arranged or forced child marriage as a punishment decided by the council of elders known as jirga. In

the areas of south Punjab, still the culture of childhood marriage is practiced despite the availability of strong legal measure. All of these traditional marriage practices are provide the way of domestic violence against women in Pakistan (Taheri, 2013).

### **Lack of Supportive System**

The absence of the legal and family support system is another factor of domestic violence against women. Although there exist laws related domestic violence against women but the implication of these laws is so pathetic that cases of violence against women continue to report on regular basis in Pakistan. Likewise, in most of the cases family also does not bother about the violence against their daughter and domestic violence continues to prevail (Babur, 2007).

### **Global Perspective**

Domestic violence is not an issue of a specific region or community but it is a global issue because all of the countries on the world map are facing the same issue. The intensity of this issue varies from society to society but bitter reality is that domestic violence exists everywhere. A plenty of studies have been conducted on the same topic which explore different dimensions of domestic violence against women (Howard et al., 2010).

Generally, it is perceived that advanced countries have overcome such issues but that reality is that even the countries like UK are not out of the jaws of domestic violence against women. It represents that gender-based victimization is also practiced in such developed countries as well. According to office of national statistics, divorcing and separated women are easy targets of domestic violence. The family system of UK is not as much strengthened as Pakistan has, so most of the offenders of domestic violence are family members (Peraica et al., 2020).

At the global perspective, higher ratio of the domestic violence against women are reported in the underdeveloped countries. According to the available data of WHO, 20% of the domestic violence cases are reported from the developed countries, 20% from the Latin America while the rest of the cases belonged to the under-developed countries. The high ratio of domestic violence cases from the underdeveloped countries are due to lack of education, awareness and economic resources which are also the major factors of domestic violence among the third world countries (Razaghi et al., 2013). Similarly, the issue of domestic violence against women is also examined in the perspective of US which reported that almost 40% of the wives in US also face the domestic violence. Even there are cases in which husbands killed their wives. At such stage, it seems that human instinct is same from every corner of the world that males want to maintain their dominance over the females. This is why domestic violence against women is also persistent in US (Bowling et al., 2010).

There are also other studies which report the existence of issue of domestic violence against women in US. According to Breiding (2014) one out of every three women faced domestic violence throughout their lifetime. Similarly, Monahan et al., (2020) explained that 1.3 million women are physically tortured

and beaten by their husbands in the United States.

In Europe, France is one of the most democratic and prosper country. But France is also not out of the issue of domestic violence. Numerous studies have been conducted on the same areas and raised the concerns of gender-based violence. For example, Moracco et al., (2007) highlighted that about 10% of the women experience the domestic violence. The ratio is lower than the third world countries but it shows that domestic violence is found in France too. The study also reported that hundred and thousands of the wives are sexually abused as well by their husbands. The citizens of such countries are much conscious about their legal rights so they adopt the legal way for compensation (Moracco et al, 2007). New Zealand is one of the top democracies of the world and strives to grant equal rights to all citizens without any biasness of males and females. In this country too, the women are facing the issue of domestic violence. The prominent domestic violence against the women in mainly related to physical and sexual abuses (Faramarzi et al, 2005).

The cultural traditions of Japan are also like the developing world where the male dominance is found. This is the factor that domestic violence in Japan is not as much reported because the affected women conceal such matters and do not make them public. The Japanese women do not highlight the issues of domestic violence due to fear of degeneration of the conflict, losing unity of the family and fear humiliation before the public (Amber & Guth, 2000).

All of these studies show that domestic violence against women is found across the world either it is developed or developing country. The women are confronting the physical, psychological, and sexual violence in all continents which needs the attention of the international organizations to work for ensuring the equal rights for women. There is also need to adopt the possible and suitable measures to culminate the gender inequalities like domestic violence against the women.

### **South Asian Standpoint**

South Asia is a region based on seven countries i.e., Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Bangladesh. The majority of the countries have strong and male dominant culture where women are not considered equal to the men. There are only urban areas where women are working with the men side by side. Otherwise, the backward areas practice the same traditional rituals and cultural practices where women are considered to be made just for households (Niaz, 2003). In South Asia, cultural norms have tightened its grip over the gender based sexual and physical violence. The violence against the women is not given importance and males take it for granted. This mentality is not individual-oriented but the family even the women perceive the same. Historically, husbands dominate their wives in socio-political and economic dimensions (Dobash et al., 1992).

