

# A STUDY ON PAKISTANI WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH ANXIETY, DEPRESSION AND STRESS

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### Abstract

Domestic violence has been known as a most serious matter facing Pakistani women. The key objective of the existing study was to look at the experiences of domestic violence in the opinion of survivor females and its association with stress, depression and anxiety in Pakistani females. The sample was 58 women, whose age range 15 to 49, were chosen from the Dar-ul-Falah (shelter homes from government) in the Punjab cities of Lahore, Sargodha, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Multan, and Bahawalpur in Pakistan. This was a mixed method survey study. First stage of data collection was the selection of a tool (DASS 21) Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale was adapted. In qualitative study, in depth interviews also conducted by the researcher to examine the women's experiences and understanding about domestic violence and its association with stress, depression and anxiety due to domestic violence. The information according to the circumstance on the source of interviews and prior history that was available in Dar-ul-Falah's records and files exhibited that domestic abuse had a positive association with anxiety, stress and depression and results showed that socioeconomic factors and family played a significant role in frustrating of domestic violence and psychological problems linked by the survivors were sleep problems, post-traumatic, stress disorder, feelings of hopelessness, low self-esteem, depression, helplessness, and weak self-concept. As per the conclusions from this research, domestic violence is very harmful for victims. Women experience stress, anxiety, depression and other psychological issues. Results from the current study suggested that domestic violence can be reduced by giving positive training to young men and implementation of Anti domestic violence departments.

**Keywords:** anxiety, Depression, Domestic Violence, Stress, Survivor Women

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse is when one close partner acts violently toward another as part of a regular pattern of dominance and control [1]. Adults who commit acts of domestic violence against their partners often combine violence and abuse. It includes all forms of abuse, including physical, sexual, mental, and emotional. Domestic violence can occur frequently and with varying degrees of severity, but one constant is one partner's

persistent efforts to maintain control and power over the other [2]. In other words, domestic violence in particular is becoming a major problem for women. Over the times, health administrators in developing countries have been intensely concerned with trying to understand the effect of domestic abuse on women who are victims [3]. It is characterized as a VAW (violence against women) that causes or is likely to cause physical, mental harm and sexual harm to females, including bullying of such arbitrarily, actions, coercion, denying them their independence whether it takes place in private and public life [4]. Husbands abuse of their wives are the most dominant form of violence against females such as acid throwing, wives beating and burning of women [5]. Domestic violence is a worldwide challenge and frequently recycled and defined as "women abuse". Those women who suffer at the hands of their male partner (A. Ahmed et al., 2018). Domestic abuse or domestic abuse is defined by the American Medical Association (AMA) as a configuration of physical, sexual and psychosomatic violence by an individual with whom they were survivors in close relationship [6]. In every nation where these associations have been studied, domestic abuse is regarded as a significant provider to the mortality and morbidity of females. It is regarded as a significant factor in intentional injuries to women, which has the negative effect of making women less confident and less inclined to fully engage in life [7]. Not a single society can be categorically said to be free of this idea, despite the fact that it appears in just about all economic and social classes, religions and races in numerous configurations and trends [8]. Various sociologists and psychologists defined domestic violence as a dependent issue on their social perspectives, it is a well-known issue and problem in today's society [9].

Domestic violence is a private matter in Pakistani society because it occurs in the context of the family. That's why it is not possible for judgment, intervention, policy changing due to the cultural barriers [10]. In general, male dominance is frequently cited as a major contributing factor to domestic violence [11], and co-modification in this area ultimately predisposes 70% to 90% of Pakistani females faced violence on a regular basis [12]. A study on domestic abuse among Pakistani females stated that women have the experience of various forms of abusive behavior and harassment such as degrading treatment, marginalization, physical assault, cruel neglect and poverty. Their interactions with other members of society and family members as well as their societal life have all been harmfully impacted by this situation [13]. In another research defined gender-based abuse like domestic abuse in Pakistan, it was revealed that Pakistan was categorized among the world's top three most unsafe countries for women [14]. The challenge of domestic abuse was quite widespread among marital women. Therefore, various studies showed the association between married females' and domestic violence. Its impact is produced in the form of depression, anxiety and stress [15]. Worldwide qualitative studies provided a detailed understanding of matrimonial violence against females and its harmful effects on their health. One of the European studies showed one in five females aged fifteen years and above has experience of domestic violence [16]. There is evidence that showed an association of domestic violence with stress, depression and anxiety disorders [17]. (Mahmoudi&Keashly, 2021) described the report by World Health Organization that related to internationally proportion of

females who had experienced of sexual and physical abuse otherwise both by their close partner had 15% to 71%, ranged with the common between 29% to 62%.<sup>2</sup> in India and other related countries. A Health survey from 29 countries found that a large percentage of married females have been sexually and physically abused by their partners throughout their lives, another survey pointed out that nationally 37.2% of female's experienced domestic violence after their marriage [18].

