Women's Perceptions and Experiences of Domestic Violence in Punjab, Pakistan

Faiza Tayyab

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ABSTRACT

This study reflects on Christian and Muslim women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence residing in the urban and rural areas of Punjab, Pakistan. It addresses a significant gap in the literature by concentrating on the intersecting identities of women. Previous research in the context of Pakistan has a focus on intimate partner violence and there is paucity of evidence investigating the active role of in-laws in violence instigation and perpetration. Thus, it compares the socio-cultural conditions of the Christian and Muslim women to understand the complex trajectories of family relations and the phenomenon of domestic violence. The research was carried out in two districts of Punjab i.e., Lahore and Nankana Sahib to collect data from women of the urban and rural localities. A total of 54 semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted on the basis of religion, place of residence, age, and education of women along with the interview of a male Christian clergy. The findings illustrate that the socio-cultural norms of the society strengthen traditional gender ideology where women are symbol of honour that need protection whereas men are heads of households through their role as economic providers, they carry family lineage and have inalienable right to divorce. Domestic violence occurs due to its private nature and a widespread culture that normalise abuse of a husband and the affinal family. The findings demonstrate that the intersecting identities of women have implications, Christian women were carrying additional burden due to their minority status alongside unamended laws that increase their exploitation. Women of the rural locality had restricted circumstances that resulted in severe consequences of domestic violence. The patriarchal structure and ideology cannot be dismantled due to structural inequalities and the passive role of the state. Domestic violence would continue to occur unless any changes in the family residential patterns, amendments in existing laws, welfare assistance to women, and a change of mindset through education and socialisation.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Daai	A traditional birth attendant who is not usually trained nurse from a formal institution rather learns the skills from women of her family.
Dupatta	A piece of cloth that women wear with shalwar kameez to cover their bodies.
Hajj	A journey towards Makkah to perform religious rituals by Muslims and is considered one of the pillars of Islam.
Nikkah	A Muslim marriage contract between two parties who agree to be spouses.
Panchayat/Panchayat System	An informal village council consisted of influential male members of the locality that functions as an alternate judicial system to settle disputes.
Rukhsati	A ceremony arranged for the formal departure of a woman to her husband's home.
Watta Satta	Also known as exchange marriage, a custom in Punjab where a brother sister pair from two households marry to each other. It is a way to secure the future of women, in case a family mistreats a woman, the other family does the similar treatment.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Thesis

This thesis examines the perceptions and experiences of Christian and Muslim women about domestic violence residing in the urban and rural areas of the Punjab province of Pakistan. It draws upon data collected through in-depth interviews from two districts of Punjab i.e., Lahore and Nankana Sahib. For the purpose of collecting data from women of the urban area, Lahore was taken to represent the urban context whereas women belonging to the rural area were from the district Nankana Sahib. The study aims to explore the background conditions of the society that encourage traditional gender ideology and male superiority, promote gender inequality, make women subordinate in a marriage relationship and normalise domestic violence against them. It investigates the perceptions of women and their experiences of domestic violence while in a marriage relationship, impacts of various types of violence and support mechanisms for them during and after the abuse. For this purpose, ever-married women aged eighteen and above were interviewed. The term 'ever-married' means women who were either in a marriage relationship at the time of interview or were divorced, separated or into their second marriages.

Though the terms 'intimate partner violence' and 'spousal violence' are broadly used to explain violence of a husband towards his wife, this study has an emphasis on the involvement of the affinal family of a woman in violence instigation against her. Due to a culture of joint household system, the family of a man plays an active role in instigating him against his wife and also gets involved in controlling her. In this study, domestic violence refers to a range of acts including physical violence, financial control, psychological abuse, coercive control, and sexual violence by a husband and/or members of the affinal family of a woman. In addition, it also covers the tactics used by a man to control a woman who has been related to him and this includes pre-marital and post-separation abuse. Initially, this study had a focus on the perceptions of women about domestic violence; therefore, all those women were accessed who were ready to discuss this issue at some length. However, during the process of data collection, many of the women participants shared their personal experiences of suffering and abuse from their husbands and in-laws.

Patriarchy has been engaged to explain male domination in this study. Following Hunnicutt (2009) and Pease (2019), the research explains that patriarchal arrangements at the macro and micro level create gender hierarchies. It is not just male-domination that maintains inequality

and perpetuate domestic violence, a mother-in-law and other women relatives of a husband get benefits of patriarchy and use it to control and abuse the woman who joins the family after marriage. Therefore, patriarchal bargain has been employed alongside patriarchy to explain the subordinate position of a woman in the affinal family. Moreover, diversity among women, based on various social divisions, is imperative to understand that how gender intersect with other identity categories and shape women's perceptions and experiences of violence. Intersectionality has provided the theoretical base to understand diversity among women and the ways it shape their perceptions and experiences of domestic violence. This research explains that women consider domestic violence as a process rather than limiting their experiences to concrete acts of violence as they are controlled and managed in their daily lives.

By employing a feminist qualitative approach, in-depth interviews assisted in understanding the standpoints of women by focusing on their subjective interpretations of the phenomenon of domestic violence. The analysis of data demonstrates that though the Muslims and Christian women have a similar orientation to the patriarchal culture, their religious identity contribute to have different experiences of violence. Similarly, women of the rural localities have less opportunities for economic stability, they suffer mobility issues and thus, are controlled more by the affinal families and their spouses. The analysis chapters provide a comparison of the circumstances of women due to their diverse identities and explain the reasons for such variations.

Keeping in view all the backdrop, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What are the sociocultural factors that promote gender inequality and subordination of women in the Punjabi society?
- How gender intersect with the religious identity and geographical location (urban/rural) and contribute to women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence?
- What is the role of the extended family in perpetration of domestic violence against women?
- How violence impact the survivors and what are the avenues of support that they turn to?

This study is important due to its focus on a very sensitive issue in the context of Pakistan and provides a detailed context of the conditions that nurture inequality and domestic violence. Besides, no previous research has focused on the positionality of minority women in comparison to the majority group (Muslim women). Thus, the findings would be important for

the researchers, policy makers, and the organisations working for women's human rights and gender violence. This thesis may also be of interest to those working on minority issues particularly related to women as this is a preliminary study that compares the positionality of the Christian and Muslim women in the urban and rural areas. Thus, it provides the initial background on which further work could be built up not only about the Christian women but also about the other minority women living in Punjab, Pakistan.

It is worth mentioning that this study has certain limitations; it has a focus on the Muslim and Christian women only and does not cover other minority groups in Punjab. Though the religious identity of women has a primacy, the status of women in the Christianity and Islam has not been addressed in this thesis. As there are different sects in both the faith groups, it was not possible to include them due to their diverse views about the status of women and family related matters. Thus, it covers the viewpoints of women participants rather than the actual teachings of both the religions. Besides, the socio-economic background of women was not considered, it was not feasible to approach the participants through prior decision due to the sensitivity of the issue.

1.2 Why Study Domestic Violence

According to the World Health Organisation's (2017) estimates, 35% of the women suffer intimate partner violence in their lifetime. However, the percentage is greater in the middle and low-income countries and Pakistan is no exception. Due to the strong patriarchal culture of the Pakistani society, domestic and intimate partner violence are simply considered as family conflicts and thus, a private matter of the family (Saeed, 2012; Ali et al., 2015). Despite the gravity of the matter, it is not taken seriously and is apparent from the absence of a national level data by the government even with the estimation that 80% of the women suffer domestic violence (Critelli, 2010; Murshid and Critelli, 2017). Consequently, the highest number of reported cases with the police and media involve incidents that pose threat to the life of a woman like murder, attempted murder, gang rape and honour killings (Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, 2018). Despite the availability of the Punjab protection of women against violence act 2016, very few women access the formal institutions for any kind of support due to the patriarchal ideology of the society (Government of the Punjab, 2016).

In the recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the area of gender violence in Pakistan. However, most of the studies in the local context are quantitative that lack personal experiences of women by limiting women's voices to certain words and language by using already defined categories (MN, 2013; Ali et al., 2015). Besides, significant others are based

on the secondary data by the Pakistan demographic and health survey which indicates a lack of contextual understanding of the phenomenon. According to a systematic review of twenty-three studies in the context of Pakistan, Ali et al. (2015) points out the need to understand domestic violence from a contextual perspective. Thus, this research aims to address this academic gap by conducting face-to-face in-depth interviews to adequately capture the perceptions and experiences of women from their own perspectives.

As the research has a focus on the Christian and Muslim women from urban and rural localities, it is importance to unfold why there is a need to consider the religious identity of women in regard to domestic violence. Religion has a strong contribution in shaping the lives of the people of Pakistan. Being a Muslim majority country, the notions of majorities and minorities are crucial to understand the religious divide and the resultant conflicts (Saigol, 2015; Khan et al. 2017). Religious divisions are deeply rooted due to the politicisation of the religion by the Zia regime in 1977 and the key legislations during that era that subsequently, discriminated against the women and the religious minorities (Rahman, 2012). One of the amendments were in the Christian divorce law that made it impossible to get divorce based on irretrievable breakdown of a Christian marriage. Thus, the law does not allow to split a marriage if spouses have disagreements and thus, the only two options are adultery and change of religion by one of the spouses. Resultantly, many Christian women converted to Islam for the sake of dissolution of their marriages as they had no other choice (Abbasi, 2019). This raises the need to look into the situation of the Christian women as they cannot dissolve a marriage legally due to domestic violence. Though Punjabi culture stigmatises divorce, the legal implications make it impossible for the Christian women to escape violent relations. Besides this, much of the information about intimate partner and domestic violence in Pakistan has a foundation in research that deals with a sample of Muslim women and do not consider the varying identities of women particularly based on their religion. Reports and information about minority women mostly deal with issues of blasphemy, forced conversion and violence they suffer from the Muslim majority population (Jivan and Jacob, 2012; Pio and Syed, 2016; Jacob, 2019; Behague, 2020). Consequently, the voices of the religious minorities about domestic violence are missing which indicate a lack of diversity, an important limitation across studies. While comparing the majority population with the ethnic minorities, Hellemans et al. (2015) reports higher prevalence of intimate partner violence in minority groups in the international context. This raises the need to find out that how the Christian minority women are positioned compared to their Muslim counterparts and how the diverse identities of women shape their perceptions

and experiences of domestic violence. For this purpose, the intersectionality framework has provided the grounds that women with diverse identities may have experiences not similar to those of the majority group. Thus, the study has a focus on women from diverse backgrounds that also include their religious identity.

Studies in the context of Pakistan concentrate on intimate partner violence and spousal violence (Jalil et al., 2013; Ali et al., 2015; Madhani et al., 2017; Murshid and Critelli, 2017; Tayyab et al., 2017). The active role of in-laws is not investigated despite that the household system prefers a collective orientation which means that the members of the extended families influence the relationships of spouses even in circumstances where the couple lives in a nuclear system. This research, by focusing on the dynamics of relationships, women had with their husbands and in-laws, explains that family is not homogeneous as women occupy hierarchal positions in the same household. Hence, it exposes patriarchal bargains alongside patriarchy that contribute to the control of women by their husbands and in-laws (Mahjebeen, 2018). In seeking to explore women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence, this research reflects on the cultural norms and patriarchal structure that promote inequality between men and women and among women too. Significantly, it identifies that the forms of violence are similar across various categories of women; however, contexts of women's lives are diverse that needs to be taken into account for an understanding of domestic violence. Indeed, the literature review confirms that there is dearth of research regarding the varying contexts of women and resultantly, one size fits all approach is not suitable to tackle this issue. As discussed earlier, the Christian law of divorce does not allow dissolution of marriage on the grounds of violence and abuse of the husband and his family, their circumstances cannot be equated with Muslim women. Similarly, the findings of this study indicate that women of the rural locality attempted for suicide which illustrate that violence impact them severely due to their restricted circumstances compared to their urban counterparts. Importantly, the differing locations of women based on urban rural divide are critical due to unequal access to resources and information. The purpose of this study, thus, is to enhance inclusiveness in research through the intersection of various identities of women.

1.3 Overview of the Thesis Structure

This thesis is organised into nine chapters including this introduction. The next two chapters are based on the review of literature related to domestic violence while chapter four focuses on the methodology that was followed to conduct this study. The subsequent four chapters

(chapter 5-8) cover the analysis of data collected from Pakistan and the last one concludes the study and provides recommendations.

The theoretical literature about gender and violence has been covered in chapter two and is broadly divided into five main sections. As oppression of women and violence against them is the main emphasis in this research, the construction of gender has a significance and thus, the first section discusses the dynamics of gender theorising and the construction of masculinities and femininities. Moreover, the implications of hegemonic masculinity to strengthen patriarchy has been argued. As Punjabi society is patriarchal in nature; therefore, the next section has a detailed focus on patriarchy and various theoretical developments about it over time. However, the chapter points out the weaknesses of all the perspectives and discusses the recent explanations by Hunnicutt (2009) and Pease (2019) as both have considered social divisions alongside gender in shaping patriarchy and violence against women. Thus, intersectionality has been engaged while interpreting patriarchy alongside patriarchal bargain that points out that how women exercise their agency and get benefits from patriarchy. Moving forward, the chapter reviews the literature for an understanding of violence against women and argues for engaging with the term 'domestic violence' in this study while considering it as a process instead of limiting it to concrete acts of violence. Feminist and family violence are the two major perspectives that explain the causes of violence against women that has been discussed. The chapter concludes by highlighting the use of patriarchy and intersectionality to inform this study.

Chapter 3 focuses on gender relations and violence against women in Pakistan. The first part of the chapter discusses the patriarchal nature of the society and points out the factors that lead to the emergence of the issue of violence against women with an emphasis on domestic violence. As the religious identity of women is an important dimension of this study, the chapter provides analysis of the relationship dynamics between Muslims and Christians that assist in understanding the positionality of religious minorities. This precedes the analysis of literature regarding the religious identities of women and domestic violence. The later part of the chapter compares the circumstances of women residing in the rural and urban settings of Pakistan in the context of domestic violence. The section points out the need to include the geographical location of women as an important intersection for understanding the role of space and place in domestic violence. The last part reflects on the institutional support available in domestic violence and points out the cultural and legal barriers that make it difficult for women to seek divorce.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodological approaches used to produce empirical data and provides rationale for doing qualitative research influenced by the feminist standpoint epistemology. Alongside providing details of choosing in-depth interviews to collect data, the chapter reflects the ways study sites and sampling strategy were selected. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, role of the gatekeepers and rapport-building with the women participants were paramount. Therefore, sample sourcing and data collection has been discussed alongside the details of conducting interviews in the field. As the positionality of the researcher and power dynamics in the field influence the quality of data, reflexivity is critical alongside the involvement of emotions in feminist research. The chapter explains the importance of emotional reflexivity and the kinds of emotions experienced by the researcher and the participants. Besides this, the contextual challenges of the Punjabi society regarding safety issues in the field and the institutional guidelines, dealing with safety and ethics, have been detailed. The chapter also explains the strategies that the researcher devised to transcribe and analyse the interview data that resulted in four chapters of analysis.

The analysis of interview data starts from chapter 5 that provides background of the Punjabi society. A main emphasise has been on the gender structure that would assist in understanding the phenomenon of domestic violence. The chapter starts by analysing the gender division of labour and thus, the roles that men and women perform in the society. The interview data reveals that patriarchy is not just strengthened by men, women particularly uneducated contribute by believing that men have a superior position to them. In addition, women are differently located in the same household, they get benefit of the patriarchy by controlling those women who join the family after marriage. Thus, patriarchal bargains were apparent in the Punjabi society and urban/rural women of both the faith groups were having similar circumstances. This indicates that a culture of male-domination is prevalent without any distinction of identity categories. Besides, the chapter reflects that women are the carriers of family honour that need protection of men alongside other factors that create subordination of women and strengthen patriarchy. As the minority status has its own implications; therefore, the positionality of the Christian women compared to their Muslim counterpart has been analysed. However, the desire for a son was equally prevalent across the board and the social and financial reasons for such a mindset have been pointed out in the section. Towards the end, the chapter reflects the involvement of the women participants in decision-making at domestic level and the treatment of the affinal families towards them.

Chapter 6 is mainly based on various types of violence and focuses on the interviewees' understandings and experiences of it. The first section covers the perceptions of women about the prevalence of domestic violence in the society and pinpoints the private nature of it. The chapter, by considering the narratives, provides the contexts of women's lives and explains types of violence into four broad categories namely: i) poverty or economic violence, ii); sexual violence and extra-marital relations of a husband; iii) child marriages and controlling of women; and iv) pre-marital and post-separation violence. Due to the intersectional approach of the research, each section analyses the distinct positions of women belonging to the various categories that are mainly based on their religious identity, location (urban/rural), and education. In the Punjabi context, the role of the members of a woman's affinal family, to control and abuse her, is crucial which explicates the varieties of patriarchy involved rather than a simple explanation of violence by a husband towards his wife. The chapter argues that violence, for women, is a process as they denote diverse interpretations of this phenomenon. Religion is an important aspect of social life in the Punjabi context; therefore, a comparison of the Christianity and Islam, drawn by the participants, has been given. Various cultural and structural factors contribute to make women vulnerable to violence in the domestic sphere and create circumstances that hinder their independent living in the society. In addition, the use of alcohol and the unamended laws increase the vulnerability of Christian women. The chapter evaluates the passive role of the community and their victim-blaming attitude, especially in the rural settings, that discourage women to discuss domestic violence with others and to get support.

Chapter 7 details the impacts of violence on women, their natal families and the children. Due to the private nature of domestic violence and limited avenues of support, women do not come out as survivors that seriously impact their physical and mental health particularly for those belonging to the rural areas. The chapter has been divided into two main sections: the first section is based on the consequences of violence on women that is further divided into three subsections. Though the impacts of violence are interrelated as sexual violence is, sometimes, accompanied by physical abuse and mental torture, the subsections provide a detailed analysis of how the types of violence impact on various categories of women. Thus, it covers the following themes: suicide attempts of women survivors, sexual violence, and physical injuries and mental health of women. The second section argues that violence in the home have consequences for children too as they not only witness it, they remain at risk of getting abuse from both the parents. The findings reflect that a mother transfers her stress on children through

beating and harsh behaviour. Thus, the section provides details of the reactions of children and highlights differences among them based on their gender. Towards the end, the chapter analyses the role of the government institutions to protect children living with their families. Each section in the chapter identifies the differences among various categories of women, where it is significant.