The women in both India and Pakistan are termed as the second-class citizens. The males consider them their property and want to run them according to their modes. Unfortunately, they don't bother that they are not animals but human beings who also have heart and feelings. The men should consider their



feelings too but they even murder them on little mistake i.e., honor killing which prevails in both countries. In India, about 25% of the women suffer from the physical abuse (Yoshihama, 1999). Another study conducted by Narayana (1996) found that 18-45% of the married men in Uttar Pradesh reported of having physically abused their wives. It again shows that most of the domestic violence against the women is somewhat like routine matter. The astonishing thing is that males report the violence against the women proudly.

There are also other studies report gender-based violence against women in Indian. For example, Rao (1997) reported that 34% of the women are physically abused while 15% of the physically abused women were pregnant. Similarly, 72% of the physically abused women were depressed which means they had double domestic violence at the same time i.e., physical and psychological. Violence against the women in India is considered scant because only a tiny ratio takes it seriously while the rest of them do not bother about such matters. The negligence of the society is the major cause that physically abuse against the Indian women ranges from 22-60% (Mahajan, 1990).

Sri Lanka has higher literacy rate comparatively to the other South Asian countries yet the domestic violence against women is reported which shows that education is not a strong factor to control gender-based violence. A study conducted by Sonali (1990) highlights that 60% of the 200 interviewed women participants reported that they have experienced physical abuse by their partners. Similarly, 51% of them explained that their husbands used a weapon during the physical abuse.

Johnson et al., (1996) conducted a study on the violence against women in the Indian Punjab which pointed out that for each rape case reported to the police, 70 went unregistered. The affected families do not report the rape cases due to strong cultural pressure and they consider that filing a case will affect their dignity and honor in the society. Likewise, for each field case of molestation, 375 went unregistered. The majority of such unreported cases were dealt by panchayats, municipalities or other informal organizations. The same is the case of domestic violence against Nepali women. They also face different form violence by the male's community as Subas (2001) pointed out that thousands of the Nepali girls are trafficked from Nepal to India every year where they provide sex services.

According to UNICEF (1999) the only Indian state Uttar Pradesh has alarming situation regarding the violence against women. Accordingly, every year more than 1500 rape cases are reported in the state and nearly 2500 cases of molestation, sexual harassment and trafficking are reported. By the same token, the women in In Pakistan too, the women are facing severe wave of domestic violence in the southern Punjab and other different parts of the country. They are being forcefully raped by the order of informal justice system i.e., jirga and panchayat. Karo Kari is a gender-based physical and psychological violence where women are killed in the name of honor killing where the men consider that their women damaged their honor in society (Dawood, 1999). The same is the picture in the case of Bangladesh as the study carried out by Stewart (1989) explained that 50% of the of the wives were killed by their husbands in the

defined universe. It again shows the brutalities against the women in the name of domestic violence. In the state of Rajasthan of India, the domestic violence against women is chiefly associated with dowry deaths. The dowry deaths of the women increased by 24.43% during 1997-1999. The dowry deaths are not confined in India only but the rest of the south Asian countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan are also facing the same type of domestic violence. In Bangladesh, insufficient dowry claims lead to acid attacks and brutal violence by the spouse's families. In single country Bangladesh, there are estimated over 200 acid mutilations per year (Heise et al., 1994).

### **Status in Pakistan**

Pakistan is one of the developing countries sharing borders with India, China, Afghanistan and Iran. It has more than 230 million population. Out of the total population, women constitute about 48% of the population share. Being a patriarchal system, women are considered subordinate to the men. They are not enjoying as much freedom as the men in Pakistan (Qureshi, 2012). There are certain restrictions on the girls and women to get education and to do a job. The local traditional normative system is also male dominated and women have little space in such normative structure. The women in Pakistan are suffering from domestic violence which involves physical, psychological, sexual and economic dimensions (Khan et al., 2013).

