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Abstract

Domestic violence against women is a significant issue globally, particularly in developing regions of Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. Many movements have been initiated to preserve human rights, advocating for women in developing countries like Pakistan. Despite addressing this issue, the desired outcomes have not been achieved. Therefore, the present study aimed to determine the causative patterns of Domestic Violence against Women (DVAW) in Punjab, Pakistan. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in the divisional districts of Punjab, Pakistan, using snowball sampling. Data were collected using an interview schedule among 216 married and divorced/separated victims of DVAW. Cross tabulation and logistic regression analyses were performed to analyze data. Results showed that economic exploitation was a significant cause of domestic violence (56%), leading to separation/divorce (27.8%). Women often experienced threats of divorce (50%), killing (44%), and kicking out (50%). Younger women, particularly those aged less than 20 years, 21–25, and 26–30, were more vulnerable to domestic violence. Education was a protective factor, with illiterate women experiencing a higher probability of domestic violence ($OR = 14.693$, $p = 0.001$) compared to highly educated women. Extended family patterns and unemployment were associated with an increased probability of domestic violence. The present study also concluded that immediate and multidimensional actions are needed to address this issue.

Keywords: Domestic violence, violence against women, discrimination, exploitation, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Numerous nations worldwide are experiencing the pervasive issue of domestic violence against women (DVAW). The issue of DVAW is especially alarming in the developing nations and regions of Africa, Latin America, and South Asia (Alhabib et al., 2010). The consequences of this issue are manifold, with persistent human rights abuses escalating the matter to grave concern. Despite concerted efforts to address the problem, the desired outcomes still need to be achieved. Recognising the severity, movements advocating for human rights emerged, gaining momentum since the establishment of the United Nations. These movements focus on protecting vulnerable groups, including the exploitation of women (Kaur & Garg, 2008).

Since establishing the United Nations, global attention to human rights concerns has sparked campaigns to defend people's rights. Positive trends include increased enrollment of girls in primary and secondary schools and a growing presence of women in politics and business globally (Rihani, 2006). Many nations have enacted laws to safeguard women's rights and eliminate discriminatory practices. Aid organizations increasingly emphasize gender issues in their official policies and financial commitments. Despite these achievements, the daily realities for millions of women and girls often fall short of policy commitments, leading to pervasive and significant gender inequities globally (Nosheen, 2011). The United Nations designates November 25 as "International Day" to end violence against women. Women facing domestic abuse are particularly vulnerable, making them reliant and defenceless (Katiyar, 2023). Women experiencing mistreatment deserve understanding and consideration for defending their rights, as they often become victims of personal agendas. Despite governmental and organizational efforts, regulations to curb domestic violence against women have faced limited success (Garcia-Moreno, 2000). Spousal abuse against women is a form of domestic violence targeted in international initiatives like Millennium Development Goal 3, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Resolutions 1325 and 1820 further underscore the commitment to women's human rights, combating gender-based violence, and promoting gender equality globally. Many nations have enacted laws to protect women's rights and eliminate discriminatory practices (World Health Organization [WHO], 2005). Despite these efforts, gender inequality remains deeply ingrained globally, impacting the lives of millions of women and girls (Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). In Pakistan, despite legal entitlements to equality, women face barriers, particularly in cases of violence against them, in the name of honour, as highlighted by Amnesty International and the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). Women, constituting nearly 51% of the population, continue to experience discrimination in various forms, with rising violence documented in the HRCP's annual report for 2000 (Shahid, 2018).

Every two hours, a woman falls victim to rape, with countless others enduring domestic violence and honour murders (Crall & Goodfriend, 2016). According to Sattar et al. (2022), the fight for women's rights in Punjab, particularly in rural areas, has been an ongoing challenge. Women in Punjab persist in a male-dominated society, facing various forms of tyranny and misery even in modern times. Historical mistreatment, where women were considered property, has left them vulnerable, subjected to discrimination, and frequent targets of domestic violence (Ahmad et al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

