

Public Discourse on Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan: A Qualitative Discourse Analysis of the Noor Mukadam Case

Samreena Wali¹, Dr. Quratulain Farooqi², Rida Naeem³, Laraib Sajid⁴, Muhammad Haris Khan⁵, Dr. Shaheer Ellahi Khan⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5} MS Public Health (Scholar), Department of Public Health, Health Services Academy, Islamabad, Pakistan, Email: samreenawali2000@gmail.com, quratulain.phase7@gmail.com, ridanaeem431@gmail.com, laraibsajid2001@gmail.com, mharis.khan@nih.org.pk

⁶ Associate Professor, Health Services Academy, Islamabad. Government of Pakistan, Email: shaheer@hsa.edu.pk

Corresponding Authors:

Samreena Wali

Dr. Quratulain Farooqi

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Abstract

Gender, based violence (GBV) has been, and still is, a major violation of human rights and a serious public health problem worldwide, and in Pakistan as well. Public discourse is one of the main sources of the general knowledge of GBV that primarily encompasses media and social media stories. These assist in defining the perception that society has of violence, blame, morality, and justice. In 2021, after the murder of Noor Mukadam in Islamabad, it was described as a turning point that caused the debate around feminists, their mobilization, and the institutional review to increase significantly. This study concerns the GBV representations in the national discourses in Pakistan, following the Noor Mukadam case. It focuses mainly on aspects such as gendered power relations, moral regulation, and feminist counter-hegemonic narratives. The study also aims to explore these aspects in relation to the protest, anxiety, and negotiation around the issue of GBV. A qualitative discourse analysis was carried out on purposively sampled data from mainstream news media, television talk shows, official statements, and social media platforms (Twitter/X, Facebook, YouTube). The study looked at language use, presentation, references to other texts, and also what was not said. Victim-blaming and moral policing were the main features of the media and public discourse, which dominated the scene and shifted the responsibility for the crime from the perpetrator to the victim. The narratives mainly focused on the honor of the family and societal norms, presenting the murder as a natural consequence of moral decay. The media and public commentary on the perpetrator, in general, were aimed at humanizing him and depicting him as a person with inner conflicts or a victim, thereby removing or lessening his responsibility. Sensationalized reporting focused on the elite status and spectacle, thereby ignoring and diverting attention from the root causes of the GBV. Social media was a reflection of misogyny and surveillance, which were used for the control of women's voices and, at the same time, for the reinforcement of patriarchal norms. Feminist counter-discourses, especially through #JusticeForNoor, dismantled the dominant narratives by focusing on rights, accountability, and structural reform. The debate around the Noor Mukadam case is indicative of a struggle between the old patriarchal narratives that are deeply rooted and the new feminist activism that has arisen. Indeed, a majority of the mainstream and online discussions were replete with victim, blaming,

honor, honor-based rhetoric, perpetrator sympathy, and media sensationalization, of which feminist counter-narratives were a minority. However, these feminist counter-narratives showed that social media and public engagement could be used to challenge the harmful narratives, to lobby for justice, and to facilitate systemic change.

Keywords: Blame Shift; Honor and Patriarchy; Perpetrator Humanization; Media Sensationalism; Social Media Misogyny; Feminist Counter-Discourses; #JusticeForNoor