KPK is one of the four provinces of Pakistan where ratio of domestic violence against women is higher than the other provinces. According to the findings of the annual report of Aurat Foundation (2008), ratio of domestic violence against women in KPK is 35.31%, Punjab 20.9%, Sindh 15.62% and Baluchistan 0.93% and Islamabad 1.56%. These statistics show that violence against women is found across the country even in the capital city of Islamabad (Shah, et al., 2012). Karachi is the largest city of Pakistan in terms of population. There reside the members of almost all ethnicities including Pashtuns, Punjabis, Sindhis, Baluchis, muhajirs and Pashtuns. The study conducted by Saeed (2012) found that Pashtuns are more likely trigger domestic violence against their wives than any other ethnicity. According to the findings Pashtuns' domestic violence against their women is 34.1%, Punjabis 27.3%, muhajirs 23.3%, Sindhis 9.6% and others 5.7%. The ways of domestic violence against women in Pakistan include beating, mentally torturing, homicide, and sexual abuse (Saeed, 2012).

Domestic violence is reported throughout the country but the proportion of such cases is higher in KPK where the cases of domestic violence against the women are reported in routine. The situation becomes worse when it comes to know that majority of the domestic violence cases are not reported due to honor of the families (Perveen, 2010). Furthermore, the informal justice system of Jirga prevails in the tribal areas which resolves the matters before to be lodged in the police station. In tribal areas, the jirga system also adopts some loophole regarding the matters related to women (Qadeer, 2014). The traditional ritual of Ghagh is practiced in such areas which is overcome to some extent yet it has its consequences on the society (Khan, 2016).

The issues of domestic violence, violation of human rights, molestation and harassment of the women are considered no issues. The reason is the dominance of patriarchal system where the males of the affected women are also not ready to lodge a case against the offenders. This is because they do not want to involve their women in the police and court matters. This is also on the right to some extent because the criminal justice system of Pakistan is not so effective which further humiliates the family. Furthermore, the matters of the women related are also decided by the men where women have little representation in the informal justice system at community level and in a house at family level (Abrar et al., 2010). In the rural areas, the bride-exchange marriage system is the root cause of domestic violence. Under such matrimonial system, a female has to sacrifice her desires and interests in order to save the family system especially her brother's family in her exchange. There are also many occasions that a girl is promised to marry a boy whom she does not like in order to end family enmity which is another form violence against women. Later, the same girl has to bear bitter consequence in her in-laws where she is psychologically tortured for the rest of her life (Khan, 2016).

### **Data Analysis and Findings of the Study**

This section deals with the analysis of data collected through in-depth interviews. All of the major findings of the research are also discussed under this section.

#### **Domestic Violence in Pakistan**

The existing literature explored the different dimensions of domestic violence exist in Pakistan. The previous studies reported that women in Pakistan are facing physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence in Pakistan (Abdullah, 2002). The participants of the study also reported different practices of domestic violence found in Pakistan. An affected respondent of domestic violence said,

“We live in a small village based on members of same clan. The village is mainly handled by the head of the clan who does not bother about the females’ domestic violence type exists in Pakistan”.

Another respondent of middle age reported,

“Domestic violence in Pakistan is found in every house but the unfortunate thing is that none is ready to accept it as domestic violence. The girls are not given equal opportunities like boys. The sisters are beaten by the brothers on little cause. The wives are punished by different means”.

A university student told,

“Yes, phenomenon of domestic violence exists in Pakistan but unfortunately, we focus on the wrong things and ignore the positive ones. There are also many positive things attached to our family system. For example, our fathers and brother work hard to bear our domestic and educational expenses”.

She further added,

“I am too a girl. To my personal experience, I did not face any type of domestic violence in my family even my father and brother love me too much but yes if I do something wrong, they will surely stop me”.

A social activist explained,

“Under the patriarchal system, the domestic violence against the women is a routine matter. The women of the urban areas are more educated and have more awareness about their rights so they face comparatively less violence. But on the other side, the women of the backward areas are facing physical and psychological violence as a routine matter”.

