

ASSESSING GENDER VIOLENCE IN RAIN FED REGION OF PUNJAB

Farhana Nosheen^{1*}, Tanvir Ali², Munir Ahmad² and Ashfaq Ahmad Maann³

¹Department of Home Economics, Government College University, Faisalabad

²Department of Agricultural Extension, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

³Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

*Corresponding author's e-mail: farhananosheen@yahoo.com

The social and cultural context of Pakistani Society (both rural and urban) is predominantly patriarchal. Therefore, the females are facing discrimination and exploitation from their male counterparts. Further different types of violence are also frequently occurring in Pakistani Society. Therefore, a research study was conducted in rain fed area of the Punjab Pakistan to assess the gender violence. A cross sectional survey research design was adopted and a sample of 400 respondents (200 female and 200 male) were selected randomly. The analysis of the data revealed that male and female respondents face different types of violence. About 55 % female respondents and 42 % male respondents reported verbal violence. Similarly, about 18% female and 12% male reported physical violence. Further majority (97%) both female and male respondents reported mobility violence regarding visits for health facilities and shopping. It is concluded that females are more victimized of all types of gender violence. At the end some recommendations like discouragement of violence, awareness raising campaign and formulation of legislation are made.

Keywords: Gender, verbal violence, mobility restricting violence, intensity, occasionally, children confiscation, divorce threat

INTRODUCTION

The social and cultural context of Pakistani society (both rural and urban) is predominantly patriarchal. Men and women are conceptually divided into two separate worlds. Home is defined as women's legitimate ideological and physical areas of activities, while a man dominates the world outside the home (ADB, 2000).

Manzoor (2006) stated that Pakistani women facing discrimination and exploitation from their male counterparts. They were not allowed to go to school and markets in many areas of Baluchistan, Sindh, North West Frontier Province and southern Punjab. Domestic Violence, sexual harassment, rape forced marriages; honor killing and brutality were common realities of every day life. Approximately 90 % women face domestic violence by their husbands, fathers, brothers and other male family members.

Violence is a product of social, cultural, religious and traditional values, which perpetuate patriarchal attitudes at different levels of society and restrict female empowerment. Violence against women (VAW) refers to "any private or public act that is likely to cause them physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering" (Islam, 2004). VAW affects all spheres of a woman's life-her autonomy, her productivity and her capacity to care for herself and her children and subsequently also her overall health status and quality of life (Mollah, 2005).

Gender based violence takes many different forms, may have distinctive patterns or manifestations associated with culture or regions. "Gender violence is present in all societies; it is a structural phenomenon, embedded in the context of cultural, socio-economic and political power relations, which reduce women to economic and emotional dependency, the property of some male protector, societies organized around gendered, hierarchical power relations give legitimacy to violence against women (Schuler, 1992). Das and Johnson (2007) in their presentation referred about a survey carried out in 2006 in Bangladesh that 30% of younger women (15-25 years) and 24 % of older women (45-60) report having ever experienced violence by their spouses. 43% men in the same communities admit to having been violent to their spouses but in the survey 75 % men report ever having been violent to their wives. Less than 50% women surveyed feel safe moving alone outside their own settlement. About Pakistan, they reported that 60% of women feel unsafe moving alone outside their village or settlement. About India, they reported that 37.2% women report ever having experienced spousal violence.

Violence committed by family members within the family home is the most serious and repugnant of all types of violence. In South Asian countries where reliable, large scale studies on gender violence are available, more than 20% women are reported to have been abused by man with whom they live. Not only they abused by their husbands. Their mother-in-law, father, also physically or mentally tortures them in law,

and sister in law or brother in law for dowry (Mollah, 2005). Facing conflicts and abuses is unfortunate part commonly found in Pakistani society (Sathar and Kazi, 1997). Women who do not face conflicts and/or abuses in the house are considered having happy life (Ali and Haq, 2006).

The physical dimension of gender violence is the most readily identifiable (Schuler, 1992). The beating of women by their husbands and other male relatives in Egypt is documented anecdotally by El Saadawi (1980), Zenie-Ziegler (1988) and Lane and Meleis (1991), who suggest that violence, may be greatest in the early years of a marriage. El Saadawi (1980) also notes that woman who gives birth to a daughter, especially if they have no sons, may be beaten.

Hartmann and Boyce (1983) reported that in Bangladesh women are being beaten for infractions like evening meal not being ready on time or it was tasting bad, chickens stolen few rice grains from the pot etc. Iqbal (1990) reported that women are beaten in Pakistan by their parents, brothers, in-laws and sons. Women who flee from house because of their husbands and/or in-law's attitude are accused of *Zina* with a man in the household which provide he shelter. Physical violence against women is under reported. The reasons behind are lack of awareness among women about their legal rights, the perception that their cases will be treated with derision and/or ignored by the police, and the fear that making charges will compound problems with their husband and his kin (Marcus, 1993).