Chapter 8 is the last chapter of analysis that discusses the available options for help that women approached to protect themselves. It further reflects the responses of women during and after the abuse, ways women adopted to deal with their difficult situations and the suggestions that they believe could be useful in eradicating violence from the society. The chapter reflects on the perceptions and experiences of women with the informal and formal help-seeking. The informal support includes friends, neighbours, colleagues, *panchayat* system but mostly it was the natal families that women turned to for emotional and instrumental support. It is discussed that the contexts of women's lives are important in seeking this type of help. On the contrary, formal support exists in the bureaucratic structures and mostly, women were reluctant to approach this kind of help unless they were left with no other option. A limited number of women accessed the services that has been discussed with issues that they suffered with such support. Women of the rural locality and those belonging to the Christian faith were most disadvantaged that has been highlighted. The chapter covers the ways women adopted before, during, and after the abuse that were very much dependent on the analysis of their circumstances and the availability of resources. The last section is based on the suggested measures that, women believed, could prevent the occurrence of domestic violence from the society. The chapter also pinpoints the differences among women based on the intersections of religion, geographical location, and their education.

The last chapter concludes the study by providing a synthesis of the key findings and highlights the theoretical, methodological, and empirical contribution of this research to the broader field of gender, violence, and to social sciences. Alongside this, generalisability of the findings to other settings have been reflected. Besides, the chapter suggests policy implications and practical measures to overcome gender inequality and domestic violence in the context of Pakistan. The last section presents the potential possibilities for future research to extend our understandings of domestic violence in Pakistan.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER AND VIOLENCE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to discuss relevant literature on gender and violence. Since the focus of this study is on the perceptions and experiences of women about domestic violence, the literature review has concentrated on how gender is inferred by various theoretical perspectives and what are the contemporary debates about it. This is done keeping in view the themes that have been discussed in the analysis chapters particularly related to gender relations in the contemporary Punjabi society. To understand gender relations, it is imperative to have reflections on dominant gender beliefs and types of masculinities that inculcate gender inequality and subordination of women. Therefore, the first part of the chapter covers debate about gender and the role of dominant beliefs in constructing hegemonic masculinity.

The next section has elaborated Patriarchy as it explains the dynamics of power in social settings and is mostly engaged to elucidate male power. Since the inception of violence against women as a human rights issue, the scholarship on violence has involved patriarchy primarily with many versions of it that have been analysed in the literature. The proponents of the feminist schools have interpreted patriarchy in the light of their contextual stance that has been discussed. A more recent explanation of patriarchy has been provided by Hunnicutt (2009) and Pease (2019) by considering other inequalities that are beyond gender; therefore, patriarchy has been discussed by considering it as a structure and ideology alongside intersectionality. Due to the complexity of domestic violence against women in the local context of Pakistan, the patriarchal bargain has also been engaged that has a particular focus on the agency of women rather than representing them as passive recipients of patriarchy.

In the subsequent sections, the literature review provides the ontology of domestic violence against women and justifies that why the term ‘domestic violence’ has been preferred rather than intimate partner violence. While analysing the definitions that consider violence as concrete acts, the current study conceives this phenomenon as a process that does not always involve particular acts of violence. The micro-management of survivors through coercive control is crucial for understanding the complexity of domestic violence. Moving forward, various theories interpret violence against women that broadly falls in feminist and family violence perspectives. Most of these theories provide a single factor explanation of violence

except the integrated models like the ecological framework that have been discussed with their strengths and weaknesses.

2.2 Dynamics of Gender Theorising and Hegemonic Gender Beliefs

Gender is one of the primary forces that organise social relations and divide people into significantly different categories of women and men (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004; Ridgeway, 2009). As gender differences are socially constructed, such differences are considered to be the foundation of inequality that are developed and reinforced at micro and macro levels (Risman, 2004). Gender has been conceived differently by scholars and there are influential theoretical explanations for it. Interactionist tradition had a focus that gender is something that individuals do and, thus, is called 'Doing Gender' paradigm. West and Zimmerman's (1987) article on "Doing Gender" is considered a conceptual breakthrough in feminist theory that made distinctions among sex, sex category, and gender to demonstrate the performative link of gender and bodies. According to this paradigm, gender is constituted through interaction which apparently seems 'as "natural" while it is being produced as socially organised achievement' (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p.129). An understanding of gender through the standpoint of interaction means creating differences between women and men that are not biological, natural, or essential. Individuals engage in behaviours that are portrayed through masculinity and femininity and 'the outcome is seen and seeable in context as gender-appropriate or, as the case may be, gender-inappropriate, that is, accountable' (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p.135). Arguably, people are held accountable for not doing/performing gender in culturally 'appropriate' ways which indicate that the arena of gender is interactional and institutional in nature (West and Zimmerman, 1987; Messerschmidt, 2009).

Lorber (1994) and Martin (2004) explicitly frame gender as an institution, they believe that such an approach would assist in making gender more visible and support in making intentional changes. While explaining the characteristics of an institution, Martin (2004) has provided an extensive review of the definition of social institutions proposed by scholars through the twentieth century. She has developed twelve points criteria that should be the characteristics of an institution and, based on that, proposed that gender should be treated as a social institution just as the institution of family or religion. Institutions, according to Martin, include, involve, and/or capable of following characteristics: (1) groups of people who associate with each other alongside recursive practices that carry certain meanings; (2) carry a history that exists across time and space; (3) particular social practices that distinguish institutions; (4) facilitating and constraining behaviour; (5) norms, rules, and social positions, for example, gender has girl,

boy, woman, man; (6) constituted by embodied agents which are also emphasised by Connell (1987) in her gender order; (7) institutions are internalised by members in the form of identities; (8) legitimating ideology like gender ideology that is internalised and believed by individuals; (9) entail contradictions and conflicts and, thus, have diverse practices; (10) continuously change; (11) power differentials that advantage some and subordinate others; and finally (12) individuals and institutions are inseparable. Adding to this, Martin (2004) points out the interdependence of various institutions on each other and also their entwined nature with the state. Arguably, framing gender as an institution, according to this perspective, makes it more visible and accessible to sociological analysis. Though Connell (2006) equates gender to a multidimensional structure, she also uses the term institution to describe gender while discussing it in organisations.

There is a third perspective that considers gender as a structure or component structures (Connell, 1987; Risman, 2004, 2011, 2013; Connell and Pearse, 2015). For example, Connell (1987; Connell and Pearse, 2015) defines gender as follows:

> Gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes…the power of structures to shape individual action often makes gender appear unchanging. Yet gender arrangements are, in fact, always changing, as human practice creates new situations and as structures develop crisis tendencies (p.11).

While defining gender, Connell and Pearse built their arguments on the concept of 'doing gender' discussed above by explaining that individuals practice gender that is shaped by the gender order of the society. Such arrangements, according to them are called gender structures. Considering gender as a structure, there are diverse ways scholars interpret this term; however, according to Connell and Pearse (2015, p.73):

> Relations among people would have little significance if they were randomly arranged. Patterns in these relations would have little significance if they were ephemeral. It is the enduring or extensive patterns among social relations that social theory calls 'structures'.

Connell uses the term gender order to explain the gender arrangements of a society and explains it through a multidimensional structure of social relations that include power, production, cathexis, and symbolism. Besides, Connell does not consider these four structures as independent rather are interweaved that condition not only each other but also intersect with other structures like ethnicity and class. Similar to Connell, Risman (2004) also explains her theory of gender as a multidimensional structure just like the political and economic structures of a society. While defining gender as a structure, Risman and Davis (2013) are influenced by

the structuration theory of Giddens and engage with it to explain that why actors do particular acts, according to them:

> Actors are knowledgeable and competent agents who reflexively monitor actions. The taken-for-granted and often unacknowledged conditions of action do shape behaviour, but do so as human beings reflexively monitor the intended and unintended consequences of their action, sometimes reifying the structure, and sometimes changing it. It is this definition of 'structure' that is most useful for conceptualizing gender as a social structure (p.744).

This reflects that structure is not something static, rather individuals have an active role in shaping the gender structure. Such a structure creates and maintains stratification based on sex category and has consequences at the levels of identity, interaction, and institutions in complex ways that restrict and encourages patterned behaviours (Risman, 2004, 2011, 2013). Consequently, gender is embedded in personalities and throughout social life as individuals and the social structure act, influence, and shape each other in complex ways. Thinking of gender through this conceptual framework assist in understanding gender relations.

In this framework, gender operates at the individual, interactional, and institutional level and produce inequality. At the individual level, identities and selves are constructed into gendered selves; this includes social processes like socialisation, modelling, and adult experiences that facilitate to the internalisation of gender norms and culturally appropriate roles of girls and boys. Here Risman and Davis (2013; Risman, 2004) engage with 'doing gender' perspective and elaborates that 'women and men choose to do gender-typical behaviour across their social roles and over the life cycle' (p.745). There is a cultural component of the gender structure that is considered to organise much of human life. Such cultural components are often taken as non-reflexive habituated rules and are reflected through the interactional expectations that people have from each other. Thus, at the interactional level, cultural expectations and taken-for-granted situational meanings are different for women and men which people meet or try to meet in their life. In the Punjabi society, such status expectations vary within the category of women where a mother and a wife have a different status and expectations from their roles within a household in relation to a man. At the institutional level, gender structure organises social institutions and organisations through the distribution of resources, organisational practices, ideology, and legal regulations (Risman, 2004). Despite changes in formal rules and regulations within institutions with the goal of gender equality, societal gender ideology contributes to the maintenance of the subordination of women and discrimination against them.

Arguably, all the perspectives overlap in some ways as they engage with 'performance', 'doing', 'displaying', 'institution', and 'structure/s' while explaining gender which indicates that there are

more commonalities than differences among them. However, the gender structure theory of Risman does not overemphasise on any one aspect, rather signifies that gender is embedded at the individual, interactional, and institutional level in a mutually reinforcing process. This has been identified without emphasising that a particular dimension is more important for explaining inequality or social change as individual identities can change interactional expectations and same is possible vice versa. Moreover, gender stratification is produced and maintained at all levels of social analysis. Such a stratification, based on gender, is expressed through personalities, cultures, and institutions in a complicated way and creates opportunities and constraints for women and men. Hence, gender is something that carries identities in the form of masculinities and femininities to what Connell calls 'configurations of gender practice' (Connell, 2005, p.72; Pease, 2019).

The next section has a focus on dominant gender beliefs that contribute to developing forms of masculinities and femininities and one of them is hegemonic masculinity. This is the form of masculinity that is valued and influence other masculinities too. Hegemonic masculinity has been discussed here as it would assist in understanding that what are the traits of men that are valued by the society, and how such traits contribute to maintaining their hegemony.

2.2.1 Dominant Gender Beliefs and Hegemonic Masculinity

Thinking of gender in the context of men and women's behaviour, multiple forms of femininities and masculinities carry cultural beliefs, patterns of behaviours and practices at the micro and macro level. Widely held beliefs about gender have a greater social significance and are conceived as hegemonic beliefs that are held not only by individuals but are also part of the structures and ideologies of institutions. Similarly, some of the forms of gendered being are culturally dominant, hegemonic masculinity is the one that defines the culturally dominant form of being a man. Connell uses the concept of hegemony to interpret power relations among men and between men and women (Buschmeyer and Lengersdoff, 2016). For Connell, maintaining a social order that is backed by patriarchy does not merely involve the domination of men over women, it is also the ascendency of a specific form of masculinity in relation to the identity formation of other masculinities (Connell, 2005). Within various masculinities occupying a hierarchical order, a particular form resides at the top of this hierarchy and it is hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). Hegemony is the domination that a group achieves through institutions, culture, and persuasion; however, this does not mean necessarily violence or force as hegemony has various configurations (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell does not consider it a form of masculinity which is fixed and the same everywhere, rather it

has dimensions of history and time and it also changes with geographical locations. Adding to this, new groups may encounter old solutions and they constitute their own versions of hegemony (Connell, 2005).

Though the concept of hegemonic masculinity is widely accepted in studies of men and masculinities, there is growing debate and critique on the conceptual value and meanings of this concept. Several authors have questioned as to consider it a social structure or something fluid that remains in the performance of masculine gender, how does it work, and is it possible to identify it in the daily activities and performances of men (Moller, 2007; Hearn, 2012; Duncanson, 2015). Besides, Buschmeyer and Lengersdorf (2016) remark that a clear typology for this particular type has not been provided and there are no definitive ways men could be dominating. While addressing some of the criticisms, Connell and Wood (2005) believe that it is difficult to figure out sharply defined patterns of hegemonic masculinity as overlap does exist between hegemonic and other forms of masculinities and thus, it is always open to change and challenge. However, simultaneously, they point to socially legitimated models of hegemonic masculinity in families which indicates that certain models are embedded in the social environments. Whilst the concept is considered as a configuration of practice, the structure of gender relations are the grounds that organise such practices. It could also be expressed through physical strength and such a feature is also valued in the local social context of the Punjabi society.

The concept is useful in the present study as dominant masculinities like hegemonic one contributes to gender inequality and strengthen patriarchy (Messerschmidt, 2018). Though men practice various masculinities, considering it as positions that are occupied situationally could assist in understanding the complexities of hierarchies within and across genders. For example, various masculinities could be performed within the domestic sphere based on relationship dynamics as a man may not practice domination with his parents and siblings but may do so with his wife in the form of exercising authority and use of violence. It is not necessary that every individual favour hegemonic masculinity; however, femininities are essential in constructing masculinities and contribute to replicate this model by socialising and treating girls/women and boys/men differently. Arguably, gender hierarchies particularly, the interplay of masculinities and femininities create inequalities and strengthen patriarchy. Though new configurations of women's identities and practices influence gender hierarchies, Anderson (2009) argues that contexts, where cultural and structural gender inequalities are profound, create greater resistance for new femininities. Social contexts are important arenas where

cultural beliefs and behaviours about gender are enacted and thus, contribute to defining and shaping the gender system. (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004). Hegemonic gender beliefs shape the behaviour of people and create hurdles for those who try to resist as such beliefs are institutionalised in various settings. While focusing on heterosexual relations in the marriage and family institution, gender beliefs define the hierarchy of the relationships and, due to its broader impact on perceptions and behaviours of people, any social change is resisted that contributes to sustaining the gender system (Ridgeway and Correll, 2004).

In this section, gender has been discussed as a basis and a structure to understand social relations. Gender structure of societies varies from patriarchal to egalitarian as the two ends of the continuum (Risman, 2011). Due to the patriarchal nature of the Punjabi society, the next section has a detailed focus on patriarchy as it elucidates power dynamics regarding violence against women. Patriarchy is one of the most debated and controversial theoretical concept in feminist theory that has been theorised in diverse ways. The following section would provide the stance of the various school of thoughts and recent developments in patriarchy that would inform this study.

2.3 Patriarchy and Oppression of Women

2.3.1 Conceptualising Patriarchy

To understand the complexity of domestic violence, patriarchy is critical as a larger framework to understand the gendered arrangements of a society. Feminist theories assume patriarchal structural relations as the defining factor of violence against women (Brubaker, 2019). Despite the diversity in the status and positionality of women, the patriarchal framework would assist in structural and ideological dimensions of the Punjabi society and the factors that promote male domination and female subordination. This section will provide the development of the concept of patriarchy over time while the subsequent sections would assist in an overview of its diverse theoretical interpretations by various scholars. The section will end with the discussion of the recent developments and the framework chose for this study.

Feminist theory has generated many concepts but patriarchy is considered as an overused concept that has been utilised mostly to explicate principles that underlie oppression of women, (Beechey, 1979; Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Kandiyoti, 1988). It is not a simple or in any sense, a single concept as it carries a diversity in meanings and social scientists acknowledge this variety (Beechey, 1979; Walby, 1990). Patriarchy is expanded at two levels i.e., structure and ideology. Institutions and social relations are involved at the level of the structure to maintain

the authority of the few, while the acceptance of this authority by many is considered the ideology of patriarchy (Dobash and Dobash, 1979).

The meaning of patriarchy has evolved particularly in the writings of radical feminists by focusing on the subordination of women when men are a dominant group and paying less attention to the domination of men to each other (Walby, 1990). This is a form of domination by men which is ideologically obtained, and it has no association with physical differences of men and women (Clough and Millett, 1994). This term rejects any biological determinism and compulsion that every woman must be in a subordinate position and a man occupying a dominant one (Walby, 1990). Since social theory was criticised for its incapacity to explain the phenomenon of the subordination of women, efforts were made by feminists to theorise patriarchy. However, difficulties with the concept became evident over time as discussed in the next section (Beechey, 1987; Acker, 1989; Walby, 1989).

2.3.2 Theoretical Diversity of Patriarchy

Patriarchy has various versions as every school of thought has its interpretations for the subordination of women; therefore, contradictions among different feminist theorists are inevitable. One reason behind this variation could be the absence of uniformity regarding the oppression of women. Kate Millet is considered one of the first feminists who used the term patriarchy and made serious attempts to theoretically interpret the oppression of women (Beechey, 1979; Tong, 2009; Pease, 2019). She used the term patriarchy in its most simplistic form- domination of women by men, and family as the fundamental unit that socialises children into sexually differentiated roles. She is believed to use patriarchy as a generalised conception of power relationships without explaining the underlying factors that institutionalised this hierarchy between women and men (Waters, 1989). Therefore, her use of the term patriarchy ceases it to a concept that was required to be reconstructed.

Another key Radical libertarian feminist Shulamith Firestone highlighted, mainly, the material aspects of the household as she stressed the reproductive differences between sexes as the sites of oppression (Beechey, 1979). Firestone confers about the replacement of the reproductive role of women by the possibility of providing technology so that the dependency of women could be reduced and ultimately, the subordination would be abated (Firestone, 1971). By this, she wanted to enable women to escape from the limitations of biology, but this could be useful only if means of reproduction could be controlled for the interests of women (Walby, 1990). Firestone is criticised for blaming all men as exploiters and radical feminists as being biologically reductionist (Barrett, 1980); however, all radical feminists do not have a similar

stance. Adrienne Rich, a radical cultural feminist, considers motherhood as a blissful experience although as an institution it is problematic, thus she blames patriarchy instead of motherhood for it (Walby, 1990). From radical feminist perspectives, patriarchy is conceived as a trans-historical, trans-cultural, and universal phenomenon and is rooted in biological reality. This biological essentialism is the major criticism on the radical perspective alongside ignoring historical variations in women's situations and also in various contexts. Besides, violence against women is used to uphold patriarchy. This raises questions that how the patriarchal systems survive where most men do not use violence against women. It also ignores the differences based on race, class, ethnicity and other such intersections that make patriarchy more of an essentialist concept. Consequently, it is difficult to use the interpretations of patriarchy by radical feminism to understand violence against women.