Introduction

On a summer morning in Islamabad, the country woke up to the tragic news of a murder that shook its conscience collectively. A young woman with a bright future and dreams, Noor Mukadam, was killed in a way that not only confused the brain but also lacked any elements of humanity. Her demise was beyond the murder of an individual; it was a reflection of patriarchal structures, inequalities, and contradictions, which are the common themes of women's lives in Pakistan [1]. Public reaction to what had happened was very quick, fiery, and divergent, blaming the victim in low tones on one side and on the other calling for the execution of justice all over the country through both online and offline activism. Gender based violence is not an unreal problem in Pakistan; it is integrated into the social fabric, and most of the time it is kept under the cover of honor, morality, and family prestige. The stories are numerous of women who are abused in the homes that they live in, and even more are the stories of honor killings [2]. Yet, these are incidents about which society speaks only in silence, in rumor, and moral judgment. Media, both traditional and digital, have an undeniable influence on shaping the stories. It can be a tool that strengthens the hard core of patriarchal and victimization biases by shifting the blame quite delicately to the victims, or it could help those who demand justice and accountability. The murder of Noor Mukadam has become a turning point in public debates about GVB in Pakistan. It exposed the intersection of elite status, social class, and gender in media representation and social media narratives and thereby revealing social biases as well as triggering a digital feminist movement at the same time [3]. How the people reacted to her murder did not go around the board; they cited the presence of the various categories of thought that encompassed the victim-blaming, the humanization of the killer, the sensationalism, and activism. The study on these discourses would assist us in comprehending the influence of media and expose as cultural and institutional structures behind them that thrive on GBV. The study is based on qualitative discourse analysis in examining how the discourse of the Pakistani media and the Pakistani people construct discourse about the murder of Noor Mukadam [4]. The study is based on the issues of patriarchal authority, social ethics, and digital activism as it attempts to answer the questions below: How do media discourses influence the social perception of victims and offenders? Is social media strengthening or weakening gendered discourses? And how counter-feminist discourses come out and meet up with social conventions? The work will aim to transcend the figures by putting emphasis on the voices, ideas, and emotions surrounding this unfortunate event, bringing up GBV at once as a societal issue, but as an experience that is lived, mediated, and contested [5]. The killing of Noor Mukadam is not merely a narrative concerning violence, but it is rather a tool with the help of which we can scout the possibilities of discourse, the power of societal norms, and the opportunities that activism can bring into transforming the narratives of women's rights in Pakistan.

**STOP
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN**



Figure 1: Stop violence against women

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Gender, Based Violence (GBV) can be said to be one of the gravest human and health-related problems worldwide. Still, its different forms, ideas, and the way societies react to it vary considerably from culture to culture [6]. In Pakistan, GBV is a major problem that is closely linked to patriarchal norms, lack of proper laws, and societal attitudes that very often treat the violence against women as something normal or that it is excused. Based on the data published by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP, 2022), many thousands of women are subjected to domestic violence, harassment, and honor killings every year; however, the number of cases reported is very low due to reasons such as fear, stigma, and lack of trust in institutions. The combination of gender, class, and cultural morality factors that influence not only the extent of GBV but also the stories around it is what gets most involved.

Gender-Based Violence as a Public Health Emergency

Gender, based violence has been recognized by the international community as one of the major causes of public health problems, as it has long-term effects on the patients' physical and mental health and also affects societies. The WHO, in its list of contributors to global suffering, defines domestic abuse, rape, and murder of women as one of the causes of illness, death, psychological distress, and family heritage damage. UN Women reported that due to long restrictions during the pandemic, the rate of domestic violence in Pakistan has gone up by more than two hundred percent, which indicates that, along with the rise of social distress, there is also an increase in the inadequacy of the reporting of cases. The HRCP report explains how the police misconduct, lack of legal aid, and the influence of society worsen the trauma of the victims [7]. Social traditions create a surrounding of silence where the community values that respect the dignity more than fairness dominate. As per the Global Gender Gap Report 2021 by the World Economic Forum, Pakistan is ranked 153rd out of 156 countries worldwide, which shows that there are still huge inequalities in the areas of healthcare, education, economic participation, and political representation [8].

Indicator	2023	2024	2025
Reported Domestic Violence Cases	32,500	34,800	18,600
Rape & Sexual Assault Cases	6,300	6,900	3,700
Honor Killing Incidents	470	510	270
Forced Marriage Cases	1,250	1,380	720
Acid Attack Cases	65	72	38
Harassment / Cyber Harassment Cases	8,900	10,400	5,900
Women Killed Due To GBV	2,900	3,100	1,650
Conviction Rate (%)	3.2%	3.6%	4.1%
Total Reported GBV Complaints	54,350	58,960	31,878

Table 2.1: Gender-Based Violence Indicators in Pakistan (2023–2025)

Those figures show that gender, based violence is a deeply systemic problem that cannot be seen as just a few isolated incidents [9]. An example of such stories is the story about Noor; it highlights how the social system predisposes certain groups of people to risks; it demonstrates how being in a privileged state may not always help a person to avoid being victimized.