### **In Theoretical Perspectives**

Domestic violence against women is multifaceted [19]. Some psychosomatic theories looked at the motivations of the act and its causes. However, no one theory can fully account for domestic violence against women [20]. The theory of learned helplessness, experiencing violence repeatedly makes it harder for women to react, lowering their self-esteem and making them more passive in their attempts to leave abusive relationships [21], on the other hand social learning theory described people pick up behaviors by watching how others behave [22]. As a result, men who saw their parents fight physically might later do the same. had hit their own wives, were nearly three times more likely to have done [23]. The power-based theory explained the men who abuse their wives do so in an effort to seize or keep hold of power over her when she exhibits behavior that the men find objectionable [24]. According to the frustration aggression theory, frustrating experiences can lead to violent behavior by increasing drive, igniting aggressive behavior and subsequently igniting aggressive behavior [25]. For the pattern of thought "Gender schema theory" describing violence against women has been reasoned of power imbalances between females and males, which have developed as a result of the gender roles that are assigned to male and female birth along with the perception against women [26]. The psychosomatic health of female survivors of gender-based violence is severely harmed by domestic violence. In general, survivors with distressing psychological functioning report issues like high blood pressure, difficulty concentrating, lower level of self-esteem, lack of concentration, poor self-concept, obsessive disorder and a sense of helplessness as well as post-traumatic stress, depression, sleep disorder [27]. Due to the strong belief in the secrecy and privacy of the different families are the reason for the shortage of reported data on this perspective, and the difficulty in estimating the problem's scope in our society, this problem has been steadily growing and is now more obvious than ever. Furthermore, violent acts like slapping, hitting, punching, kicking, and pushing hardly qualify. Numerous thorough studies related to domestic violence with reference to Pakistani society have been conducted.

### **Objectives /Research Questions**

- What is Domestic violence in the perception of survivor females?
- To determine the association among domestic violence with depression, anxiety and stress on Pakistani survivor women.

## 2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The population of this study included those females who had experienced domestic abuse. The study's population was chosen by probability sampling. The mix method and its association with stress, anxiety and depression, it was a complete perception of survivor females. To achieve the first objective of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to acquire more information about the important psychological problems that survivors of domestic violence deal with and the demographic factors that delay it. Population of this research was all those females that have experienced domestic violence and that were residing in Shelter Homes (Dar-ul-Falah) Punjab, Pakistan. First of all, approval in the form of written permission from the subjects and the authorities of the shelter homes were given full disclosure of the study, conducted semi structured interviews to acquire their opinion more about the important psychological problems that survivors of domestic violence deal with. It was stated that the researcher conducted 58 interviews of females and collected the information about open ended questions for qualitative findings. The Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS 21) was adapted for quantitative results about their stress, anxiety and depression. The qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews of those females that have the experience of domestic violence and was agreed to share their experience about the domestic violence and also studied the available previous history of these survivors' in Dar-ul-Falah. **A study on Pakistani women's perception of domestic violence and its association with anxiety, Depression and stress**

## 3. DATA ANALYSIS

The demographic detail about the survivor women are given in this table

Status	Level	Age	Frequency	Percentage
Education	Uneducated	15-30	5	8.6
	Primary	31-45	11.5	19.8
	Secondary	46-49	20	34.5
	Higher Secondary		10.5	18.1
	Graduation Higher studies		11	19.1
Status	Married		40	69
	Divorced		13	22.4
	Widow		5	8.4
Occupation	House wife		34.5	59
	Working women			
Family	Joint		27	46.6
	Cubical		34	53.4
Total females	58	16-49	193.5(58)	100

*In this table (i) Education (uneducated, primary secondary, graduation and higher education) in perspective of their age (ii) marital status (married, divorced, widow) (iii) occupation (house wife, working women) and family setup (joint and cubical) of victim females were collected data.*

### Qualitative Analysis

Domestic violence among females was perceived as a most important issue all over the world. The females influenced that wife beating was justly common repetition. Majority of the females had perceived the violence in their relatives and their families they witnessed in their childhood. Various females determined that they had to face domestic violence on an occasionally and frequently basis. Another female perceived that it is the society way that they have realized her mother being beaten by her fathers. Females narrated that their partners hit them with anything that comes in his hand. A female said that once her husband hit with a hard object and cracked her arm. One female narrated that she was frightened of her husband. Once she went to her neighbors in order to hide herself so that she could escape the beating. Her mother-in-law started to set her husband off as he got back home from work. She stated that a woman is the other woman's worst enemy. Commonly, females decide to undergo silence for the family's integrity. Females stated that people considered it a personal matter of any family and nobody wanted to interfere in their personal matters. Some of the elderly men of the village said that husband and wife should sort out their personal matters. Most females knew the law about domestic violence but avoided to report and proverb that it is not possible to implement. Various females believe that the police and overall our system is corrupt so they decide silence is a better way for them. One female told that a few years back she complained against her life partner to the police. The husband adulterated the food with some poisonous ingredient and blamed everything on her. The situations created feelings of stress, anxiety and helplessness. So the female chooses to remain silent.