Unlike the radical feminists, Marxist feminists are committed to understanding the relationship between patriarchy and capitalist mode of production in a variety of ways because, within Marxist theory, there are various approaches to elaborate means of production (Beechey, 1979). From the Marxist perspective, both sexual and material economic conditions need to be dealt with for understanding oppression of women rather than understanding merely the economic exploitation (Eisenstein,1999). Feminists who believed that women's economic as well as sex class both play a role in their oppression started to categorise themselves as socialist or materialist feminists. Their main intention was to explain not just patriarchy but to explain how patriarchy and capitalism interact and create a system of oppression for women. This is because they believe that in capitalist societies equal weightage should be given to other forms of oppressions and exploitations (Beechey, 1979). One of the proponents for this two-systems explanation of women's oppression is Juliet Mitchell (Tong, 2009). Mitchell has identified production, reproduction, sexuality, and socialisation as key structures, where powerlessness of women is rooted, that needs to be transformed to achieve liberation for women (Eisenstein,1999; Mitchell, 2015). Waters (1989) argues that it is over-simplified as he believes that Mitchell has provided an analysis more parallel to the structuralism of Louis Althusser. Further to this, Beechey (1979) highlighted that Mitchell has also used Freud's social theory and Levi-Strauss' analysis of kinship systems (who also was not able to provide an account of the foundation of male domination) and thus, she could not have been able to formulate a theory of patriarchy that could explain the foundation of male domination and female subordination. Thus, it was quite unsatisfactory and inadequate particularly for a Marxist analysis of the oppression of women (Beechey, 1979).

Although the term patriarchy had a great deal of worth in the feminist political struggle, its differing interpretations reduced its theoretical and explanatory power (Waters, 1989). Patriarchy was also criticised for not being able to treat the subordination of women in the historical and cross-cultural contexts (Walby, 1989; Pollert, 1996). The form and intensity of patriarchy change over time and besides this, nationality, race, class, marital status, and sexual orientation play its role in having differential access of men to the benefits of patriarchy that needs to be examined (Hartmann, 1979). Due to the inadequacies of the concept of patriarchy, it was incorporated into a more general class theory (Connell, 1987) that already was scanty in explaining oppression of women and patriarchy also did not make any change in the existing theories of society (Acker, 1989). Waters (1989) expanded that the term patriarchy had a rhetorical and political origin that was requiring a reconstruction for usage as a social scientific construct as no consensus was developed on the scientific definition of the concept (Waters, 1989). Bearing all these difficulties, Waters (1989) and Walby (1989) contributed to make it a useful analytical tool (Aker, 1989). Waters proposed a new concept of viriarchy for male-dominated structures where patriarchy did not apply whereas, Walby made efforts to address major criticisms of patriarchy that were considered irredeemable by most social scientists (Waters, 1989; Walby, 1989,1990); therefore, the work of Walby was widely influential in the feminist literature.

Walby identified six structures of patriarchy to provide theoretical tools instead of one major base that creates problems in interpretation. She argues that any theory that attempts to interpret a phenomenon across time and space must have multiple structures (Walby, 1989). These structures include the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and in the cultural institutions (Walby, 1990). The first two structures lay emphasis on economic aspects of women’s lives and the way women are subordinated in both these areas. The role of the state, in the domination of men, is another crucial domain in patriarchy as it does not penalise men in situations of violence against women and secondly, through systematic biases in policies and actions that maintain male privilege (Walby, 1990). Male violence, although it is taken up previously by various scholars, has been dealt with as an independent structure with a focus on males as perpetrators and females as victims of varying forms of violence. Patriarchal relations in sexuality stresses the prevalence of compulsory heterosexuality and sexual double standards. While the notions of masculinity and femininity prevail in cultures that's why it is crucial in the understanding of gender and gender relations (Walby, 1990). She

argues that violence against women cannot be eliminated as long as these structures carry gender inequality.

Although Walby has been influential in defending patriarchy, Pollert (1996) believed that she did an arbitrary exercise by dividing it into six structures as it is a static perspective of the parts that are interrelated. Hence, such explanation gives an impression of the fixed nature of patriarchy where human agency had, seemingly, little place than before and there was no space for women's resistance. Besides, it was criticised that patriarchy is applied to a reality that was nuanced and complex in nature and Walby's work was carrying ambiguity at the theoretical and empirical level. Further to this, Pollert (1996) emphasised that the focus should have been on social processes instead of six structures as gender relations are everywhere that needs a close interrogation. Ultimately, Walby (1997) abandoned the term patriarchy and started using 'gender regime', an alternate to patriarchy and to explain systems of interrelated gender structures as she considered the use of regime 'more elegant' (p.6). However, gender regimes could not create impact the way patriarchy had formed and fail to explicitly convey the domination of men (Pease, 2019).

2.3.3 Recent Developments in Patriarchy

After the initial period of theorising patriarchy, many thinkers turned towards women's identity, agency, and subjectivity instead of focusing on structural domination of male that overshadowed deeper understanding of patriarchy (Einsphar, 2010). However, social scientists kept using the term indirectly to explain gender oppression. In recent developments, attention has been focused on the changing nature of structure and agency, domination and contestation across time and space. This created the need to reformulate patriarchy rather than a traditional standpoint of considering it simplistically that obscures the complex system of gender relations (Hunnicutt, 2009; Pease, 2019). Bauman (2000, p.8) also ascertains that there is a need to rethink about "old concepts" due to the profound changes in human conditions. Arguably, Bennett (2006) pointed out that patriarchy also requires to be analysed and explained with the changing cultural demands as it might not be the same everywhere.

In view of all that has been brought up so far, one may suppose that patriarchy is a fluid concept that provides an opportunity to view society as forever shifting, taking new shapes (Hunnicutt, 2009). Resultantly, patriarchal structures and ideologies do change with the passage of time and across cultures. This has been well taken up by Hunnicutt (2009, p.554) and has suggested "a theory of varieties of patriarchy" to explain the occurrence of violence against women. She asserts that in today's modern and complex societies, domination may not be direct, it is not a

compulsion that every woman will be a victim. Many women face risks and simultaneously, others receive protection under patriarchal systems; therefore, considering varieties of patriarchy, both at the structural and ideological level, could provide support to answer that why some women are victimised while others are not (Hunnicutt, 2009). Recent explanations of violence against women have also engaged patriarchy to uncover structures of power relations between men and women (Chowdhury, 2009; Sultana, 2011; Chowdhury, 2015; Zaatut and Haj-Yahia, 2016).

Similar to what Hunnicutt (2009) has suggested, a recent effort to explain violence against women by engaging patriarchy has been provided by Pease (2019) who advocates a theoretical framework by differentiating between structure and ideology as the two levels where patriarchy is manifested. Besides, he links patriarchy with other hierarchies based on inequalities like race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, age, geographical location that was also envisioned by Hunnicutt (2009) and other proponents of patriarchy to deal with complex inequalities. It also addresses the initial criticisms on patriarchy based on the universalism of power relations without considering the differences among men. Pease (2019) argues that patriarchy operates at multiple levels, it is a historical structure; however, its dynamics change due to the intersection of other inequalities. Thus, this framework has three broad dimensions: "a diversity of patriarchal structures, [it] differentiate between structure and ideology, and acknowledge other forms of domination and oppression" (Pease, 2019, p.63).

Another strength of this framework is that it interprets patriarchy in the context of violence against women rather than providing a general interpretation of the patriarchal framework in the context of gender inequality. Domestic violence is a manifestation of power and control in relationships and patriarchy has the potential to interpret power, dominance, and gender. This research, thus, is influenced by the patriarchal framework provided by Pease (2019) to understand the ideological and structural aspects of patriarchy prevalent in the Punjabi society.

As most of the explanations of patriarchy have been developed keeping in view the western societies whereas, according to Pease (2019), patriarchy appears in various forms depending on the contexts particularly in non-western societies. Similar is the case in the context of the present study as family dynamics are different in Pakistan compared to western societies. This was highlighted by Kandiyoti (1988) by providing a more culturally grounded understanding of patriarchal systems. Kandiyoti recognised the gendered subjectivities of women and highlighted their agency in the form of active and passive resistance. The next section has analysed patriarchal bargain that would inform this study.

2.3.4 Patriarchal Bargain and Hegemony of Women

A crucial view within patriarchy is its classic form where women's agency does prevail and it is highlighted by Kandiyoti (1988, p.275) using the concept of 'patriarchal bargain' that reflects women's strategies in dealing with different forms of patriarchy and creating opportunities for themselves (Kandiyoti, 1988; Bennett, 2006; Chowdhury, 2009; Shankar and Northcott, 2009). In classic patriarchy, sons are an asset for women because all the hardships and deprivations that they face during their life course are superseded by practising authority on their daughters-in-law (Kandiyoti, 1988). This form of patriarchy pressurises women to have more sons than daughters as boys are their critical resource (Kandiyoti, 1988). Through this way, power is productive for a certain group of women and this form of patriarchy can be further extended by borrowing the ideas of Michel Foucault who advocates that power is not possessed by a particular dominant group but is enforced through complex social networks that force subjects to behave in socially acceptable ways (Pedwell, 2013). In expanding the ideas of Foucault, Allen (1996) elaborates that power or domination works at micro and macrolevel. The former has a focus on agents that are directly part of the power relations and are small in number, it does not include background relations that set the ground for that power relation (Allen, 1996). The macrolevel of analysis is related to the cultural and institutional contexts which are more complex and thus, this level of analysis is split into four distinct aspects; cultural meanings, practices, surface structures of domination, and deep structures of domination (Allen, 1996). Through this, Allen (1996) argues that Foucault's analysis of power could be useful in constructing a feminist theory of domination because Foucault puts emphasis on the local, minute, and everyday level that makes his theory useful for the analysis of microlevel domination relations. Secondly, Foucault also highlights power at the macro level as he develops scholarship on the circulation of power in institutional contexts, cultural discourses, and social practices (Allen, 1996). Foucault's work is useful to be utilised in the feminist scholarship of domination and interpretation of subordination in the context of violence against women.

Applying the interpretations of power by Foucault and the concept of patriarchal bargains by Kandiyoti, domestic violence is not always from men towards women, rather power operates in diverse and complex ways at the domestic level. Both women and men gain power from their social locations and use violence directly and indirectly as a tactic to control the other person. Arguably, differences and power relations in the categories of men and women are important to understand the complexity of domestic violence. On the contrary, binary division

views women as a homogeneous group that obscures the variations among them and make them a powerless group without agency (Cannon et al., 2015) whereas, women are also capable of initiating violence. Therefore, when power is explained, it should not be taken as always one group dominating the other by considering men as violent and women as victims. There are also other discursive ways power functions in violence cases (Cannon et al., 2015) and that is the use of agency by women against other women in the domestic sphere. In patriarchal societies, it is assumed that men usually deploy violence but in joint or extended household systems, other women do hold agency due to their locations in the social hierarchy. As discussed earlier in this chapter, they also derive power from men due to patriarchal bargains and exercise that over another woman who joins the family after marriage.

Punjabi culture emphasises on the respect of elders in the family institution and parents live with their married son/s. These sons also have the caring responsibilities of parents in the old age; therefore, sons are assets, especially for mothers who suffer hardships in their lives and are financially dependent on them. They try to exert power either directly or through their sons and control the daughters-in-law. Resultantly, issue of domestic violence prevails with various justifications for it particularly by blaming the inability of a woman to conform to behavioural norms of the patriarchal society.

On the contrary, divorce is stigmatised, married women make every effort to survive in their relationships despite dysfunctional and violent marriages. In such a social environment, a woman in her affinal family has to be subordinate to the elderly and other members including brothers and sisters of her husband. This does not mean that a woman would suffer physical violence, rather coercive control through verbal and emotional abuse are common and acceptable in the society. The common proverbs legitimise violence by in-laws particularly the power and control of a mother-in-law who practices it to keep the family 'intact' as the joint household is idealised as a form of unity. As Foucault elucidates power at both micro and macro level, the complexity of power hierarchy within the category of ‘woman’ varies within the same family. The mother-in-law and other relatives of a husband’s family exercise their power against a woman who joins the family after marriage. Men also use violence and coercive control against their wives on the instigation of their families. Thus, the initial conceptualisation of patriarchal bargains works within the context of Pakistan where the birth of a son is celebrated compared to a daughter.

As this research has a focus on women belonging to various identities, Pease (2019) and Hunnicutt (2009) elaborate that understanding of patriarchy is incomplete unless attention is

given to other social divisions alongside gender. This provides a nuanced conception of patriarchy by acknowledging other hierarchies- and it is to this which the next section turns to.

2.3.5 Intersectionalising Patriarchy

Violence is a complex phenomenon and no single theory can explain the causes of it. Pease (2019) has considered the intersections of gender with other social divisions while interpreting the patriarchal framework. Patriarchy, as a structure of domination, interacts with other structures of dominance in complex ways (Einspahr, 2010). This signifies the use of Intersectionality to understand inequality and violence against women. Though gender is one aspect of the explanatory framework for domestic violence, there are other forms of oppression and inequalities that intersect to produce differential experiences of women as gender is not clearly separable from other social categories. Besides, it is not just the category 'woman' that is important for an analysis of violence, divisions within women are crucial for a deeper understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon of domestic violence. Within the category 'women', there are intersectional perspectives due to their race, class, and sexuality; thus, to call women as a single entity is a theoretical issue (Einspahr, 2010). Besides, women may oppress other women and some of them might have the opportunity to have privilege over other men.

There is a need to see how patriarchy functions within groups of women belonging to various identities and intersectionality framework provide dimensions of identity and inequality which are useful for this study. In other words, the intersectional approach provides the opportunity to consider identity categories that shape those inequalities. Sokoloff and Dupont (2005, p.49) emphasise that "intersectional approach provide ways to legitimate the experiences of women who have been marginalized and hidden from dominant cultural discourses about battered women". Such an approach is crucial due to lack of perspectives in the mainstream literature and a way to improve the response to survivors at the margins of society. Therefore, Intersectionality is engaged to better understand domestic violence by a husband and other members of his family by taking the intersections of religious identity, and geographical locations of women in the context of Pakistan. In addition to this, it will also make visible how identity and geographical locations of women shape the ways they experience violence and its consequences and seek formal and informal support.

According to Walby (2009), there are multiple complex inequalities that include not only gender, but also other identities or systems of power based on ethnicity, race, religion, age, linguistic community, age, disability and sexual orientation. Intersectionality is a strategy to

construe the relationship between multiple forms of social inequality and oppression to study neglected intersections (Crenshaw, 1991; Walby, 2009). Though Walby has identified an exhaustive list of social categories, it is also a criticism on Intersectionality as pointed out by Ludvig (2006) that the list of differences is endless, and there is always a question of 'which social divisions should be incorporated in the analysis'. To answer this, the inclusion of minority groups, who have not previously been heard, is a way to deal with it. Phoenix (2006) suggests that the researchers need to take creative and strategic decisions keeping in view which social divisions are most relevant on particular issues at particular times. Yuval-Davis (2006) takes such social divisions positively and argues that "this expands the arena of intersectionality to a major theoretical tool that challenges hegemonic approaches to the study of stratification as well as reified forms of identity politics" (p.201).

Another criticism on Intersectionality is its inability to fulfil the requirement of a full-fledged theory as it does not predict the outcomes of specific factors. However, Brubaker and Keegan (2019) argue that it is a well-regarded framework that makes visible the experiences of neglected and marginalised by including multiple identities and systems of inequality ignored by mainstream approaches. Such divisions are crucial to make certain groups of people visible and similar is the case in the context of the present study. Applying intersectionality would assist in identifying dimensions of domestic violence and how do it impact various segments under study in the context of Punjab, Pakistan. As the current study engages with women belonging to the Christian and Muslim religious backgrounds, it is important to see how they are located in the social and structural setup as women are differently situated in the social, economic, and political world (Crenshaw, 1991). These differences shape their social standings in the society, diversity further arises due to intersectionality that generates multiple discourses on violence. The intersectional scholarship is crucial to investigate the phenomenon of violence as it highlights the interaction of multiple differences that creates subordination and inequality for particular groups of women (Kerner, 2017). To the best of my knowledge, no previous studies in the context of Pakistan have focused on the differences among women based on such identities as Christian and Muslim women in the rural and the urban context. Treating all women equally elevates the cost of violence consequences for some women than others; therefore, the diversity approach of intersectionality is a good way of representing reality by capturing the complexity of oppression in the social world (Carbin and Edenheim, 2013) as it acknowledges issues of differences among women (Davis, 2008). Intersectionality has provided an alternative to all the perspectives that are against the static identity

conceptualisations (Davis, 2008). Moreover, it is universally applicable and can be employed to analyse and figure out individual or group experiences, any social practice or structural arrangements (Davis, 2008) by challenging common identity and shared experiences of women (Crenshaw, 1989; Ludvig, 2006; Davis, 2008). After discussing patriarchy and intersectionality as major theoretical frameworks, the next section will focus on understanding violence and how it is defined in the literature.

2.4 Ontology of Domestic Violence against Women

Violence is the use of power to make others subordinate and to shape the course of conduct of others. People experience multiple forms of violence that are usually arrayed at the micro, meso, and macro-level. Walby (2009) asserts that violence is a social phenomenon that is deployed and regulated by social institutions to constitute power and inequality and is not reducible to individualised pathology, psychological traits, hormones, or emotions. Violence is complex as it has institutional domains and involves individuals, groups, and states. Violence against women is one form of it which is considered as the outcome of systematic gender inequality (Gill et al., 2016). The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women by the UN General Assembly (1993) defines violence against women as:

> Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.

This is a broad definition of violence; however, it does not cover the financial and social harm caused to women. On the contrary, Gill and colleagues (2016, p.1) not only cover the missing aspects of the definition given by the United Nations, they also include the types of perpetrators:

> Any physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, financial or social harm caused to a woman by individuals (known or unknown to the woman), groups, institutions or states, based primarily or in part on the fact that she is a woman.