In the light of the importance of subject a research study was designed and conducted in district Chakwal situated near salt range mountains of Punjab, Pakistan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross sectional survey research design was used for the study conducted for assessing violence against

women. District Chakwal, especially rural area was selected as the universe of research. District Chakwal has four tehsils and it had total population of 1059,491 persons (Census, 1998; Govt. of Pakistan, 2000). Present estimated population of this district is 1.31 millions and total literacy rate is 69.02%. There are 58 rural and 10 urban union councils in the district and total villages are 461.

A multistage random sampling process was used for this research study. Two tehsils out of four were selected by employing simple random sampling technique. Afterwards five villages were selected randomly from the selected two villages and twenty households (farming and non-farming families) of each village were further selected by using systematic random sampling technique. One married couple from the selected households was selected as respondents and total 400 respondents (200 female and 200 males) were interviewed. The data were collected through pre-tested interview schedule survey. The collected data were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Moreover, the data were analyzed by calculating simple frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Verbal violence

Table 1 indicates that 55% wife respondents and 42% husband respondents reported facing verbal violence. The hierarchy of verbal violence often faced by female respondents was abusing by words, blaming, divorce threat, children confiscation threat, insulting the spouse, insulting spouse's family and criticizing people. The intensity of verbal violence faced by husband respondents was much lower than what was faced by wife respondents. However, a small proportion had occasionally faced this violence in sequential order as abusing by words, reproaching/ blaming, criticizing

Table 1. Distribution of respondents facing verbal violence

| Verbal violence type | Wife (n=200) | | | | | | Husband (n=200) | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------|----------|------|-------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|------|-------|-----|
| | Never | | Sometime | | Often | | Never | | Sometimes | | Often | |
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Abusing by words | 100 | 50.0 | 47 | 23.5 | 53 | 26.5 | 126 | 63.0 | 70 | 35.0 | 4 | 2.0 |
| Reproaching/blaming | 113 | 56.5 | 79 | 39.5 | 8 | 4.0 | 155 | 77.5 | 42 | 21.0 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Divorcing threat | 139 | 69.5 | 53 | 26.5 | 8 | 4.0 | 191 | 95.5 | 7 | 3.5 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Children confiscation threat | 186 | 93.0 | 11 | 5.5 | 3 | 1.5 | 193 | 96.5 | 5 | 2.5 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Insulting the spouse | 186 | 93.0 | 11 | 5.5 | 3 | 1.5 | 168 | 84.0 | 30 | 15.0 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Insulting the spouse's family | 179 | 89.5 | 15 | 7.5 | 6 | 3.0 | 172 | 86.0 | 26 | 13.0 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Criticizing other people | 175 | 87.5 | 20 | 10.0 | 5 | 2.5 | 164 | 82.0 | 33 | 16.5 | 3 | 1.5 |
| Overall violence reported | 54.5% | | | | | | 42.0% | | | | | |

Scale: The scale used for estimating mean for the violence frequencies was: 1=never; 2=sometimes; 3=often.

people, insulting the spouse and insulting the spouse's family (Table 1). Although both partners tried to under report it, but still the tendency towards not facing any such violence (denying in other words) was relatively high for husbands in case of abusing by words, blaming, divorce threat and children confiscation. Female respondents have relatively more denied for insulting the spouse, insulting spouse's family and criticizing other people. It can be concluded that both partners take verbal violence quarries as highly personal and tried to under report it in different manner. This trend has been supported by many studies like Das and Johnson (2007) who reported that in Bangladesh, 75% men accepted that they were violent on their wives, although he did not mention the violence type. According to Sathar and Qazi (1997), frequent facing the conflicts and abuses was unfortunate part of Pakistani society.

Physical violence

In Pakistan physical violence on females is committed by their parents, brothers, in-laws and sons (Iqbal, 1990). Marcus (1993) mentioned various reasons like lack of awareness, derision/ ignorant handling the case by police and fear of further increase in their humiliation in society and males in the house. In research study, the frequency of physical violence was much lower with both the wife and husband respondents. However, in relatively terms, the intensity is higher with wives than the husbands (Table 2). Although both partners highly under reported it, but the tendency towards not facing any such violence

Mobility violence regarding visiting doctor and shopping

It is generally believed that women's freedom of movement outside home is an indicator of women's autonomy. Generally, Pakistani women enjoy limited mobility outside their homes. They need to seek someone's permission for going out from home and are generally accompanied (rather escorted) by some close relatives (Sathar and Kazi, 1997; Hakim *et al.*, 1998). Considering movement restricting violence, majority of the husband and wife respondents reported facing mobility violence from their family members. The wife respondents were relatively more vulnerable to this type of violence than the husbands. Opposing females visit to doctor, hospital, dispensaries and going out for shopping were the most frequently faced violence by wives in decreasing order. This violence was also faced by husband respondents but their intensity was lower than the wives (Table 3). It was probably due to their faith, traditions and practices in the area and limited vision about innovative and modern development in the health sector.

