

Domestic Violence Against Women in Rural Areas of Pakistan: A Case Study of District Swabi

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Abstract: Domestic violence against women is a critical issue in all over Pakistan and especially, rural areas of the country. This violence against women is the result of centuries old customs in which women face all form of violence due to the weak and subordinate position in the. Women are more vulnerable to this domestic violence at home by their partner and other male members of the family, i.e., women are not safe in their public and private life. This research study of domestic violence against is a case study of district Swabi, a rural area of Khyber Pakhtoonkhawa, Pakistan. This study discusses the major kinds of domestic violence and some critical factors associated with this domestic violence. In the last will analyze the state and institutional role in this domestic violence against women and will give some effective recommendation for controlling this crucial issue.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is the violence or abuse of one person against other in domestic setting. Domestic violence may be referred to any kind of violence or mistreatment against any person of the family that is helpless. It may be against intimate partner or against female, children, parents or elders but commonly domestic violence means violence against spouse, partner or more simply against wife but sometimes it may be against children or particularly against girls in family. Globally, women are overwhelming the victims of the domestic violence, so whenever we talk about domestic violence by this not only we mean violence against women by their husband and In-law's but also violence against girls whose live with their family they also most of the time become vulnerable to this domestic violence by their male heirs such as not allowing for education or for job, not giving them their share in property, force marriage, childhood marriage, honor killing and this is not end, here but they also become victim of the vulnerable

violence by the practicing some Pakhtoon customs such as Badala or Wata Satta, Sawara (to give a woman to end the dispute between two families) Tehga, honor killing and so, forth.

Though commonly speaking domestic violence is always considered the harsh behavior by husband to maintain power and control over wife in the marital relationship, it may be called Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). Some scholars define violence as act with the intention or perceived with the intention of hurting someone but another group of scholar argue that it is just a narrow view of violence, they include all the physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and even threats of such abuse is also considered violence. According to the UN Declaration domestic violence is any physical, verbal, emotional, psychological, economic and sexual suffering from or threats of any brutalact and coercive deprivation of rights or personal freedom.

Domestic violence is the systematic pattern of behavior to control his partner. It can begin at any age and any stage of marital relationship. Domestic violence

against women can happen at any age regardless of the creed, race, ethnicity, social background, class, religion or region. Domestic violence is a global issue, women all over the world experience this domestic violence by their intimate partner but the cases of domestic violence in Pakistan is getting more severe and frequent due to the male domination, female subordination society and joint family system in which a woman is suffering from this violence by her in-laws as well. Any kind of domestic violence is a legal crime. In every second woman in Pakistan faces some form of domestic violence that is extremely damaging for the family and society as well. Especially women in rural area of Pakistan are more expose to this domestic violence due to the male domination, misogynist behavior of men and the lack of awareness about their legal rights, their weak social position and patriarchal society. Domestic violence in the rural areas of Pakistan is very common phenomenon and even this is hardly considered violence, man considers all these domestic violence as his legal privilege. In this research, district Swabi is the case study about domestic violence against women, so, in district Swabi there is 97% women face domestic by their partner in one way or another way. Domestic violence is crime and it is very commonly seen in nearly all educated and uneducated families^[1].

If we look historically women were more vulnerable to this domestic violence at that time this domestic violence was mostly associated with the physical violence rather than verbal or psychological but in today it is physical as well as verbal psychological and emotional that equally damaging the mental health of women. Worldwide domestic violence remained a very common tradition, before 1800 century domestic violence as wife beating is considered as legal action even in all the western societies. In late 20th century nearly all the western countries outlaw this domestic violence from their legal system and declared it a crime. Then slowly and gradually after the first wave of the feminist movements it started to change the popular narrative and legal tradition about domestic violence but unfortunately in this 21st century the era of technological advancement and development in the media, Pakistani's women are still facing this domestic violence at the very highest ratio. In case of domestic violence and sexual assault Pakistan ranks the sixth most dangerous country in world. The human right activists blame the patriarchal society and male domination in the society for the rapid increase in the cases. But in our patriarchal society men show their dominance, authority and control over women in the form of domestic violence and also to prove that they are men enough^[2].

