Structure of Violence in Pakistani Schools:
A Gender Based Analysis

Dr. Jamil Ahmad Chitrali , Dr. Mussarat Anwar
& Dr. Syeda Nabahat

Abstract

Violence in punishments by school teachers, class leaders or even peers causes delinquency and deviancy among students. This phenomenon is reported from all continents of the world both from formal schooling and informal education system. This paper investigates how schools as structures produce violence and what are the mechanisms through which violence is received by students. Two alternatives were assumed in construction of this variable: first, the School administration, which are structured in such a manner that promotes masculinity, and the second, the culture in neighborhoods that instigate students to reflect upon is schools where vulnerable students are the recipients. These vulnerabilities may include sub-variables such as ethnicity, age, gender, class or even physical disabilities. The third possibility is that youth in Schools sustain violence back home and project their reaction on others as replica in schools. The curriculum is not considered in this study as the syllabus in government schools uniform so it may not be a determining variable across schools under consideration. This paper is derived from the literature of my PhD dissertation in which a sample size of 522 students (54.6% boys and 45.4% girls) was randomly selected on proportional allocation basis all enrolled in Grade 10 in December 2013. The major findings of that study showed that almost all of the respondents (95.59%) agreed that violence at school is the major cause of dropout from school; as result shows in this study that majority of respondents (73.47%) agreed that harsh treatment of teacher is ineffective in making student to comply on homework assignments.

Keywords

Gender Based Violence, School Structure, Class Monitors and Vulnerable Places

Introduction

In Pakistan public school system is divided into three tiers. Primary schools enroll and retain students from grade 1 through grade 5, followed by enrolment in middle schools (grade 6th to grade 8th) through to high schools (grade 9th to grade 10th). In addition to this, there are higher secondary schools also, which offer enrolment from grade 9th to grade 12th. Pakistani schools, in terms of their internal environment and in terms of enrolment-related aspects exhibit multiple issues and problems. In addition to public schools, private schools also provide education, which until the beginning of 1990s were only few but since then have mushroomed quite well. The private primary schools have grown more than the middle or high schools. Despite efforts at improving public sector schools' performance[1] their

performance is quite low, rather degenerating, in comparison to private sector schools. Absenteeism of teachers, high dropout rates, low completion rates and high repetition rates, and inequalities of gender, power, class, geography have been identified as persistent problems (Shah, 2003). With teacher-to-student ratio of 40:1 in government primary schools (Witte, El-Bassel, Gilbert, Wu, & Chang, 2010) in a culture of authoritative teaching techniques it is not unsurprising to know that it is more damaging for children to be in schools than to be out of it; the luckier school students – against the unfortunate children herding animals or scavenging – sitting for hours in congested and crowded environment (Baer, 2012, p. 02)and being subject to punishment for minor actions such as moving or speaking in class-room stunt their mental, emotional and physical growth (DFID, 2000: 12-13). Around 20,000 public schools do not have adequate facilities such as toilets (Baer, 2012, p. 02).

According to Population Council report (Council, 2009, p. iv)In Pakistan children attending primary schools are only half of the total possible schooling-going children, while in secondary schools this drop further to only quarter of the cohort and further at higher education it remains just 5 % of the total youth in the age to be attending colleges or universities for the purpose. Moreover, wide gaps exist in enrolment rates in rural and urban areas. At primary level the enrolment gap between rural and urban areas is 20%, which more than doubles at middle level (41.4%), finally reaching 50% at Matric (high school) level. A more striking fact is that 14 % of the girls are enrolled in primary schools and just 8 % girls are enrolled at middle schools (EMIS, 2011: 22). In Pakistan, gender differences in school attendance exist in all provinces and in urban and rural areas (Sathar, Lloyd, Mete, & ul Haque, 2003). According to Sathar's (2003) findings, the percentage of respondents attending school increases with higher levels of socioeconomic status. There is relatively small difference in the gap between male and female school attendance in urban areas. Moreover, she found that poverty, especially in urban areas, is a major explanatory variable for differences in school attendance for females in urban areas: in comparison to 88 % of female adolescents from the highest income group only 23%of female adolescents from the lowest income group reported to have attended schools. Thus, in the context of urban areas, class rather than gender seems to explain differences in school attendance for girls. However, in rural areas the number of males completing middle school is more than twice the number of females, which means that gender differences are more clearly pronounced: '… only 13 percent% of young female respondents in rural areas complete middle level compared to more than four times that proportion in urban areas' (Sathar, 2003: 50). Although school attainment rates are higher for males in urban areas as well but the gender differences are not that striking as they are in rural areas. Overall, Sathar (2003) concludes that '… fewer than half of all young females aged 15-24 years have