It is revealed from table 4 that in wife respondents, the mean score was the highest for violence by abusing words followed by reproaching, threat for divorce, criticizing other people, insulting spouse's family, threat for confiscating children and insulting the spouse. In husbands, the decreasing order of mean score flows like abusing by words followed by reproaching, criticizing other people, insulting the spouse, insulting the spouse's family, divorcing threat, children

Table 2. Distribution of respondents regarding physical gender violence

| Physical violence type | Wife (n=200) | | | | | | Husband (n=200) | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|------|----------|-----|-------|-----|-----------------|------|----------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Never | | Sometime | | Often | | Never | | Sometime | | Often | |
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Beating by kicking | 194 | 97.0 | 2 | 1.0 | 4 | 2.0 | 199 | 99.5 | 1 | 0.5 | - | - |
| Beating by punching | 190 | 95.0 | 8 | 4.0 | 2 | 1.0 | 196 | 98.0 | 4 | 2.0 | - | - |
| Beating by slapping | 185 | 92.5 | 12 | 6.5 | 3 | 1.5 | 194 | 97.0 | 6 | 3.0 | - | - |
| Throwing objects | 171 | 85.5 | 18 | 9.0 | 11 | 5.5 | 179 | 89.5 | 19 | 9.5 | 2 | 1.0 |
| Overall violence reported | 18.0% | | | | | | 12.0% | | | | | |

(denying in other words) was relatively high in male respondents than females. It can be concluded that both folks seem regarding reporting physical violence as socially unacceptable. Similar situation was stated by Eillsberg *et al.* (2000) that battered women frequently experienced feelings of shame, isolation and entrapment, which together with a lack of family and community support, often contribute to women's difficulty in recognizing from a violent relationship.

confiscation threat. In physical violence, the mean score for throwing objects on opponent followed by beating by slapping, beating by punching and beating by kicking ranking obtained for both husband and wife respondents. In mobility restricting violence, not allowing visiting the doctor was the most faced violence by wives. Shopping restriction was the least faced mobility violence with the wife respondents.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents regarding mobility violence regarding visiting doctor and shopping

| Mobility Violence Type | Wife (n=200) | | | | | | Husband (n=200) | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-----|----------|-----|-------|------|-----------------|------|----------|------|-------|------|
| | Never | | Sometime | | Often | | Never | | Sometime | | Often | |
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Visiting the doctor | 11 | 5.5 | 9 | 4.5 | 180 | 90.0 | 31 | 15.5 | 42 | 21.0 | 127 | 63.5 |
| Going to hospital | 11 | 5.5 | 10 | 5.0 | 179 | 89.5 | 9 | 4.5 | 58 | 29.0 | 133 | 66.5 |
| Going to dispensary | 9 | 4.5 | 12 | 6.0 | 179 | 89.5 | 20 | 10.0 | 53 | 26.5 | 127 | 63.5 |
| Going for shopping | 12 | 6.0 | 12 | 6.0 | 176 | 88.0 | 15 | 7.5 | 49 | 24.5 | 136 | 68.0 |
| Overall violence reported | 95.6% | | | | | | 97.0% | | | | | |

Table 4. Ranking by mean scores about the extent of various gender violence

| Violence types | Wife (n=200) | | | Husband (n=200) | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | Mean | Standard deviation | Ranking order | Mean | Standard deviation | Ranking order |
| Verbal violence | | | | | | |
| Abusing by words | 1.765 | 0.844 | 1 | 1.390 | 0.528 | 1 |
| Reproaching | 1.475 | 0.575 | 2 | 1.240 | 0.462 | 2 |
| Divorcing threat | 1.345 | 0.554 | 3 | 1.055 | 0.269 | 6 |
| Criticizing the people | 1.150 | 0.422 | 4 | 1.195 | 0.433 | 3 |
| Insulting the spouse's family | 1.135 | 0.421 | 5 | 1.150 | 0.385 | 5 |
| Children's confiscation threat | 1.085 | 0.329 | 6 | 1.045 | 0.251 | 7 |
| Insulting the spouse | 1.085 | 0.329 | 6 | 1.170 | 0.402 | 4 |
| Physical violence | | | | | | |
| Throwing objects | 1.200 | 0.520 | 1 | 1.115 | 0.349 | 1 |
| Beating by slapping | 1.090 | 0.335 | 2 | 1.030 | 0.171 | 2 |
| Beating by punching | 1.060 | 0.277 | 3 | 1.020 | 0.140 | 3 |
| Beating by kicking | 1.050 | 0.296 | 4 | 1.005 | 0.120 | 4 |
| Mobility violence | | | | | | |
| Going to dispensary | 2.850 | 0.467 | 1 | 2.535 | 0.671 | 3 |
| Visiting the doctor | 2.845 | 0.492 | 2 | 2.480 | 0.749 | 4 |
| Going to hospital | 2.840 | 0.495 | 3 | 2.620 | 0.572 | 1 |
| Going for shopping | 2.820 | 0.518 | 4 | 2.605 | 0.625 | 2 |