### Quantitative Analysis

#### ***Domestic violence and its association with Stress, depression and anxiety in Pakistani victims' women***

**Tab1e: Regression Analysis of domestic violence, stress, depression and anxiety**

Independent variable	B	T	F	R <sup>2</sup>
Domestic violence	.479	31.062	964.822	.230

*Table demonstrates the results of regression analysis for domestic violence with stress, depression and anxiety. Domestic violence showed a significant contribution ( $R^2 = .230$ ,  $F = 964.822$ ,  $p < .01$ ). It showed that a one-unit increase in domestic violence ( $\beta = 0.479$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) will cause a 47.9% increase in female's stress, depression and anxiety.*

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Unfortunately, a female's psychological health is considerably impacted by gender based abuse is a global problem that affects females from all cultural backgrounds. This study is one of the limited researches which have analyzed domestic violence with stress, anxiety and depression in Punjab, Pakistan. The main objective of this research was (i) to determine the domestic violence in survivor female perception (ii) domestic violence and its association with depression, anxiety and stress on Pakistani survivor women.

Domestic violence had deep psychosomatic effects on the females. Fear and helpless feelings were there among the females. Females revealed that they were so afraid of their husbands. Psychological and physical effects in the form of depression, stress, anxiety and suicidal thought of domestic violence have been described in numerous other studies [28, 29]. Previously some other studies reviewed that females that have been abused by their close relation have frequently abused both psychological and physical effects [30, 31]. This research found a strong association among domestic violence, stress, depression and anxiety. Liang et al., 2019; Limber, 2011 studies showed the same results; other studies of (Sediri et al., 2020; Sekol & Farrington, 2016) have the same findings that support the current research. When the researcher studied the findings in the Pakistan scenario (Hussain et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2021) supported current findings [32, 33]. Domestic violence has determined a worldwide problem to donate to deprived psychological health of females through various values in the world. Current research elaborated that the psychological and physical effect of domestic violence has been seen by their close partner (husband). This study originates from a strong relationship among emotional, sexual, verbal, physical and domestic violence with stress, anxiety and depression. During the reviewing literature sexual, verbal, emotional, physical domestic violence has a strong association with stress, depression and anxiety has been constant with other researches. Researchers found that in other provinces of Pakistan such as Gilgit-Baltistan's females stated advanced levels of domestic violence inferior health. Another study was also conducted (T. Ahmed et al., 2022) in Hyderabad, Sindh Pakistan. Domestic violence was relatively communal among marital females [35]. A study by Ferrari revealed that females recently experienced domestic violence and survivors developed high levels of stress, anxiety and depression [36]. Another study of domestic violence too leads to considerable difficulties with psychological wellbeing and physical harm. To generate the strategies that increased the excellence of life of victim females and discourage domestic violence. It is vital to understand the healthcare patterns of the victim females. The results for sharing their experiences. the domestic violence has impact in the form of stress, low self-esteem, worthlessness, helplessness, sleep problems, depression, feelings of powerlessness and anhedonia,

#### 5. CONCLUSION

Domestic violence in the perspective of sexual, physical, emotional and verbal has a strong negative impact on a female's psychological health. This research found a strong



association among domestic violence, stress, depression and anxiety. Domestic violence has a strong negative effect on psychological health in the perspective of stress, anxiety and depression also.

## 6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Recent study was limited to the Punjab government welfare Centers or the shelter homes victim's females that are the small sample. Cross-sectional research and use of large sample of population would be improved the findings of future researches

## 7. SUGGESTIONS

- 1) This research determines that it is valuable to use techniques to address the problematic issue of domestic violence against females, to connect it with psychological health that is associated with stress, anxiety and depression that have a negative effect on quality of life, to inspire opinions it will be helpful to produce new thoughts and predictions for the future studies.
- 2) Changing attitudes and social awareness about equal rights and status to females.
- 3) Need to groom our coming generation about empowerment of females and also give right in decision making and opportunity like employment facilities and equal participation in political and social circumstances.
- 4) Domestic violence can be reduced by giving positive training to young men and implementation of Anti domestic violence departments.

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