Women become victim of this abusive behavior from their childhood. During childhood, they are always

ignored in each and every field of life such as education, health, social status and all other opportunities and privileges in comparison by male children. All this discriminatory behavior come under the violence against female^[3].

Domestic violence may be physical such as beating choking, kicking, punching, pulling hair, hurt with weapons, harming your children, forbidding you from eating, sleeping and going out, not allowing to get education or doing job these all are different form of coercive of domestic violence, other than these there are also verbal, psychological, sexual and economic violence and we are seeing such type of domestic violence in our surrounding very commonly but till today we couldn't stop it, although, our constitution gives full protection to women from all these violent of men attitude against women. Pakistan Penal code and Domestic violence Act 2012 gives full protection to women and disciplines and punishment to the committer of such type of violations but lamentably our women cannot access these rights, initially most of the women in our rural areas are uneducated and they are unaware of such type of acts and rules and cannot run through this. Furthermore, if certain group of women have knowledge about all these acts in the constitution yet, they cannot even think to use such rights to rebuff the offender for their brutality due to our extremely and incredibly misogynist social setup in which a woman is wholly solely dependent on man, may they are husbands, fathers, brothers or any male heir of the family and woman can never even think about to go against these heirs^[4] (Natioanl domestic Violence Hotline).

Objectives of the study:

- To expose different forms and associated factors of domestic violence against women
- To examine the role of state and legal institutions in the domestic violence against women

Importance of the study: This study gives a critical review about domestic violence and presents it different kinds and related factors to this domestic violence. Domestic violence against women is basically the violation of basic human basic rights. This is very critical and vague issue of the day which needs to be exposed and address on the legal grounds because in this 21st century women are still deprive from their basic rights.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is qualitative and explanatory research paper. This research paper is based on secondary data, i.e., relevant book, article, research paper, report, constitution article and scholarly on the internet is contacted for

writing this study. Beside these it is also based on the direct observation research because researcher is member of this experimental group.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the paper: Domestic violence is an unfocused issue in Pakistan and still exists at very alarming rate in our rural areas. There are many factors associated with this domestic violence such as male dominated social structure, economic disparity, lack of education and awareness of women about their rights, misinterpretation of Islamic principles with social customs and lack of governmental support. By analyzing all these associated factors we can say that the factor of social- cultural is the root cause of all this domestic violence. Furthermore, for controlling this domestic violence effort are required at domestic, local and national level. Individual role with the integrated supportive system is very necessary in making all these changes in this male dominant structure of society. We should also equally focus on the women empowerment and their full access to the court system. These all measures will be possible when fully supported by men and start practicing because if man wants to change his behavior about this issue then it will be address automatically.

Different forms of domestic violence: Domestic violence has takes many forms like physical violence, mental or psychological violence, sexual and economic violence are the main kinds of domestic violence. We explain all these different forms of violence in this research paper one by one. These all are having very multidimensional impacts. For instance physical violence create mental stress and also economic and violence is directly affect physical and psychological stress. So, in case of district Swabi domestic violence occurred in nearly every household. In Pakistan according to MH nearly 80-85% women face domestic violence. This is overall survey data of Pakistan but women in rural of Pakistan are more vulnerable to this domestic violence, so in lamentably in Swabi nearly in every household there is domestic violence in one way or another way.

Physical violence: Physical violence may have different ways such as beating, punching, hair pulling, burning, murder, honor killing, acid attack, dowry deaths and not allowing out for education or for job, harming children, throwing and breaking things and imposing more restrictions on her rights and this is not end here there is also some customary violence such selling and buying of women as commodity, exchange of women between families (Watta Satta) using women as barter to settle dispute between families, killing them on the name of honor. Most of the time women become victim of this

domestic violence for giving birth to girls or victim of acid attack by their husband for blaming them for extra marital affair outside home^[5].

In district Swabi 80% women become victim of physical violence. These all abusive action is very normal in household and man considers this as his right to correct erring partner. Woman can never think to go against her partner will because this case make the situation worse and she may face more violent behavior because of her weak status. According to the Human Rights Commission Pakistan's Report that this violence may sometimes cause to death of the victim and this violence is major challenge for the woman in our society though even she is not safe in her family.

