Determinants of Domestic Violence Against Women: A Socioeconomic Perspective from Pakistan

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Abstract

Violence against women remains one of the most pervasive and serious social challenges worldwide. This study investigates the socioeconomic determinants of intimate partner violence against women in Pakistan. Owing to the binary nature of the dependent variable, a binary logistic regression model was applied. The independent variables included women's employment status, type of residence, household economic standing, husband's residence, husband's educational level, gender of the household head, and gender of children. The analysis revealed that women in economically disadvantaged households were significantly more likely to experience violence (41.7%) compared to those from wealthier households (38.3%). Similarly, women whose husbands lacked formal education reported higher rates of violence (37.8%) than those married to educated men (19.3%). Place of residence also emerged as a key determinant, with women in rural areas facing markedly higher risks of violence (55.1%) compared to their counterparts in urban or more developed settings (44.9%). These findings underscore the multifaceted influence of socioeconomic disparities on women's vulnerability to violence. The study recommends that governmental and non-governmental organizations launch targeted awareness campaigns to challenge societal acceptance of violence and promote gender equity. Moreover, it highlights the urgency of enacting and rigorously enforcing comprehensive legislation at the grassroots level to ensure women's protection and prevent intimate partner violence.

Keywords: Intimate Partner Violence, Socioeconomic Determinants, Gender-Based Violence, Education, Rural-Urban Divide

Introduction

Violence can be broadly defined as any act committed against another person's will with the intent to exert authority, dominance, or control over them. It may take psychological or physical forms, often serving as a means of enforcing compliance in decision-making processes. Violence manifests in multiple dimensions of life, ranging from human-to-human aggression to harmful acts against animals and the environment. Among these, domestic violence is one of the most pervasive forms of interpersonal violence. Domestic violence is not only a medical and psychological issue but also a serious matter of public security and social justice. In most modern societies, it is recognized as a criminal offense and is reportable to law enforcement authorities (Babu & Kar, 2009). It has been conceptualized as a "social relationship disease," often perpetrated by the most

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authoritative member of the household against vulnerable members such as women, elderly parents, and children. The issue becomes more critical when incidents of domestic violence remain unreported, further perpetuating the cycle of abuse (Ali & Govino, 2008). Research indicates that male partners frequently attempt to assert dominance by reducing women's role in household and societal affairs, often treating them as subordinates rather than equal partners (Khan & Sajid, 2011). Acts of domestic violence typically include physical assaults such as beating or kicking, verbal abuse, coercion, and forced compliance with the perpetrator's personal and physical demands. This abusive behavior reflects a perception of wives as objects or machines under male control, with violence employed as a corrective mechanism whenever resistance or non-compliance arises (Naveed & Ghori, 2011). Cultural and religious taboos further reinforce these power imbalances, leaving women particularly vulnerable to long-term physical, psychological, and social harm. The global health implications of domestic violence are significant. The World Health Organization's first World Report on Violence and Health (2002) underscored its alarming impact, noting that approximately one million women lose their lives annually due to violence. With advances in medicine reducing mortality from infectious diseases in the early twentieth century, violence has emerged as a leading cause of preventable death and disability in many parts of the world (WHO, 2010).This social evil is very much prevalent even in China which is said to be a strong pillar of world economy. More than 60% females commit suicide there due physical and mental torture. This ratio is higher among the rich persons of the society in China. The persons that are ranked at high grades in offices try to maintain their authority even at home by committing violence with their female partners (Xiao et al, 2005). This dilemma looks more complex when society of America is evaluated for violence. More than 70% of males who have seen their fathers becoming violent to their mothers become harsh to their females. This shows that even high earnings and better standard of living people are still in the net of their cultural values formulates by their forefathers (Statistics of America). Though Americans are leading the world in all walks of life, yet they force their female partners to keep quite on their act of violence afterwards. In spite of all myths, females are so innocent and sincere to their life partner that they feel reluctant and disgraced to inform anyone in the society (Abraham et al, 2004). Different regions have their own cultural myths in this regard. In Arab countries women are confined and isolated in their houses. They are not allowed to see and to work with any other person except their husbands (Mahrram). They are fully dependent on male partner in every walk of life (Khan et al, 2011). Similarly, Indian society is male dominant society where female partners are treated as maid and touch the feet of males as a sign of submission to male partner. Sometimes she is burnt with her dead husband at the name of Satti. In other societies like Far East and Africa male partners sometimes are not earning and they force their female partners to earn money by using any meanto provide them daily needs of life and occasionally drugs for addiction. Whenever the female partner expresses her protest then she has to face the music (Burazari et al, 2010). It can happen vice versa as well in certain cases. Socially high standard people are found to keep more than one women to entertain themselves. They give less attention to females at their homes as compared to females without any familiar marital relation. In this case they spend more time out of their home that results in decrease in the violence to the females (Jejeebhoy et al, 2001). It is an alarming issue found everywhere globally. Pakistan is a highly populated country having great socioeconomic inequalities. While discussing gender violence, women is considered as major victim in this part of universe too. Pakistan is also one of those countries in which women is the most deprived individual of the society in certain aspects of daily matters of life. In backward rural areas females are not allowed to get education. The females are accused of an immense crime if they use their right to go out independently for their wishful routine living (Abrar and Ghori, 2010). In its North provinces situation is even more critical. Every day many female killing cases by males are reported in the name of honor and dignity. Media is used to present these news in such an