Digital Battlegrounds: Misogyny, Surveillance, and Resistance Online

Through social media, individuals have been able to communicate with GBV differently in the open, hence bringing about new opportunities and challenges. According to her work, Shirazi (2020) notes that in Pakistan, the sphere of the Internet often contributes to the further development of misogynistic speech: being either blamed for their actions, outfits, or lifestyle, victims are on the one hand, whereas those perpetrating the act are given the status of the victim or are victims of the circumstances [10]. Online harassment, trolling, and surveillance are forms of the practice of control over women due to patriarchy in the digital world. Nevertheless, social media has also turned out to be a powerful platform of feminist activism. The effectiveness of collective action to impact institutions, to educate people, and to debunk the established narratives can be seen in the use of hashtag campaigns such as the JusticeForNoor. According to Anwar and Khan (2020), digital activism allows for increasing the volume of voices of the marginalized and, moreover, assists in establishing the space of the alternative, discursive space in which social norms and power structures may be challenged [11]. It is as much a critical prism through which one can examine the discourse of people on GBV in Pakistan as it is a dual prism of social media as a place of misogyny and resistance.

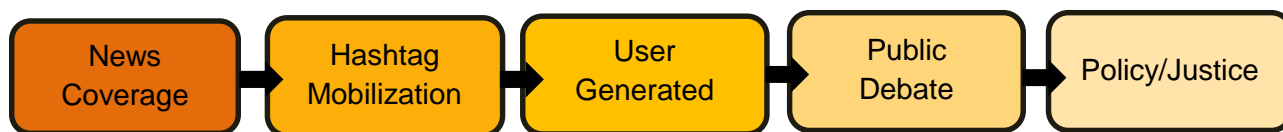


Figure: Flow of Social Media Discourse

Media Framing of Gender-Based Violence

Media is a mirror as well as a lens: it both mirrors the societal attitudes and influences public perception. Various research in Pakistan and South Asia have revealed that the mainstream media very often presents GBV as a morality, related issue and from a patriarchal point of view. Victims, as Ali and Rehman (2021) discovered, are represented as those who are morally and socially responsible for their assault, whereas perpetrators are shown as those who are temporarily misguided or have been pressured by circumstances. The "perpetrator humanization" thus helps the perpetrator to get away with the crime because it reduces the blame to the minimum and goes

on to support various cultural narratives that explain away male violence [12]. Wahid and Rehman (2021) pointed to the rise of class-based media framing in Pakistan as an emerging issue. The crimes that have victims from the elite or middle class are talked about in length, while similar crimes in the underprivileged areas are hardly mentioned [13]. This kind of selective reporting leads to the view that GBV is only a problem of the elite; thus, the extensive and deeply rooted issue is getting hidden away. Media sensationalism, such as the use of excessively dramatic headlines and the repetition of certain incidents throughout the broadcast

Gender, Class, and Power: An Intersectional Analysis of GBV in Pakistan

The literature recognizes the fact that the occurrence of gender, based violence (GBV) in Pakistan needs to be analyzed through an intersectional perspective, as the aspect of gender alone is not sufficient to explain the complexity of women's experiences [14]. The authors maintain that gender interacts with class, cultural norms, and power relations to determine both the exposure to violence and the societal reactions (Crenshaw, 1989; Malik & Shaikh, 2021). By implication, the studies that have been highlighted show that women hailing from various socio-economic backgrounds expose different degrees of visibility, support, and access to justice, hence mirror the widespread structural hierarchies that exist in the law, culture, and institutions. The research is also showing that the talk in public and media about GBV in Pakistan is usually the factors that lead to different levels of victimhood. Cases that evoke strong emotional reactions and involve women from affluent backgrounds, like the Noor Mukadam case, are said to draw excessive attention; thus, the violence against women from the deprived sectors remains silent, and the victims are least helped (Malik & Shaikh, 2021). This particular recognition puts forth the idea of how class privilege and cultural narratives determine which cases get the attention and which do not, thereby point to the necessity of the analytical approaches that acknowledge the intersecting social inequalities when dealing with the issue of GBV [15].