### **Physical and Psychological Violence**

Physical and psychological violence are the broad categories of domestic violence against women. These are two major types of gender-based violence across the globe (Amber & Guth, 2000). The existing literature elucidated that women are facing such typed of violence in developed and under-developed nations. In the perspective of Pakistan, the same is also reported from the previous studies (Ali et al., 2007). Furthermore, the participants of the study also reported somewhat alike situation as one of the affected women told,

“I am married since 2008 to my second cousin. The early years of my wedding were very happy but later when I gave birth to two daughters, the happiness withered away. Although my husband never beat me but he became quiet along with his mother which made me patient of depression”.

Another young married girl said,

“From very first day of my wedding, I am victim of physical and psychological domestic violence. I tried my best to make my husband and his family happy but all in vain. My mother-in-law scolds me on little things and my husband slaps me on every minor matter of family”.

A female of middle age explained,

“I faced physical and psychological domestic violence mainly due to dowry. My in-laws started to demand more dowry from my parents which my parents could not afford. This led me to psychological ailments i.e., depression and anxiety”.

She continued to tell her story and told,

“Psychological violence is more fatal than the physical because physical damages can be recovered through healing but the psychological issues have long lasting implications. I look like as if I were old so early because the psychological problems affected my health conditions badly”.

A social activist explained,

“Physical and psychological violence is not only concerned with the married women only. There are hundreds and thousands of the girls facing the sever conditions by their families. Their whole future is compromised due to a single issue”.

She further reported,

“Women in Pakistan are facing physical and psychological violence day by day. They are not allowed to take part in important decision making of family which alienate them from the family system. They are bound to follow specific rules and regulations set by the family but they have to accept them which is also a type of psychological violence”.

### **Social Factors**

Social factors are those triggers which motivate the males to direct violence or threat of domestic violence against women (Breiding, 2014). Like physical and psychological, social factors are also prominent reasons found in different countries behind the domestic violence against women. In the perspective of Pakistan, there are certain social factors found form the previous researches (Babur, 2007). Similarly, the respondents of the current research also highlighted some other social factors. For example, a respondent told,

“The foremost social factor of domestic violence is the dominance of the males and patriarchal form of society. All of the matters related to a single family at micro level and society at macro level are dealt by men. This is the prime social factor provides the ways to domestic violence”.

A social activist who also runs an NGO for the women rights elaborated,

“Our constitution clearly defines that women and men are equal citizens in Pakistan but in practice the reality is totally different. The women are selected mainly on reserved seats in provincial and national assemblies. The male dominant society is not willing to cast a vote in the favor of a woman candidate which shows the mentality of the Pakistani society against women”.

A university student explained,

“Lack of education is one of the major social factors of domestic violence. She said that my parents are educated I never saw them even a single time fighting each other. They both give respect to each other and they socialized me and my brothers with the same mentality”.

She further added,

“On contrary, those spouses who have limited level of education or who are uneducated have more chances to get involved in domestic violence. An uneducated either this is a

male or female does not know well about the respect and dignity of his/her spouse so there are more chances of domestic violence in such matters”.

Another respondent pointed out,

“Social stigmatization is another social factor of domestic violence from both sides. On male side, the domestic violence is carried out because he wants to keep his dignity up and does not want to be labeled as weak husband. Similarly, the woman continues to be victim of domestic violence and does not tell to any other so that she cannot be stigmatized in society”.

Another activist pointed out,

“The lack of social and family support is another factor of domestic violence. Unfortunately, in countries like Pakistan, there is not any proper governmental mechanism to handle such social issues. Furthermore, females’ families also want maintain the relations anyway which also encourage the commencement of violence against women”.

### **Cultural Factors**

Cultural factors of domestic violence against women involve those cultural traditions and practices which prove helpful in triggering domestic violence. Such cultural factors mainly contribute in the developing and under-developed countries where inhabitants are strongly bound to centuries old cultural practices (Dalal, 2007). In Pakistani viewpoint, the cultural factors are generally associated with the rural and backward areas. The literature review also pointed out different cultural factors held responsible for violence against women (Dawood, 1999). Similarly, the participants of the research also fetched varied views regarding cultural factors. For example, a participant explained,

“Cultural traditions and rituals are the key factors of domestic violence against women in Pakistan. In the existing cultural setup, only women have to give in so they do and accept any misdeed of the males as their destiny”.