ever enrolled in school. Of those who are fortunate enough to gain some education, more are likely to drop out of school at an earlier class than their male counterparts. This pattern of low enrollment for females is magnified at the lowest socioeconomic stratum' (Sathar, 2003:57-58).

In 2000 as part of Devolution of Power (DoP) program for transforming local government system, the government of Pakistan initiated Educational Sector Reforms (ESR) for the purpose of 'comprehensive literacy and poverty reduction, expansion of primary elementary education, introduction of technical stream at the secondary level, improving the quality of education through teachers training, forming public private partnership' (Shah, 2003: iv). The situation, however, is anything but better.

As of 2005, some 33 % of children were enrolled at private schools in Pakistan (Amjad & MacLeod, 2012). The mushrooming of private sector schools may generally be seen as a sign of overall improvement in living standard of the people and as ground for supposition that school environment there might be qualitatively more sophisticated. However, besides the fear that it is leading emergence of class divisions and rifts in terms of employability, creativity and civic engagement their internal dynamics are strongly linked to gender issues. For instance, the largest bulk of students in private schools are boys; only a handful of families would like to send their daughters to schools. This gender discrimination from family side emerges out of socially shared belief that sons are future/old age insurance while a girl's education in private schools is devalued because she would have to move to husband's house after marriage and hence won't be of that much help to parents (Aslam, 2006)[2]. According to UN (2005)[3], 40% of government schools and 35 % of private schools use corporal punishment. One should not expect violence-free schools in a state that legalize corporal punishment and does not have legal safeguards against sexual harassment. According to Section 89, Pakistan Penal Code 1860 (XLV), parents, teachers and guardians of children are empowered to use moderate corporal punishment as a means to discipline children under the age of 12 years (Jones et al., 2009)[4] . And as stated above, because there are no laws safeguarding children against sexual abuse, Plan (2008: 27) reports to have documented 2500 complaints of sexual abuse against children between 2002 and 2003.

Cultural Impediments

In Pakistani culture, mobility is more and severely constrained for females than it is for males. Although it is hard to see but in case if both the genders are equally (un)constrained, there are yet other important gender dimensions administered to young people by the adults. For instance, once permission is given for outside activities (play, sports, clubbing etc.), young males can move outside home

unaccompanied but for young females it is compulsory not to move unaccompanied. Reasons for gender differences in mobility could be many but in Pakistan, religion or more specifically, the cultural interpretation of religious values and beliefs seem to be a major reason. According to Khan (Khan, 2004: X), the imposition of uni-dimensional and monolithic version of Islam led to emergence of an ideology that has contribute towards severing mobility for females. Elaborating the argument, Khan (2004) contends furthers that the injunctions keep female body covered and hidden, are basically to restrict her social mobility in society and to impose culturally created needs of patriarchy of "protecting" her from the gaze of outsiders, the fear of its being violated by strangers. These are terms in which men perceive the female body and legislatures, dominated by men, make laws to protect themselves from the havoc that may be wrought upon society if the fitnaocated within the female body were to release' (Khan, 2004: 10). Such restrictions have serious implications for the attainment of education, accessing health services, opportunities for job/work, as well as for recreation and social networks for young females. In her survey about gender dimension of parenting, Sathar (2003) found that places that parents consider unsafe for young males and females vary. Similarly, parents' fears and reasons for justifying restrictions on the mobility of young males and females also vary. For example, with respect to young males, parental fear circles around the notion of personal safety that is whether they might get physical harm or not. However, with respect to females, the notion of fear is broader than the mere concern for their physical safety: the concern mainly centers on the notion of family reputation and family honor (Sathar, 2003: 40-41). The differences in conception of mobility have implications for school attendance, which, for example in 2001, remained 84 percent% for male and 54 percent% for female adolescents in 2001 (Sathar, 2003: 40-41).