Feminist Media Studies in South Asia

Feminist media scholarship stresses how patriarchal systems that dominate male power are maintained through the language used, the representations given, and the framing [16]. Kabeer (2020) explains that the media narratives in South Asia seem to support the gender hierarchies by mainly focusing on the characteristics of obedience, modesty, and family honor as the criteria for female value. These discourses in Pakistan are very influential because they combine with legal and cultural aspects of morality, thus making it morally acceptable to blame the victims for their own victimization. Besides that, feminist scholars put forth that the media has a big influence in molding the public discourse on honor, based on violence. Rashid (2019) points out that portraying murders or assaults as a violation of family or community honor not only provides an alibi for the perpetrators but also makes female victims so intimidated that they keep silent. The vicious cycle of underreporting and societal normalization of violence is what this situation constitutes. Feminist critiques demand that the media should be held accountable and, emphasis should be put on the importance of women's voices to be heard, which would break down the structural inequalities and open up the possibilities for the themes of agency and justice. Although there is a lot of research on gender, based violence in Pakistan, there are still significant gaps that can be found. Only a handful of studies would combine the topics of media discourse, social media, and public health into one coherent framework, thereby leaving the interaction dynamics of GBV less studied. Similar to that, the relationship between digital feminist activism and traditional media narratives has hardly been talked about, thereby concealing how online advocacy influences public perception. In addition, the majority of the studies are narrowly focused on domestic violence and honor killings, hardly ever taking into consideration prominent cases like Noor Mukadam that

bring to light the experiences of the elite victims and the different societal and systemic patterns that emerge from it. This research identifies the missing points in the GBV Pakistan research by the previous literature [17]. It analyses the Noor Mukadam case through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis and feminist media theory to demonstrate how media both mirrors and changes societal norms regarding gender, class, and justice.

Methodology

The research used qualitative discourse analysis and was largely based on the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and feminist media theory. The choice of discourse analysis was aimed at going beyond the mere surface-level content analysis to the interrogation of the fact that language constructs social realities, assigns blame, distributes agency, and reproduces or challenges patriarchal power structures. In particular, CDA helped to discern the role of the so-called "institutional power, media organizations, elite voices, and dominant social norms, " in shaping the public understanding of gender, based violence [18]. The study is based on Pakistan's media ecosystem and includes the ecologies of mainstream English and Urdu news outlets, television talk shows, and digital platforms. The temporal scope extends from July 2021 to December 2022, which is a period of time covering the aftermath, trial, and verdict, related discourse. The study was located in Pakistan's contemporary media and digital communication environment. Data were sourced from national, print, and broadcast media, as well as popular social media platforms [19]. These places were chosen as they are the main venues through which public opinion is formed, challenged, and circulated. The analysis zoomed in on the materials that were produced and shared during the period of maximum public attention following the murder of Noor Mukadam, when the discourse was most intensive and emotionally charged. The purposive sampling strategy was employed to identify media texts that were most relevant to the research purposes. Purposive sampling acted as the reason to include those pieces that not only discussed the Noor Mukadam case directly but also the overall discussions on the issues of gender, morality, justice, and violence. The inclusion of both traditional and digital media sources was aimed at capturing the multidimensional nature of public discourse.