The involvement of institutions and state in this definition explains that violence is not just an individual act, the role of the state is questionable particularly when interventions are not made or implemented to protect women. Violence against women is expressed both in the public and the private sphere, though vary in types due to the changing contexts and socio-cultural norms of societies. Home brings with itself a sense of protection; however, the most heinous forms of violence are the ones women suffer in the territory of their homes. Violence against women in the private sphere of the home is documented with various terms and interpretations and there are contradictions and contestations among academicians for using the terms (Cooper et al.,

2006; Kelly and Johnson, 2008; Groves and Thomas, 2014; Boyle, 2019). Literature in the area of violence against women reveals that the most widely used terms are intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence; IPV describes the violence committed by an intimate partner including boyfriends or girlfriends, current or former spouses (Gill et al., 2016) whereas, domestic violence is considered to cover broad aspects of violence and perpetrators could include both an intimate/ cohabiting partner and members of a family (Cooper et al., 2006; Walby et al., 2014; Ragavan and Iyengar, 2017). United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef, 2000) defines the term as following:

> The term "domestic violence" includes violence against women and girls by an intimate partner, including a cohabiting partner, and by other family members, whether this violence occurs within or beyond the confines of the home…In other words, the term "domestic" here refers to the types of relationships involved rather than the place where the violent act occurs (p.2).

As is evident from this definition that using the term 'domestic violence' covers a range of perpetrators within the family making it feasible to be used in contexts where women suffer not only from their husbands/partners but also other members of a husband's family. Although the purpose here is not to privilege one term over the other rather to prefer one that could cover multiple perpetrators keeping in view the context of the Punjabi society where a joint household system is a norm. Resultantly, women are at risk of facing violence from other members of their affinal families. It is not just the term domestic violence that is mainly used in this study, other terms that cover a range of acts like coercive control, or abuse are frequently engaged in the analysis chapters keeping in view that domestic violence and control tactics are interconnected (Yllo, 2005).

As violence is socially constructed, the definitions of domestic violence vary depending on the contexts and specific socio-cultural and historical conditions. For example, in the United Kingdom, the Home Office updated the definition of domestic violence in 2012 by recognising violence and abuse suffered by young people. This definition states:

> Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive and threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional.

This definition of domestic violence reflects the broader explanation given by the United Nations about violence against women. However, the use of terms 'incident' and 'pattern' are contested by scholars as the approach to deal with domestic violence is incident-based rather than need-based services for the survivors (Kelly and Westmarland, 2016). A growing

literature reflects that women explain violence as an ongoing process of micro-management and control of their lives rather than concrete incidents that goes unrecognised and unpunished (Stark, 2012; Mitra, 2013; Kelly and Westmarland, 2016). Kelly's conceptualisation of 'continuum' provides a way to connect the horrific to everyday control as it covers women's experiences over a lifetime (Kelly and Westmarland, 2016; Boyle, 2019). Violence, this way, cannot be limited merely to acts, rather an experience which is indeterminate temporally with far-reaching consequences.

Qualitative studies reflect that persons on the receiving end explain their experiences with their particular contexts which manifest domestic violence a complex phenomenon. In a qualitative study of intimate violence, Mitra (2013) details the cultural processes that shape women's experiences of violence in India, the narratives of women revealed nuanced and subtle forms of violence that do not fall into the routine definitions. Similarly, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) emphasise that there could be various ways to define domestic violence and it is dependent on the varying perceptions shaped by cultural contexts. Socialisation with gendered norms has a significant contribution in shaping the ways women define and perceive domestic violence. In patrirachal contexts, men and women believe that violence is acceptable in certain circumstances; consequently, cultural contexts are important to enhance understandings of domestic violence (Madhani et al., 2017).

The idea that domestic violence against women is generated by men is a traditional paradigm which is not suitable particularly in the context of Pakistan. Due to strict gender binary and an Islamic state, same-sex relationships are prohibited that makes it clear that there is no place for the discourse that highlights violence by a woman against another woman in an intimate relationship. It is possible by members of a husband's family, both women and men, to be involved in instigating a husband against his wife or direct perpetrators in such cases (Fernandez, 1997). On the contrary, in the research literature, domestic violence typically involves one perpetrator one victim (Fernandez, 1997; Salter, 2014) and the perpetrator is normally considered a man. Therefore, the experiences of women victims of domestic violence may necessarily not be universal (Fernandez, 1997). Most of the theories explaining the phenomenon of domestic violence against women revolve around male perpetrators (Fernandez, 1997) and the role of females as perpetrators and instigators in domestic violence against women has not been investigated deeply. Theories of domestic violence revolve around male perpetrators and are incommensurate in particular social and cultural settings (Rajan, 2016). Due to cross-cultural differences, it is not necessary that women's perceptions and

experiences about violence would be universal as it cannot be separated from the cultural and social context in which they experience violence (Fernandez, 1997; Rianon and Shelton, 2003). Moreover, within cultures, women's experiences of violence can vary due to the intersections of social classes, age, caste, education, religious sects, *biradri* (clan), and urban-rural divide (Fernandez, 1997).

In many south Asian countries, there is an extended family system prevalent compared to the nuclear system in the west (Fernandez, 1997). Therefore, women in South Asia have experiences where families of men are involved, particularly mothers-in-law, in committing acts of violence against daughters-in-law either as instigators or perpetrators of violence (Fernandez, 1997; Rianon and Shelton, 2003; Raj et al., 2006; Chan et al., 2009) as women also benefit from 'hierarchies of domination' (p.438) due to their locations in particular social systems (Fernandez, 1997). Men in such situations could be passive observers when their families are involved or, they could be participants in controlling their female partners (Raj et al., 2006; Chan et al., 2009). As masculinity and violence are socially constructed, patriarchal gender norms exert pressures on individuals to behave in certain ways to maintain hegemonic gender beliefs. Men's control of their female partners is a manifestation of it and is normative in the Punjabi culture. This control could be due to his own choice and/or he does this for the sake of his family to maintain a superior position over his partner. Thus, patriarchy shapes the victimisation of women by both men and women (Pease, 2019).

The above discussion provides the grounds to understand violence beyond a male perpetrator female victim model to a broader visualisation of the phenomenon in the Punjabi society where the active involvement of extended family members influences relationship dynamics of spouses within a general patriarchal environment. This makes violence more of a process when other members of the family are also involved in controlling a woman who joins the family after marriage. Resultantly, violence becomes more of a micro-management of women and includes both coercive control and concrete acts/incidents of violence (Kelly and Westmarland, 2016; Stark and Hester, 2019). Arguably, context-specific meanings of violence and their interpretations are important. Besides, it is also crucial to understand how violence impacts women and others around them including children who also witness it in their daily routine. Thus, the focus of this study is violence that occurs to a woman due to a marriage relationship and is perpetrated by a husband and/or members of the affinal family.

All the theories of violence usually fall under feminist or family violence perspectives. Therefore, the next section elaborates these two major perspectives that explain violence against women with their particular theoretical backgrounds.

2.5 Theoretical Perspectives on Domestic Violence against Women

Violence against women is conceptualised differently in the literature and due to this variation, there is a lack of consensus on conceptual frameworks that attempt to answer the causes of this distinct problem (Loseke et al., 2005). The most commonly used theoretical perspectives are from feminism and sociology. These frameworks bring into focus the human behaviours by engaging gender relations, social structures and social processes. However, assessing the usefulness of these frameworks is hard as a particular framework interprets the phenomenon of violence through a certain way that may be beneficial in one context but not in others (Loseke et al., 2005). Moreover, social systems are changing due to the spatial and the temporal order (Walby, 2009); therefore, each framework has its strengths and weaknesses.

By narrowing the focus on **Feminist Perspectives**, which are predominant since the 1970s, there are varieties of viewpoints. However, there is a common central underpinning that gender needs to be focused while analysing partner violence. They take gender relations in sharp focus and consider men as perpetrators and women as victims of violence with an emphasis on gender and power (Yllo, 2005). The supporters of the Feminist Perspectives have an assessment that inequality and sexism in patriarchal societies result in violence towards women (Bell and Naugle, 2008). Most feminist perspectives believe that gender asymmetry is the reason of this problem and men are far more likely to commit violence against their female partners. It challenges the traditional notion that domestic violence is a private matter by identifying political, social, and cultural forces that require actions at the broader policy level (McPhail et al., 2007). Earlier feminist perspectives have emphasised gender for analysis by taking women as a homogeneous group, always victims of violence, that obscure the multiplicity among women. Their notion of the commonality of women regarding intimate violence obscures the differences among women (Yllo, 2005). However, the current developments in feminist perspectives have started highlighting the intersections of gender with other systems of oppression particularly through the contribution of feminists of colour (Yllo, 2005; McPhail et al., 2007; Ali and Naylor, 2013). Feminists are also criticised for their inattention to the violence perpetrated by women against their male partners. The proponents of feminist perspectives have a stance that most of the violence is committed by men for patriarchal control. On the contrary, women's use of violence is mostly for self-defence or they fight back

to resist which implies that contexts are important to understand violence instead of simply counting acts of violence (McPhail et al., 2007; DeKeseredy, 2016). However, due to its origin and development in the western feminism, it focuses on intimate partner violence only and does not cover the violence women suffer from extended members of husbands' families.

The Integrative Feminist Model suggested by McPhail et al. (2007) has incorporated the aspects of gender, class, race, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, and age that create power differentials and also acknowledge female aggression in the context of partner abuse. However, in milieu of the current study, women are taken both as perpetrators and survivors of violence, they are not intimate partners rather this relationship is different from the one explained by feminist perspectives. Therefore, understanding power differentials among women who are not related as partners are not possible through the model developed by McPhail and colleagues. Furthermore, varieties of feminist perspectives sometimes contradict and criticise each other that results in no single interpretation of violence against women (Ali and Naylor, 2013). However, patriarchy has been engaged to make visible the gender relations of the Punjabi society and its influence in developing unequal power relations between the sexes. Patriarchy rejects the egalitarian gender structures therefore, violence is considered an acceptable way to maintain domination of men.

Family Violence is another major theoretical perspective given by Gelles and Straus that considers violence within the family as a broader issue and partner violence is just one aspect of the family violence (Gelles, 1985; Yick, 2001; Lawson, 2012). This perspective identifies socio-economic factors that perpetuate violence and considers patriarchy as just one of the causes rather than the main reason (Rodriguez-Menes and Safranoff, 2012). Although the factors identified by this perspective and others are considered as risk factors, women's lives are complex and no single explanation is enough to cover the phenomenon of violence against them (Rodriguez-Menes and Safranoff, 2012). Within the family violence perspective, the focus is why family members use violence and there are a number of theories available to address this question including Exchange/ Control Theory, Resource Theory, Systems Theory, and Ecological Theory as all these perspectives provide an explanation of intimate partner violence within the family institution (Gelles, 1985; Lawson, 2012; Ali and Naylor, 2013). However, these do not cover violence perpetrated by the members of the affinal family of a woman that is one dimension of this research.

Exchange/ Social Control Theory elaborates the amount of costs and rewards one achieves by committing violence (Gelles, 1983, 1985). If the rewards are higher than costs then a person

commits acts of violence (Gelles, 1985; Jasinski, 2001; Cavanaugh, 2012) and there are a number of contributory factors that increase the rewards than costs of violence including the family institution as a private arena, cultural acceptance of violence, and non-interference of agencies and social institutions by considering violence as a private matter (Gelles, 1983, 1985; Jasinski, 2001). Moreover, the desired results, as expected by the perpetrator, further reinforce acts of violence (Jasinski, 2001). Another explanation of family violence is **Resource Theory** which is situated in the Exchange Theory Framework as the main emphasis is on the idea of power within the family (Goode, 1971; Jasinski, 2001). Men use power in the form of violence as a resource when other resources like income and educational status are fewer or lacking (Goode, 1971; Anderson, 1997; Jasinski, 2001) whereas, those having more resources try to dominate their wives by using these resources as they are less likely to use violence as a resource (Loseke, 2005; Cavanaugh, 2012). Ultimately the power differences between partners are the risk factors for family violence (Anderson, 1997). Resource Theory contravenes with other perspectives that promote the empowerment of women by providing them resources in the form of education and employment to end the violence because men with fewer resources, as compared to their wives, try to use violence as a power to dominate their partners (Ali and Naylor, 2013). A major drawback of this theory is that it does not address the issue of violence in societies which are patriarchal in nature, men's use of violence against women is questionable as they already enjoy power and resources in these settings (Ali and Naylor, 2013). Secondly, within domestic settings, women have fewer resources than men so they should be more violent than men to achieve power (Anderson, 1997). Although few studies have supported Resource Theory, these studies are limited to a small sample of just one member of the family and biases are also predominant in reporting of domestic violence cases (Anderson, 1997). **Systems Theory** has a stance that violence within the family is universal, it views violence not as an individual pathology but a systemic product (Murray, 2006). The intensity of violence depends on the level of feedback from the system (Straus, 1973). Positive feedback increases violence whereas negative one results in less intensity of violence within the family (Straus, 1973; Gelles, 1985; Lawson, 2012). This theory considers the interaction of various systems including familial and societal variables, and individual characteristics that together create situations of violence with varying consequences for family and society (Straus, 1973). While interpreting Systems Theory, Straus (1973) considers violence as a physical force used by the family members and does not mention any other forms as violence. One major drawback of Systems Theory is that it does not consider power dynamics in families that give a supposition that all family members are equally responsible for acts of violence (Murray,

2006). Besides, this theory also considers psychopathological traits of individuals within the family as a cause of violence (Straus, 1973) whereas current literature considers that violence is a social phenomenon that cannot be justified by labelling it as a psychological trait (Walby, 2009).

Gender is the major dividing point between feminists and family violence theories as the former considers gender asymmetry in intimate relationships whereas the proponents of family violence have a view that women are as likely to commit violence as men. Family violence considers that sexist norms do contribute alongside other structural factors while, for feminists, sexism is the central point of analysis. Besides these two opposing theoretical explanations of partner violence, social scientists have developed integrated theories to avoid polarised perspectives and one of them is the ecological framework. The **Ecological Framework** is an integrated set of explanations that address multiple levels of influence to unfold violence in intimate relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Heise, 1998; Dasgupta, 2001; Flake, 2005; Ali and Naylor, 2013). It was initially developed and used to explain human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986); however, later on, this framework has been engaged to explicate child abuse (Belsky, 1980) and domestic violence against women (Heise, 1998; Dasgupta, 2001; Flake, 2005; Lawson, 2012; Ali and Naylor, 2013).

The Ecological Framework discourages single level explanation of violence against women and acknowledges that violence is a complex phenomenon that needs to be dealt at various levels with multidimensional factors involve in its explanation. This framework emphasises on the personal, situational, and sociocultural factors that consist of personal history, micro, exo, and macro systems (Heise, 1998) as the interaction of individuals and social systems shape the behaviour of people in the society (Ali and Naylor, 2013). The individual or ontogenic factors contribute to the response of a person towards the stressors present in the micro and the exo-system. Simultaneously, Heise (1998) has pointed out that there are few reliable ontogenic factors in identifying the aetiology of violence towards women. There are two factors that are particularly predictive of husbands that they would possibly commit violence against their wives: if they have been "experiencing physical or sexual abuse as a child" and/or "witnessing domestic violence as a child" (Heise, 1998, p.267). The microsystem factors involve direct relationships particularly in the family institution which is the site of women's oppression because societies where men control economic and decision-making authority in the families, women suffer more domestic violence (Heise, 1998; Flake, 2005). At the exo-system level, individual interact with formal and informal social structures of society (Flake, 2005). Violence

occurs if men have low socio-economic status, interacting with delinquent peers, and family and women have isolation from public activities (Heise, 1998). The macrosystem involves cultural norms and beliefs of a society that influence the other levels including individual, micro, and exo-system and most of the theories of violence deals with macro-level (Heise, 1998). The Ecological Model endorses the broader macro-level explanations of violence by other theories, but it also asserts the relationship of this macro-level with other three levels of explanations to take a comprehensive portrayal of violence against women (Heise, 1998). Although the Nested Ecological Framework has a focus on domestic violence against women, it is also used to explain violence of women against their male partners for self-defence (Dasgupta, 2001). However, a major criticism on the ecological framework is that it combines feminist and family violence perspectives which are theoretically conflicting and, thus, makes this model incoherent (Pease, 2019). For example, this model explains societal gender norms at the macro level by taking influence from feminist theory while, at the same time, explains gender-neutral personality factors that contribute to intimate partner violence. Thus, gender is just one variable rather than a central tenant to explain familial/domestic and societal patriarchy to understand domestic violence against women. Though the factors to explain partner violence in the ecological model might be useful, gendered social context alongside other systems of oppression are crucial in societies like Pakistan where patriarchy and male domination are a norm as it helps to explain relationship dynamics within the family institution and at the broader societal level. Besides, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2011) argue that addressing all four levels identified in the ecological model are only possible in a sophisticated longitudinal research that makes it difficult to engage fully in cross-sectional research.

This section has provided a review of feminist and family violence perspectives to explain the causes of violence against women. Though each theory provides interpretation of violence, gender is the major dividing line between the two perspectives. Besides these, the ecological framework integrates aspects of both the perspectives and explain the phenomenon of violence at various levels. However, this integrated framework is criticised for combining family violence and feminist perspectives that are theoretically opposing. Thus, this research is influenced by the patriarchy that is discussed earlier in this chapter and belongs to the feminist perspective.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter has discussed broadly the theoretical perspectives that could explain the construction of gender and violence. The first section focused on theories of gender and the

ways it is maintained through various masculinities and femininities. Besides, hegemonic masculinity has been elaborated due to its ability to carry dominant gender beliefs and its contribution to maintain patriarchy. The next section provides a detailed overview of patriarchy and its development since the late twentieth century to the contemporary debate about it. The recent developments have brought the theory of patriarchy back into the discussion to explain violence against women particularly by the work of Hunnicutt (2009) and Pease (2019) as both have introduced varieties of patriarchy instead of a single explanation that was the main criticism on it. In the context of Punjabi society, family has a significant role in shaping the relationships of spouses that has been discussed through the patriarchal bargain and the explanations of power given by poststructuralists. In addition to that, intersectionality has been engaged alongside patriarchy due to diversity among women and their experiences based on their geographical locations and religious identity. The later part discusses various definitions of violence against women that the United Nations and gender scholars have developed. Reasons have been discussed for choosing the term 'domestic violence' rather than intimate partner violence or any other terms due to the involvement of the affinal family of a woman in violence instigation and perpetration.

