

Perception of females regarding gender based violence

Maira Gul,¹ Sakhawat Ali Randhawa,² Muhammad Farrukh Mujtaba,³ Sara Gul¹

Abstract

Background: Gender based violence is a serious violation of women's human rights and emerged as a major public health issue. This fact is also recognized in Pakistan as a result of international recognition of the problem.

Objective: To assess the perceived causes of gender-based violence and perception of females regarding the initiatives of controlling it.

Methodology: This was a cross sectional study done in district Jhelum. The data was collected through the self-designed, Study subjects were women of age 18 years and above, attending BHUs, Schools and district hospital. Duration of Study: 1st June to 30th September 2017. Variables included were, age of women, education, knowledge and experience of gender based violence, causes and control measures of gender based violence. Data analysis was done by using SPSS 20.

Results: Out of 300 subjects, 33.3% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 26-35 years, 65.7% were married, 85.33% reported that they have heard about this term, while 14.67% reported that they don't know about gender based violence. While assessing the association between marital status and knowledge it was found that 82% who were married had knowledge about this term as compared to unmarried 79%. This showed that married females were more familiar with the gender based violence. Although the study showed statistically no association of marital status with knowledge ($p=0.189$).

Conclusion: The study showed that many of the females are aware of the gender based violence. Depending upon the results of the study it can be concluded that married women suffer more from gender based violence as compared to unmarried women in our society. There are different factors which can lead towards this curse and they should be controlled at the social and community level.

Key words: Gender-based violence, Perception, Attitude, Causes.

Introduction

Pakistan is world's sixth most populous, with a very poor ranking on Gender-related Development Index.¹ Pakistan stands at 125th out of 169 countries, and its ranking in Gender Empowerment Measure is 99 out of 109 countries. Discussion about Gender Based Violence (GBV) is a complex topic for ordinary Pakistani women as they face many disadvantages. Women are marginalized portion of population in Pakistan therefore GBV may be seen through lens of their perspective for better understanding.^{2,3,4}

The strategies and interventions in area of gender-based violence is vaguely defined as perspective of affected women are not given due consideration.^{5,6,7} This is evident of a lack of understanding about the gravity of the problem in Pakistani society. The effective response to gender-based violence needs multi sector involvement including health, education and law enforcement agencies.^{8,9,10} There is always an opportunity in adversity. Women are advancing in

every field but gender equality is yet to be established in Pakistan. A vast NGO sector is working on issues of women in Pakistan, but their efforts specific to gender-based violence are poorly coordinated. Gender-based violence is a systemic issue that affects all socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural groups around the globe.^{11,12} It is need of the hour to develop strategy and develop evidence based approaches to address gender-based violence in Pakistani society. This can only benefit Pakistani women but will also improve country's image in the community of nations.^{2,13,14}

Gender-based violence not only adversely affects physical health but also have detrimental social and psychological effects.³ The United Nations highlights the importance of identifying risk factors and causes of GBV. It needs multidisciplinary research and analysis of risk factors and causes of violence in order to form laws, policies and strategies to support women and raising awareness about GBV.^{4,15}

1. Military Lands and Cantonments, Cantonment Board Jhelum Cantt. Jhelum, Pakistan

2. Chief Executive Officer, District Health Authority Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

3. Department of Community Medicine, Sheikh Zayed Medical College/Hospital, Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

4. Military Lands and Cantonments Lahore Walton Cantt, Lahore, Pakistan.

Correspondence: Dr. Sakhawat Ali Randhawa, Chief Executive Officer, District Health Authority Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan.

Email: drrandhawa7@yahoo.com **Phone:** +92-333-6336700 **Received:** 14-06-2019 **Accepted:** 05-07-2019 **Published:** 29-08-2019

Awareness is growing about violence against women and the need to document incidents of gender-based violence. The research shows that women who experience violence at homes are more likely to suffer from serious health issues. The adverse health effects of violence on women include physical, psychological, sexual and reproductive consequences.^{5,7,9,10}

Gender-based violence is a major but neglected global public health issue and coordinated efforts are needed for effective control. Little research work has been done on GBV as a whole in our part of world and especially there is dearth of knowledge regarding complexity of the matter. Moreover very few studies in our region have focused on practices and behavior in association with GBV. Therefore the objective of this study was to assess the perceived cases and control measures of gender based violence among females.

Methodology

Study design: Cross Sectional Study

Study setting: This study was conducted in District Jhelum. The data was collected at different hospitals and Schools of Jhelum. Hospitals were District headquarters, BHUs, RHCs from 8 am to 8 pm from Monday to Friday.

Duration of study: The data was collected after approval of synopsis in 2017. Data was collected during June to September 2017.

Sample size: Total number of women included in the study were $n=300$.