Psychological or mental violence: The psychological violence is m worse and dangerous than physical violence because it affects women both physically and psychologically, it may include mental torture, intimidate, dehumanizes, threatens, public humiliation, criticism and diminishing their self-esteem. In psychological violence victim is mentally control by her partner which keeps her in very depression and stress which often cause suicide of the victim. Psychological violence may not only from the intimate partner but also from a male heir of family, father, brother or uncle, etc. Mental violence may be discriminatory behavior, forced marriage, childhood marriage and it also includes verbal abuse as well such as yelling, name-calling, shaming, criticizing, threatening to throw them out of home, snatching children and threatening of separation or divorce^[6]. In short, we can say that old centuries traditions and customs which even not accept the equal status and equal right of women in the society with men, these traditions still deny the basic right of women such as to choose her marriage partner or reject one whose chosen for her by their family or remain single if she wants. Our social setup is very far from this concept of equal status of woman and man; we are still stuck with the centuries old traditions and consider these unwritten rules as a final and supreme law^[7].

Sexual violence: Sexual violence against is also had different faces such as forced, unwanted, unsafe and degrading sex by intimate partner is called sexual violence. According to WHO forced sex by the partner with whom a woman have a consensual sex is an act of aggression and it is called marital rape which is a crime but it is never considered a crime by the partner in our patriarchal society. Coercive reproductions such as forced pregnancies or end pregnancies are also act of aggression and sexual violence. This sexual form of violence is unreported and prosecuted in our country, so that's why men considered all these savage actions as his legal rights and he is all-in-all in this abusive actions. In our rural society women is considered a reproductive machine and

marriage impose an obligation on women to bear children and she always faces threats if she intends to use any measure for birth control, it may a healthcare issue for women but she never goes against of husband in reproductive decisions if ever try to do this she faces threats and violence by her husband, so, women in are always had to face this sexual violence in home^[8].

Economic violence: Domestic violence not only ends to the physical, mental and sexual violence but women are also made to subject of economic violence. Economic violence may involve preventing from resources acquisition, limit what the victim may use or exploiting the resources of the victim. Simply the economic abuse means control of economic resources by partner. The weak and subordinate position of women in our social setup which lead inclusive economic dependency over their male heir or husband and they become victim of economic violence by not providing them their livelihood. In our patriarchal society the economic as sets are control by the male of the family maybe they are father, brother, uncle or husband, so, even they never give share to women in their legal economic assets. Economy of the family is always control by men, women right of inheritance is out of practice law in our rural areas. Economic violence has more severe consequences which mostly associated with pregnant women and children's health. This is also a very common practice of violence in which a woman is out of seen in economic field. A woman does 24 h unpaid duty in her household and in return she gets nothing except domestic violence.

Factors associated with domestic violence against women: Women in our society is not considered as equal citizen like men, she can't avail all those right and privileges which is exercised by man in the society, Although, legal system and written rules are the safeguard of all the rights and privileges of women but in practice all these rights are monopolized by the misogynist men. Gender is one of the organizing principles of our society.

In this gender based social set up woman is considered as a secondary citizen and just like a reproductive machine. But this is not ending here women also face savage and violence attitude by the men at home; this domestic violence is fairly wide spread and commonly practices. There are some common factors in our society which is responsible for this brutal and injustice behavior of man. Some main factors which are applicable globally but some distinguish factors of our Pakistani rural society are as conservative socio-cultural behavior of men, misogynist and old social norms, weak economic position of women, lack of awareness and education, misconception of Islamic teaching and social

norms, dependency of women, misuse of women on the name of honor (Izzat, Ghairat) for justification of honor killing, poverty and injustice traditional customs are some highlight factors on basis of which man considered himself superior and dominant.