Table 3.1.1: Data Collection

Source Type	Number of Texts	Rationale
News articles	20	High reach, agenda-setting role
TV talk show episodes	10	Influence public opinion; moralising discourse
YouTube commentary videos	15	Hosts sensational framing; mixed audiences
Twitter posts (#JusticeForNoor, #NoorMukadam)	500	Digital activism & misogyny
Facebook public posts	80	Widely used in Pakistan, localised discourse

Exclusion and Inclusion Criteria:

Media texts were considered if they:

1. Directly referred to the Noor Mukadam case
2. Illustrated the topics of gender, based violence, morality, honor, justice, or accountability
3. Were open to the public and published in Urdu or English

Content was kept aside if it:

1. Shared the information already known without giving any new perspective
2. Were composed of only legal documents without any story

3. Consisted of the content that was confidential or limited and needed permission from the user to access

Information about the news sector of Pakistan came from the various leading newspapers of Pakistan and online news portals. Talk shows on television were available from the official channel uploads and confirmed YouTube accounts. Data about social media was gathered with the help of hashtag searches like #JusticeForNoor and #NoorMukadam, which included the posts having more engagement (likes, shares, comments) in order to reflect the discourses having greater public visibility. All the textual materials were saved in digital form, given a unique identification code, and brought qualitative analysis software to make the process of the systematic investigation easier.

Results:

The Discourse Analysis of the public commentary on the Noor Mukadam case shows a complicated battlefield of the most influential patriarchal ideologies fighting against the emerging feminist resistance [20]. The results are divided into the main discursive themes:



Blame Shift: Who is responsible?

One of the main victim-blaming discourses that prevailed in the media, as well as in the public, was the examination of Noor Mukadam’s personal life and choices, while the perpetrator’s actions were largely ignored. Familiarly, the news coverage would emphasize her lifestyle, friendships, and being of the liberated sex. Headlines, for example, “*Noor Mukadam, daughter of a diplomat, found dead in her home... her social life under scrutiny,*” were insinuating her behavior. On social media, there were utterances such as “*She should have been careful with whom she associated*” and “*This wouldn’t have happened if she had respected social norms*” that gave moral accountability to the victim [21].

Feature	Comments	Interpretation
Lexical blame	“She was too modern and bold.”	Frames autonomy as a moral failing
Passive voice	“A girl was brutally murdered in Islamabad.”	Erases or softens perpetrator presence
Honour language	“Parents must control daughters to protect honour.”	Places responsibility on women and families
Metaphor	“Society is collapsing because of such girls.”	Turns the case into a symbol of moral panic, not violence
Modal judgement	“She should have known better.”	Implies foreseeability and personal responsibility

Through the focus on Noor's individual decisions, the different media and public comments seemed to suggest that her father was still in control of her. Essentially, the victim is seen as the

one who did the crime, and the perpetrator is seen as a regular or kept in the background. This is consistent with societal patterns of Pakistan, where women's behavior is controlled, and their freedom is limited by gendered expectations.

Honor and Patriarchy: Society's Lens

Another emotionally charged story dealing with issues of family honor and social morality. Several media outlets and TV debates used the killing as proof of moral degradation and loss of cultural values [22]. Quotes such as:

Feature	Quotes	Interpretation
Honour language	“Parents must control daughters to protect honour.”	Places responsibility on women and families
Moralizing verbs	“Women should follow societal norms to avoid tragedy.”	Imposes moral obligations on women
Metaphor	“Society is collapsing because of such girls.”	Turns the individual case into a symbol of societal moral panic
Modal judgment	“She should have known better.”	Implies foreseeability and personal responsibility
Causative framing	“If girls obeyed rules, this would not have happened.”	Constructs violence as preventable by women's behavior

When the case was discussed in terms of honor and morality, the debate indirectly depicted women as the ones who have to uphold societal norms, thus confirming patriarchal power. From the point of view of the text, these stories figure the protection of women as dependent on their conforming to the community's expectations, thus diverting the spotlight from the system's shortcomings, male violence, and the silence of the institutions. In terms of the story, these honor-related conversations are very delicate ways of society controlling itself, as they influence people's understanding of GBV cases to be a moral judgment rather than a legal action.