The study used Yamane formula where total population was 12,22,000, sampling error was 0.05, total population of female was 620,636. This sample size was calculated for total female population. Population of 18 years and above according to census was estimated to be 55.6% (88) so, $n=55.5\% \times 400=222.4 \sim 200$

To make the study more accurate and strength-full sample size was increased to $n=300$ women above the age of 18 years.

Sampling technique: Consecutive sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria: Females of 18 years of age and above in District Jhelum at the health centers, DHQs, RHCs, BHUs, Pak-UK health centre Jhelum, Presentation Convent Jhelum, West Colony Church, Marie Stopes Society, Jhelum.

Exclusion Criteria: Females below 18 years of age and females not ready to give informed consent.

Data collection procedure: Data was collected through personal visits of different areas of Jhelum especially including the district headquarters, BHU's, RHCs, Presentation Convent, Jhelum, West colony Jhelum, Pak-UK health centre Jhelum, Marie Stopes Society Jhelum and West colony church Jhelum.

Data collection instrument: The research instrument was a questionnaire, that included variables age, gender, occupation, education level and variables on gender based violence, frequency, causes, and control measures.

Data analysis procedure: Data was entered and analyzed by using SPSS version 20. Data was analyzed and frequencies were generated.

Results

In this study, 300 female respondents from different regions of District Jhelum were approached. Data regarding different aspects of gender based violence was collected from the females and the details of results is discussed as follows.

Regarding the age distribution of the respondents, 33.3% belonged to the age 26-35 years, 29% age group of 18-25 years, 21.3% age group of 36-45 years of age, 12% belonged to 46-55 years and 4.3% were above 56 years with mean age of 31.5 ± 1.13 years. The marital status of females included 28.3% were single, 65.7% were married, 0.6% were separated, 2% were divorced and 3.3% were widowed.

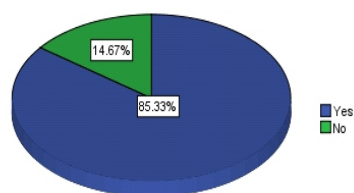
In this study, 29.3% of the respondents had marriage duration less than 1 year, 50.3% had marriage duration 1 to 20 years and 20.4% has marriage duration of more than 21 years. Mean duration of marriage was found to be 10.9 ± 1.3 years.

In this study, 23.6% of the respondents had primary education, 21.3% had secondary education, 22% had college (diploma/higher diploma) and 33% were undergraduate and post graduate.

In this study, 41% were only house wife while 59% ($n=177$) were working in private and government institutes.

Table I: Perceived Causes of the gender based violence

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n(%)
Gender violence happens because men want to establish control over women	149 (49.7)	94 (31.3)	27 (9)	9 (3)	21 (7)
Gender based violence is the result of power inequality between women and men	148 (49.3)	108 (36)	23 (7.7)	15 (5)	6 (2)
Male violence against women varies in degree and intensity according to the specific circumstances	148 (49.3)	84 (28)	44 (14.7)	11 (3.7)	13 (4.3)
Women commit violence as a way to ensure their own survival and security	114 (38)	102 (34)	44 (14.7)	18 (6)	22 (7.3)
Gender based violence is not exclusively a woman's concern	30 (10)	83 (27)	62 (20.7)	61 (20.3)	64 (21.3)
It is more acceptable for a man to have many sexual partners than for a woman.	85 (28.3)	87 (29.1)	43 (14.3)	36 (12)	49 (16.3)
On the average, woman are not smarter than man	53 (17.7)	37 (12.3)	45 (15)	44 (14.7)	121 (40.3)
Most man like to go out with woman just for sex	83 (27.7)	62 (20.7)	49 (16.3)	40 (13.3)	66 (22)
Most women like to show off their bodies.	67 (22.3)	41 (13.7)	64 (21.3)	40 (13.3)	88 (29.3)
Woman should not have the same freedom as man.	62 (20.7)	59 (19.7)	41 (13.7)	52 (17.3)	86 (28.7)
Woman should be more concerned with becoming good wives and mothers rather than desiring a professional or business career.	87 (29)	58 (19.3)	33 (11)	54 (18)	68 (22.7)
If both husband and wife have jobs, the husband should do a share of the housework such as washing dishes and doing the laundry.	117 (59)	66 (22)	18 (6)	17 (5.7)	22 (7.3)
More encouragement in a family should be given to sons than daughters to go to college.	63 (21)	33 (11)	38 (12.7)	56 (18.7)	110 (36.7)
If a person is being abused, they could just exit the relationship.	58 (19.3)	34 (11.3)	65 (21.7)	55 (18.3)	88 (29.3)
Most women are concerned about whether men like them.	54 (18)	75 (25)	58 (19.3)	36 (12)	77 (25.7)
Women are just as likely to be violent toward their partners as men.	67 (22.3)	70 (23.3)	68 (22.7)	36 (12)	59 (19.7)
Women are more likely to be sexually abused by a stranger than someone they know	103 (34.3)	61 (20.3)	72 (24)	34 (11.3)	30 (10)
Financial difficulties are the most common reason for problems that involve violence in relationships.	146 (48.7)	85 (28.3)	26 (8.7)	16 (5.3)	27 (9)