An affected woman replied,

Although arranged marriage system is very popular among the people of Pakistan but frankly speaking to my point of view this arranged marriage system is also one of the major cultural factors of domestic violence against women. In most of the cases, the husbands and wives do not like each other and it results in domestic violence.

Another respondent briefed the situation in more details and told,

Both families of husband and wife want to save their honor in the society, they do not want to publicize their family matters so most of the rape, brutality and other domestic violence cases are not reported and it motivates the other males to carry on the same practice under the support of such culture.

She further added,

In the name of fake family honor and dignity, the whole life of the affected woman is destroyed. I am the victim of the same and living in the same family even after severe physical and psychological torture due to face saving of both families. But under this fake family honor I am living like a ghost without existence and without emotions just passing the rest of the days.

A social activist told,

Our religion Islam provides open and shut ways of leading life according to Islam. It provided the way of divorce if the husband and wife are misfit for each other but unfortunately the divorce is also stigmatized in our society despite the religious provisions. So, the women also face domestic violence to safeguard their marriage.

### **Legal and Family Support**

Legal and family support are two supportive indicators to control the domestic violence against women. Here is vivid difference between the developed and developing countries. The developed countries like US, UK, France and New Zealand have strong legal measures to culminate domestic violence against women. They provide full support to the affected women and their families which is one of the prime determinants that gender-based violence is lower in such countries (Faramarzi et al., 2005). On the other hand, the developed countries do not have typical cultural practices like that of Pakistani societies and they openly fight for the damages to get compensations. But contrary to that the legal and family support is not as much effective in Pakistan which is also a social and legal factor of domestic violence in this country (Hadi & M. Ullah, 2015). The respondents of the current research also provided the detailed commentary about these factors. For example, a female reported,

“From the very first day of my wedding, I was told to compromise with the routine matters of the domestic life. I do not want to tease my parents by telling them about the physical and mental torture I am facing”.

Another respondent explained,

“Every family wants to see his daughter to be happily married and happily living in her in-laws. I do not face such severe type of physical domestic violence but yes, I have some issues but try to compromise with them”.

She further added,

“I know a woman who lives nearby my home. She is victim of physical domestic violence by her husband on daily basis. I never saw her family to see her and to talk about such brutalities. It shows that women have to compromise a lot to save her married life because

after divorce most of the women become the victim of psychological violence in her parents' home".

A social activist elaborated,

"Pakistan is one of the third world countries and it seems almost impossible to frame irony policies with proper implementation to counter domestic violence. The women do not have confidence in the criminal justice system of Pakistan".

Another respondent said,

"The police look more dangerous and unsafe than the offenders. There are many cases the rape affected women that are again raped by the police. So, the role of police is so pathetic which is also a factor of domestic violence against women in Pakistan".

Similarly, a university student told,

"The common people of Pakistan are so terrified from the police culture so they do not file domestic violence case in police station. Furthermore, the court system of Pakistan is so delayed and overcrowded that there are limited chances of gaining justice in such system".

### **Suitable Recommendations**

In the end, the researcher asked the participants to propose some suitable recommendations to control domestic violence in accordance to the social and cultural setting of Pakistan. All of the participants of the study provided fruitful suggestions. For example, a female told,

"First of all, our cultural patterns should be redressed and the role of the women should also be included. The women should be given equal status like that of the males. This will be the most suitable recommendation to get rid of domestic violence".

Another respondent said,

"The traditional marriage practices should be forbidden because this is one of the leading factors of directing domestic violence against women".

Simliry another woman replied,

"The religious stance should be explained properly before the men in Pakistani society because the majority of the domestic violence against the women is triggered through wrong religious interpretations. The men should be told that according to the teachings of Islam, women are granted certain perks and privileges as well and they should not be treated like animals".

A young social activist explained the legal side in details and reported,

"There is dire need to reform the existing legal provisions regarding the domestic violence



and women related laws. Such laws look like dead bodies which need to be redressed on urgent bases. Furthermore, the morality level of the police should also be enhanced because due to their immoral and rude behavior, a huge bulk of such cases are not reported”.

Another respondent told,

“More educational and employment opportunities should be created for the girls and women. Such initiatives will also reduce domestic violence because when women will be economically independent, they surely strive in better ways”.