enthusiastic emotional way that the Pakistan has become a terrifying country for whole world (Tazeem et al, 2011). This increases the aggression of males against females resulting in violence. Being the male dominant society, males in Pakistan considered themselves as the lords of their females, so they always try to neglect them. Even they do not provide them their basic rights. Due to fear of disgrace in the society, females become reluctant to report its problem to the police in rich section of the society. This promotes the violent behaviors and attitudes among the males. On the other side if such an incident happens among low class families, more cases are reported to the police. Poor people are deprived of their basic necessities of life. This enhances their frustration making them more violent. Becoming a mother of baby girls is another major factor making her more prone to violence (Khan and Sajid, 2011). This issue is not addressed by the local authorities as well as Demographic and Health Survey of Pakistan (DHS) properly. So there is a dire need to evaluate this issue in general masses in Pakistan more elaborately.

Literature Review
Abraham et al, (2004) analyzed that domestic violence in developing countries had been acknowledged as a common health problem with a prevalence rate of 20% to 60%.The objective was to determine the prevalence of physical violence during pregnancy and the factors associated with it. The method had been used to collect the information was structured questionnaire. The result of this survey was the lifetime experience, during pregnancy, of being slapped was 16%, hit 10%, beat 10%, kicked 9%, use of weapon 5% and harmed in any other way was 6%. Suspicion of infidelity, dowry harassment, husband being regularly drunk and low education of husband was the main risk factors for violence during pregnancy. Koenig et al,(2003) explained that the prevalence of domestic violation was more likely in underdeveloped countries. Male considered it their legal light to abuse their women. The study showed the impact of education, age, and number of children and the addiction of drugs. The study revealed that who were drug addicted became cruel to his wife both physically and sexually. Women getting higher knowledge had the access to the court and she had the sense to handle their problems more efficiently. Loyalty became obvious when there was a long term relation between the husband and wife that caused less violence among the people. Parveen et al, (2008) concluded that violence against women was as complex as its process. a framework using the determinants of violence against women as proposed, included intrinsic and extrinsic factors within the people, the socio- economic-political and cultural system of Pakistan and the influences of surrounding countries. The Pakistani scenario had been described and the theoretical bases were presented .The proposed framework which had intrinsic factors within people, extrinsic factors, the socio-economic-political and cultural system of Pakistan and the influences of surrounding countries as determinants of violence against women provided useful insights towards the understanding of the phenomenon. The framework may help men, women, public health professionals and policy and decision makers to understand the dynamics of violence against women, thus moving them to action. A milieu of bicultural change may be initiated to bring forth improvements in women's lives. Micheal et al, (2004) evaluated the violence in the Uttar Pradesh that lied in the poor category of country. He took data from MRHS and studied different variables such as husband's knowledge, standard of living, household items, the family size etc. He applied multi logistic model and found that the violence were more among the people who were living in poor areas and didn't had the manners. The persons who had education below middle were considered as crueler. They also collected data about sexual harassment because the females were the more victims of that than the physical violence. Women had to be abused more in the under developed countries. The husband who had to get loans for the medication of their females for a long period of time became fierce. It was found that the people living in high crime areas were considered more sexual violent Farouk, (2005) evaluated then causes of violence in Bangladesh. They were considered as inferior creature. They were deprived of their basic rights.

