

# **NAVIGATING THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DOMESTIC LAW IN PAKISTAN**

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## **Abstract**

*Domestic Violence (DV) persists as a significant social issue globally, encompassing violence against both males and females. This study focuses on domestic violence against women in Pakistan, a pervasive problem escalating in urban and rural areas. In Pakistani society, such violence is often viewed as a private family matter, lacking proper attention to assessment, intervention, and resolution. Women endure daily acts of violence and discrimination, rooted in the misuse of social customs, cultural values, and religious norms. The research aims to shed light on domestic violence against women in Pakistan, exploring its causes, factors, consequences, and proposing Islamic perspectives for solutions. The paper adopts a qualitative research methodology, analysing a comprehensive understanding of the issue and offering potential solutions. The study aspires to be crucial and beneficial for Muslim communities in Pakistan and beyond. It analyses the historical evolution of domestic law in Pakistan to understand its foundational principles, legislative developments and evaluates the effectiveness of legislative mechanisms in addressing contemporary societal issues within the framework of domestic law in Pakistan. Social norms significantly influence how women perceive and respond to domestic violence. In Pakistan, enduring marital abuse is often viewed favourably, while reporting or seeking legal help is met with distrust. Distorted religious teachings contribute to sustaining abusive relationships in Pakistan.*

**Keywords.** *Social norms, Historical Evolution, Domestic Violence, Discrimination.*

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### **Introduction**

Violence against women, commonly known as domestic violence (DV), is a pervasive and sensitive issue present globally across diverse societies and cultures. Referred to as domestic abuse, spousal violence, intimate partner violence, or family violence, this harmful phenomenon transcends generational boundaries, impacting women across various socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Shockingly, one in three women worldwide has experienced abuse or coercion into sex during their lifetime. The scope of domestic violence knows no boundaries, encompassing physical, psychological, and reproductive abuse. The consequences are profound, affecting individuals, families, and societal dynamics. These repercussions include fear, anxiety, depression, stress, isolation, diminished self-esteem, suicide attempts, severe physical injuries, chronic health issues, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, family disruption, criminal activities, and tragically, even loss of life. Domestic violence against women is a widespread and sensitive global issue, encompassing various forms such as physical, psychological, and reproductive abuse. Referred to by different terms like domestic abuse and spousal violence, it transcends generational boundaries, affecting women across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Shockingly, one in three women worldwide has experienced abuse or coercion into sex. The consequences of domestic violence are far-reaching, impacting individuals, families, and society, leading to issues such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and even loss of life.

In Pakistan, the alarming and persistent issue of violence against women occurs at high rates, manifesting in both physical and verbal forms across various economic and literacy backgrounds. Despite extensive coverage in research articles, media, and NGOs, there is a lack of comprehensive studies addressing the issue accurately. Researchers have conducted individual studies to highlight the severity at the local level. This domestic violence poses significant public health challenges, affecting women's physical, psychological, and reproductive well-being. The repercussions extend to other family members, witnesses, friends, and co-workers. The ensuing discussion offers an overview of domestic violence against women in Pakistan, suggesting potential solutions within an Islamic context. Family members, including husbands, fathers, brothers, and in-laws, perpetrate domestic abuse, sometimes leading to fatal outcomes. The cultural expectations regarding family responsibilities and social obligations often contribute to the perpetuation of domestic violence against women. Domestic violence in Pakistan encompasses various forms of abuse within familial relationships. These can include physical violence, emotional or psychological abuse, financial control, and social isolation. It often stems from power imbalances, cultural norms, and societal factors. Understanding and addressing these multifaceted aspects are crucial for combating domestic violence and promoting a safer

environment for individuals and families.