The Perpetrator's Story: Sympathy vs. Justice

Some media and social narratives **humanized the perpetrator**, portraying Zahir Jaffer as emotionally troubled or socially constrained [23]. News reports described him as a “reserved young man from an elite family,” and social media commentary often highlighted his background, stating, “*Friends describe him as polite and soft-spoken; this tragedy is shocking.*” Some other examples are as under:

Feature	Narratives	Interpretation
Empathy language	“Zahir was a quiet and troubled young man.”	Softens responsibility, elicits sympathy
Background emphasis	“He had an elite upbringing with pressures.”	Diverts attention from crime to social/psychological context
Passive framing	“Mistakes were made leading to the tragedy.”	Reduces active agency, avoids direct accountability
Minimizing verbs	“He lost control in a moment of anger.”	Frames crime as a temporary lapse, not a deliberate act

The discourse, by concentrating on his social and emotional background, lessened his responsibility, which was in stark contrast to the very detailed and hard-to-miss kind of scrutiny

that was given to Noor Mukadam. In fact, if one looks at this situation through a critical discourse lens, it would be a textbook example of agency dilution, that is, the offender's actions being considered as understandable or even excusable. The presence of media sympathy along with public comments, therefore, functioning as a double-edged sword, is a matter of societal bias that is helping the men of the upper class to maintain their social privilege, while the victims, mostly women, are being subjected to moral judgment and blame.

Headlines and High Society: Media Bias

The case was covered by the media in a very sensational manner, and they also highlighted the fact that the person belonged to an elite class. Publications titled “Tragedy in Islamabad: Elite Socialite Murdered in Her Home” or “Zahir Jaffer: From Diplomatic Family to Murder Suspect” mainly focused on the class and the money, making the whole thing a spectacle. Some Examples of the Headlines are given below:

Feature	Headlines	Interpretation
Dramatic adjectives	“Shocking murder in Islamabad’s elite neighborhood.”	Emphasizes spectacle over social issue
Class markers	“Diplomat’s daughter found dead at home.”	Highlights social status, attracts public interest
Repetition	“Exclusive details of the gruesome murder revealed.”	Sustains sensationalism and emotional engagement
Contrast framing	“Unlike ordinary cases, this tragedy shocked the nation.”	Prioritizes elite cases, marginalizes ordinary victims

This class, based on framing, by focusing the public attention on elite tragedies, basically ignores similar violent acts against women from marginalized communities that are happening silently and have hardly any coverage. Sensationalism, as a discursive phenomenon, chooses to highlight the aspects related to drama and social status at the cost of systemic justice, thereby indirectly maintaining class hierarchies along with gendered power structures. The story framework depicts the incident as different because of the social status, thus implying that it is not a common occurrence and it is not part of the huge societal problem of gender, based violence.

Online Eyes: Abuse and Oversight

On the one hand, social media served as a stage for misogynistic attacks, and on the other hand, it supported communal participation. Female users expressing their views on the issue were, in general, targeted by the offensive comments, like:

Feature	Comments	Interpretation
Policing language	“Why are women always talking about this?”	Enforces social control over women’s opinions
Abusive tone	“She brought this on herself.”	Reinforces victim-blaming and gender hierarchy
Surveillance rhetoric	“Everyone is watching what girls post online.”	Creates digital control and social fear
Binary framing	“Good girls stay silent; outspoken ones are blamed.”	Simplifies gendered norms, marginalizes dissenting voices

Such comments demonstrate the phenomenon of virtual moral policing and gendered surveillance that regulate the behavior of women under the umbrella of the already existing patriarchal system, even in the online world. Conversely, users were also enabled by digital platforms to collectively track the progress of trials, exchange news updates, and gather public support. Tweets like "*Noor's murder is not about morality, it's about justice for all women*" are examples of the conflict between suppression and activism that was present in the case of Noor Mukadam's justice. Social media, as revealed by discourse analysis, is a tool that at the same time supports gender norms and provides opportunities for the defiance of these norms, thus reflecting the double nature of digital public spheres in present-day Pakistan.