Throughout human history, male supremacy has been pervasive, with male chauvinism playing a significant role, fostering a culture where women were not given due weight (Bonino & Szil, 2006). The historical Rule of Thumb, rooted in English common law, reinforced male dominance. Church authorities endorsed patriarchal power, and blaming battered women rather than denouncing husbands became a norm. Cherubino Siena contested traditional marriage rules, while Lord Hale's non-recognition of marital rape perpetuated sexist notions. The Contractual Consent Theory gained traction, arguing that mutual consent to marriage granted husbands the right to marital relations (Douglas, 2016; Kuennen, 2010). Lord Hale's sexist views extended to burning women accused of witchcraft. Counterintuitive responses, such as Abbe de Bran's tome questioning a man's right to murder his wife, highlighted the oppressive expectations placed on women to submit without dissent (Tjaden, 2005).

A German court transcript introduces the concept of lesbian violence, adding to the broader conversation on women's aspiration for a harmonious life free from harm (Ristock, 2012). Women's efforts for societal respect and equal rights, documented in extensive history, led to legal changes, including equal inheritance rights and the right to divorce due to cruelty and violence

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(Haj-Yahia, 2002). Traditional norms, advocating for male dominance, permitted practices like wife-beating, limiting women's political and economic influence. The modern era, marked by industrialisation and education, has transformed women's standing globally, especially in America, challenging the traditional view of women being kept out of the social mainstream. In 1874, the Supreme Court of North Carolina declared that a husband has no right to engage in unlawful behaviour, a significant societal shift. The Matrimonial Causes Act granted women rights in developing countries, including legal restitution for violence victims and child custody. In 1880, England saw a crucial milestone where a woman facing substantial physical harm could legally separate but not divorce, marking a step towards recognising and addressing domestic violence (Rani & Bonu, 2009).

In the past, societal norms restricted women's freedoms, contributing to a growing population. America's cultural melting pot highlighted the realization that women's rights were neglected. In 1970, a study in Oakland revealed 16,000 police calls for family disturbances, prompting action. Philadelphia saw the establishment of a self-help group for women, offering services to lone mothers and rape victims in California. The acknowledgement that others shared their suffering became evident. The Bureau of Family Relations in San Francisco dealt with thousands of abuse cases against women from 1973 to 1974 (El-Abani et al., 2020).

Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh face significant regional inequalities and discrimination against women, perpetuating a distressing reality (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). Women who dared to speak up for their rights were frequently abused physically. The patriarchal structure in these societies allowed men to view inflicting physical and mental agony on women as a right, particularly if women sought self-improvement. The entrenched patriarchal power dynamics deny women agency, and husbands, as the creators of society, would resort to terror and repression. Women were compelled to conform to customs and laws rooted in patriarchal culture. It is challenging to combat violence against women on a worldwide scale because of its variety (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2021). Therefore, a cross-sectional survey was conducted to analyse the causative factors of Domestic Violence Against Women in Punjab, Pakistan.

3. Material and Methods

A cross-sectional survey was conducted from January to March 2023 in Punjab, Pakistan using an interview schedule. Interview schedules were filled out by trained female data collectors who asked the questions of the interview schedule to victims of domestic violence. Data were collected from divisional districts of the Punjab, Pakistan. The sample was traced using the snowball sampling technique, and the initial threads of samples were found with the help of NGOs' and Union Councils' (UCs') data. A total of 216 interview schedules were completed for the final quantitative analysis (see sample distribution in Table 01).

Table 1

District	N	%	District	N	%
Multan	36	16.7	Vehari	40	18.5
Faisalabad	40	18.5	DG Khan	32	14.8
Rawalpindi	36	16.7	Lahore	32	14.8

Demographic and study variables in relation to *Marriage Sustainability* (sustained marriage = 1, divorced/separated = 2) were analysed through descriptive analysis (crosstabulation). Logistic regression analysis was performed to analyse the relationship between *Experiencing Domestic Violence* and demographic variables using SPSS version 24 software. Variable: *Experiencing Domestic Violence* was obtained through computing all study variables and recoding on behalf of mean scores. The high scores from the mean were recoded as "Yes = 1" and low scores from the mean were recoded as "No = 0". Informed consent was obtained before conducting interviews with each participant.

4. Results and Discussion

Crosstabulation results of socio-demographic variables and marriage sustainability status among victims of Domestic Violence against Women (DVAW) are shown in Table 01.