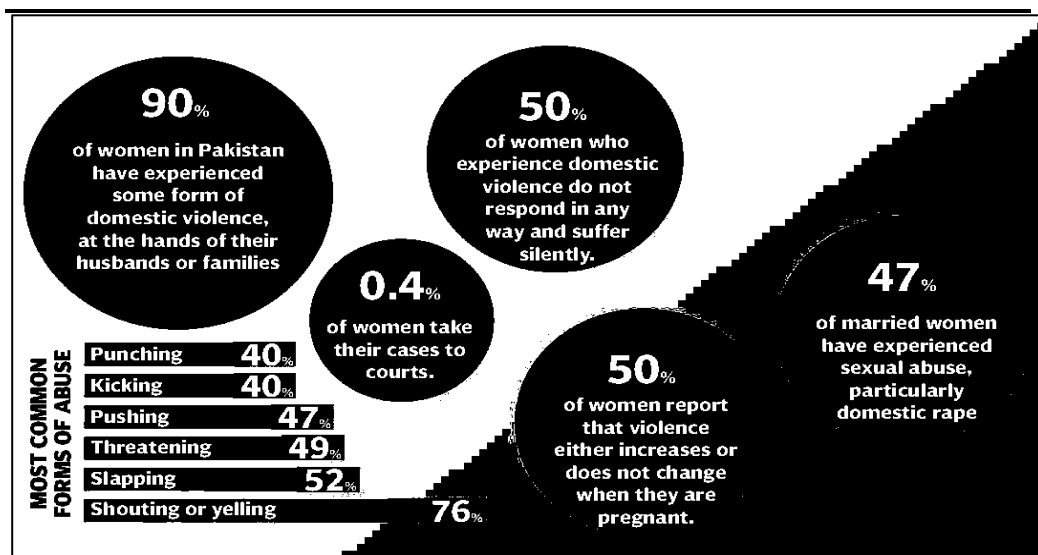
### **Significance of the Study**

Assessing, intervening, or reforming policies related to domestic violence in Pakistan faces challenges as it predominantly takes place within families. Survey data indicates a significant prevalence, ranging from 35% to 70% of intimate relationship violence in the country. Various factors contribute to this issue, such as women's limited education and empowerment, misconceptions about Islamic beliefs, traditional customs, poverty, the dowry system, gender preferences, infertility concerns, and substance abuse. Anurag Singh (2021) examined Pakistan's Domestic Violence bill, noting its similarity to other countries due to the influence of cultural and societal factors. The article highlighted a significant rise in domestic violence cases during the pandemic, leading to the enactment of the law to safeguard victims. Despite an agreement with the United Nations, religious groups criticized the law, asserting it contradicts Islamic principles that permit disciplining wives. The law, inclusive of all genders, is seen as an improvement, but the article suggests addressing patriarchal societal norms and changing the mind-set regarding women's roles. Emphasizing the need for prompt implementation, the Domestic Violence Act is deemed essential for ensuring women's safety and rights in Pakistan.

### **Problem Statement**

The problem encompasses a web of interconnected issues: a lack of education leading to unawareness of rights, economic dependence trapping individuals in abusive relationships, legal challenges and cultural barriers deterring reporting, psychological problems manifesting as abusive behaviour, societal and family pressures silencing victims, limited support systems hindering escape, and patriarchal structures favouring men perpetuating abusive dynamics. The research emphasized the need for addressing gaps through various measures, including increased specialist personnel, the establishment of forensic centres, enhanced laboratory infrastructure, technological advancements, and the creation of a national DNA database. While acknowledging persistent challenges, the study advocated for governmental steps to improve the forensic investigative system, implement new regulations, and enhance the overall justice system in Pakistan for the benefit of sexual assault victims.

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### **Types of Domestic violence in Pakistan**

*Types of Domestic violence in Pakistan can manifest in various forms, including physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, economic abuse, and sexual abuse. These forms of violence can occur within the context of familial relationships, often involving spouses, children, or other household members. It's important to raise awareness about these issues and promote efforts to prevent and address domestic violence.*

### **Research Objectives**

*The present research aims to:*

- 1. Analyse the historical evolution of domestic law in Pakistan to understand its foundational principles and legislative developments.*
- 2. Assess the effectiveness of legislative mechanisms in addressing contemporary societal issues within the framework of domestic law in Pakistan.*
- 3. Evaluate the role of legal institutions, including law enforcement agencies, in upholding domestic law and ensuring access to justice in Pakistan.*