She enlarged her commentary and said,

“Women are bound under the directions of parents and in-laws for the financial matters. They get what their families and in-laws give them which is insufficient to lead a happy life. So, the employment initiatives will liberate them from the economic violence on one side and they will contribute to their families on the other”.

The whole of the above commentary of the participants elucidated different social, cultural, legal and traditional practices which contribute to the domestic violence against women in Pakistan. It is obvious from the views of the variety of the respondents that women in Pakistan are facing domestic violence on different levels.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Following are a few limitations of the present research.

- The current research is purely qualitative which is the foremost limitation.
- The sample size of 10 respondents another limitation.
- This study is only involving the female respondents which is also a limitation.
- The participants of the research belong to Lahore only which again limits the research.

### **Conclusion**

Domestic violence against women exists in every region of the world. All of the modern and traditional countries are confronting the same issue. The intensity of domestic violence varies from country to country and region to region (Howard et al., 2010). In the perspective of South Asia, women in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan are facing different types of domestic violence (Sonali, 1990). In South Asian countries, women are facing all types of domestic violence i.e., physical, psychological, economic and sexual (Subas, 2001). Pakistan is also not out of such social problem because the extensive literature review provided that Pakistani women are facing domestic violence from Karachi to Gilgit-Baltistan. In the Pakistani standpoint, social and cultural factors are primary contours of domestic violence (Qaisrani et al, 2016). Pakistan has more than sixty percent rural population where centuries old cultural traditions are still being practiced. These social and cultural settings are vividly male-dominant where women are considered the second-class citizens. Furthermore, the violence against women is openly reported in the male community as a notion of pride. The cultural patterns are framed

in such ways that women have to obey the decision of the men and they have to accept what their husbands do is right either it is physical or psychological violence against women.

## References

- Abdullah, K.F., (2002). Causes, forms and levels of violence against women in Muzaffarabad: Azad Jammu and Kashmir. *Explorer: J. Social Sc.*, 1: 88-93.
- Abrar et al. (2010) The Women Violence in Pakistan: Evidence from Rural and Urban Areas. *European Journal of Social Sciences*.
- Aftab. S et al (2011) Women surviving under the menace of domestic violence. *Medical Channel*, Vol.17-No 2, 8-12.
- Ali et al. (2007) Prevalence of And Reasons for Domestic Violence Among Women from Low Socio-Economic Communities of Karachi. *Eastern*.
- Ali et al. (2011) Intimate Partner Violence in Urban Pakistan Prevalence, Frequency, And Risk Factors. *International Journal of Women's Health*, 105–115.
- Amber, A., & Guth Leon, P. (2000). Domestic Violence and trauma surgeon. *The American Journal of Surgery*.179, 134- 139. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0002-9610\(00\)00245-2](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0002-9610(00)00245-2).
- Babur, Z. U. (2007) Violence Against Women in Pakistan: Current Realities and Strategies for Change. *Burg: European University Center for Peace Studies Stadtschlaining*.
- Bowling. (2010). Background Checks for Firearm Transfers, 2008. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, I. Retrieved from

<http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/html/bcft/2008/bcft08st.pdf>.