Figure I: Knowledge about gender based violence

Respondents were asked about whether they have heard about the gender based violence 85.33% reported that they have heard about this term, while 14.67% reported that they don't know about gender based violence. While assessing the association between marital status and knowledge it was found that 86% among married had knowledge about this term as compared to unmarried 79%. This showed that married females were more familiar with the gender based violence. Although the study showed no statistical association of marital status with knowledge ($p=0.189$) using Pearson Chi-Square test.

Respondents were asked about their experience of gender based violence. 14.33% reported that they were violated either by their family member, more by their husbands (married reported). When cross tabulation of gender based violence and marital status was analyzed, it was seen that married women faced more violence 70% as compared to the un-married 61%. A significant relationship between marital status and experience of violence was found with p value of 0.00.

Table I depicts agreement of respondents on issues related to gender based violence; 49.7% of the

respondents strongly agreed that gender violence happens because men want to establish control over women ($M=4.14$, $SD=1.150$), 49.3% strongly agreed and 36% agreed that gender based violence is the result of power inequality between women and men, ($M=4.26$, $SD=0.942$) 49.3% respondents strongly agreed that male violence against women varies in degree and intensity according to the specific circumstances, ($M=4.14$, $SD=1.077$) 38% respondents strongly agreed and 34% agreed that Women commit violence as a way to ensure their own survival and security, ($M=3.89$, $SD=1.192$). Mixed responses were found in the opinion that Gender based violence is not exclusively a woman's concern, 21.3% strongly disagreed with this, 20.7% disagreed with it, 27% agreed and 10% strongly agreed ($M=2.85$, $SD=1.3$). We noted that 28.3% strongly agreed, 29.1% agreed, 12% disagreed and 16.3% strongly disagreed that it is more acceptable for a man to have many sexual partners than for a woman ($M=3.41$, $SD=1.42$). In this study, 40.3% women strongly disagreed and 1.17% agreed for the opinion of "on the average, woman are not smarter than man" ($M=2.52$, $SD=1.5$) and 27.7% strongly agreed, 20.7% agreed and 22% strongly disagreed that most man like to go out with woman just for sex ($M=3.19$, $SD=1.5$). In this study, 29.3% women strongly disagreed that most women like to show off their bodies, 13.3% disagreed 21.3% were undecided, 13.7% agreed and 22.3% agreed as well ($M=2.8$, $SD=1.52$).

Mean value of response that woman should not have the same freedom as man was found to be 2.86

Table II: Level of agreement on the initiatives to control the gender based violence

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Increasing women and girls' access to income and productive resources helps in combating GBV	153 (51)	83 (27.7)	29 (9.7)	19 (6.3)	16 (5.3)
Engaging men and boys to address norms and behaviors in order to prevent GBV	160 (53.3)	82 (27.3)	37 (12.3)	10 (3.3)	11 (3.7)
Increasing gender equity programs and services to address the issue of GBV	182 (60.7)	94 (31.3)	13 (4.3)	6 (2)	5 (1.7)
Increasing women and girls' legal protection	220 (73.3)	59 (19.7)	11 (3.7)	5 (1.7)	5 (1.7)

± 1.527 , The mean value of responses to statement that woman should be more concerned with becoming good wives and mothers rather than desiring a professional or business career was 3.14 ± 1.558 . The mean score of the statement that if both husband and wife have jobs, the husband should do a share of the housework such as washing dishes and doing the laundry was 4.20 ± 1.226 . Mean score to statement that more encouragement in a family should be given to sons than daughters to go to college was 2.61 ± 1.568 . The mean score to statement that women are just as likely to be violent toward their partners as men was 3.17 ± 1.419 . Women are more likely to be sexually abused by a stranger than someone they know was 3.58 ± 1.328 .

Respondents were asked about their level of agreement with the above statements on initiatives to address perception of gender based violence; 51% of the respondents strongly agreed that increasing women and girls' access to income and productive resources helps in combating GBV ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.16$), 53.3% of respondents strongly agreed with engaging men and boys to address norms and behaviors in order to prevent GBV ($M=4.23$, $SD=1.03$), 60.7% respondents strongly agreed with increasing gender equity programs and services to address the issue of GBV ($M=4.47$, $SD=0.811$) and 73.3% strongly agreed with increasing women and girls' legal protection ($M=4.61$, $SD=0.783$).

Discussion

Pakistan is regarded as one of the most dangerous country for women in the world. It is reported that more than 1,000 women are murdered in "honor killings" and reported that of Pakistani women suffer from domestic violence.