### **Research Questions**

*The present research aims to address the following questions:*

- 1. How the historical evolution of domestic law in Pakistan has facilitated understanding its foundational principles and legislative developments?*
- 2. What is the effectiveness of legislative mechanisms in addressing contemporary societal issues within the framework of domestic law in Pakistan?*
- 3. What role the legal institutions, including law enforcement agencies, have played in upholding domestic law and ensuring access to justice in Pakistan.*

## **Legal Framework of Pakistan**

Pakistan has made efforts to address domestic violence through legislative measures, including the "Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006." This legislation aims to protect women from various forms of abuse within the domestic sphere. Historically, spousal violence against women in Pakistan faced limited legal intervention due to cultural norms treating it as a private matter. However, influenced by cultural globalization, legislative measures have been implemented. Acts such as the Sindh Domestic Violence Act, 2013, Balochistan Domestic Violence Bill, 2014, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence Act, 2019, and Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016, aim to address various forms of domestic violence. Despite these laws, societal norms discourage women from seeking legal redress, leading to a significant number not seeking help, as reported in the DHS 2017-18. Historically, legal intervention in cases of spousal violence against women was limited due to cultural norms rooted in tradition and social attitudes. This issue was often regarded as a private matter to be resolved informally, away from authoritative intervention. Cultural globalization has compelled governments to enact legislative measures combating spousal violence. The Sindh Domestic Violence Act of 2013 aims to curb domestic violence in Sindh and is recognized as gender-sensitive legislation. It broadens the definition to include physical and psychological abuse, offering remedies like protection orders restraining the accused from harassing the complainant.

In Pakistan, societal norms tend to view women enduring marital abuse stoically more favorably than those who report or seek legal redress for such abuse. The Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill of 2014 expanded the definition of domestic violence to encompass physical, sexual, economic, verbal, and emotional abuse.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act of 2019 covers individuals in a household related by "consanguinity, marriage, kinship, or family members," addressing various dimensions of violence such as physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse.

The Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act in 2016 takes a comprehensive approach to domestic violence, including sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, alongside stalking and cybercrime. The act allows women to be placed in shelters, with the court having the authority to compel the defendant to cover shelter costs, considering non-payment as contempt of court. Despite an extensive set of laws related to domestic abuse, few women in Pakistan seek legal remedies. According to the DHS 2017-18, 56 percent of women who have experienced domestic violence in the country have not sought assistance or talked to anyone about resisting or stopping the violence.

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The language of Pakistani law on domestic violence is primarily reflected in the "Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016." This legislation encompasses a comprehensive framework defining domestic violence and outlining legal measures for prevention and protection. The language emphasizes the prohibition of various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, psychological, and economic violence. It also establishes protective orders, shelters, and support services for victims. The law aims to provide a clear legal foundation to address domestic violence, reflecting a commitment to safeguarding the rights and well-being of individuals within the context of domestic relationships. The Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016 in Pakistan provides legal justification and examples to address domestic violence comprehensively. For instance, the Act explicitly defines various forms of abuse, such as physical violence, stalking, verbal abuse, and economic control. By delineating these actions, the law establishes a clear framework for identifying and addressing domestic violence situations. Additionally, the Act empowers the courts to issue protection orders, restraining the abuser from contacting the victim or entering specified premises. This legal measure serves as a tangible example of the legislation's commitment to providing immediate relief and safeguarding victims. Moreover, the law ensures the establishment of shelter homes and support services for victims. These concrete initiatives illustrate the commitment to not only penalize perpetrators but also to create a supportive environment for victims to escape abusive situations. In essence, the language of the Pakistani law on domestic violence, as exemplified by the Protection of Women Against Violence Act, is justified through its comprehensive definition of abuse, provision of protection orders, and the establishment of support services, all aimed at curbing and addressing various facets of domestic violence.