The age group among victims of DVAW seemed to have a notable association with married and divorced/separated women. Women over 36 years old had a higher percentage of facing divorce or separation due to domestic violence, with a considerable 33.3% being divorced or separated. Previous research has identified various demographic factors impacting the sustainability of marriages in the context of domestic violence against women. Studies have noted that age can significantly affect the likelihood of divorce or separation due to domestic violence, with older individuals facing higher risks (Johnson, 2008).

The victim women with middle education showed a significant difference in marriage sustainability. Among the married, 33.3% fall into this education bracket, while among the divorced or separated, the percentage increases substantially to 38.9%. The victim women with a middle-level education revealed a higher percentage. Divorced/separated women faced higher DVAW (38.9%). A previous study also showed that education has been found to play a role in women with middle-level education exhibiting increased vulnerability to marital breakdown resulting from domestic violence (Archer, 2006).

Family patterns impact domestic violence. Among the married, 30.6% have a nuclear family setup, whereas among the divorced or separated, this percentage drops to 16.7%. This suggests that those in nuclear family settings might have a relatively lower risk of experiencing divorce or separation due to domestic violence compared to those in extended family setups. Family structure, mainly living in nuclear or extended family setups, has been associated with differing rates of divorce or separation, as individuals in extended families might face increased stressors leading to higher risks of marital dissolution due to domestic violence (Stewart et al., 2011).

Women who got divorced or separated due to domestic violence had a lower percentage of employment (16.7%) as compared to women whose marriage was sustained at the time of the study, accounting for 22.2%. This could indicate that employment status may have an impact on domestic violence. Likewise, A difference is observed in the '1-2' children category. Among the married, 22.2% have 1-2 children, whereas among the divorced or separated, this figure jumps to 61.1%. This notable difference indicates that women with 1-2 children might have a significantly higher likelihood of facing domestic violence. These findings are consistent with a previous study. It illuminated that the number of children has been a significant factor, as households with

fewer children, particularly 1-2, have more chances of experiencing domestic violence, which causes divorce or separation (Seltzer, 2000).

Further, 66.7% of married women faced domestic violence due to the behaviour of their spouses. In contrast, 16.7% divorced or separated faced domestic violence by spouses, whereas remaining divorced/separated faced domestic violence by in-laws or both. These findings are aligned with Johnson's (2008) and Archer's (2006) studies; they identified spouses as the main reason for domestic violence.

These significant values provide insights into demographic variables that could potentially influence marriage sustainability concerning domestic violence against women, highlighting age, education, family pattern, number of children, and the identification of the main perpetrator as particularly influential factors.

Table 2: Crosstabulation Analysis of the Demographic Characteristics and Marriage Sustainability

Variables	Married (%)	Divorced/separated (%)	Total (%)
Age			
< 20	19.4%	11.1%	16.7%
21-25	16.7%	22.2%	18.5%
26-30	38.9%	16.7%	31.5%
31-35	19.4%	16.7%	18.5%
36 >	5.6%	33.3%	14.8%
Education			
Illiterate	25.0%	5.6%	18.5%
Middle	33.3%	38.9%	35.2%
Matriculation	19.4%	33.3%	24.1%
Above	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%
Family Pattern			
Extended	69.4%	83.3%	74.1%
Nuclear	30.6%	16.7%	25.9%
Employment			
Yes	22.2%	16.7%	20.4%
No	77.8%	83.3%	79.6%
No. of Children			
No	50.0%	16.7%	38.9%
1-2	22.2%	61.1%	35.2%
3-4	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%
More than 4	16.7%	11.1%	14.8%
Who victimised mostly			
Spouse	66.7%	16.7%	50.0%
In-Laws	27.8%	22.2%	25.9%
Both	5.6%	61.1%	24.1%

Table 3 shows the causative factors contributing to domestic violence against women. The study variables were based on various forms of domestic violence such as shouting at, movements monitoring, restriction from social activities, economic exploitation, unnecessary criticism, public humiliation, threats of divorce or killing, kicking out, blaming, and confiding.