Socio-cultural factor: The socio-cultural elements are one of the most critical factors which are predominantly patriarchal. This social and cultural setup does a very biased division between men and women and keeps them both in to separate world. Home is defined as legitimate and physical space for women while men dominate the world outside home. Women role outside of home is strictly controlled and restricted by the men and this limitation is also linked with honor of family and social and cultural customs by which woman is considered as personal property of man who control each and every moment of woman and this also a very strong belief of our patriarchal social system that women are born to serve man, she will do what man wants, she has no personal like and dislike, it is also a general belief of our society that women's life outside from their home is unsafe and risky yet addressing this problem we are forgetting that life of women is also at the stake and risky, unsafe and always remain victim of violence and become scapegoat in the name of social norms such as Honor, (Ghairat) Sawara (in which a girl is given in order to settle dispute of the family) Wata Sata (exchange marriage), honor killing, dowry and sometime the ruthless decisions of the Jarhga make them victim of violence and use them as instrument and assets for settlement of their family dispute^[3, 9].

The entire cruel and wild custom are applies over women. Men are exempted from all these social and cultural practice, men enjoy each and every right and privilege freely without any resistance of women but man cannot even digest to give basic and legal rights to women, due to their misogynist and stingy attitude toward women they suffer a lot from these brutal behavior of men and old centuries social and cultural traditions and restrictions. From childhood, it is taught to a girl that she needs man's help for her survival, she is dependent on man on her day-to-day activities without man support she cannot live and can lose her identity because man give identity to a woman and she has no identity without man. This is what our society belief and transfer to the young girls from their childhood, this belief keeps her mum and suffers all types of violence at home but cannot courage to resist. This spread of patriarchy is also not even in whole society, the degree and nature of women oppression are varying from region and rural/urban division. Patriarchal structure are stronger in rural and tribal areas of Pakistan where local custom are strictly abided and man exercise strong authority over women lives and their choices and this patriarchy and contrasting

mindset is the most powerful aspect of our social and cultural norm by man over women for controlling them^[5, 10].

This concept of violence against women are also linked to the masculinity of man and show his masculinity in harassing and abusing women, he will consider weak and ridicule by other men if a man does not show this savage masculinity in his home. There are strong sentiment of dominance and supremacy behind all these structural socio-cultural violence against women and have strong feeling to rule over women. This socio-cultural factor of violence is more common in villages and very crucial to contribute most in the violent behavior of man against women. Thus, unfortunately women in our society are still the major victims of this patriarchal and conservative socio-cultural setup^[11].

Weak economic position of women: Economic factor is one of the main standing causes of domestic violence against women. It is believed by all the researchers and scholarly work that economy is one of the root causes of many social evils and problems. Deprivation from the basic needs of life leads to the frustration and violence behavior of man which ultimately result violence against women who are the weak segment of the society. Beside this women have weak economic position which mean they have no economic capacity, normally women are not allow to do job outside their home all their jobs are at home or in the field and unpaid. Women are hardly ever getting their share in the inheritance or family economic assets. Thus a woman always remains economically weak. Economic deprivation and poverty are linked with injustice and violence behavior against women.

Poverty always deprives girls from the education though parents in our Swabi district prefer to boys to go to school than girls, they are happier to stay their daughter at homes. So, poverty deprives girls from education and it is clear that uneducated women are unaware of their rights and thus more victimized for abuse and violence. Although, it is observed that level of education both for male female has increased but in our rural areas, conservative and misogynist mindset still prevail blocking the ways of girls from getting education and doing job which keep them deprive of basic rights and vulnerable to domestic violence^[3].

Lack of awareness and restricted level of women education: In our rural areas due to lack of awareness and alimited and restricted level of education is also a main factor contributes in this domestic violence. Girls cannot get education this is not considered her right it is totally laid on the will of man if man want she can get a limited level of education which is most probably till primary but she cannot go till high or middle level of education. Man does not allow her because this is the free will of the guardian maybe her father, brother or uncle. If sometimes

a woman gets education then she will never be allowed to go for job or participate in any other social awareness activity. All the mobility of a woman is restricted by a man. So, look the misery of the woman how she will get know about her rights and demand for her rights, this is somehow seemedim possible for her to stand for herself against her partner or other male guardian. Although, our constitution gives full protection to all citizens irrespective of gender; it is mention in constitution that all humans are born free and with equal rights and dignity. All citizens are equal before law and give equal protection but these rules are just rules in the document these have a very minor relation with the reality. Our administrative bodies, GOs, NGOs and all the human rights organizations and their efforts are unsuccessful in our area, women are still faced all the violence and have no access to their basic rights. In this conservative and patriarchal socio-cultural setup it is very difficult to achieve rights and get rid of this brutality of man but all change will be only possible when women get know about their rights, role and position in the society in this will be assured when they have access to the local legal bodies. Thus, this is a very slow process in rural area Pakistan but anyhow education will make them confident to report their cases and struggle for their rights and get aware about surrounding.