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2020 was presented in the National Assembly by the Ministry of Human Rights on July 8, 2020. Its purpose is to establish an effective protective system for women, children, elders, and vulnerable individuals against domestic violence. The bill, applicable to Islamabad Capital Territory as well, defines domestic violence broadly, encompassing physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse. The specified acts include possessiveness, threats of divorce based on false accusations, abandonment, stalking, harassment, and intentional deprivation of economic resources. Crucially, the bill criminalizes humiliation and false allegations against females or household members, along with hindering access to entitled financial resources. Federal Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari emphasized that domestic violence offenses not covered by the Pakistan Penal Code could result in imprisonment ranging from six months to three years. If a PPC offense occurs in a domestic relationship, punishment would align with the PPC. Perpetrators could face fines between Rs20,000 and Rs100,000,

serving as compensation for the aggrieved person. Defaulting on the fine might lead to a three-month imprisonment. The bill also proposes the establishment of a Protection Committee to aid the aggrieved person in court. Consultations with key figures such as Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Barrister Mirza Shahzad Akbar, and Farooqh Naseem were conducted to finalize the legislation.

In 2021, the Aurat Foundation, a women's rights organization based in Islamabad, Pakistan, documented 2,297 cases of violence against women across four provinces. These incidents included murder, kidnappings, rapes, gang rapes, honour killings, and domestic violence. Researchers argue that these numbers may underestimate the actual prevalence of violence against women in Pakistan (Sukhera, 2021).

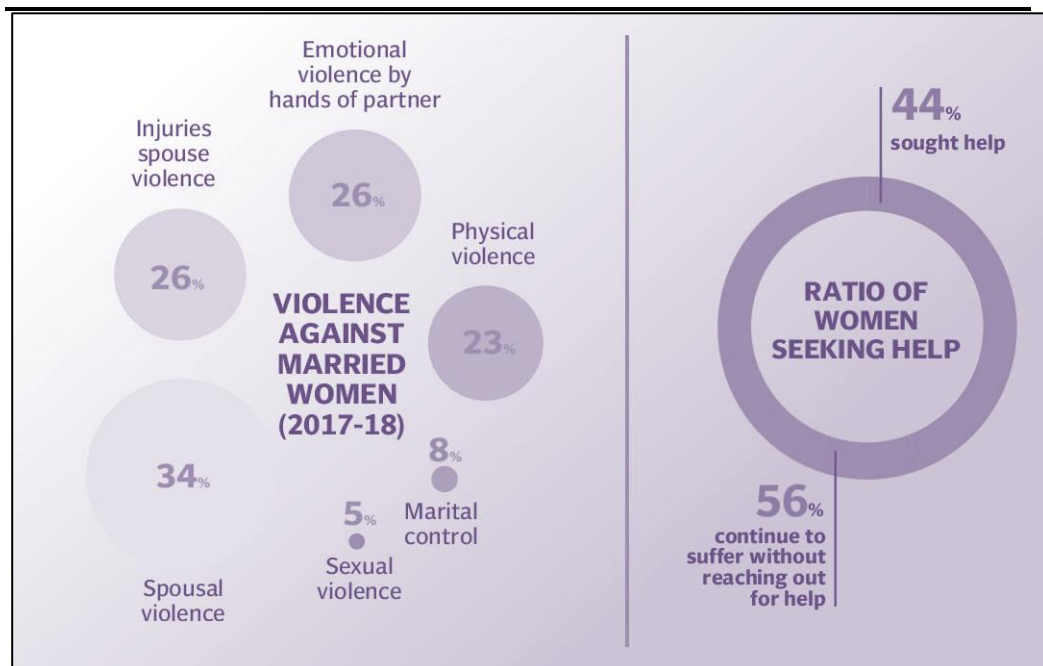
### **Key Provisions**

1. *Protection Orders:* The law allows for the issuance of protection orders by the court to prevent acts of domestic violence. These orders serve to safeguard victims from further harm.
2. *Criminalization of Domestic Violence:* The act criminalizes different forms of domestic violence, encompassing physical, emotional, verbal, and economic abuse. Perpetrators can face criminal charges, including imprisonment and fines.
3. *Emergency Shelter:* Recognizing the need for immediate protection, the law provides for the establishment of shelters where victims can seek refuge.
4. *Role of Law Enforcement:* The legislation empowers law enforcement agencies to take prompt action against those involved in domestic violence. This includes the authority to make arrests when necessary.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

The effectiveness of these legal provisions may be influenced by the consistent and rigorous enforcement of the law. Changing societal norms and attitudes toward domestic violence is crucial for the success of legal measures. Public awareness campaigns and education play a vital role in this regard. Availability and accessibility of support services, including counseling and rehabilitation, are essential for victims of domestic violence.