Gender Biased Value System

The social values of devaluing girls' education out of concern that they would shift to another house after marriage (Council, 2009) is perhaps the worst form of violence. Such ideational construct around the girls' education supposedly mean that no matter what happens to a handful of enrolled girls in and around school, parents or community at large would turn blind eye to their problems. This perhaps explains the reasons regarding lack of studies on girls' harassment in and around school. Inside schools the authoritarian teaching methods, punishment and humiliation of children are factors associated with non-attendance and high dropout rates of children from schools in Pakistan (Watkins, 1999: 75)[5]. It should also be noted that though no estimates exist as to how much girl students suffer from sexual harassment in and around schools but at least this much is known that most parents would not send their daughters to schools because safeguarding girls' virginity is socially considered as equivalent to safeguarding family honor (UNFPA, 1998)[6].

The gender based violence in schools and outside, especially sexual harassment, has a religious and minority dimension to it as well. For instance, in many parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan there was a myth which still prevails that to have sex with a sweeper girl (who usually are from religious minority-Christians) cures backache. Such mythical beliefs trigger risky behavior among boys who would not hesitate from sexual violence against girls in schools as well as outside schools. This phenomenon also relates to the issue of terrorists' development in Pakistan. The anecdotal evidence and media inspired theory suggests that it is madrasah-system and its curricula that prepare students for terrorist activities. However, Christine's (2007: 100) qualitative study on profiling of suicide-bombers suggests that out of total educated youth (males) some 70% are educated in public schools of Pakistan. According to Christine (2007) more than 60 % of suicide-bombers in Pakistan had some form of formal (public) schooling.

School Management of Violence and Students Adoption of Violence

Management means proper arrangement of events/ things for smooth functioning. Taken this analogy by applying on the school management system depicts a system based on management activities right from bottom to top including all stakeholders perfectly performing their roles for the stability to their particular system. ~~More is~~ Higher the efficiency high would be the management scenario. School management is basically meant for internalization of basic values of the society, getting excel in the academics and provision of skills in such a manner that upon the completion of training in the stipulated time the participant (students) positively contribute to the development of the society in a positive manner. Relationship between lacks of school management policy on violence leads to student's adoption of violence was found non-significant with physical violence (p=0.552), psychological violence (p=0.174) and economic violence (p=0.314) respectively. Policy which is a blueprint for running any affair of life is one of the basic document which brings conformity to the social system or otherwise. The inferences indicated here that physical, psychological violence and economic nature of violence were missing in the school policy of management that is the reason; the existence of these modes of punishments had little been focused over. In addition the non-significance could also signify their existence under the cultural prerogative within the prescribed norms of the society. These results are highly in line to Eisner (2009) who finds it difficult to place any single theory capable to explain the different modes of violence universally. Any act to be violent in one culture is taken as prerogative in the other. The sexual violence was found highly significant (p=0.002) with lack in school management policy in violence leads to student adoption of violence. However, psychologically the depression, anxiety and stress are some of the outcomes associated to physical punishment (linenthal, 2001). It

could be attributed to the cultural traits with strong social restrictions in the shape of considering it as cultural and social taboo with no any space for it to take place in the prevalent social system. Social structure is highly dynamic with functional mechanics for containment of these acts through strong system of social checks. Doers are not only punished in the shape of expelling from school but also the social stigma is associated to them for their anti-social behavior. These findings are in line to the Eisner (2009) that high level of institutionalization as a process with conspicuous inclination as indicators towards the reformation of the behavior under the cultural balance approach. The dichotomous phenomenon of nature and nurture is the main outcome of antisocial behavior (Yerin, 2006). Moreover cultural and social context has close meaning to the occurrence of events with reasonable justifications (Dubet, 2003)

Table1: Correlation Between School Management of Violence and Students Adoption of Violent