Feminist and family violence are the two broadly engaged perspectives to explain domestic violence against women. All the important theories that fall under these broad theoretical divisions have been discussed. It is difficult to claim that certain theories are correct while others are not as each perspective has strengths and weaknesses that has been discussed. Simultaneously, domestic violence is a complex phenomenon and no single theory can explain it due to variations in contexts as most of the theories are based on western ideas and situations (Pease, 2019). However, this research intends to engage broadly with patriarchy and intersectionality to explain domestic violence in the local context of Pakistan. This has been done keeping in the view the explanatory power of the patriarchy to explain gender inequality and violence against women whereas intersectionality would be useful due to the diverse identities of the study participants that assist in understanding domestic violence. As this chapter has provided detailed theoretical literature on gender and violence against women, the next chapter has a particular focus on Pakistan. It will provide the context of gender relations as a background to understand violence against women generally and domestic violence in particular.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER RELATIONS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN PAKISTAN

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of gender relations and the situation of violence against women in Pakistan. A particular focus has been given to the intersections of religious identity, geographical location of women and domestic violence in the local context. The literature reflects on gender relations by comparing the status of women in comparison to men and their positioning as carriers of family honour that provide men the opportunities to commit violence against them. The chapter then highlights the development of the issue of violence against women and its significance in Pakistan with regard to the growing awareness of women's rights in the world and endorsement of Pakistan to the international women's human rights documents.

As one of the important dimensions of this research is the religious identity of women; therefore, the next section gives an overview of the situation of the Christians, as a religious minority, in Pakistan by reflecting on their socio-legal standing. The literature in the Pakistani context provides limited evidence about the perspectives of Christian minorities about domestic violence against women. Hence, the subsequent section analyses any related literature that could assist in explaining this phenomenon. The next section reviews the phenomenon of domestic violence by urban/ rural division and stresses the importance of local geographies and social contexts particularly in the rural settings. The chapter also evaluates the role of the formal institutions for provision of support to the women survivors of domestic violence. Towards the end, the discussion examines the gaps that exist between women's legal rights to dissolute a marriage and the customary practices that discourage divorce alongside lacunas in the Christian divorce law.

3.2 Gender Relations and the Status of Women in Pakistan

Pakistani society is predominantly patriarchal with strong values and norms of the family institution (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Qadeer, 2006; Ali et al., 2016). It is diverse with divisions based on urban rural residences, social classes, religious sects, language differences, and caste system. The Pakistani family structures are based on a collective orientation which means that the household systems are generally joint or extended; however, due to urbanisation, nuclear families are also becoming common (Taqui et al., 2007; Critelli, 2010a). Gender is organised on a strict binary division and the patriarchal structure favours men as a powerful

gender whereas women are second class citizens due to the traditional norms of the society (Ferdoos, 2005; Wasim et al., 2008; Critelli, 2010b; Murshid and Critelli, 2017). Hence, men hold the decision-making authority as heads of families whereas women are perceived as dependent on them (Ali and Gavino, 2008; Ali et al., 2011). As gender roles are clearly defined due to the patriarchal nature of the society, sons are preferred over daughters which depict inequality of genders and women's subordination (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Niaz, 2004; Ali et al., 2011). During pregnancy, if ultrasound indicates a male baby then women usually get privileged treatment whereas, for a girl, it is quite opposite (Ali et al., 2011). Therefore, women having sons are considered privileged as boys are assets while it is a curse if they have no sons (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000; Bibi, 2015). One of the factors for son preference is their responsibility of providing care to their parents in old age whereas, daughters leave the parents' home after marriage and are not able to provide any support to them (Lyon and Fischer, 1997; Bhattacharya, 2014).

Bano (1997) reflects on the different roles of women in the Pakistani society from the perspectives of religious groups as these people believe that women's primary responsibilities are to maintain their families and to bear children. In contrast, educated elite class are progressive in their attitude towards women and have beliefs that other than domestic chores, women do have occupational and public responsibilities (Bano, 1997). However, culture and religion are intermingled that creates confusion about the status of women in an Islamic state (Weiss, 2012). Despite the traditional views about the role of women in the society, substantial changes have occurred in the social, political, and economic domains particularly the allocation of reserved seats for women in the parliament, fixed quotas in the government jobs, and many pro women legislations in recent years to protect them (Weiss, 2014). Despite these facts, men are considered to be dominant and commanding in their familial life as it is perceived culturally shameful if a man is subordinate to his wife and thus, marital equality is unwanted in the patriarchal culture of the society (Niaz, 2004; Zakar et al., 2013). Local knowledge assists and justifies in legitimising the dominant roles of men and gives them the authority to be exploitative towards women which are further strengthened by using religious misconceptions to suppress women's rights (Ali et al., 2011). Women belonging to urban areas have greater access to education and economic opportunities and they perceive that the notions of masculinity also encompass gender equity and involvement of women in decision-making at the domestic level (Ali et al., 2012). It is, however, still a question that how much these

emerging images of masculinity are linked to actual practices of men in their daily lives (Sullivan, 2004).

Gender relations are very much dependent the way boys and girls are brought up and socialised in a society. Though parents give lots of love and care to daughters, they get worried about their future life as it depends on the attitude of husbands and in-laws. Women are also considered as carriers of family honour and it has a special significance in the local culture (Critelli, 2012). Policing of women's behaviour and their sexuality are common. Pre-marital relations and women's choice to exercise independence in selecting spouses and seeking divorce against the will of the families are perceived deviant behaviours that bring dishonour to the family reputation. Thus, any violation of norms related to marriage and family results in honour related crimes in Pakistan. Despite legal sanctions, honour-based violence and killings occur and the perpetrators are mostly male members of the family as the woman is believed to have insulted them through her acts (Idriss, 2015). Therefore, girls are socialised and disciplined to protect their sexuality and conform to the desired norms and behaviour (Usman, 2012). Owing to this ideology, men are trained to be protective of this honour whereas women are expected to be docile and submissive in marital relationships (Ali et al., 2012; Isran and Isran, 2012; Nasrullah and Bhatti, 2012). They are supposed to submit not only to the authority of their husbands but also to the in-laws to avoid any conflict and divorce whereas husbands and in-laws occupy a dominant position due to inalienable right of a husband to divorce his wife. On the contrary, divorce is stigmatised and bring dishonour to a woman and her family. Resultantly, the divorced status of a woman reduces her chances of a second marriage; therefore, women try to continue with their difficult circumstances. As the gender norms consider women a burden and responsibility, Pakistan is one of the countries where girl child marriages are common (National Institute of Population Studies and ICF International, 2019). Girl child marriages are a violation of the basic human rights and is prohibited under the "Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 1929". As women carry the family honour and do not provide any financial support to parents; therefore, gender norms, poverty, lack of education and traditional harmful practices drive child marriages. Early girl child marriages are also associated with higher risk of domestic violence and marital rape (Ijaz, 2017).

Gender relations and the status of women in Pakistan show that women have a subordinate position in comparison to men (Nasrullah et al., 2014). However, it is crucial to highlight that due to the intersections of gender with categories of class, region, urban/ rural division, and different religions, heterogeneity among the category women is apparent which is further

strengthened by the tribal and feudal culture in different parts of the country and unequal socioeconomic development (Bari, 2000; Critelli, 2010b). Women in Pakistan are gaining empowerment due to educational attainments, professional and employment related positions and with a growing awareness of their rights but simultaneously, they are worst victims of gender-based violence as the reality of women varies greatly (Critelli, 2010a). Globalisation and forces of modernisation create pressures on the local culture however, the patriarchal structure resists any such change that does not fit into its basic ideology (Zakar et al., 2013). As empowerment of women is linked to their higher literacy and economic freedom, such independence also create barriers for women's adjustment as it challenges male authority and thus, the breadwinning role of women sometimes yield hurdles for them (Atkinson et al., 2005; Simister and Mehta, 2010; Murshid et al., 2016). The evidence shows that highest reported cases of violence against women were identified in many districts of Pakistan with significant literacy rates (Zia and Butt, 2012). This section has illustrated the state of gender relations, the next section would provide background factors that contributed to the emergence of the issue of violence against women.

3.3 Emergence of the Issue of Violence against Women in Pakistan

The issue of violence against women gained prominence in Pakistan particularly in the 1980s and 1990s when the second wave of women's movement in the world came to an end and a new era of awareness about the rights of women was also felt in the global south with many organisations led by educated middle-class women (Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987; Bano, 1997; Murshid and Critelli, 2017). Activism for women's rights in Pakistan arose due to the military government of General Zia-Ul-Haq in 1979 who introduced discriminatory laws against women in the name of religion (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2004; Khan, 2004; Burki, 2016). These steps led to the sustained efforts of women's and human rights activists and organisations who strongly resisted the state led prejudices towards women that had fuelled a rise in the incidences of violence against women (Mumtaz and Shaheed, 1987; Khan, 2004; Mullally, 2005; Weiss, 2014; Murshid and Critelli, 2017) and many such cases got international media attention. Meanwhile, Pakistan officially endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)-an international women's rights document that binds the signatory states to implement its provisions, and also consented to implement United Nations Millennium Development Goals (Jahangir, 2000; Critelli, 2010a, 2010b; Bhattacharya, 2014). All these steps increased the visibility of the abuse of women's basic rights internationally. Being a

patriarchal society, it was challenging for state institutions to make provisions that could create a conducive environment for women when discriminatory laws and customary practices were prevalent simultaneously (Jilani and Ahmed, 2004; Critelli, 2010b). The resulting actions were policies that were, paradoxically, contradictory and without categorical actions (Critelli, 2010a). Due to the international commitments, it became difficult to defend discriminatory laws and violation of human rights of women. Therefore, the forthcoming governments, predominantly, the military led government of Pervaiz Musharraf took many initiatives particularly the repeal of discriminatory laws and introduction of the progressive reforms and policies for the empowerment of women that, somehow, gave equality to women in legal documents (Zia, 2009; Critelli, 2010a; Murshid and Critelli, 2017).

Gender disparities are wide in the social system of Pakistan and women are sufferers of different forms of violence (Jilani and Ahmed, 2004). In recent years, many pro-women legislations have been made at the national level particularly the Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2010, The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act 2011, The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act 2011, and a National Commission on the Status of Women Act 2012. However, after eighteenth amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan, the responsibility for women's development has been allocated to the provincial governments (Shirkat Gah, 2013; United Nations, 2013; Murshid and Critelli, 2017). As a result, all the provinces of Pakistan except Khyber Pakhtunkhwa passed legislations to protect women against violence (Noreen and Musarrat, 2013; Burki, 2016; Nabeel et al., 2016; Zaidi and Farooq, 2018). All the national and provincial legal provisions cover both domestic and community violence suffered by women and are aimed at protecting them from customary practices including the marriage of women with the Holy Quran, depriving them of their rightful property, giving them in marriage for the purpose of settling disputes among rivals, disfigure them by using acid, and from harassment at the workplaces.

The cases of violence against women have increased despite the legal measures to protect women as the official data from 2012-15 of the Punjab province indicates a rise in the reported cases and a fall in the conviction rates (Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, 2016). Implementation of law is a perennial problem in Pakistan; consequently, all the policies and laws relevant to women face similar issues of administrative and structural constraints in its enactment (Isran and Isran, 2012; Bhattacharya, 2014). Likewise, most of the cases of violence against women go unreported due to structural and cultural issues (Nasrullah et al., 2009; Shirkat Gah, 2013). Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2017) indicates that the focus of

government remains protective rather than taking preventive measures that subsequently does not contribute in declining the cases of violence against women. In case of women wanting to file complaints then formal institutions like police are male dominated places and are insensitive towards victims of violence (Sajid et al., 2010; Shirkat Gah, 2013). Besides this, women are largely unaware of their rights in the law particularly uneducated and those in the rural areas (Amnesty International, 2002; Shirkat Gah, 2013; Zakar et al., 2016).

Domestic violence is considered a private matter due to deep rooted beliefs that women are subordinate to men in the marriage relationship and sharing with others is a breach of family privacy. Such a mindset normalises violence in the family institution, women themselves do not disclose it as sharing with others could worsen the problem and bring dishonour to them. Reporting of violence exacerbates the problem, women have to face separation or divorce and they may deprive themselves of their children for such an action (Andersson et al., 2010). Thus, they try to protect their honour and of their families and to avoid the stigma of divorce (Simister and Mehta, 2010; National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International, 2013; Murshid and Critelli, 2017). The dominance of a husband in the marriage relationship also provide the opportunity to the affinal families to control women's autonomy by restricting their mobility outside homes and involving them less in household decision- making (Hakim and Aziz, 1998; Ali et al., 2012). Economic dependence of women on their husbands further contribute to reducing their independence and decision-making ability (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001). A report by the Aurat Foundation highlights that domestic violence against women has increased in Pakistan (Aurat Foundation, 2015) and perpetrators are mostly husbands and in-laws (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International, 2013; Bibi et al., 2014). In addition to the cultural factors, lack of awareness about available services and financial constraints alongside the insensitive attitude of the police towards domestic violence contribute to its less reporting (Andersson et al., 2010).

The above section has reflected on the situation of violence against women in Pakistan by highlighting the structural, legal and cultural aspects. The next section illustrates the situation of Christians in a Muslim majority country. As this research has a focus on comparing the perceptions and experiences of Christian and Muslim women in the local context of Punjab, it is imperative to provide the circumstances of Christians for an understanding of the status of minorities in Pakistan. By doing so would also provide insight into the positionality of Christian women; therefore, the next section details the socioeconomic and legal status of Christians in Pakistan.

3.4 Relationship Dynamics between Muslims and Christians in Pakistan

The population of Pakistan is predominantly Muslims and only 3.74% consists of religious minorities (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The Christians, along with the Hindus, are the two largest minority groups (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2019); however, there is contradictory evidence as several minority rights advocacy groups disagree with the census results of 2017 (United States Department of State, 2019). Conclusively, a precise number of Christians is difficult to find in Pakistan except that most of the Christians reside in the Punjab province (Mcclintock, 1992; Gregory, 2012; Raina, 2014; Home Office, 2015; United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2016;).

Minority status carries a sense of pressure with itself and the dominant majority groups consider them alien and dispersed groups (Gabriel, 2007). In 1947, at the time of the independence of Pakistan, 15% of the total population of Pakistan consisted of religious minorities that have reduced to 3-4% according to recent estimates (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 2015). Being the largest religious minority community in Punjab, the Christians suffer dangers of life, discrimination and are victimised and abused because of certain laws particularly the Blasphemy law in Pakistan (Malik, 2002; Gregory, 2012; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2017). They also get exploited by the local Muslim community and, in some areas, by extremist groups (Gregory, 2012; Home Office, 2015). Although the Constitution of Pakistan protects the rights of religious minorities by extending the freedom to profess religion and religious institutions and equality of citizenship, the situation is quite contradictory to what the constitution offers (Gregory, 2012). During the era of the military government of General Zia-ul-Haq in 1977, the Islamisation of Pakistan started in such a way that it adversely affected the women and the religious minorities of Pakistan (Rahman, 2012). However, the concern here is to discuss laws that are relevant to the religious minorities and are being utilised to exploit them. The most significant is the Blasphemy law that is a source of abuse. Though the Blasphemy law was already part of Pakistan's Penal Code (statute book), it was altered to give capital punishments of death penalty or life time imprisonment if a person disrespects the Holy Quran or the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) directly or indirectly in any manner either spoken or written (Rahman, 2012). These provisions in the law encourage people to harass their rivals, take revenge, persecute the religious minorities, and to settle personal disputes instead of taking these provisions of law in the sense of religious sacredness. The misuse of law is largely because of the absence of any arrangements of giving punishment

to the person who has a malicious intent of false accusation of blasphemy to the other person (Gabriel, 2007; Rahman, 2012; Pio and Syed, 2016).

Religious clerics also provoke and disseminate negative stereotypes against religious minorities and people from different strata follow them blindly (Pio and Syed, 2016). The power of religious groups is so dominant that in many cases of accusation of blasphemy, the mob, without any evidence, burnt the houses of the Christian community. As a result, they had to flee to save their lives as a mere rumour of blasphemy was enough to demolish the whole Christian community (Rahman, 2012; Raina, 2014). There are numerous incidents when the Christian community was attacked and their houses were burnt and many killed including women and children whereas some religious clerics also demanded a ban on the Bible for narrating 'immoral stories' (Gregory, 2012; Rahman, 2012; Raina, 2014; Pio and Syed, 2016; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2017). Besides facing harassment to convert into Muslim faith and mob attacks from the local community, the Christians also suffered many bomb blasts on their churches in the major cities of Pakistan that resulted in dozens of deaths and injuries (Minority Rights Group International, 2016; Pio and Syed, 2016; Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2017).

Muslims who object to the Blasphemy law or try to defend the religious minorities are also considered blasphemous. In 2011, the then governor of the Punjab, the biggest province of the country, was assassinated by his official bodyguard because the governor had criticised the Blasphemy law and had taken up the case of a Christian woman who was accused of Blasphemy. She was sentenced to death in 2010 by the High Court and her case was pending in the supreme court (Pio and Syed, 2016; Hashim, 2014; Ballard, 2012). Again in 2011, the federal minister for minorities, a Christian figure, was shot dead for providing recommendations in the Blasphemy law (Ballard, 2012; Hashim, 2014; Pio and Syed, 2016). These are few of the examples to give an overview of the situation of how the Christian community has attracted hate, although in theory, they are allowed to practice their religion in Pakistan (Pio and Syed, 2016). Moreover, their evidence is given less value than the Muslim testimony in legal matters that make their position unequal compared to the Muslim citizens (Gregory, 2012; Pio and Syed, 2016).

In addition to the legal and social discrimination, a crucial aspect regarding religious minorities is the curriculum taught in the educational institutions of Pakistan which is a source of growing religious intolerance (Rahman, 2012). In Pakistan, there are religious *madrassas* (a term used for schools in the religious context) in addition to the public and private schools. There is no

uniformity in the curriculum of public and private institutions and students of *madrassas* are less tolerant to religious minorities (Rahman, 2012). Pakistani textbooks contain materials that contain biased passages and depict distrust towards the Christians, they are portrayed as westerners and colonial oppressors and similar feelings are reflected for other minorities (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2016). Thus, a major problem within Pakistan is the history of Muslim-Christian relations that also become the reason of uncomfortable relations between them and are reflected from the attitude of the Muslims (Gabriel, 2007). Gregory (2012) has compared the situation of the Minorities residing in Pakistan to those of the urban and rural working class of Pakistan to see if both groups have a similar status. Though the working class suffer multiple issues including poverty, lack of education, violence and deprivation of the basic necessities that lead to their powerlessness and vulnerabilities, religious minorities suffer additional burden due to their religious differences from the majority population and carry insecurities due to the lack of the state will to protect them (Gregory, 2012).