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### **Literature Review**

Nisa (2022) conducted a Forensic Discourse Analysis focused on honour killings and violence against women in Pakistan, specifically exploring the coverage of these issues in the newspaper "Dawn." This descriptive study employed a mixed-methods approach, incorporating Forensic Discourse Analysis and textual analysis. The theoretical framework utilized encompassed Fair Clough's 3-dimensional model, Multimodality, Discourse Analysis, and Forensic Analysis. The research methodology involved a stepwise analysis, beginning with vocabulary examination using Fair Clough's model, followed by grammar analysis within the Multimodality model. Cohesion connections were scrutinized through Discourse Analysis, culminating in a Forensic Analysis of the text structure. Two synchronic articles from The Dawn newspaper, both centred on the honour killing of Pakistani model Qandeel Baloch, constituted the study's population/sample. The study delved into societal attitudes toward violence against women, providing a comprehensive overview of historical and cultural contexts. Major factors contributing to honour killings in Pakistan were highlighted, emphasizing the intricate nature of such incidents. Root causes, including societal factors like gender equality, were identified as contributors to violence against women. Findings underscored the need to address honour killings as a complex social issue. The study advocated for women's awareness of their rights, societal equality, and the eradication of cultural factors fueling honour killings. The Forensic Analysis emphasized patterns contributing to violence against women. By combining Forensic and textual analysis, this study was deemed suitable for



examining newspaper discourse on sensitive topics. The employed models were found effective in uncovering the roots of honour killings in Pakistan. The research explored hidden ideologies and how writers portrayed honour killing victims, ultimately calling for urgent attention to this on-going social issue. The study concluded by advocating for increased awareness, proposing educational initiatives to address societal and cultural factors, and challenging patriarchal mentalities. It positioned itself as a valuable resource for further analysis on various topics, offering a new perspective on the portrayal of honour killing victims in newspapers.

Razak (2022) conducted a Critical Discourse Analysis of British news reports on Domestic Violence, aiming to reveal the underlying ideologies and purpose within the text. This study delves into the representation of ideologies, emphasizing the importance of careful portrayal due to the audience's perception of news as reality. News discourse, a specific media type, combines social and cultural factors to convey ideologies, influenced by the writer's interpretation. The study explored how ideologies, particularly social actors, are depicted in British news reports on Domestic Violence. Strategies from the socio-semantic network were applied, with some categories detailed in the analysis, while others were excluded if absent in the text. The analysis identified abusers as suppressed social actors and women as victims using exclusion and inclusion strategies. Men were consistently portrayed as active abusers, although sometimes presented as passive due to the influence of the law. Additionally, minor actors like police, lawyers, and organizations were depicted positively for supporting victims. Notably, the study focused on identifying social categories and did not provide recommendations for improving domestic violence news reports.

Dmitrieva (2022) sought to explore lexical changes in the English language within the context of domestic violence. The study aimed to gain insights into various aspects, including approaches to domestic violence, linguistic reflections of family violence, societal attitudes toward domestic violence in terms of linguistic factors, and understanding the linguistic and cognitive consequences of combatting domestic abuse. This investigation falls under the purview of cognitive linguistics and employs both quantitative and qualitative methods, utilizing data from textual and audio materials. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed to grasp cognitive and linguistic factors, while discursive analysis methodology helps in comprehending English language linguistics related to domestic violence. The study delves into expressions, new words, and meanings associated with domestic violence, analysing how vocabulary significantly shapes societal perspectives and ideologies surrounding this issue. The symbolic representation of domestic violence influences public mind-set, with a focus on women as victims. The discourse analysis, conducted using a Corpus, unfolds in three stages: lexical classifications, classification of words based on