Violence Type	Exposure	Statistics	Lack of School Management Policy on Violence Leads to Students Adoption of Violence			Statistical Test
			Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
Physical	Never	# Cases	25	184	47	Chi-Square 1.189 (0.552)
		Percent	4.79	35.25	9	
	Exposed	# Cases	33	181	52	
		Percent	6.32	34.67	9.96	
Psychological	Never	# Cases	26	127	42	Chi-Square 3.494 (0.174)
		Percent	4.98	24.32	8.04	
	Exposed	# Cases	32	238	57	
		Percent	6.13	45.59	10.92	
Sexual	Never	# Cases	30	230	77	Chi-Square 12.117 (0.002)
		Percent	5.75	44.06	14.75	
	Exposed	# Cases	28	135	22	
		Percent	5.36	25.86	4.21	
Economic	Never	# Cases	19	122	41	Chi-Square 2.317 (0.314)
		Percent	3.64	23.37	7.85	
	Exposed	# Cases	39	243	58	
		Percent	7.47	46.55	11.11	

Source: Field Data

Government Policies

Government regulate through executive to regulate peaceful environment at schools. Government policies play vital role both through School management system, district government and giving certain liberties to media to play the role of a watchdog and help state implement its various policies on different issues including but not limited to control of violence at schools.

1. **School Management Response to Gender Based Violence**

School management system is also a complex whole where a number of stakeholders participate. Management in this capacity refers to the authority vested in school teachers, principal and management of the schools. Government regulates schools through Teachers appointed on executive positions to regulate peaceful environment at schools. Management in this capacity refers to the authority vested in school teachers, principal and management of the schools. The sole purpose behind the whole exercise is to maintain discipline and achieve maximum objectives in terms of academic excellence. This approach is not only limited to the provision of academics but also certain other skills and behavioral traits transmission in a socially acceptable manner to make them viable citizens. Results pertaining to the effects of school management system in gender based violence with relation to school policy and mechanism on violence was ascertained and it was found that there was significant relationship among physical violence (p=0.015) of the school have clear policy and mechanism on violence. This inference vividly indicated towards existence of physical violence where students, irrespective of gender affiliation, age group, and even class and ethnicity affiliation were exposed to this type of violence. It is eminent here that the school management had managed to contain the students through infliction of physical violence with different modes and manifestations. It could include bullying, beating and even corporal punishments. This practice as assumed to be successful in predicting the human behavior towards the attainment of any particular goal. However, if kept unchecked, it is also responsible for a high dropout rate of students which could be attributed to a poor and lawful school management. This is purely the outcome of school violence (Ayers, 2000; and Plan, 2008). Bullying of school mates are attributable to the fact that punishment existed in the area, however, the school central position had a big role in role transformation which worked as a double edge weapon i.e. agent of violence and preventing agent of violence as well (Sulevan and Bash, 1967). As indicated by (Plan, 2008; De Wet, 2007) that in most Asian countries violence at school is practiced under the social value based on respecting the elders.

Table 2: School Management Response to Gender Based Violence

Violence Type	Exposure	Statistics	Our School has Clear Policy & Mechanism on Violence			Statistical Test
			Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
Physical	Never	# Cases	228	13	15	Chi-Square 8.361 (0.015)
		Percent	43.68	2.49	2.87	
	Exposed	# Cases	253	3	10	
		Percent	48.47	0.57	1.91	
Psychological	Never	# Cases	175	7	13	Chi-Square 2.765 (0.251)
		Percent	33.52	1.34	2.49	
	Exposed	# Cases	306	9	12	
		Percent	58.62	1.72	2.29	
Sexual	Never	# Cases	310	7	20	Chi-Square 5.636 (0.060)
		Percent	59.39	1.34	3.83	
	Exposed	# Cases	171	9	5	
		Percent	32.76	1.72	0.96	
Economic	Never	# Cases	167	6	9	Chi-Square 0.068 (0.967)
		Percent	31.99	1.15	1.72	
	Exposed	# Cases	314	10	16	
		Percent	60.15	1.91	3.06	