Being a religious minority in an Islamic state also restricts choices of employment and access to political offices for the Christians that further strengthen their feelings of persecution and insecurity with the mindset that only Muslims are sacrosanct in Pakistan (Mcclintock, 1992; Gabriel, 2007). They are socioeconomically and demographically oppressed by the religious groups and local power elites, and Blasphemy is used to cash their land, labour, and women (Raina, 2014) who are abducted and forcefully converted to Islam (Minority Rights Group International, 2016). In the context of Pakistan, literature reflects on the plight of the Pakistani Christians by focusing on their legal and socio-religious position, it does not grasp the domestic intimate relations within the Christian community. Mcclintock (1992) has given some deliberations on the aspects of *izzat* (honour, prestige), family orientation, and *biradri* (clan) among the Punjabi Christians of Pakistan which indicates that they share a Punjabi culture as their family structures and customs seem quite alike to that of Muslims.

This section has deliberated in detail the circumstances of Christians in Pakistan, the next section would reflect on the literature that relate to the religious identities of women and domestic violence against them.

3.5 Religious identities of Women and Domestic Violence in Pakistan

Being one of the largest minorities in Pakistan, Christians are the focus of attention for international media and researchers due to the grave discriminations they suffer in the social and legal contexts. However, the debate regarding violence against women do not incorporate

the Christian women and their positioning in the domestic sphere. Studies have identified that the minority status of women complicates their experiences of violence as they suffer both from the society and from their families (Sorenson, 1996; Kasturirangan et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the situation of Christian minority women in the Muslim countries focus mainly on the forms of violence they suffer from the larger society. In addition, their status is also linked to the overall standing of women in the society; therefore, their inequality may be larger than that of the other women (Jivan and Jacob, 2012; Petrosillo, 2014). In Pakistan, until recently, there has been limited evidence of the perceptions that women of the Christian faith hold about domestic intimate violence and their experiences about it. A study conducted in the urban area of Karachi (the largest metropolitan city), with both the Muslim and the Christian women, did not find any differences in their experiences as they were equally affected by domestic violence (Khan and Hussain, 2008). Besides, the study did not cover the experiences of women belonging to the rural localities and the sample size was also limited (Khan and Hussain, 2008).

Literature in the context of Pakistan does not converge the gender, minority status of women, and their geographical location that are important variants in shaping the perceptions and experiences of individuals regarding domestic violence against women. Such an intersectionality is significant to understand the differences among women as Ludvig (2006) points out that this approach attempts to focus on diverse identities and avoid essentialised assumptions about the notion of womanhood as a single homogenised category. Social positions of individuals are relational and, instead of reducing women into one category, intersectionality provides richer ontology of those positions that women possess in the particular social contexts (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006). This indicates a need to understand the issue and also to explore that how the minority status contributes to women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence. Although, the family structure of the Christians seems quite similar to that of the majority Punjabi culture (Mcclintock, 1992), it still needs further exploration alongside the role of the affinal families in shaping domestic intimate relations because, so far, this area is under researched in Pakistan. Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2012-13 has identified a mother-in-law along with the husband as a significant perpetrator in domestic violence cases. This survey has also pointed out the elevated reported cases of domestic violence in Punjab and the women victims from the rural areas were higher compared to the urban women (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International, 2013).

Due to scarcity of literature about the Christian women and their perceptions and experiences of domestic violence in the Pakistani context, the literature reviewed here has a focus on other Asian and Muslim countries where Christians are a minority group. Yount and Li (2009), in their seminal work, found differences of opinion between the Muslim and Christian women regarding their perceptions about justification of wife beating in Egypt. They identified that the Christian minority women held more uniform vision of the empowerment of women and they were less in favour of wife beating compared to the Muslim women (Yount and Li, 2009). Interestingly, physical domestic violence was comparatively less prevalent among the Christian women than their Muslim counterparts with high prevalence in the rural areas (Yount and Li, 2010). Similarly, in India, the National Family Health Survey 2005-2006 indicates that women belonging to the Christian minority are less likely to face physical and sexual violence than the Hindu women, who are a majority population (Kimuna et al., 2012). These findings contradict with the literature highlighting that the minority status increases the burden of violence because low income and education, higher poverty and unemployment rates contribute in making the socioeconomic position of minority group lower in the society (Ellison et al., 2007; Thibaud, 2010). Rasche (1988) assumes that the perceptions and experiences of minority and non-minority women regarding domestic violence may not vary but the differences may be prevalent when it comes to obtaining escape from violence or looking for the solution of the problem. Besides being a minority community, the role of social support from other members of the community particularly the family could be protective against marginality and poverty (Agoff et al., 2007). However, in the case of current study, it is still unexplored how the family contributes to making women's lives protective or oppressive in domestic violence situations. The status of Christian women and their perceptions and experiences of domestic violence in Punjab, Pakistan has not yet been explored. This raises the need to study how they are positioned compared to their Muslim counterparts. By focusing on women with multiple identities will enable the problem of violence to be understood through contextual factors that could give voice to the women on the margins (O'Neal and Beckman, 2017).

Most of the research studies related to domestic violence against women in Pakistan are quantitative in nature and focus on intimate partner violence (Ali et al., 2015). It is crucial to know the settings in which the phenomenon of violence occurs because apparently, husbands could be perpetrators, but in-laws could instigate a man to commit violence against his wife (Khan and Hussain, 2008). Besides, on the part of both the perpetrators and victims, the role

of violence socialisation is imperative to understand the meanings that they give to such acts that will further elaborate their approval to certain acts as violence but not to others (Kelmendi and Baumgartner, 2020). Studies have also elaborated that perceptions about violence vary in different cultures (Tehee and Esqueda, 2008; Flood and Pease, 2009); therefore, generalisation should be avoided as other forms of structural inequalities intersect with gender oppression that shape the lives of women in diverse ways (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Treating all women as a monolithic category reduces the focus on culturally specific forms of abuse and structural causes of violence on them (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Additionally, "monolithic notion of patriarchy" (p.19) that men are oppressors and most, if not all, women are victims is a reductive approach (Mohanty, 2003). Although, women face violence from men but defining women as archetypal victims that always suffer and men as perpetrators of violence create binary categories. This makes it impossible to analyse the differences, as social becomes biological, in such a case, and makes a commonality of oppression without a context (Mohanty, 2003).

Women are not a homogeneous category, always oppressed, but in social classes and ethnic frameworks women do possess agency whereas declaring them as a monolithic group deprives them of this historical and political agency (Mohanty, 2003). Although Pakistan is a patriarchal society, treating women and men as a binary category, without considering other intersections, would diminish the variations as significant diversity is found across regions and urban/rural divisions (Murshid and Critelli, 2017). Such analysis may be useful at macro level, gender relations do exist at meso and micro level and there may be substantial variations which are crucial to understand (Walby, 2009). As mentioned earlier, research evidence regarding domestic violence against women in Pakistan has focused mainly on intimate partner violence and its justification by reporting men as perpetrators (Khan and Hussain, 2008; Zakar et al., 2012; Ali et al., 2015; Murshid and Critelli, 2017; Tayyab et al., 2017). There is scarcity of evidence regarding the role of the affinal families particularly mothers-in-law, although studies have identified them as perpetrators and instigators (Khan and Hussain, 2008; Clark et al., 2010; Ali et al., 2015; Ali et al., 2016; Madhani et al., 2017). Likewise, research conducted with women survivors of domestic violence did not address the contexts and motivating factors through which violence occurs in households (Ali et al., 2016) and "how it is experienced by self and responded to by others" (p.43) as individuals have certain social contexts having formed through the interaction of power and oppression (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005,). Therefore, this study would provide in-depth insights into the diverse positionalities of women

in the domestic sphere that would assist in understanding gender relations and the phenomenon of domestic violence.

3.6 Domestic Violence against Women in the Urban/ Rural Settings of Pakistan

About 67% of Pakistan comprises of rural population (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Women of rural areas are treated as a homogeneous category who are assumed least involved in decision-making about their lives and are powerless in their daily matters (Sathar and Kazi, 2000). However, the status of women in rural areas is multi-dimensional and complex (Sathar and Kazi, 2000; Hogg and Carrington, 2003; Wendt, 2009; Farooq and Kayani, 2014) and apparently parallel structures also involve divergent attitudes and relationships in subtle and systematic ways (Donnan, 1997). Many factors including the family systems in context of household living arrangements, modes of production, demographic characteristics of individuals like age and education, and community traits particularly caste, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class contribute in defining the gender roles and positionality of women (Sathar and Kazi, 2000; Mumtaz and Salway, 2009). Nevertheless, literature on domestic violence in rural areas, overall, represents weaker social position of women due to their low literacy rate, limited access to economic opportunities, mobility constraints, patriarchal family structures, geographical isolation, inadequate access to services, and sparse formal enforcement of law and order by government agencies (Bates et al., 2004; Wendt and Hornosty, 2010; Peek-Asa et al., 2011; Edwards, 2015). As mobility of women is also considered an indicator of their autonomy (Jejeebhoy, 2002; Koenig et al., 2003), restrictions on it creates a relationship between space and domestic violence because the perpetrator tries to control and discipline the victim by restricting in a certain physical space (Little, 2017).

Violence in the rural settings is also linked to the construction of masculinity and femininity (Beynon, 2002) as places hold meanings that needs to be understood through the local culture. The traditional image of a good woman has strong implications for women in rural areas. Women have legal rights to own their ancestral property; however, majority do not exercise this right just to comply with the image of a good woman. Parents and siblings' homes are the places that can provide shelter to women in times of need. Therefore, women surrender their right to property to stay connected otherwise the natal families ostracise them and do not provide any social and economic support in situations of marital breakdowns and distress (Isran and Isran, 2012). Jalil et al. (2013) illustrate that in situations of violence, the unavailability of secure place increases women's chances of physical abuse. Mughal (2015) states that though the rural culture in Pakistan has observed changes in the family structure, the statuses and roles

related to gender and age has not changed. Conversely, Farooq and Kayani (2014) advocate that women's roles are changing in the rural Punjab; however, this is minimal in the case of men. Though both studies were conducted in Punjab but were from two different areas. This supports the assumption that places and socioeconomic contexts are important otherwise making generalised assumptions from a global perspective is problematic without finding micro local evidence (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001; Mughal, 2015).

Studies of domestic violence in the rural context of Pakistan rely on cross sectional surveys (Jalil et al., 2013; Nasrullah et al., 2015; Tayyab et al., 2017). The national level data of the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) reveals that women of rural areas suffer more domestic violence than women of the urban areas (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International, 2013; Tayyab et al., 2017). The PDHS 2012-13 has included domestic violence module for the first time in Pakistan and indicates that it is the most underreported form of violence suffered by women (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International, 2013). However, the findings of PDHS has a limited focus on contextual and cultural variations between urban and rural places.

In contrast to the women of rural areas, urban women are considered to face less violence (Peek-Asa et al., 2011). Edwards (2015) analysed the literature to observe the differences in rates of violence against women between urban and rural places and found no variations except that women of rural areas remain at greater risk of partner violence. However, evidence in the context of Pakistan regarding urban/rural comparison of domestic violence is limited. A study conducted in the two districts of the Punjab province, to find out the differences between early age marriages and domestic violence, found no differences due to the residence status of respondents (Asif et al., 2010). Nevertheless, women of rural areas are considered more disadvantaged socioeconomically that create marginalisation for them (Sandberg, 2013). Besides, spatial isolation of rural areas hinders victims of domestic violence to access social care services that women in urban areas can access (Pruitt, 2008).

Social cohesion in rural communities is considered to be stronger as people know each other due to their smaller size resulting in less anonymity. This social cohesion could be a protective source from violence and, on the contrary, it could keep the victim silent to protect her honour and of her family (Riddell et al., 2009; Kaur and Garg, 2010). Moreover, Social standing of the perpetrator also hinders the social networks to acknowledge the problem of domestic violence and people prefer to ignore or take it as a routine matter. Besides, they may possess the similar mindset as of perpetrator due to the traditional patriarchal ideology (Wendt and Hornosty,

2010). Additionally, privacy is considered less among the rural communities, but it still needs empirical investigation in different contexts as relevance of place needs to be considered in domestic violence research. The pre-conceived mindset, that rural women suffer more violence, may hinder women from these localities to share their experiences in order to dilute these perceptions (Little, 2017).

Arguably, research on domestic violence needs to take discussions on intersectionality further by including rural/ urban geographies and minority status of women could influence women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence (Sandberg, 2013). Research in urban areas do not incorporate space and place and is assumed to be generalizable to rural areas that consequently obscures the specific conditions and problems that rural victims of domestic violence face (Sandberg, 2013; Pruitt, 2008). The meanings of local geographies are important in understanding phenomenon of violence as people hold particular behaviours in the social boundaries and also pointed out by Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) that regions play a significant role in defining the autonomy of women. Post-colonial feminism also asserts that women, as a category, are not coherent but are distinct due to their geographical positions, class, ethnicity, and location and the context of their analysis could be any category (Mohanty, 2003). Besides, preventive approaches to domestic violence are considered more appropriate and successful if developed by keeping in view the role of social contexts (Wendt and Hornosty, 2010).

3.7 Institutional Support System and Legislative Context for protection

Legal dimension is crucial to provide protection to women and, in the context of Punjab, the government has implemented 'The Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act 2016' (Government of the Punjab, 2016) that also covers domestic violence. However, accessing the institutions for the sake of protection by women is difficult due to various factors involved particularly the male dominated spaces of police and judiciary alongside widespread patriarchal ideology that also dominates in the institutions. Resultantly, domestic violence is considered a private matter of the family and in case of women approaching these institutions, they are advised to resolve it at the family level. Lack of rule of law and poor governance further contributes to weaken women's legal rights (Critelli, 2012). Thus, lack of adequate institutional support is the biggest barrier alongside cultural norms to conceal domestic violence against women. Besides, inadequate social services, housing, and economic dependence are the concerns that forces many to continue with their abusive relationship despite their willingness to quit (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). The situation further exacerbates as the Christian divorce law does not have provisions for divorce based on irretrievable breakdown of the marriage. In

1981 the Christian divorce act was amended by the federal laws ordinance that reduced the grounds for divorce to just adultery and conversion of a spouse to another religion (Bangash, 2019). Such grounds for separation are a violation of the fundamental rights of the Christians and force them to make wrong allegations against their spouses to get a divorce. The recent government has made amendments in the law, it has not yet been passed through the National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan to be implemented.

In the case of Muslims, a husband has the unilateral right to divorce his wife. However, this can be restricted through marriage contract (also known as *Nikkahnama*) whereas a wife can only exercise the right to divorce if this has been granted to her in the marriage contract. A Muslim woman has the choice to take judicial divorce, also known as *khula* (literal meaning- untying the knot), through court in case she does not want to continue with her marriage and the husband is not willing to divorce. However, the rights given by the law are curtailed in practice (Critelli, 2012). The provisions that delegate a woman the right to divorce her husband is deleted in the marriage contract and thus, women approach the courts for a judicial divorce which is a lengthy and cumbersome process. Contrarily, men have the inalienable legal right to divorce that make their position superior in the marriage relationship. In a patriarchal society, the social implications of divorce and khula are far reaching for women. They suffer obstacles and repercussions for exercising their legal right of a judicial divorce and are also stigmatised for their divorcee status that reduce their chances of a second marriage. Therefore, girls are socialised to be docile and submissive so that they could be well-adjusted in their marriages (Hamid et al., 2009; 2010). Socio-cultural and legal barriers hinder women to disclose violence that increases its consequences as women find no way to come out of it (Andersson et al., 2010). Though culturally, divorce is equally unacceptable for the Christians and the Muslims, the legal dimension makes it impossible for the Christian women to take divorce due to the issue of domestic violence. Therefore, they face double jeopardy as both cultural and structural barriers hinder their ability to escape violent relationships.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated gender relations by reflecting on the patriarchal structure of the society where men holds the authority whereas women are symbols of honour and subordinate to men. Though the changing patterns in the form of women's empowerment are also apparent, there is no uniformity due to various intersections of women's identity. The chapter has illustrated the emergence of the issue of violence against women and the factors that push the country for pro-women legislations. However, such initiatives did not contribute enough to

improve the circumstances of women due to strong cultural norms and lack of institutional commitments to protect them. The situation further complicates in cases of domestic violence due to the inalienable right of a husband to divorce while a woman is stigmatised for being a divorcee.

Moving forward, the chapter provides an analysis of the situation of Christians in a Muslim country for the sake of providing the background conditions that has an additional burden on women belonging to the Christian faith compared to their Muslim counterparts. Though there is a lack of evidence about the differences in the circumstances of Muslim and Christian women regarding domestic violence, the situation of Christians reveal that women of this faith have to face double jeopardy due to their minority status and being women in a patriarchal society. The literature reviewed in the context of other countries provide contradictory evidence about the situation of minority women that raised the need to understand contexts of women's lives for a comprehensive analysis of gender relations and domestic violence against them in Pakistan.

The literature does not examine how women's membership in a particular religion and their urban/rural residence play a part in constructing their gender identity. Moreover, research in the urban contexts is considered extendable to the rural women. Resultantly, it conceals the identities of rural women as their voices in the mainstream academic discourse on domestic violence are missing. In the light of the review of literature and discussion, it is evident that there are hardly any attempts to examine how the categories of religious identity and geographical location interact to shape women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence. Hence, the present study aims to fulfil this knowledge gap in the research by the inclusion of different intersections of women to highlight the diversity among them with varying locations and religious identity that will assist in nuanced understanding of this social problem and will contribute in the efforts towards its elimination.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological approaches employed in the study to explore and understand women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence. The philosophical underpinnings of the study are influenced by qualitative framework due to the complexity of the issue under study. The first part of the chapter compares qualitative and quantitative research and provide reasoning for the preference of qualitative research and subsequently its reliance on the standpoints of women participants to generate evidence. The following section reflects on the use of in-depth interview as a tool to collect data and the inability of focus groups to discuss the sensitive topic of domestic violence in the context of the Punjabi society. The recruitment of participants was possible by initially selecting the study sites which has been discussed by providing details of accessing the relevant organisations during the literature review phase. After that, the sampling strategy and the inclusion criteria based on age and education of Christian and Muslim women from rural and urban localities are explained. The chapter highlights the significant role of gatekeepers in providing access to the study participants. Rapport building with the participants was crucial which has been elaborated with the strategies adopted by the researcher to build a relationship of trust for the sake of getting nuanced and contextual understandings of domestic violence. The position of the researcher and the power relations in the context of reciprocity and reflexivity alongside emotional demands of researching violence are reviewed. The importance of ethical issues regarding the safety of both the researcher and the participants along with the informed consent are also addressed. The last section describes the challenges of transcription and translating interviews and the procedures followed for analysing qualitative data.