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*platforms and genre, and assessing word frequency. The analysis reveals valuable insights into public opinion, cognitive aspects, and evaluative traits of the English language concerning domestic violence. It also distinguishes between cognitive perspectives and societal attitudes toward this social issue, highlighting language's transformative tendencies over time.*

*Gul (2023) carried out a study to analyse the implementation and effectiveness of the Domestic Violence ACT (2009). The purpose of this Act was to provide legal protection for women who are facing domestic violence. Quantitative data is used for analysis. It was observed that the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act suffered a few challenges. Pakistani women were not aware of this Act, the lack of practice of law enforcement officials, and also the lack of resources for supporting domestic violence victims. However, previous laws and policies were also discussed in this study that addresses the issue of domestic violence in Pakistan. The key features of the Domestic Violence ACT (2009) were discussed in the research. The implementation of this law was considered inadequate and slow. Many women were unaware of this law. Social and cultural obstacles were responsible for the limited effectiveness of the Domestic Violence ACT (2009). The obstacles like women are ashamed of not discussing the abuse they have experienced, many women are not aware of their legal rights, the typical patriarchal norms in Pakistan also demotivated the women to report and seek help against domestic violence, fear of the negative response from the abuser also discouraged the women to report against the abuse, women were financially dependent on the abusers and the women have no trust the justice system of Pakistan as they thought that they are unable to provide them protection. Moreover, this study provided recommendations for the improvement of the implementation of the Domestic Violence ACT (2009) by including awareness campaigns such as workshops, seminars, and public campaigns to educate women about their legal rights as they are established for women to protect them from domestic abuse. There are shortcomings and a few gaps in the Act. The government should take a comprehensive revision of the ACT. And make changes to ensure that it is adequate to protect the victims of domestic violence. Also, it was recommended that legislative bodies should receive sensitization training in order to improve understanding of this sensitive issue and to learn in which ways they can provide/support the victims by showing a positive attitude towards them. Furthermore, adequate resources should be available to provide support to the victims as there is a lack of adequate resources. The government has to increase fundraising and provide support services to women who have experienced domestic violence. To enable them to recover from the horrific experience the government should ensure that they are strengthened enough to protect women's rights. They should be empowered to help the*

survivors of domestic violence. Women's empowerment should be considered. Encouraging them to have an equal status in society as men is required. They should not be treated as low social class. The cultural factors that cause problems in addressing this issue should be addressed with the help of educational campaigns. The government should collaborate with the agencies and organizations already working to overcome domestic violence. This study elevated a broader understanding and scope of the ACT.

Zahoor (2022) conducted a thorough examination of legislation addressing domestic abuse against women in Pakistan. The study, primarily descriptive, utilized both secondary and primary data collection methods. It revealed significant legal loopholes in the country's domestic violence laws, particularly evident in the Criminal Prosecution Act of 2004, which struggled to address honour crimes adequately. Despite efforts to establish protective measures, Acts such as the Women's Protection Act and the Sindh Domestic Violence Act faced challenges, including political conflicts, inadequate implementation, and delays in appointing defence officers. The study also highlighted shortcomings in laws related to sexual harassment and forced marriages.

In 2016, a new Act aimed at preventing women from sexual offenses faced criticism for its perceived deviation from Islamic norms. The study concluded by emphasizing the need for specific rules to prevent domestic violence, advocating for education on women's rights, equal status, and implementing measures to stop such acts. It also stressed the importance of considering Islamic principles in the formulation of laws in Pakistan.

Tsagas (2022) conducted an analysis of existing approaches to domestic abuse, highlighting a surge in domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the UK government took steps to protect victims, it notably enacted the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, primarily focusing on punishing abusers rather than emphasizing support for victims. The study revealed concerns about the Act's punitive focus, emphasizing the need for prioritizing victim assistance over punishment. It shed light on barriers preventing victims from reporting abuse, including shame, fear of revenge, societal norms, protection of the abuser, and the perceived difficulty of the reporting process. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 broadened its scope beyond physical abuse to include other forms of violence. The study recommended adopting restorative justice to aid victims in healing and transforming abusers for mutual benefit. The importance of considering victims' mental health on par with physical health was underscored, urging specific legislative changes for enhanced effectiveness and support for both victims and abusers.