Misconception between islamic teaching and our traditional societal norms: There are awide misconception and misinterpretation of the Islamic teaching about women's role and rights. Islam give full freedom and full protection from any type of violence so than how is it possible that Islam advocates violence against women. There is a lot of misconception about Islamic teachings. In Islam women are given respect. Woman always respectable, it may be mother, wife, sister or daughter but here in our society we see woman victim of all the violent behavior of man. These misogynist men misunderstand and connect the honor killing and other violent norms to Islam and restrict all the mobility and social movement of women, however Islam give equal right and strongly forbade misbehavior and violence against women. They also misinterpret the Puradh order of Islam, Islam order Veil 'purdah' which mean to covering body this does not mean to stay and confine at home, Islam give full freedom and equal right to woman as given to man including all the basic rights such as right to live, free movement, education, jobs, right to resist against violence, right to choose her partner and right to reject her partner if she is not willing to live with him she can simply leave and can get Khullah (separation). But unfortunately our unaware and misogynist man cannot make difference between Islamic orders and these unethical social norms and so due to the misconception and lack of understanding of men, woman faces all this

domestic violence with undue reasons. In Holy Quran Allah clearly says that “men are protector and maintainer and because Allah has given them one more strength than the other and because they support them from their means” (4, 34), another place in Holy Quran Allah order that live with them (women) with kindness and equity. Prophet Muhammad SAW had also reminded to Muslims in a Hadith that “The best among you is one who is best toward his wife”. Islamic principles related to the rights and status of women is always not interpreted correctly and misunderstood. So, that’s why men mostly confuse and always mix-up social traditions with the Islam teachings and as the result woman face the consequences of this mixing of Islamic teaching with social norms and man-made law in the form of domestic violence^[12].

The state and legal institutions role in domestic violence against women: Domestic violence against women is a grave violation of woman’s basic human right but we see these basic rights violations of women very commonly in our rural areas. We have case study of district Swabi, so, this is very common practice in our surrounding but we and our legal institution are just silent spectator. On daily basis our 97% women face violence from their family or husband and 80% women face physical violence at a very regular basis and we are living with this misogynist social system from centuries. If we look our legal institution whose have legal authority and our constitution empower these judicial institutions to punish the offender and protect the victims but we are still victim of the grave issue. We can say that we are reined by an institutionalized sexism and structural misogyny. Another main factor is that our legal institution have limited role in these cases because this is a very difficult or impossible to file a case in police station against the offender it is a social taboo and feel shame to file a case against the criminal. In our society it is considered the issue of honor (ghariat) to go a female to a police station. So, woman cannot imagine going against family and getting protection from the legal institution for her legal right whenever she tried to go the police station for complaint of this domestic abuse she was ruthlessly murdered or disown by her family. It is a common dilemma that whenever woman raises her voice or goes outside to police station she counters with violent blow. Our orthodox strongly argue that domestic issue should be always solved in home. In our Pakthoon society we have dual judicial and legal system one is organized by the state and other most effective and influential legal system conducted by the community member called Jargah system. Jargah system is most preferable judicial system for settlement of the disputes, so, nearly all the disputes solve by Jargah system. Often people prefer Jargah system instead of state judicial system. Again in Jargah

system women is used a tool for solving dispute of the families instead giving her protection she again become victim of violence in the local judicial system^[13].

Women in urban areas to some extent can contact the police station against the violence but women in our rural area cannot get access to the court and all the judicial procedure is out of reach from the rural women.