4.2 The Research Strategy

Methodological strategy according to Mason (2018, p.32) is "the logic by which you go about answering your research questions-it is the often-implicit set of reasons why you might use particular methods". Methodology is, therefore, a framework that a researcher uses to answer research questions which include day-to-day decisions about various aspects of the research project and data collection method/s. There are various decisions that a researcher make regarding the process of research which are mostly planned but, sometimes, ad hoc in nature

due to unexpected events and changing contexts (Mason, 2018). Methodology provides the grounds to strategically inform such decisions.

Various methodologies are used keeping in view the nature of research questions which reveal different kinds of knowledge. Thus, each methodology is informed by a certain epistemology (theory of knowledge) to understand the nature of reality. For example, feminist methodology is considered to carry a few epistemological principles which, according to Letherby (2003), signifies gender as an important aspect of research and social life, it acknowledges the differences between women and "also the relevance of men's lives to a feminist understanding of the world" (Cook and Fonow, 1990, p.73). This methodology challenges 'objectivity' which explicates that reality can only be achieved by separating researcher and research subjects. Besides, the role of reflexivity is crucial, and emotions have a significant role in the research process. Another characteristic of the feminist methodology is its concern for ethical issues with a focus on non-exploitative relationships in the research process and it values the personal and private as important for research (Cook and Fonow, 1990; Letherby, 2003). Consequently, feminist methodology emphasises the active involvement of the subjects and simultaneously, the subjective role of the researcher. Feminist methodology does not differ from others on the basis of methods, rather the way these are involved in the research process (Stanley and Wise, 1995; Letherby, 2003).

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are engaged in the feminist research depending on the nature of research questions. This study aims to understand and explore the perceptions and experiences of domestic violence from the viewpoint of Christian and Muslim women residing in the rural and urban areas of Punjab. The goal, therefore, was to seek detailed information about domestic violence which is considered a private matter of the family. In the Punjabi context, it is a breach of family honour if women discuss it with others. Thus, the demand was for a methodological approach that could assist in analysing the contexts of women's lives and they could share it in a safe environment. This was not possible by objectively engaging with the research participants due to the sensitive nature of the study. Qualitative research is considered appropriate in understanding the intricacies of such phenomenon as it is well suited for nuanced and subjective experiences in particular social contexts (Hennink et al., 2011; Hardesty et al., 2019). Thus, the qualitative approach was employed as it commensurate with the objectives of the study. The intention was to view the reality of domestic violence from the standpoints of women being studied instead of relying on universal laws proposed by positivists of value-free evidence. Qualitative data gives rich information about the issue under

investigation in a particular social setting that provides the opportunity to understand it through logic in practice rather than reconstructed logic which most of the quantitative researchers engage in (Merriam, 2002; Neuman, 2003). The qualitative approach renounces the ideas of positivists and advocates that the patterns that positivists develop through correlations to understand the social world are flawed, it lacks particular meanings that people give to such patterns (Bryman, 2012; Silverman, 2017). Arguably, the interpretations and intentions of people are crucial to recognising the social world that they produce and reproduce instead of imposing an outsider perspective on them (Blaikie, 2000; Mason, 2002). This approach to social enquiry emphases on uncovering the concepts and mutual knowledge of social actors in making sense of social activity as the basis for producing particular sense about the social world. Though the process of digging out the meanings of social actors is complex, the social scientists could involve themselves with a particular group for the purpose of understanding their meaning-making process that people build through social and cultural encounters (Blaikie, 2007).

Though feminist empiricists challenged positivism by questioning scientific objectivity and universality of the social reality and worked to improve the accuracy of mainstream positivist research, Stanley and Wise (1995) believed that there are multiple realities of women's lives which cannot be explored through positivism. Therefore, qualitative methods are preferred to explicate the issues of women (Letherby, 2003; Bryman, 2012) as the researcher is most likely immersed in the social world of the participants that provide the opportunity to understand the realities from the viewpoints of the participants (Blaikie, 2007). Hence, this study is influenced by standpoint epistemology, a theory of knowledge which proposes that the standpoints of women have an epistemic privilege and it recognises the diversity of women's experiences based on their race, class, religion, and other social locations (Sprague, 2005, p.41; Hesse-Biber, 2014). The first step towards constructing a feminist standpoint, according to Brooks (2007) is to understand society from the perspectives and experiences of women.

Feminist standpoint offers an intersectional analysis of the structural aspects of the social life by using diverse qualitative methods for producing knowledge (Naples and Gurr, 2014). As the feminist research argues for a self-reflexive approach and addresses the role of power in research relations, feminist standpoint theory acknowledges the point of view of all those involved in knowledge production. The standpoint theorists have a focus on community contexts alongside identity dynamics of women, this research study has attempted to explore and explain the perceptions and experiences of women across various identities based on their

religion, rural/urban location, age, and education. Collins (1997) argues that the identity categories are not just descriptive in nature, rather elements of social structure that foster inequality and power relations. Thus, creating knowledge from differing experiences of women increase the chances to understand the perspectives of the powerful and the less powerful (Letherby, 2003).

Though standpoint theorists were criticised for considering women as a group in opposition to men, the growing debate around this epistemology has addressed issues of differences within the category of women (Collins, 1997; Hekman, 1997; Harding; 2004). Standpoint epistemology has the ability to explain social inequality by incorporating intersectionality which provides the opportunity to understand the group dynamics and their accompanying standpoints (Collins, 1997). Correspondingly, differences between women provide dividing standpoints which, according to the logic of this epistemology, assist in building social knowledge (Longino, 1999; Sprague, 2005; Brooks, 2007). This diversity of knowledge directs the researcher to the details and features of women's lives which, otherwise, are overlooked in the positivist methodology.

4.3 Data Collection Method

Though methods are merely tools, some are considered more useful (Charmaz, 2006) as these are the ways that develop the relationship between the knower and the known. As the ontological position of qualitative approach values people's knowledge, in-depth interviews are considered to provide meaningful insights to the realities of the social world of participants (Mason, 2002; Miller and Glassner, 2011). The qualitative in-depth interview is an approach that is considered to be grounded in the experiences of women as it let the women speak for themselves (Letherby, 2003) and is also a prominent method in feminist research framework (Oakley, 1998; Bryman, 2012). Domestic violence is a phenomenon which is considered private, emotional, and subjective, and in-depth interview technique is useful in understanding the perceptions and experiences of women about this sensitive issue. It gives the flexibility to the interviewees to use their own language while the researcher could adapt according to the responses of the participants (Byrne, 2004). Moreover, meanings cannot be directly derived from mere questions but are obtained from the conversation that the researcher has with the participants (Holstein and Gubrium, 2011). Hence, this technique of data collection helps the researcher to gain detailed insight into the reality from the perspectives of the study participants and provides the contexts in understanding their lives according to the provided frames and structures of their responses (Marshall and Rossman, 1999; Mason, 2002; Hennink et al.,

2011). The qualitative interview technique provides the advantage of one-to-one interaction with participants in an informal way that helps the researcher in understanding the perspectives and meaning construction process of the participants about complex and sensitive issues. This technique of data collection provides the opportunity to use different approaches in asking questions and to probe further into responses which are critical for gaining rich data (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Besides, interviews gives meaningful insights about the sensitive issue that needs to be explicit in a patriarchal society like Pakistan (Patton, 1990). Interviews provided the opportunity to spend time with the participants that were useful in building rapport which is crucial for gaining access to the personal and private lives of the participants.

Though focus group is also a substantial data collection technique, it does not provide a sense of confidentiality. There are also chances of the influence of social pressures in such groups and some participants may dominate the discussion (Creswell, 1998; Hennink et al., 2011). Domestic violence is a sensitive topic and is considered a private matter in Pakistan, there was a possibility that participants may not share their views and personal experiences due to lack of privacy in such discussions. Furthermore, family structure in rural areas is mostly joint (Wasim et al., 2008), and the possibility of other family members accompanying the participants in such discussions might affect the quality of the data generated. In many instances, mobility of women is controlled by their families, arranging a particular time with participants was difficult that could ultimately impact the quality of focus group and a general discussion on domestic violence was not useful for the purpose of this study.

Half of the participating women had no formal education and using other methods like questionnaire was disempowering for being dependent on a literate person to read questions for them. In a study regarding perceptions of men about domestic violence in the Pakhtun culture of Pakistan, Saeed (2012) also collected his data through in-depth interviews due to the sensitive nature of questions. According to him, there were very few chances of getting information related to the private lives of people through questionnaire or observation (Saeed, 2012). Thus, qualitative interviewing was the only feasible method that could provide a one-on-one conversation with the participants to know their perceptions and experiences of domestic violence. It is worth mentioning here that this study was focused on women's perceptions of domestic violence; however, most of the participants ended up sharing their personal experiences of violence. This could have been possible due to the time spent with women for rapport building which is crucial in qualitative in-depth interviewing.

4.4 Selecting the Research Sites

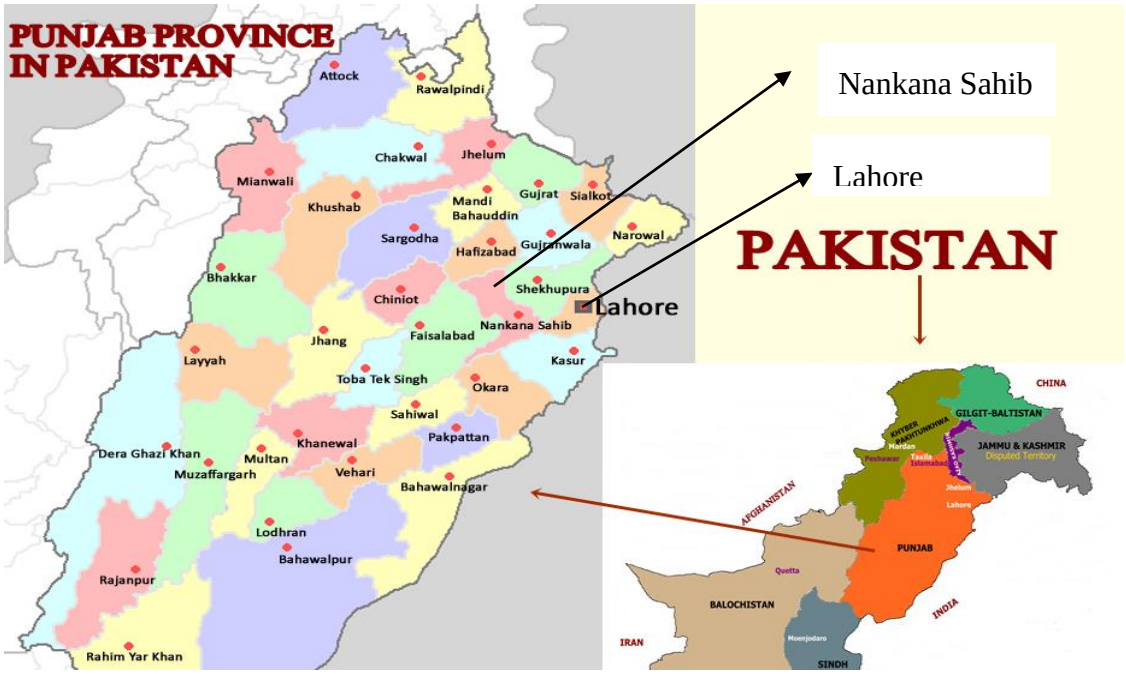
According to Braun and Clark (2013), recruitment of participants ranges from easy to difficult as it is dependent on the topic of the study. As the current study is focused on domestic violence, the intention was to recruit participants who are able to discuss this issue at some length. To achieve this, it was decided to recruit participants who would be aware of the circumstances of a woman survivor of domestic violence in their family, relatives, friends, or neighbours. The traditional methods of participant recruitment like advertisements, letter writing, snowball sampling, or word of mouth were not feasible due to the sensitive nature of the study especially in rural areas due to the patriarchal setup of the Punjabi society. Besides, this could also pose threat to the safety of the researcher as people in the local community could get offended that an outsider was trying to take information from women about their personal lives especially in cases where women were suffering domestic violence in their homes. Women's subordination is a norm and taking information about issues like violence against women is conceived as a 'foreign agenda' which could threaten the values and culture of the community.

The study had a target population from two religious identity groups; Christian and Muslim women from the urban and the rural localities of the Punjab Province of Pakistan. During the process of literature review, the researcher found the organisations working for the Christians of Pakistan and tried to approach them. However, only one of them responded once to enquire further about the purpose of the research. When this effort could not bear fruit, the researcher used her personal contacts and accessed an organisation working in the district Nankana Sahib with the Christian community. Nankana Sahib was established as a district in 2005 and is divided for administrative purposes into three sub-divisions called Tehsils (Government of the Punjab, 2016). More than eighty percent of the population in the district lives in rural areas (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Nankana Sahib is a famous religious site of the Sikh community as it is the birthplace of the founder of Sikhism (Government of the Punjab, 2016). Pakistan is a Muslim majority country, so are the population of this district, Sikhs and Christians are the largest religious minorities in Nankana Sahib. There are two villages in the district Nankana Sahib where more than ninety percent of the population are Christians which is uncommon as they usually live alongside Muslims but with distinct areas in the same village.

The organisation provided details of the Christian population in each of the villages of district Nankana Sahib which they had worked out at grassroot for one of their projects. It is important to mention here that the Census of Pakistan was under process during the year 2017 after almost eighteen years and no updated official figures of the Christian population were available before

the data collection process. Thus, the details of Christian households in each village, provided by this organisation, was a good starting point to decide about the target villages. Three villages were finalised as the organisation was working with the local community including the Christians and the Muslims and was able to facilitate the researcher for the purposes of data collection. According to the recent data, updated by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Village Bura has a total population of 12,316 individuals where 11,058 are Muslims while rest of the 1258 are non-Muslims and majority of them are Christians (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The rest of the two villages have a majority Christian population: village Barton has 4322 families that consists of 30251 individuals while the village Hassan Abad has 14282 individuals and most of them belong to Protestant faith (Sanjh Preet Organization, 2017).

Gatekeepers were approached and selection criterion for the recruitment of participants was discussed and finalised with the gatekeepers as the Christians alongside Muslim population were accessible for data collection. Secondly, being a female researcher, commuting to the study villages was possible on a daily basis keeping in view the safety and security of the researcher. Hence, all these factors paved the way to select this district and all the interviews of women participants belonging to the rural areas were conducted in the selected three villages of the district.



Source: https://www.mydestinationguide.com/punjab-province-pakistan/ (adapted by Faiza Tayyab), accessed February 06, 2020.

Figure 1: Map of Punjab Province showing all the Districts alongside Lahore and Nankana Sahib

Lahore has the largest population compared to the other districts of the Punjab province and is divided into five urban Tehsils (administrative units). According to the census of Pakistan 2017, the district of Lahore is declared urban having no areas marked as rural with more than ten million population. Though the census of Pakistan (2017) has not yet revealed the religious composition of the districts, Lahore is considered to have the largest Christian population (Home Office, 2018). Again, the main focus was to access the Christian population as the researcher had no previous interaction with the Christian community compared to Muslims. The organisation that facilitated in the District Nankana Sahib also assisted in Lahore through its sister organisation working in Lahore with religious groups including Christians and Muslims for interfaith harmony. Urban women particularly Christian participants were interviewed through this organisation while Muslim women were accessed through a female provincial parliamentarian. She had an extensive social work experience of working closely with women and was involved in women empowerment projects particularly their economic uplift in the Lahore city.

Additionally, the gender of the researcher had bearings in the selection of the research sites, especially in the rural area. Due to close-knit relationships, people in the village usually know if a visitor is entering the site. There is a culture of standing and socialising in the streets by men which is also a way to express the patriarchal domination of public spaces. They keep an eye on women and are well-aware of any outsider woman in the vicinity. They try to figure out the purpose of visit from different sources. In the case of the current study, spending time with women and rapport building was crucial to understanding the intricacies of domestic violence which was requiring daily visits to these villages. The facilitating organisations had their local centres in the targeted villages which gave the impression to the villagers that the researcher was a new member of the organisation who was on her duty. Commuting regularly until the completion of interviews was another concern, the researcher stayed in the Nankana Sahib city and travelled daily with two accompanying males to the destination villages. However, due to a large metropolitan city, the researcher had fewer mobility issues in Lahore.

4.5 Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy is an integral part of the research design and is driven by the research purpose. All the decisions about sampling influence the usefulness of the data collected and the type of analysis possible (Ritchie et al., 2014). A key debate around sampling categorises it into probability and non-probability samples. Probability sampling is considered less useful in qualitative research as the characteristics of the population are considered the basis to select

a sample. According to Bryman (2012), probability sampling is rarely employed in qualitative interviews as the focus in quantitative enquiry is a statistically representative sample of the wider population and to make broad generalisations of the study results. Conversely, qualitative research focuses on in-depth exploration and understanding of the questions and central themes of the topic, thus the typical approach to sampling is purposive (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Purposive sampling is strategic as it develops a good connection of research questions with relevant people to be interviewed (Bryman, 2004).

In the current study, stratified purposive sampling was used to recruit the participants. The inclusion criteria for the sample universe was ever married Christian and Muslim women from two localities, i.e., rural and urban. The religious identity of the women was the first criterion to identify study participants as Christians are the largest minority in the province. Choosing them as a sample alongside Muslim women was, somehow, a politically motivated act. The Christian community was under attack in Pakistan due to religious reasons (see chapter 3 for a detailed discussion). This resulted in the thinking of Christian women and to compare their perceptions and experiences with Muslim women. Though studies about violence against women in the context of Pakistan, in general, consider various demographic variables, viewpoints of minority women particularly Christians alongside Muslim women are rarely focused. Besides, the epistemological stance of the study also emphasises the viewpoints of women particularly those whose vantage points have been previously ignored for producing knowledge (Naples and Gurr, 2014). This was further informed by the framework of Intersectionality to include identities and hierarchies of women who were marginalised. The women were sampled from urban and rural localities of the Punjab province keeping in view that the contexts of women's lives change with geographical heterogeneity i.e., rural/urban background.