Rising Voices: Feminist Pushback

Feminist counter discourses, especially with the hashtag #JusticeForNoor, were very vocal in disputing the main narratives [24]. The activists protested the need for the law to take its course, disapproved of the blaming of the victim, and illuminated the system a lot better that it was very difficult for people to overlook the social, structural nature of the case:

Feature	Voices	Interpretation
Rights-based language	"Noor's murder is about justice, not morality."	Reframes the issue from personal blame to systemic accountability
Activist framing	"We demand accountability; women's lives are not disposable."	Challenges patriarchal and sensationalist narratives
Solidarity markers	"We stand together for justice."	Creates collective identity and empowerment
Legal emphasis	"Justice must be served through courts, not opinions."	Shifts discourse from morality to institutional reform

These stories help to change the general perception of the issue by showing less focus on individual morality and social class and more on changes in institutions, gender equality, and justice that take into account the needs of survivors. From a communication perspective, feminist counter-narratives oppose and break down patriarchal, moralistic, and sensationalist framings, thus opening up a discursive space for activism. Social media, in this case, has the power to make these different voices heard, to keep the public interested, and to have an effect on wider societal conversations about GBV.

Discussion: Impact of Discourse on Public Perception

The case of the murder of Noor Mukadam is not an unfortunate incident involving a single individual, but it is an incident that demonstrates that gender, media, and the power structure of the society that exists in Pakistan are interconnected. The rhetoric around her murder, mainstream media, social commentary, and even digital activism can be said to be the way in which the narrative shapes the way people view it and how it reinforces the norms of patriarchy, as well as how it provides space to resist and change the social norms. The media's portrayal of the incident, reactions from the public, and online activism collectively catalyze social understanding, which is a mixture of both limiting and liberating effects. Victim blaming and humanization of the perpetrator narratives have, most of the time, been dominant in shaping people's views of who is to blame. By focusing on the victim's personal decisions, lifestyle, or independence, the media and social discourse were indirectly suggesting that Noor's actions were partly responsible for what happened to her, and public comments seemed to suggest that her father was still in control of her. Essentially, the victim is seen as the one who did the crime, and the perpetrator is seen as a regular

or kept in the background. This is consistent with societal patterns of Pakistan, where women's behavior is controlled, and their freedom is limited by gendered expectations. At the same time, the perpetrator was, to some extent, presented as a victim, especially when factors like his elite social background or his personal difficulties were brought to light, which, in turn, made the public sympathize with him. Moral confusion, patriarchalism, and gendered standards are the two results of this two-story in which male sins are excused, and the actions of women are questioned. Additionally, the case analysis, based on the perspective of honor, morality, and societal decadence, also influenced the views of people. The act of making the brutal murder associated with the cultural or family values created a discourse of women being the upholders of the societal virtue and the moral order, and taking the focus off the gender and the injustices and malfunctions of institutions. This kind of representation not only increases social demands that limit the freedom of women, but it also justifies moral policing and renders the control that the patriarchal establishment has over the lives of women as natural. The media and its sensationalist nature and attention towards the elite also influenced the perception of people on the case, which made GBV a spectacle, instead of taking it as a serious case. The pieces of news that highlighted the perpetrator's social status, lavish lifestyle, or sensational aspects of the trial made the people more curious and entertained rather than concerned. As a result, GBV was seen as an exception to the elite world, and the public was less demanding of reforms and justice from the institutions.