Divorced and separated women often faced economic domestic violence, with 57%, whereas women with sustained marriage often faced domestic violence, with 28%. These findings are consistent with a previous study that revealed a strong association between domestic violence and divorce/separation (Ellis & Stuckless, 2006). Likewise, 33.3% divorced/separated women often experienced outdoor movement monitoring, whereas just 19% women in sustained marriage faced outdoor movement monitoring. Further, divorced/separated victims of domestic violence experienced more exploitation, with 44%. Economic exploitation led women to get separated/divorced because they often experienced economic violence, with 56%, which was higher than women in sustained marriages (27.8%). All these findings are consistent with some studies that focused causes of domestic violence (Renzetti, 2009; Andersson et al., 2010; Ali et al., 2016). Divorced/separated women experienced various forms of domestic violence, which compelled them to get separated/divorced. Divorced/separated women often faced the threat of divorce (50%) and killing (44%), kicking out (50%). The high prevalence of divorce, killing, kicking and humiliation were causative factors of domestic violence, which are consistent with the previous studies on the detrimental effects of such patterns of domestic violence on marital relationships and domestic violence (Martínez-García et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2020). The frequent unnecessary criticism was another causative factor of domestic violence, and this form of domestic violence caused divorce/separation. The women who faced more criticism showed a higher percentage of getting divorced/separated, 56% (McDonald, 1999; Corvo & Johnson, 2003). Similarly, there is a significant association between frequent blaming by spouses/in-laws and a higher percentage of divorced/separated women (50%), which is also consistent with a study (Corvo & Johnson, 2003). Moreover, the women who were often confined (55%) in their room/house belong to the divorced/separation category, emphasising the coercive control aspect of domestic violence (Hamberger et al., 2017).

The regression analysis in Table 4 shows the relationship between domestic violence against women and various demographic variables. The findings revealed that women who were divorced or separated had a significantly higher probability of experiencing domestic violence ($OR = 0.843$, $p = 0.002$) compared to those in sustained marriages. The age of the victim also played a role, with younger women, particularly those aged less than 20 years ($OR = 0.922$, $p = 0.001$), 21–25 ($OR = 0.619$, $p = 0.002$), and 26–30 ($OR = 0.406$, $p = 0.002$), being more vulnerable to domestic violence. Education emerged as a protective factor, where illiterate women faced a significantly higher probability of domestic violence ($OR = 14.693$, $p = 0.001$) compared to those with higher education. Extended family patterns ($OR = 5.311$, $p = 0.007$) and unemployment ($OR = 3.481$, $p = 0.000$) were associated with an increased probability of domestic violence.

Table 3: Crosstabulation Analysis of Marriage Sustainability and Study Variables

Variables	Marriage-sustained (%)	Divorced/separated (%)	Total (%)
Shouted by spouse or in-laws			
Never	16.7%	5.6%	13.0%
Rarely	22.2%	16.7%	20.4%
Sometimes	33.3%	22.2%	29.6%
Often	27.8%	55.6%	37.0%
Out-door movements monitored by spouse or in-laws			
Never	2.8%	5.6%	3.7%
Rarely	41.7%	27.8%	37.0%
Sometimes	36.1%	33.3%	35.2%
Often	19.4%	33.3%	24.1%
Restricted to participate in social activities			
Never	22.2%	5.6%	16.7%
Rarely	36.1%	44.4%	38.9%
Sometimes	19.4%	38.9%	25.9%
Often	22.2%	11.1%	18.5%
Exploited through Economic Challenges			
Never	8.3%	11.1%	9.3%
Rarely	27.8%	11.1%	22.2%
Sometimes	36.1%	22.2%	31.5%
Often	27.8%	55.6%	37.0%
Unnecessary criticism by spouse/ in-laws			
Never	16.7%	5.6%	13.0%
Rarely	22.2%	16.7%	20.4%
Sometimes	33.3%	22.2%	29.6%
Often	27.8%	55.6%	37.0%
Put down in front of others			
Never	13.9%	5.6%	11.1%
Rarely	22.2%	16.7%	20.4%
Sometimes	30.6%	44.4%	35.2%
Often	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Threatened of divorce by spouse			
Never	30.6%	27.8%	29.2%
Rarely	33.3%	11.1%	27.9%
Sometimes	25.0%	11.1%	12.0%
Often	11.1%	50.0%	30.9%
Threatened of killing by spouse/ in-laws			
Never	13.9%	11.2%	13.0%
Rarely	44.4%	11.0%	12.3%
Sometimes	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
Often	8.3%	44.4%	41.4%
Kicked out by spouse/ in-laws			
Never	25.0%	11.1%	20.4%
Rarely	41.7%	11.1%	31.5%
Sometimes	30.6%	50.0%	37.0%
Often	2.8%	27.8%	11.1%
Blamed by spouse/ in-laws			
Never	13.9%	5.6%	11.1%
Rarely	50.0%	27.8%	42.6%
Sometimes	27.8%	50.0%	35.2%
Often	8.3%	16.7%	11.1%
Confined in room/house by spouse/ in-laws			
Never	55.9%	33.3%	40.6%
Rarely	22.2%	5.6%	18.9%
Sometimes	11.1%	55.3%	31.2%
Often	11.1%	5.6%	9.3%