Shaikh (2022) undertook a forensic investigation study on sexual assault

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*cases in Pakistan, encompassing domestic violence. Concentrating on female survivors, the research aimed to deliver justice to victims and explored connections between forensic investigation and forensic linguistics. Uncovering gaps in the Pakistani forensic investigative landscape for sexual assault cases, the study analysed data from the past six years, revealing causes, shortcomings, and potential improvements. Notably, the study highlighted issues such as limited published data on forensic systems, mistrust in the police function, victim-blaming during reporting, and deficiencies in the penal code.*

*Parihar (2023) in his study discussed domestic violence as a global problem. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), women's rights are being violated by domestic violence. It is reported around 2 million women are abused every year all around the globe. Gender differences are one of the main reasons for domestic violence. Domestic violence is not only observed in developing countries, it is also observed in developed countries as well. Countries like Pakistan, the United Kingdom, India, Mexico, China, the United States, and many more reported domestic violence cases on a very large scale. There are social factors that contribute to domestic violence. Every factor depends upon the nature of that specific area. Such as the factors are poverty, lack of financial assets, low social class of women, lack of education, and many more. Cultural factors are also responsible for domestic violence. Moreover, there are several types of domestic violence like physical abuse, emotional abuse, and verbal aggression. Recent research has shown honour and dowry killings are the major cause of domestic murders globally. World Health Organization (WHO) specified due to domestic violence women and female children are at higher risk of negative health results such as physical and mental health issues, HIV/AIDS, and unwelcomed pregnancy. Both physical and mental health consequences of domestic violence were determined to be a severe reproductive health concern for women in Pakistan. 15% of married women are assaulted on daily basis during pregnancy. In a few countries, women are not allowed to raise their voices against domestic violence. It happens because women are being ashamed of sharing this matter, due to their cultural factors. Thus, a lack of acknowledgment would definitely result in more domestic violence cases.*

*Nawaz, B., Johnson(2022) in their research utilized Johnson's (2008) classification of intimate partner violence (IPV) when examining female survivors in Karachi, Pakistan. The initial category identified through Ward's method cluster analysis is situational couple violence (SCV), encompassing 29 respondents whose husbands exhibited low control levels across all factors. The second category, intimate terrorism (IT), includes 15 respondents facing high control levels on most aspects. A unique classification in this study, termed familial intimate terrorism (FIT), involves*

36 respondents whose husbands, while not as controlling as IT and not notably jealous or sexually cruel, are more prone to using control tactics rooted in the joint family system. The Johnson control typology proves applicable to intimate partner violence in Pakistan, introducing a crucial third category tied to the prevalent joint family system worldwide. Future research should incorporate non-violent couples for comparison, particularly in cultures where the joint family system authorizes considerable "normal" control over women. Despite assuming that familial intimate terrorism involves men (and sometimes their families) exploiting the norms of this system, further investigation is imperative.

### **Research Findings**

Pakistani women who step up to seek their rights and justice against the perpetrators who have created problems for them in living a normal life, face enormous difficulties. One of the most basic problems that almost each individual has encountered is to get their case registered against such person, who is a source of constant source of domestic issues and mental tortures. Authorities don't investigate complains seriously and always have one excuse that "we cannot register the case, as he is your husband/brother or any other close relative, because mostly such issues are resolved through the process of mediation", reluctance in registering cases, gives women a sense of hopelessness, therefore they don't bother to register the cases and keep suffering the torture and mental agony. However the Code of Criminal Procedure section 22-A & 22-B do allows you to file a complaint directly to the magistrate, thus avoiding the police investigation completely, but still women would need a competent lawyer who can assist them properly in their cause, as there are complexities and exceptions involved in this route.