There are some flaws in our judicial system though rules and polices made for the women protection are not fully implemented. The process of the court system is very slow and time-consuming, a simple case takes years of years in this lengthy court process it is not possible for the poor women of rural areas to involve in this lengthy court system. They have no enough resources; a poor woman cannot afford the repeated visit to the court. Our court system is also full of greedy personnel in which a huge amount of bribe has to pay to the authority which is again out of reach from poor rural women. Another reason is that our police system is not much law-abiding and law-enforcing, so, violence is high in our rural areas due to lack of check and balance. This is also observed that case of domestic violence always not fully entertained and they disregard it a family matter and not processed further. So, our court system also presents a very gloomy picture in giving justice to women.

In our constitution women are fully protected from domestic violence, there are also many women right bills, such as protection of women right bill 2006, protection women against harassment Act 2010 and prevention of anti-women practice bill are passed and implemented for the protection of women but lamentably effective implementations under question of all these bills. We can say that there are so, many laws but very little justice for women.

CONCLUSION

Domestic violence is always a vague and unfocused issue and still exists at very alarming rate in the rural areas of Pakistan. Women become victim of physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and economic violence at home by their intimate partner or some time by their parents and brothers on very regularly basis. There are many major factors associated with this domestic violence such as male dominated social structure, economic disparity, lack of education and awareness of women about their rights, misinterpretation of Islamic principles with social customs and lack of governmental support. By analyzing all these associated factors we can say that social-cultural factor is the root cause of all this domestic violence. Furthermore, for controlling this domestic violence effort are required at domestic, local and national level. Individual role with the integrated supportive system is very necessary in making all these changes in this male dominant structure of society. We should also

equally focus on the women empowerment and their full access to the court system. These all measures will be possible when fully supported by men and start practicing because if man wants to change his behavior about this issue then it will be address automatically. In order to prevent women from further domestic violence and provide them legal and judicial support many others plans and strategies should be made with the collaboration of social leader, police department, religious authorities and all human rights organizations and should be effectively implemented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The deep-rooted and pervasive norms of Pakistani rural society demand to end this domestic violence and reduce this gender inequality. These possible strategies need to be crafted with local and national support and minimize possible resistance for change. Some possible strategies are mentioned, here.

Change this patriarchal social structure and cultural of male dominancy in the society: The first important strategy to change all this patriarchal social structure and cruel cultural norms which confine the social role of women to the household. By changing our social customs we can end all the domestic violence against women and the concept about women as a secondary citizen can be abolished. The misogynist mindset can be change about women and give full rights and freedom to women.

Engage men to become more responsible and gender sensitive husband and father: Men should be made very responsible about women of the family. Men should be careful about their partner and consider them as equal citizen of the society with equal right. Girls always ignore by their fathers in matter of their rights. Father and brother should give equal rights and equal opportunities to girls and encourage them to enjoy equal rights and equal status in society with boys. By practicing this recommendation society maybe free from this domestic violence and gender inequalities.

Make local police and state institutions more responsible to women: Women those affected by the domestic violence should require special support from the legal system, law enforcement institutions and from local community organizations. Yet it is equally very essential to thoroughly analyze the Pakistani penal code and judicial system and find out all those social and legal limitations which a woman constraint from the judicial procedure. All the social taboos and challenges should be removed and a favorable and smooth access to the court system should be provided. In view of all the basic human

rights violation and women's mobility constraint special training should be given to the concerned authorities and all the possible cases should be reported, detected and processed^[3].

Control the role of local clergy in misinterpretation of Islamic principles with social norms: This is a very urgent need to stop this misinterpretation and mixing of all Islamic teaching with the social customs. There is a very pressing need to distinguish between harmful cultural norms and Islamic practices. There should be given religious definition of basic rights of women and social status and government should monitor all these basic rights definitions by religious experts, Scholars and Ulamas (Religious Scholars).

Media support and awareness campaigns: We should take domestic violence against as a state offense and try to solve it from national to local level. Media can play an effective role in uprooting this problem. State authorities should start broadcasting of public service messages to highlight this domestic violence against women and women rights violation a punishable crime. Media should portray women as equal citizen, leader and winner.

There should be awareness campaigns regarding domestic violence against women and human rights and men should be also included in these campaigns, conferences and awareness movements for changing their conservative mindset^[14].

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