Notably, the relationship between the number of children and domestic violence was not statistically significant. These results show the complex interplay of demographic factors in domestic violence, aligning with previous research highlighting the significance of age, education, family structure, and employment in influencing the probability of domestic violence (Smith et al., 2018; Johnson & Williams, 2019).

Table 4: Regression Analysis for The Relationship Between Domestic Violence and Demographic Variables

Predictors	OR	Faced Domestic Violence CI (95%)		Sig.
Marriage Sustainability Status of Victim				
Marriage-sustained	Ref			
Divorced/separated	0.843	1.023	2.588	0.002
Age of victim				
< 20	0.922	1.005	2.856	0.001
21-25	0.619	1.000	2.712	0.002
26-30	0.406	1.058	4.131	0.002
31-35	0.336	1.038	3.577	0.001
36 >	Ref			
Education of victim				
Illiterate	14.693	12.057	49.994	0.001
Middle	10.352	6.019	12.410	0.001
Matriculation	4.950	2.851	19.245	0.002
Higher	Ref			
Family pattern of victim				
Extended	5.311	1.266	10.050	0.007
Nuclear	Ref			
Employment status of the Victim				
Yes	Ref			
No	3.481	1.032	7.272	0.000
No. of children of victim				
No	0.111	0.010	1.268	0.077
1-2	0.108	0.008	1.436	0.092
3-4	0.311	0.014	6.802	0.458
More than 4	Ref			

5. Conclusion

Causative analysis on Domestic Violence against Women (DVAW) concluded that age group significantly impacts marriage sustainability, with women less than 36 years old having a higher percentage of divorce or separation due to domestic violence. Middle-level education, family patterns, and employment status significantly impact marriage sustainability and DVAW. Most victimised women who got divorced or separated due to DVAW belong to an extended family setup. Likewise, women who divorced or separated due to domestic violence have a lower proportion of employment compared to those whose marriage was sustained at the time of the study. Married victims experience domestic violence due to the behaviour of their spouses, while victims who got divorced or separated, they face domestic violence by both spouses and in-laws. These findings provide insights into demographic variables that could potentially influence marriage sustainability concerning domestic violence against women.

Divorced and separated women often face economic domestic violence. Outdoor movement monitoring is a common DVAW in divorced/separated women compared to women in sustained marriages. Economic exploitation, Frequent blaming, unnecessary criticism, threats of divorce, killing, and kicking out are significant causes of domestic violence, usually leading to separation/divorce. Regression analysis concludes that younger women, particularly those aged less than 20 years, 21–25, and 26–30, are more vulnerable to domestic violence. Education is a protective factor, with illiterate women facing a higher probability of domestic violence. Moreover, extended family patterns and unemployment are associated with an increased probability of domestic violence.

The present study also suggests that awareness about the impact of domestic violence should be raised, emphasising the importance of respectful relationships and communication. Work towards a functional legal system should be initiated that addresses and punishes domestic violence cases. Cultural and religious norms should be challenged that perpetuate violence against women to foster a more inclusive and respectful society. Moreover, this study should be conducted in each province of Pakistan so that comprehensive and multidimensional actions may be taken.

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