Men were the owners of women and they were allowed to treat them according to their desire. Due to gender biasness male child considered he superior to the female child, as growing up they did everything according to their wish y violating the women. Women were being sexually harassed and were asked to make extramarital relation without their consent. Muslim women were victimized by the fatwa of molvi,s. In the same sense non-Muslims were neglected during property decision making and they had to forcibly give up their right of property. They were not allowed to marry again when their husband died. It was recommended that the Govt. should formulate strong policies to protect the females. Ali and Gavino, (2008) studied the factors of violence against women in the Pakistan. They analyzed in their study that in Pakistan, women were suffered from the physical, mental and emotion abuse due to the Pakistan's cultural and religious norms. Male dominance in the family and male control of wealth lead the women towards the domestic violence. Lack of employment opportunities also increased the domestic as well as physical violence against women. Marital conflicts also associated with physical abuse. If women was financially strong than they became less victim of violence. Interference of mother-in-law in the partner's decision making also a big caused of domestic violence. In Pakistan, most of the population lived in the villages where feudal system was existed. So in villages violence against woman is more common due to the lack of education. Babu and Kar (2009) described that the domestic violence was more prevalent in the east part of India. It was elaborated by taking the data from three different districts of eastern side of India. Queries that asked were much personal about the lives of male and female. Three types of violence (physical, social and psychological) were most likely to be found in all three districts at large scale. They emphasized that the income of a person, their living area, and their ways of earning were much important to analyze the domestic violence. While living in a joint family system a female had to face more violation from her husband than from any other person in the family. Conclusion was made by emphasizing on high living standard. Agarwalet al, (2009) examined the nature, factors, consequences and mechanism of the gender based physical violence among women in slum population of UT Chandigarh. They included the variables of age, literacy, educational status, religion, age of marriage, reasons and consequence of physical violence against women etc. For this they took cross sectional data and used logistic regression model for predicting risk factors of physical violence against women. Results showed illiterate women faced high physical violence as compared to those women who were literate. Husband's short temper and drinking alcohol were main reasons of physical violence against women. Physical violence against women was more in nuclear family in Chandigarh. They suggested that in Chandigarh, violence against women could be stopped by improving literacy rate in women and by improving social economic status of women Abrar and Ghouri (2010) investigated the violence against women in the rural and urban areas of Pakistan. Cross sectional data was collected and result showed the horrible reality that Pakistani women were struggling for their socio economic status in the male dominant society. Gender discrimination, social dependency of women on the men, factors of dowry, and factors of son, numbers of family members, economical back ground and religion were most important issues of physical, psychological and sexual violence against women in Pakistan. The women desired live with their husband, even after the witnessing of sensitive violence also one of the main reason for the physical violence against women. Illiteracy was one of the main reasons of the sexual exploitation among women. They suggested that Government of Pakistan should make some policies in order to stop such violence against women. Nosheen et al, (2007) explained that the women had all along been a frail & feeble layer of every society. Violence against them, with a difference of degree (& intensity), had been a universal phenomenon. In the postindustrial revolution era, however, female folk (along with the young children) were drawn out of the four-walls of their homes & urged to work in industries as a cheap labor force. They were compensated by offering a legislative sanction of right to private property. This financial independence changed their vision & enabled them to fight for their socio-moral &

legal rights. As a result, there has been a marked reduction in violence against women. But, unfortunately, the shadow of this menace is still lingering on. The research data revealed that majority of the females did not suffer from violence in their families while 44.6% reported violence is in the form of physical violence (torture), wife beating, slapping, hitting, strangling, mental abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse, between the families. Violence against women is reduced in the family due to improved educational level of women in the society. Education, modernization and other socioeconomic and political factors were also responsible for such change.

Methodology

Cross sectional data is obtained from the DHS (Demographic and health survey).A data set containing observations on multiple phenomena observed at a single point in time is called cross-sectional data. In cross-sectional data sets, the values of the data points have meaning, but the ordering of the data points does not. This study was conducted from January to April 2016 taking data from Demographic and Health Survey of Pakistan (2012-2013). The dependent variable was in two categories so a binary logistic technique was applied to evaluate the result. As the dependent Variable is in Binary form so Binary Logistic model is applied to check the results of data.

$$Y = 1/e^{-z}$$

Model: $DM = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7$

Dependent Variable
DM = Domestic Violence
Independent Variable
X1=Female Currently Working.
X2=Partner's Education
X3=Currently Residing
X4=Wealth Index
X5=Gender of Household head
X6=Residential area
X7=Gender of Child

Results and Discussion

It has been exhibited from the table that as Pakistan is an under developing country and the employment situation is very critical area. Females are not giving the equal rights. Prejudice people didn't allow their females to perform any activity for earning source. Owing to that the percentage of unemployed females were 77.8. Only 22.2 percent females could do job to earn for their family. Education makes people civilized otherwise they may behave like animals snubbing their partners. It creates a sense of ownership and equality among the couples. It makes people respectful, humble and creates a sense of living for others (Babu and Kar,2009). Moreover, the percentage of uneducated husbands was also considerable. They were about 37.8 percent. At the same time the percentages of Primary, Secondary and higher education were 14.0, 28.8, and 19.3 respectively. Furthermore, data showed a large percentage of husbands that were living at their own homes with their wives that was 91.5. A small number of people were residing out of their homes.