Source: Field Data

2.   District Management (Government) Response to Gender Based Violence

Education is one of the institutions which are mostly embarked on delivering through subunits across a state. These units i.e. schools have a manifest role in personality formation and behavioral transformation under a policy reflective of relative culture, religion and state laws. To ensure the implementations of policies its regularity is a big question and being resolved through a management system from top to bottom. District management is a key to this process where government not only design policies based on inputs received from bottom at district level but also impose their policy while transmitting it to district management for its implementation at the bottom. Some of the relationships pertaining to different modes of violence were ascertained and it was found that government regulate through executive ensure peaceful environment at school was found non-significant with physical, psychological, sexual and economic mode of violence. It is strange to see the relationship that any government efforts regarding the regulation of the violence with the above

four manifestation were missing. It is pathetic on the part of government that any link of receiving inputs based on occurrence of such anti-social behaviors was missing between the state and the functionaries working both at the tale and the middle.

Table 3: District Management (Government) Response to Gender Based Violence

Violence Type	Exposure	Statistics	Government Regulate Through Executive to Ensure Peaceful Environment at School			Statistical Test
			Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
Physical	Never	# Cases	172	13	15	Chi-Square 8.361 (0.015)
		Percent	32.95	2.49	2.87	
	Exposed	# Cases	196	3	10	
		Percent	37.55	0.57	1.91	
Psychological	Never	# Cases	128	7	13	Chi-Square 2.765 (0.251)
		Percent	24.52	1.34	2.49	
	Exposed	# Cases	240	9	12	
		Percent	45.98	1.72	2.29	
Sexual	Never	# Cases	232	7	20	Chi-Square 5.636 (0.060)
		Percent	44.44	1.34	3.83	
	Exposed	# Cases	136	9	5	
		Percent	26.05	1.72	0.96	
Economic	Never	# Cases	129	6	9	Chi-Square 0.068 (0.967)
		Percent	24.71	1.15	1.72	
	Exposed	# Cases	239	10	16	
		Percent	45.78	1.91	3.06	

Source: Field Data

Conclusion

Educational institutions serves as breeding hub for making young lot capable for performing their duties in the social and economic market. If any policy regarding their controlling behavior, directing and redirecting is lacking in our system, the fruit associated to the process initiated through schooling could not be mature. Government of Pakistan has initiated a policy for education in 2007 but this policy is met with failure due to non-incorporation of normative structure of the schooling (SPARC, 2007). Any professional stance is lacking to measure the violence with its different type in the perspective of normal traditional setup(Coslin, 1997; Dubet, 2003). The study concludes that our education system has yet to adopt a strategy to train its youth for their future roles in-line with millennium development goals. Our education system is a part of creating violence both through its structures and patriarchal mind sets that injects masculinities more than

reasoning to achieve ones objectives. The lack of any monitoring system at district and provincial level furthers the distortion of our school system. The parents are not fully engaged in training of adolescents at schools which leave them without any direction and at the mercy of self-conceivedrole of teachers. On the other hand, media, which is considered as watch dog on public services and performance of government in spending public money has also remained focused on cosmetic aspects of the government not realizing how the future nation is being built at our schools.

End Notes

[1]Since the holding of 'All-education conference (1947) a number of Commission have been formed, e.g. The Commission on National Education (1959), National Education Policy (1970), National Education Policy (1979), and National Education Policy (1992), and Education Sector Reforms as part of Devolution of Power (DOP) various commissions such as 1959 Commission on National Education,

[2.]Aslam, M. (2006).*The Quality of School Provision in Pakistan: Are Girls Worse off?* Retrieved on July 8, 2011, from
http://www.gprg.org/pubs/workingpapers/pdfs/gprg-wps-066.pdf

[3.]United Nations (2005) Violence against children: regional consultation in East Asia and the Pacific. Geneva: United Nations. In the Painful lessons report.

[4.] Jones, N., Karen Moore, Eliana Villar-Marquez, and Emma Broadbent (2008), 'Painful Lessons: The Politics of preventing sexual violence and bullying at school', London: ODI.