CONCLUSIONS

Three types of violence namely verbal, physical and mobility types were faced by both husband and wife respondents in the study area. Verbal violence was the most prevailed violence type followed by mobility violence and physical violence. Husbands were largely found to commit violence against wives. Among verbal violence, children confiscation threat (96.5%), divorcing threat (95.5%), insulting the spouse's family (86%), insulting the spouse (84%), and criticizing the other people (82%) were the most frequent violence committed by husbands against wives followed by reproaching/blaming (77.5%) and abusing by words (63%) in descending order. Due to more vulnerability of

family females to verbal violence, female's life was relatively tenser than the males. The frequency of physical violence was much lower with both the husband and wife respondents. Among physical violence, beating by kicks (99.5%) was the most severe form of physical violence followed by beating by punching (98%), slapping (97%) and throwing objects (89.5%) were the most common types of physical violence committed by husbands against wives. In mobility related violence, opposing wives visit to doctor (15.5%) was the most prevalent type of mobile violence committed by males by against females followed by visiting hospital/ dispensaries (10%) and going out for shopping (7.5%) were the most frequently faced violence by wives in decreasing order.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After thorough review and discussion the following recommendations are made:

- Every type of violence against females should be discouraged and checked at social, moral, political, cultural and legal forum by concerned departments/agencies/ institutions in any form in any way.
- Social awareness campaign should be launched to highlight the evil/ill residual effects of all types of violence against females by community development department and NGO's concerned.
- Policy makers should formulate their policies and programmes keeping in view of the gender specific needs.

REFERENCES

- Asian Development Bank. 2000. Women in Pakistan. A Country Briefing Paper, Programs Department (West) and Office of the Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank.
- Ali, S.M. and R. Haq. 2006. Women Autonomy and Happiness: The Case of Pakistan. *The Pak. Dev. Review* 45(1): 121-136.
- Das, M.B. and K. Johson. 2007. Gender Based Violence: Reflections from South Asia and What it Got to Do With the Bank (Power point Presentation).
- Ellsberg, M., R. Pena, A. Herrera, J. Liljestrand and A. Winkvist. 2000. Candies in hell: women's experiences of violence in Nicaragua. *J. Soc. Sci. Med.* 51(11): 1595-1610.
- El-Saadawi, N. 1980. *The Hidden Face of Eve*. Zed Books, London.
- Government of Pakistan. 2000. District Census Report of Chakwal, 1998. Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, March 2000.
- Hakim A., *et al.* 1998. Pakistan Fertility and Family Planning Survey 1996-1997. National Institute of Population Studies and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.
- Hartmann, B. and J. Boyce. 1983. *A Quiet Violence*. Zed, London.
- Iqbal, J. 1990. Crimes Against Women in Pakistan. *J. South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 13(3): 37-45.
- Islam, M.R. 2004. Recent Trends and Consequences of Rape in Bangladesh: A Study on Violence against Women Girls. *Rajshahi University and Adolescent Social Science Journal* 9: 119-134.
- Lane, S. and A. Meleis. 1991. Roles, work, health perceptions and health resources of women: a study in an Egyptian Delta hamlet. *Social Science and Medicine* 33(10).
- Manzoor, R. 2006. Women Facing Slavery, Discrimination and Exploitation. Socialists Alternative. ORG P.O. Box 45343, Seattle WA 98145, Pakistan.
- Marcus, R. 1993. Violence Against Women in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Sudan, Senegal and Yemen. Report No. 10, BRIDGE (Development-Gender), Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Brighton BN1 9RE, UK (March, 1993).
- Mollah, M.A.H. 2005. Combating Violence Against Women in South Asia: An Overview of Bangladesh. Draft paper.
- Sathar, Z. and S. Kazi. 1997. Women's Autonomy, Livelihood and Fertility: A Case of Rural Punjab. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad.
- Schuler, M. (Ed.). 1992. *Freedom from Violence: Strategies from Around the World*. UNIFEM.
- Zenie-Ziegler, W. 1988. *In Search of Shadows: Conversations with Egyptian Women*, Zed, London.