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5

Table.1 Frequency Distribution of Variables

Variables	Categories	Frequency
Female Currently Working	No	77.8
	Yes	22.2
Partner's Education	No	37.8
	Primary	14.0
	Secondary	28.8
	Higher	19.3
Currently Residing	With wife	91.5
	Elsewhere	8.3
Wealth Index	Poor	41.7
	Middle	20.0
	Rich	38.3
Gender of Household head	Male	91.7
	Female	8.3
Residential area	Urban	44.9
	Rural	55.1
Gender of Child	Male	51.7
	Female	48.3

Poor people become frustrated due to their economic and health constraints. It makes them more aggressive, irritated and violent. Poor people who had very low living standard were about 41.7 percent (Khan and Sajid,2011). The percentages of middle and rich were 20.0 and 38.3 respectively. It was the sign of income inequality the number of people falling in middle class was less than the poor and rich class. Females are usually very kind, tolerant and adjustable by nature. On the other hand male presumed themselves to be the powerful organ of the society. Consequently males become more violent (Naveed and Ghori, 2010). Eastern world always contained a male dominant society, so the percentage of male household heads was 91.7 and the female was 8.3 percent. The cultural taboos and myths of the particular culture prevails in the society which make the males more violent exercising their dominance especially in the rural area (Ali et al,2011). In Pakistan most of the population was residing in the rural areas was 55.1% and the people in urban areas was 44.9%. The number of male children was about 51.7 percent while females were 48.3 percent.

Table 2: Results for Binary Logistic Model

Variables	Categories	B	Sig	Ex (B)
Female Currently Working	No	.339	.000	1.403
	Yes			
Partner's Education	No	.438	.000	1.550
	Primary	.232	.000	1.262
	Secondary	.142	.000	1.152
	Higher	0		
Currently Residing	With wife	-.386	.000	.680
	Elsewhere	0		
Wealth Index	Poor	.187	.000	3.277
	Middle	.693	.000	1.999
	Rich	0		
Gender of Household head	Male	.116	.023	1.123
	Female			
Residential area	Urban	-.068	.003	.934
	Rural	0		
Gender of Child	Male	-012	.545	.988
	Female	0		

It was obvious from the results obtained from applying binary logistic model that the females who were not working had 1.403 times more probability to be violated from their life partners as compared to the females who had the opportunity of doing employment. Similarly, Babu (2009) found that violence has a significant relationship with employment opportunities for females. The uneducated husbands had 1.550 more chances to beat their wives as compared to the highly educated husbands. Moreover, the probabilities of primary and secondary educated husbands were 1.262 and 1.152 respectively. At the same time findings of Micheal et al, (2006) revealed that educated husbands had less probability to violate their wives as compared to the uneducated husbands.It was concluded that the husbands who were residing at their homes had .680 less chances to violate their wives as compared to those who were living out of their homes.In another study Tazeem et al, (2011) exhibited opposite picture. They found that the males who were residing out of their homes were less violent to their females as compared to the persons who were residing at their homes. Poor person had bad manners so their probability of opposing their wives was high than the rich people of the country. Sarfraz and Mirza (2011) showed that the rich persons were less furious to their wives as compared to the poor people.Furthermore, the houses who were headed by the male persons had 1.123 more probability to violate their wives as compared to those houses that were headed by the female members. Tabassum (2005) determined that the houses headed by females experienced less violence as compared to the families that were headed by males. In urban areas people were more educated so, the chances of violence were .934 less as compared to the urban areas. Likewise, Burezarei determined that people residing in rural areas were more violent as compared to the people residing in urban areas. The females who had male children had .988 less likelihood to be violated as compared to those who had female children. In another study Naveed and Arslan (2010) found that the birth of a baby girl was an important factor causing violence.

Conclusion
It is concluded from the study that unemployed females are subjected to the male violence than the employed females. Educated communities have less incidence of male violence against females. Male violence against females is also more common among the poor people of rural areas.

It is suggested that maximum efforts should be made to eradicate the evil of violence of male against female around the society. All necessary measures should be taken to strengthen the socioeconomic norms of society like education and economic status. Cultural taboos and myths should be rectified.

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