The internet and social media platforms make the situation even more complex as they are the battlegrounds where misogyny and feminist activism co, coexist. The online patriarchal control was strengthened through the use of trolling, victim-blaming, and attacks on feminist voices that led to the intimidation of women and made public criticism of male violence less visible. However, at the same time, social media also acted as a tool for activism, spreading awareness, and uniting people. The *#JusticeForNoor* campaign, among others, was very effective in communicating to the public the different facets of gender inequality in society, thereby creating pressure on the authorities and opening the way for public discussions on the topics of accountability and reform. The transformation of understanding in the population has been achieved with the support of the feminist counter-narratives backed by both new and old media. These discourses rebranded GBV as a personal tragedy and a social problem because they criticized the existing discourses, pointing out the bias of the media, and emphasizing structural inequalities. They introduced more individuals to the political process, made people sympathize with the victims, and emphasized the need to change the laws and institutions, which, in a real sense, opened gateways to social and cultural changes. The social images that are created by such discourses are dialectical and debatable. On the one hand, mainstream discourses tend to hold on to patriarchal values, moral policing, and class-informed prejudices, whereas on the other hand, feminist interventions disrupt such tendencies and, therefore, enable the mechanisms of awareness, resistance, and advocacy. The Noor Mukadam case is a clear pointer that discourse is not only a means of reporting events but also plays a key role in how societal meaning, cultural values, and the mass imagination of justice, morality, and power relations between the genders are created. Finally, the court demonstrates that discourse is not just a reflection of society, as it is one of the critical determinants of social reality, cultural norms, and possibilities of collective actions. The struggles against gender, based violence in Pakistan require not only a critical approach to media discourses but also institutional and cultural changes that would ensure the rights, independence, and security of the female gender as priorities instead of patriarchal rules and melodrama.

Conclusion

The unfortunate demise of Noor Mukadam is not merely the tragedy of a single person, but the unwelcome eye-opener to the dark side of gender, media, and society in Pakistan. The discourse of her killing, which involves mainstream media, social commentary, and digital activism, follows

the way discourses control the practice of seeing and hearing, assist in sustaining the norms of patriarchy, and simultaneously create the space of resistance and social change. Through victim-blaming, elite sympathy, and sensationalized reporting that have all been present, victim attitudes have been influenced to such an extent that gendered double standards and moral policing have been normalized without them even realizing it. Along with this, feminist counter-narratives and digital activism, such as the #JusticeForNoor campaign, have broken the wall of presence of the dominant discourses, made the public aware, and pointed out the systemic injustices. In fact, the court situation can't be separated from the idea that talk is just one mirror of society; it actively builds the social reality, determines cultural norms, affects views of justice, and helps to gather people for the common cause. Fighting gender, based violence in Pakistan means that one has to not only critique media narratives but also push for institutional and cultural reforms; thus, women's rights, freedom, and safety should be above patriarchal norms and the general public's desire for a spectacle.

Recommendations

The study provides the basis for the recommendation of various measures to control GBV and how they are portrayed in Pakistan. It is necessary to enhance legal structures as a matter of policy to ensure that victims of gender, based violence get their justice quickly and transparently. Law enforcement and judiciary, as law enforcement and judicial branches, should not only equip their staff with gender sensitivity training but also pay close attention to organizing it, to make them more informed and responsive, and at the same time conduct campaigns directed to the public to inform the people about the legal rights of women and their security.

The media are a powerful tool in the hands of the public and can be used to influence people's views; therefore, they should be free of charge. The implementation of ethical reporting guidelines should be seen as a shield for the media to avoid sensationalism and victim-blaming, and at the same time, journalists should be equipped with the skills for the gender, sensitive coverage, which points out the structural causes of GBV instead of isolating the individual behavior or social status. By employing media channels as a means to inform people, news agencies can thus be instrumental in changing societal attitudes and institutionalizing the accountability process.

As a problem closely connected to the health of the population, GBV requires a solution that would consider not only the social causes but also the community-level. Based programs should be provided to the survivors in terms of psychological support services, counseling, and community provision. In addition to this, there must be community and school initiatives to arrange events that break down the patriarchal beliefs of honor and morality and impart gender, equitable concepts to the youth.

Finally, future studies should explore the parameters of media representation, social conception, and feminist activism in Pakistan. The studies on the influence of digital media in enhancing or undermining the patriarchal norms will pave the path to more effective interventions, and the cross-border research in South Asia will show the cultural and institutional trends in the discourse of gender, based violence prevalent in the region.

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