- Breiding, M. J. (2014). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence victimization—National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, United States, 2011. *Morbidity and mortality weekly report. Surveillance summaries* (Washington, DC: 2002), 63(8), 1.
- Dalal, K. (2008) Causes and Consequences of Violence Against Child Labor And Women In Developing Countries.
- Dawood, A. (1999). Karo-kari: A question of honour, but whose honour? *Feminista* 2: 3– 4.
- Dobash, R. P., Dobash, R. E., Wilson M et al (1992) The myth of sexual symmetry in marital violence. *Soc Probl* 39: 71– 91.
- Faramarzi, M., Esmailzadeh, S., & Mosavi, S. (2005). Prevalence and Determinants of Intimate Partner Violence in Babol City, Islamic Republic Iran. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 11(55/6), 870-879.
- Hadi, R. & M. Ullah, (2015). Violence against women in Pakistan. Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Heise, L., Pitanguy, J., Germain, A. (1994). Violence against women: the hidden health burden. *World Bank Discussion Paper* 255. The World Bank, Washington, DC.
- Howard, L. M., Trevillion, K., & Agnew-Davies, R. (2010). Domestic violence and mental health. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 22(5), 525-534.
- Johnson, Cate et al. (1996). Domestic violence in India: Recommendations of the Women's Rights Team. Report to USAID/India.
- Khan et al. (2011) Violence Against Women In Pakistan: A Case Study Of Wife Battering In Rural Gujrat, Pakistan. *World Applied Science Journal*, pp. 2168-2174.
- Mahajan, A. (1990). Instigators of wife battering. In: Sooshma Sood (ed) Violence against women. Arihant Publishers, Jaipur.
- Manzoor, R., A.M. Abdul Rahman & M. Bano, (2013). Violence against women in Pakistan: Evidence from Punjab. *Int. J. Adv. Res.*, 1: 356-365.
- Maqsood, S., S. Tufail, F. Maqsood & R. Sajid, (2015). Demographic factors of domestic violence: An analysis of PDHS 2012-13. *Pak. J. Social Issues*, 6: 1-17.
- Monahan, K., Bannon, S., & Dams-O'Connor, K. (2020). Nonfatal Strangulation (NFS) and Intimate Partner Violence: a Brief Overview. *Journal of Family Violence*, 1-12.
- Moracco, K. E., Runyan, C. W., Bowling, J. M., & Earp, J. A. (2007). Women's experiences with violence: A national study. *Womens Health Issues*, 17(1), 3-12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.whi.2006.03.007>.
- Narayana, G. (1996). Family violence, sex and reproductive health behaviour among men in Uttar

- Pradesh, India. The Futures Group, Uttar Pradesh, India.
- Niaz, U. (2003). Violence against women in South Asian countries. *Arch Women's Ment Health*, 6:173–184 DOI 10.1007/s00737-003-0171-9
- Peraica, T., Petrovic, Z. K., Baric, Z., Galic, R., & Kozaric-Kovacic, D. (2020). Gender Differences among Domestic Violence Help-Seekers: Socio-Demographic Characteristics, Types and Duration of Violence, Perpetrators, and Interventions. *Journal of Family Violence*, 1-14.
- Qaisrani, A., S. Liaquat & E.N. Khokhar, (2016). Socio-economic and cultural factors of violence against women in Pakistan. Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Rao, V. (1997). Wife-beating in rural south India: A qualitative and econometric analysis. *Soc Sci Med* 44(8): 1169–1180.
- Razaghi, N., Ramezani, M., Tabatabaei, S. M., & Parvizy, S. (2013). The Consequences of Violence against women in the Family: A Qualitative Study. *IJOGI*, 16(44), 11-20.
- Schechter, S., & Ganley, A. (1995). Understanding domestic violence. Domestic violence: A national curriculum for family preservation practitioners.
- Sonali, D. (1990). An Investigation into the incidence and causes of domestic violence in Sri Lanka, Colombo: Women in need.
- Subas, R. (2001). INGO's call for political will to control girl trafficking. *The Kathmandu Post*, Nepal, June 17.
- UNICEF (1999). Conveying Concerns. Women report on gender based violence. UNICEF.
- Yoshihama, M. (1999). Domestic violence: Japan's hidden crime. Domestic Violence Action and Research Group in Japan. *Japan Quart* 46(3) July–Sept.
- Zakar, R., M.Z. Zakar & S. Abbas, (2016). Domestic violence against rural women in Pakistan: An issue of health and human rights. *J. Family Violence*, 31: 15-25

## INTERVIEW-GUIDE

Q1) How do you perceive domestic violence in the perspective of Pakistan?

---

---

---

---

Q2) Did you face any type of physical violence?

---

---

---

---

Q3) Do you think psychological violence is terrible than other types of domestic violence? If yes, then how?

---

---

---

---

Q4) What are social factors behind the domestic violence?

---

---

---

---

Q5) Do you think cultural factors play critical role in gender-based violence in Pakistan?

---

---

---

---

Q6) Is there any social or family support available for the affected women in Pakistan?

---

---

---

---

Q7) What is the legal support available for affected women in Pakistan?

---

---

---

---

Q8) What are suitable recommendations to control domestic violence?

---

---

---

---

THANK YOU