The opinion of the western world is that gender based violence in Pakistan is on religion but in fact it is more complicated issue than it. A specific mentality is prevailing in strictly patriarchal societies like that of Pakistan. Poor, rural and uneducated women mostly struggle daily for basic rights, and respect. They are living in a culture where male figures in family defines the status, even if these women are the earning hands of family.

A difficult situation for women in Pakistan is that, victim can't speak about physical or sexual

violence. Many cases rapes are unreported as the victim thinks that she will become worthless in society. Even the story of five elite class females face gender based violence especially in bureaucracy and corporate sector when i met them and interviewed them, they told that how difficult to make a survival but one has to go due to family's dignity and for their children they tolerated all kind of violence and always smile in front of others.

In the present study, married girls faced more domestic violence as compared to unmarried. Similar finding was found by a report which shared live stories of domestic violence against women and explained the fierce face of men towards their women.¹⁷

Gender based violence is sometimes taken as hate crime, where abuser hates the women and accredit that abuse is a privilege, admissible, justified, or not to be answered by anyone. It might deliver "intergenerational cycles of abuse" in youngsters and other relatives, who may feel that gender based violence is adequate or approved. Few of the people perceive themselves as abusers because they think that family clashes and conflicts are not under control and by blaming others they carry out violence.¹⁸ Aggressive behavior at home frequently occurs with regards to constrained or child marriage.¹⁹

With respect to causes of gender based violence level of agreement was taken in this study. This was supported by the literature of previous studies. According to "Global Agenda Council on Women's Empowerment 2011 – 2012" women face five major problems in their domestic and social lives. These are demographical problem bearing the title of female, leadership problems while deciding about little matters of life, food Security and agricultural needs, sustainability and resource Scarcity, social and domestic conflicts with males. Demographically women have problems in adopting contraception and planning babies by their own choices. For choices of babies women need permission and grants from their men or in-laws.²⁰

Bearing children at early age, especially before age 18, is adverse to both mother and child, not just in light of the higher risks related with pregnancies at early age, yet additionally in light of the fact that early childbearing enables the young girls to perform other activities of same age like getting school education, participating in games and employment

and enjoy the other happiness of the young age due to bearing child and having responsibilities as a mothers. Early child bearing is especially regular in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and a couple of nations in Asia, and is frequently the consequence of early marriage. In a few social orders, early childbearing happens before marriage generally in light of the fact that young people who are sexually dynamic face extensive hindrances in getting information, direction and contraception related services. Decreasing adolescent fertility was an objective in the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015. Ordinarily, young ladies have more chances of surviving than young men, yet overabundance female child mortality has verifiably been normal in social orders that favor young men more than young ladies. These disparities have vanished in many nations with development however they are still indulged in giant societies like china and India. What's more, the accessibility of techniques to recognize the sex of a kid in utero has made sex choice feasible for critical fragments of the number of inhabitants in nations where child inclination is across the board. Subsequently, especially in low-ripeness nations where child inclination is solid, the proportion of male to female births has expanded past the natural standard and is prompting significant sex uneven characters in the populace. People are going towards sex selection due to the available sex detection methods, so son preference is wide-spreading. This problem is creating sex imbalances in the regions having low fertility. The business case for removing gender gap holes is tangible. Because of demographic change, the present fertility rates in numerous created nations suggest that the labor force is declining.

Ladies have switched the gender gap hole in instruction and are currently preferable taught over men in numerous countries.²¹ No organization needs to forego the best-qualified talent basically on the ground if happens to be female. Business pioneers know about the diversified premium. With an undeniably different client and customer base, organizations battle to mirror the world's assorted variety in their workforce, incorporating into basic leadership positions of authority. Ladies add values to the works since they convey alternative point of views to the organizations. Anita Woolley and her

partners have shown that gender orientation teams performed superior as compared to homogenous ones over a substantial number of various tasks.²²

In a few investigations, Catalyst and others have discovered a positive connection between organizations with more ladies in senior authority and sheets of chiefs and superior to normal monetary execution despite the fact that the proof isn't conclusive.²³⁻²⁵ A comparative relationship has been found concerning corporate philanthropy organizations with more ladies board chiefs are more altruistic, demonstrating a larger amount of commitment and bringing a gender focal point to humanitarian decisions.²⁵ Further, profiting ability advancement and official progression, organizations with at least three ladies on their board five years after the fact have more ladies in senior authority, incorporating into working roles.^{25,26}

Conclusion

The study showed that many of the females are aware of the gender based violence. Depending upon the results of the study it can be concluded that married women suffer more from gender based violence as compared to unmarried women in our society. There are different factors which can lead towards this curse and they should be controlled at the social and community level. The problem should be solved by educating men, by persuasion of community leader, guidance and counseling of men.

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