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*If for the sake of argument if the authorities register the case, the next big hurdle are the judges who either belong to entire different background, that they don't even entertain such complaints and ask the petitioner, to resolve the issues amicably, blatantly ignoring the fact, that if one could have resolved the issues amicably they would not have approached the learned court. The next hindrance would come from the delays of the courts in passing an order or decree. Taking excessive leaves every other day proves to be detrimental on the outcome of hundreds of cases, not to mention the strikes and political issues that constantly arises with the circumstances of the country. This is one of the biggest reasons why the victim decides not to file a case in the court. Another reason is the demand of ridiculous fee from the lawyers. Women who are not independent are not always able to fund their litigation expenses and majority of the lawyers don't care about the cause of the case but merely interested in getting the professional fee, thus making it quite difficult for a home maker women, who don't posses enough finances. Social norms significantly influence how women perceive and respond to domestic violence. In Pakistan, enduring marital abuse is often viewed favorably, while reporting or seeking legal help is met with distrust. Distorted religious teachings contribute to sustaining abusive relationships.*

*Limited access to police services, an outdated policing style, and skepticism about police actions hinder women seeking legal redress for domestic violence. Media reports of police mistreating victims further deter them. The judicial process adds to discouragement with high legal fees, slow proceedings, and low conviction rates. Implementing court decisions involves obstacles with the police and other institutions. Compensation in family cases is often inadequate, and women lacking family support face increased vulnerability. Legal actions against abusive husbands pose challenges as punishments may lead to retaliation. Victims may face social isolation from in-laws, financial struggles, and emotional blackmail regarding children. Supportive family members are not always available, making it financially daunting for women to leave abusive marriages. Addressing this complex issue requires intervention early in life, focusing on the first five years. Promoting respect for gender diversity and embedding gender equality in education, especially up to secondary levels, is crucial.*

*Media plays a pivotal role in shaping adult attitudes toward gender equality.*

## **Conclusion**

*The research findings underscore a nuanced interplay of social and psychological elements coupled with societal normalization of gender power imbalances, culminating in the pervasive issue of domestic violence. A critical revelation was the centrality of male mentality as the foundational determinant, influencing other contributing factors. The repercussions of domestic violence extend beyond immediate victims, impacting family dynamics and predisposing children to long-term consequences such as low self-esteem and future abusive behavior. Moreover, the ripple effect extends to the workplace, where instances of domestic violence correlate with increased absenteeism, particularly affecting female employees. Strikingly, a recurrent theme was the reluctance of victims to seek external help, attributed to a lack of autonomy and induced fear. The analysis delved into the multifaceted negative outcomes of domestic abuse, encompassing physical and mental health ramifications, workplace disruptions, and reproductive health concerns. Notably, the intricate web of causes behind male violence in Pakistan was unveiled; encompassing socioeconomic structures, workplace challenges, cultural norms, and legal limitations, creating a complex matrix of factors. The study also spotlighted influential policy actors ranging from non-governmental organizations and the media to religious groups and the government. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the research proposed comprehensive policy alternatives. These included dismantling barriers such as opposition from religious groups, implementing awareness campaigns, establishing a 24-hour government helpline, and integrating women into police stations and complaint centers. However, trade-offs were acknowledged, leading to a decision-making process based on key criteria, primarily security and political feasibility. Despite women staffing providing the highest security levels, it was deemed politically less feasible. Consequently, eliminating barriers, specifically addressing religious opposition, emerged as the most effective policy action. Raising awareness ranked second, and women staffing in police stations was deemed the third most feasible strategy. The study concluded with a sobering warning that without decisive action, Pakistan, already on the brink of moral degeneration, could witness a further decline. Urgent implementation of effective policies, as proposed, was emphasized to avert such a perilous trajectory.*

## **Recommendations**

- 1. Promoting basic human rights education in universities is crucial for fostering awareness and preventing violations. Integrating mandatory courses can empower students with the knowledge needed to uphold rights and contribute to a more just society. The need of the hour is to educate our youth about basic human rights. So the universities should take initiatives*

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and incorporate basic human rights course as a mandatory part of their curriculum. Such mandatory courses would not only spread awareness among the female students about their basic domestic rights against violence but would also beware the male students about the consequences that they may face in case of violation.

2. The Pakistani patriarchal society should stop normalizing domestic violence which may start off with verbal abuse and ends in brutal emotional, mental or physical torture.
3. The stereotypical attitudes of maika/ family should be deconstructed.



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