[5.] Watkins, K. (1999), '*Education Now: Break the Cycle of Poverty'*, Oxford: Oxfam

[6.] UNFPA (2000), 'State of World Population Report, the Widespread violence against women in Africa documented,
http://www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/wom003_violence_unfpa.htm accessed 23rd April, 2010

References

Allison, Baer., (2012). Combating Radicalism in Pakistan: Educational Reform and Information Technology, The Project on International Peace and Security and The College of William and Mary, (P.I.P.S Brief No. 4.1) Accessible accessed on (date) from https:// www.wm.edu/offices/itpir/pips/_documents/pips/baer_allison_brief.pdf

Amjad, R., & MacLeod, G. (2012).Effectiveness of Private, Public and Private-Public Partnership Schools in Pakistan.

Ayers, W., Bracey, G., & Smith, G. (2000).The ultimate education reform? Make schools smaller. Education Policy Project CERAI–00–35)..

Christine Fair, C. (2007). Who are Pakistan's militants and their families? Terrorism and Political Violence, 20(1), 49-65.

Coslin, P. G. (1997). Adolescents' judgments of the seriousness of disruptive behavior at school and of the sanction appropriate for dealing with it. Journal of Adolescence, 20(6), 707-715.

Council, B. (2009).Pakistan: the next generation: British Council.

De Wet, C. (2007). Free State educators' perceptions and observations of learner-on-learner, learner-on-educator and educator-on-learner school violence. Education as Change, 11(1), 59-85.

Dubet, F. (2003).Juvenile and Urban Violence. International handbook of violence research, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 937-952.

Eisner, M. (2009). The uses of violence: An examination of some cross-cutting issues. International Journal of Conflict and Violence, 3(1), 40-59.

EMIS.(2011). Annual Statistical Report of Government Schools based on October 31, 2010. Peshawar: Education Management Information System. (EMIS o. Document Number)

International, P. (2008). Learn Without Fear–Looking at Violence from the Gender Perspective (Report No. 12): Plan International. (Plan o. Document Number)

Jones, N., Moore, K., Villar-Marquez, E., & Broadbent, E. (2009). Painful lessons: The politics of preventing sexual violence and bullying at school.

Khan, S. (2008). Helpdesk Research Report: Under-development and Radicalization in Pakistan 11.01.08 [Electronic Version], 10. Retrieved March 01, 2013,

Linenthal, E. T. (2001). The unfinished bombing: Oklahoma City in American memory. No.: ISBN 0-19-513672-1, 319.

Sathar, Z. A., Lloyd, C. B., Mete, C., &ulHaque, M. (2003). Schooling Opportunities for Girls as a Stimulus for Fertility Change in Rural Pakistan*. Economic Development and Cultural Change, 51(3), 677-698.

Shah, D. (2003). Country report on decentralization in the education system of Pakistan: Policies and strategies. Islamabad: Academy of Educational Planning and Management,(Islamabad), Ministry of Education.

SPARC.(2007). State of Children in Pakistan. Islamabad, Pakistan: SPARC. (SPARC o. Document Number)

Sullivan, C., & Bash, S. (1967). Current programs for delinquency prevention.Delinquency Prevention: Theory and Practice, 51-72.

UNDP, U., & UNFPA, U. (1998).WHO and WORLD BANK (1998).Implementing the 20/20 Initiative: Achieving universal access to basic social services.

Watkins, W. D., & Hooks, J. S. (1999). Legal Aspects of School Violence: Balancing School Safety with Students' Rights, The. Miss. Lj, 69, 641.

Witte, S. S., El-Bassel, N., Gilbert, L., Wu, E., & Chang, M. (2010).Lack of awareness of partner STD risk among heterosexual couples.Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 42(1), 49-55.

Yerin-Guneri, O., Erdur Baker, O., &AkbabaAltun, S. (2006). School violence among urban Turkish students: A qualitative investigation. Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research.

The author Dr. Jamil Ahmad Chitrali is Director/Associate Professor, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies University of Peshawar, Pakistan.He can be reached at jamilchitrali@upesh.edu.pk

The author Dr. Mussarat Anwar is Lecturer of Human Development, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar.

The author Dr. Syeda Nabahat Lecturer of Economics, College of Home Economics, University of Peshawar.