Age and education were further employed for the purpose of diversity in the above-mentioned categories. Ritchie and colleagues (2014) also advocate for a diverse sample as it improves the chances to cover the full range of factors associated with the phenomenon. Secondly, it allows for further exploration of those characteristics that have more influence. Moving forward, interviews were conducted with ever-married women based on four broad categories i.e., geographical location on the basis of urban/rural division, religious affiliation, age, and education. These Christians and Muslims women were from three age categories i.e., 18-30 years, 31-40, and above forty years. Though the legal age of marriage is sixteen years in the Punjab province of Pakistan, there is an increasing trend of marrying at a higher age among

women of Pakistan with an estimate of above 22 years (Sathar and Kiani, 1998; Khan, 2009; Jones, 2010; National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan and ICF International, 2013). Besides, the nuptiality trends vary between urban and rural women of Pakistan. More than half of the women in the age category of 20-24 years in urban areas are single while it is 34 percent in the rural areas (Sathar and Kiani, 1998). As the marriage age varies among women, taking a diversity of age groups was an effort to access women who got married early in their lives and with the aim of maximum variation in the sample to observe the heterogeneity in their opinions. The varying backgrounds assisted in understanding the complexities of domestic violence in detail.

Within each age category, participants were recruited based on their education. It is perceived that educated women have access to written information and can use different resources to enhance their knowledge about their rights and the legal structure (Saeed, 2012). The study participants were divided into two broad categories i.e., literate/educated and illiterate/uneducated. Literate here mean those women who were able to read some basic text and also those with higher educational qualifications. Though literate/educated women could have been categorised further on the basis of their varying educational levels, this was avoided as such categories could further complicate the data analysis. Opinions of illiterate women were equally important as they constitute a majority group particularly in the rural areas (Government of Pakistan, 2016). These were the women who cannot read and write any material and was expected that their standpoints could be different from literate/educated women.

By adding categories of age and education, a range of participants' views were achieved that provided heterogeneity in the study. As the purpose of the qualitative research is to give a detailed and nuanced view of the particular contexts, sampling strategically provided the opportunity to understand that how things worked in those contexts (Mason, 2002). Since the research was conducted in two different settings i.e., rural and urban, the researcher initially decided to conduct 24 interviews in each of the geographical settings by recruiting Christian and Muslim women in equal numbers which comprised of a total of 48 interviews. Letherby (2003) articulates that one of the first worries regarding practical aspects of the research is to find enough people to speak to. It was an important concern alongside saturation while deciding the number of participants for the study. This cannot be ignored at the design phase of the study as time and resources are the main concerns that cannot be ascertained without a tentative number of the sample (Robinson, 2014). Various logics are available to justify the number of

participants in a given study, Bryman (2012), however, suggests a large sample size in a study that require various comparisons. Though the definition of a large and small sample size varies, Ritchie et al., (2014) suggest a sample of under 50 that involve individual interviews. Simultaneously, they provided a very general rule that it should not be much larger than 50 as this could impact the quality of data and analysis would be difficult to manage in a particular time (Ritchie et al., 2014). As the study involved a diverse sample for the sake of making comparisons, a large sample size was justified to explore the perceptions and experiences of women about domestic violence.

Two participants were chosen to be interviewed, initially, in each of the age categories shown in the table. Thus, to achieve thematic exhaustion, it was assumed that six participants would be enough in each of the categories of education (educated/uneducated) having Christian and Muslim identity living across the urban and the rural locality. However, when the researcher started conducting interviews from the urban locality, the need for more interviews emerged. The researcher came across information that developed the need for further interviews, for example, the use of alcohol and drugs in the Christian community required further understanding and investigation. It was important to be responsive to such needs and to review the existing decision about the sample size (Robinson, 2014; Mason, 2018). This resulted in a slight increase of participants in the urban area and the total number of 29 interviews were conducted instead of the initial decision of 24 interviews. On the contrary, saturation was achieved with the pre-conceived number of 24 interviews in the rural locality. As the researcher entered the rural locality after conducting a significant number of interviews from the urban area, she was quite aware of the dynamics of domestic violence. Consequently, new questions that emerged from the urban data were also asked from the rural participants that reduced the need to go beyond the set number of interviews. Besides the women participants, a Christian clergy was interviewed before collecting data from Christian women for the purpose of gaining information about marriage, family life, and divorce-related matters in Christianity. This facilitated the researcher to overcome the issue of an outsider with Christian participants. The table below shows the number of interviews conducted in each category

Table 1: Sample Matrix of the Study

Age Groups	Urban Area				Rural Area			
	Christians		Muslims		Christians		Muslims	
	literate	illiterate	literate	illiterate	literate	illiterate	literate	illiterate
18-30	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2
31-40	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
40 +	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2
Total	8	6	8	7	6	6	6	6
14 interviews with Christians and 15 with Muslim women in the urban area= 29 12 interviews with Christians and 12 with Muslim women in the rural area= 24 1 interview with the Christian Clergy. Total= 54 interviews								

Note: illiterate is also denoted with uneducated, literate is denoted with educated at some places.

4.6 Sample Sourcing and Data Collection

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this study was initially designed to understand women's perceptions of domestic violence. However, during the phase of data collection, women not only shared their perceptions, but they also ended up with their personal experiences of pain and suffering alongside struggles and brave initiatives in their lives. Approaching women and discussing with them on a sensitive topic was an arduous task which was not possible without the involvement of gatekeepers. They are the ones that facilitate the entry to the research sites and increase acceptance of the researcher with the participants (Campbell et al., 2006; Clark, 2010). Women participants were approached through many gatekeepers, ranging from formal to informal as they exist at various levels (Emmel et al., 2007). These included organisations and individuals who were working and/or residing in the geographical locations under study and were both men and women.

The figure below is influenced by the hierarchy defined by Campbell et al., (2006) and shows the involvement of gatekeepers based at various levels in accessing the women participants for the present study.

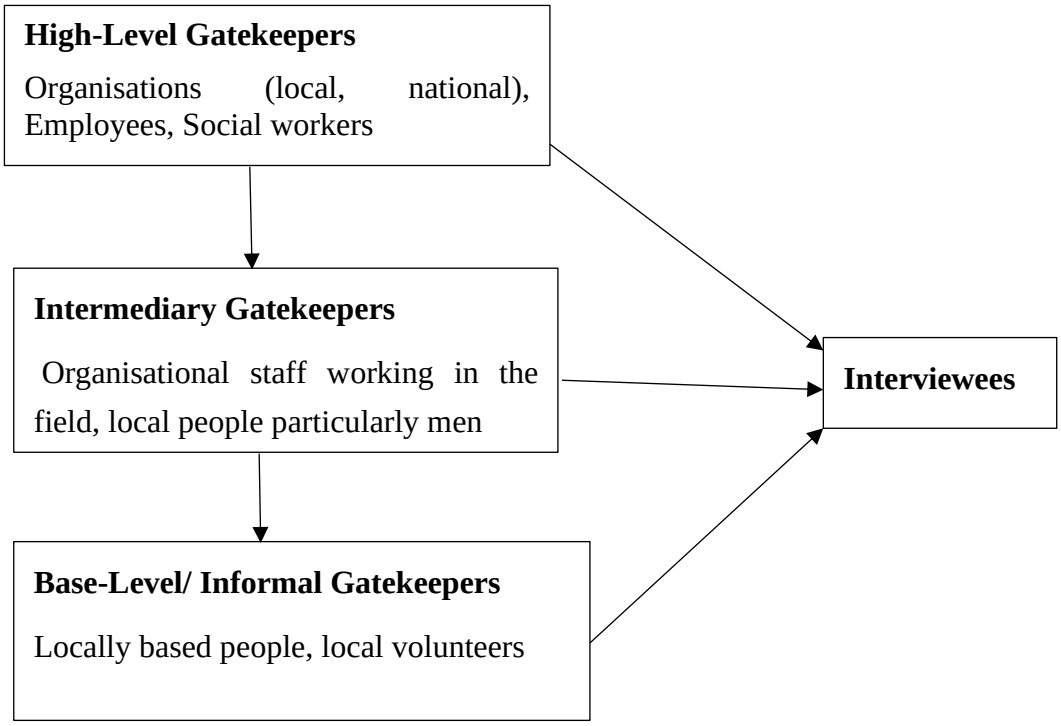


Figure 2:Involvement of Gatekeepers in Accessing Women Participants

Though gatekeepers facilitate in gaining and accessing various resources including cultural insights, logistic support, people, research permits, the researcher was knowledgeable about the area and was culturally aware of the local norms (Campbell et al., 2006). This resulted in support required to access women participants and no other resources were needed from the gatekeepers. Negotiations with the gatekeepers were a complex process due to their gender and keeping in view the sensitive nature of the study. In the case of Male gatekeepers, they either connect the researcher directly with the woman participants for negotiations to give interviews or with a female gatekeeper. A relationship of faith and trust between the gatekeepers and the participants made social access easy (Emmel et al., 2007). Women were able to give interviews despite their busy schedules around children and domestic chores, particularly in the rural locality. Hence, the gatekeepers were the support that bridged the initial gap between the researcher and the participants which otherwise was difficult and time-consuming (Clark, 2010).

Besides, issues of power do prevail between the researcher and the gatekeepers and were also experienced with one of the intermediary gatekeepers in the context of the present study. He was quite dominant in his conversation being aware of the fact that he was providing access to

the Christian community which, otherwise, was not easy for the researcher in one of the villages. In the urban area, a woman gatekeeper initially showed her consent to arrange preliminary meetings with participants over the weekend but did not show up later. Concurrently, there were gatekeepers at intermediary level who made extra efforts to connect the researcher with base-level gatekeepers in accessing the participants. Thus, the process of negotiations and engagements with the gatekeepers was, in no way, straightforward as the focus of the study was domestic violence that is considered a confidential matter in the context of family honour and women do not share it with outsiders (Clark, 2010).

Though initial interviews with women participants provided the opportunity to access other participants through the process called as 'keymasters', a term used by Campbell et al. (2006) to describe the switching role of the researcher as a gatekeeper. After spending significant time with people in the fieldwork, the researcher was in a position to get access to the subjects of study without involving the initial gatekeepers (Campbell et al., 2006). However, it was not practiced due to the ethical restrictions put by the institutional review board of the University of Leeds despite that the opportunity to become a keymaster was available.

After getting access to the sites and study participants, the next step was building rapport with the participants which are imperative in studies like violence against women.



Photo 1: One of the study sites in the rural locality.

As the gatekeepers make the initial contacts possible, Sprague (2005) argues that the subjects of the research have the power to negotiate terms of their participation and to decide the amount

of information they wanted to share. To get access to the personal lives of women, rapport building is a strategy that bride the initial gap of the researcher and the researched and assists in developing a relationship of trust. The interviews were an effort to encourage interviewees to reflect on their beliefs and experiences and was a way to know their inner world.

Cultural understanding and culturally appropriate language are central in building a respectful and trustworthy relationship (Duncombe and Jessop, 2012; Leavy and Harris, 2019). The researcher had a Punjabi background and was fluent in both Urdu and Punjabi languages and local dialects, norms, and customs. In the rural area, speaking of Punjabi language was an effective way of starting the conversation with women about their day-to-day matters around children, domestic chores, and weather conditions. The local dress is *Shalwar Kameez* (loose trouser and long shirt) with a big *shawl* (cloth to cover head and body) which the researcher followed. In the urban area, both Urdu and Punjabi are spoken by the locals with fewer restrictions on dress code and covering of the head. However, the researcher used language and dress appropriately in the urban area which started to establish rapport with the participants. Working conditions in the offices, childcare, and domestic chores were aspects of rapport development with educated working women. Due to the diversity of the sample, various techniques were employed in creating a comfortable environment to build a relationship of trust with the study participants. Moreover, they were provided adequate information about the study, and interview times were settled with their choice of suitable timing and day. Gender of the researcher also contributed to the process of confidence and trust-building with the participants (Williams and Heikes, 1993). Domestic violence is culturally sensitive terminology, the researcher avoided using the word ‘domestic violence’ and similar terms in Punjabi and Urdu. Thus, the stage of convincing women for interviews was time-consuming, two of the uneducated Christian women were expecting monetary benefits. They were informed that their participation was voluntary and researcher, being a student, was not able to support them financially; however, children were provided snacks to keep them busy.

4.6.1 Interviewing Women

As the epistemological position of the study values the standpoints of women regarding their perceptions and experiences of domestic violence, qualitative interviewing provided the way to access their perspectives more fully (Mason, 2018). A semi-structured interview guide consisting of four sections was designed with the flexibility of altering the questions and its sequence. Qualitative research is inductive in nature (Ormston et al., 2014); however, existing literature about domestic and intimate partner violence provided the grounds for developing

questions and employing analytic categories. According to Mason (2018), it is not necessary to find a perfect philosophical label during the process of identifying a methodological strategy as it may involve ‘a range of philosophical leanings (p.34)’. This is also supported by Blaikie (2007) that there is no ‘pure’ induction or deduction as both the strategies influence each other. Thus, the initial interview guide was developed through the process of an extensive literature review.

The first section focused on broad discussion around gender roles and relations and the way women were living or used to live with their in-laws (a few women were separated or divorced and were living independently). Hesse-Biber (2014) also suggests constructing a guide by first focusing broader areas of inquiry and then towards more specific ones. This section provided the context and background of women’s lives. The next two sections centred on perceptions and experiences of domestic violence, and impacts of violence on women, children and their natal families. The last section focused on protective mechanisms including the availability of formal and informal support to the survivors. However, during the interviews, the sequence of questions was dependent on participants’ responses. For example, when a participant started sharing her personal life and relationship dynamics, it was not appropriate to interfere and follow the set questions that could distort the whole process. This non-interference gave women full control over the interview process; nevertheless, the researcher probed in instances where an elaboration was required, or women used ‘hidden’ words which had no apparent meanings. If some questions were left unaddressed, the researcher asked that at the end of the interview or in a general conversation. As the researcher followed the pace of the interviews, it was not just violence, women shared other issues that were impacting their lives including child abuse, discrimination against Christians, rape, and inter-religious marriages.

The researcher conducted pilot interviews with ever-married female members of her family and with some friends from Lahore who volunteered to check the feasibility of the interview guide. This practice proved very useful, certain changes were made in the guide. The language of the guide was made understandable by using simple words instead of academic terms. Some of the questions seemed repetitive which were omitted. The sequence of the guide was useful from general to specific as it provided participants time to open up and get used to with the audio device to overcome initial reluctance. Pilot interviews were also an opportunity for the researcher to memorise interview guide and a learning process to be more relaxed while asking questions (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

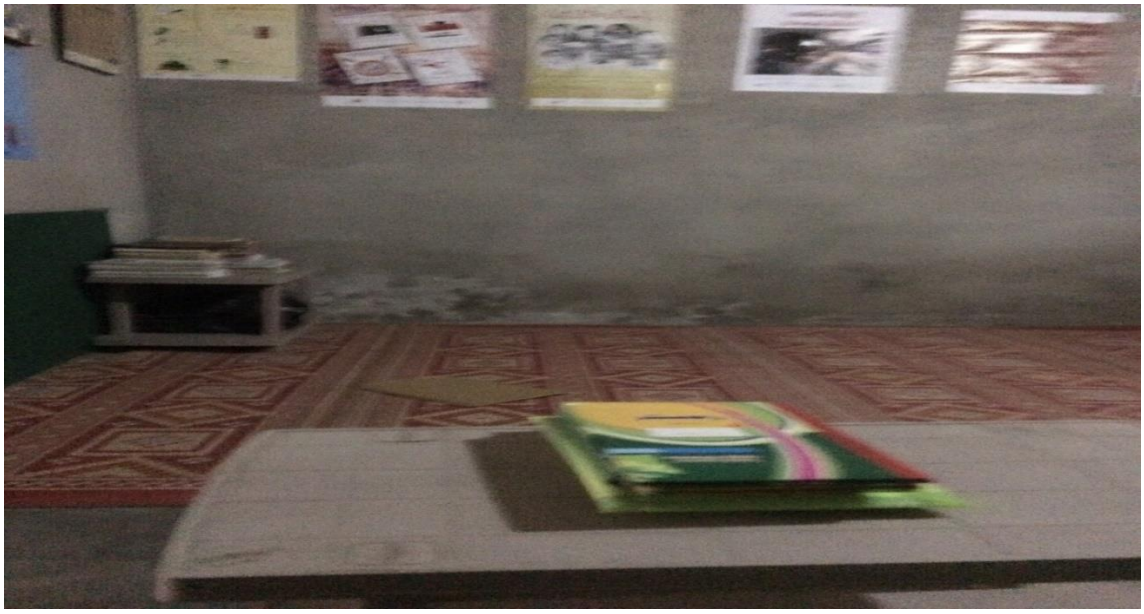


Photo 2: One of the places in the rural locality where interviews were conducted.

Most of the interviews were arranged in a room with a one-on-one conversation between the researcher and the participants. At the beginning of the conversation, the focus was to build and maintain a good rapport and a non-hierarchical relationship as advocated by feminist research (Bryman, 2008). The researcher and the participant sat on the floor (see photo 2) or on the same sofa facing each other, physical closeness was crucial to give comfort to the participant in situation of distress. Most of the participants, both educated and uneducated, were interested to know why the researcher was interviewing them. They were explained in Punjabi and Urdu that the researcher was interested in their viewpoints about the gender structure of the Punjabi society and the way women are treated. The word 'domestic violence' was intentionally avoided at the beginning of the interview, instead, they were asked to share if they knew the circumstances of a woman who was facing family conflicts, or she had experienced that in the past. This was ethically a safe way particularly with women participants who were experiencing domestic violence, or they had suffered it in the past and was a way to give them the choice to decide whether they wanted to share their personal circumstances or not. The survivors were identified during the interviews alongside other women who shared experiences of their sisters, daughters, sisters-in-law and other close female relatives. The researcher interviewed women having children during school hours to avoid interruptions except in a few instances when the interview was conducted over the weekend. Women were also accompanied by their infants, their presence was a good starting point for conversation and, sometimes, the researcher carried the baby to give comfort to the mother especially in audio-recorded interviews.

The interview was a two-way conversation, participants asked questions about the marital status of the researcher (this was important when women wanted to share experiences of sexual violence), experiences with in-laws and the number of her children. This technique was particularly useful in building a relationship of trust with women and helped in developing new questions during the process of initial interviews. Simultaneously, not every participant was comfortable directly discussing domestic violence. In those situations, a general discussion was started by following the sequence set in the tool which was from generic questions towards a specific focus on domestic violence. Both the techniques helped in understanding the contexts and complexities of this phenomenon. The interview duration ranged from forty minutes to almost four hours. Highly educated urban women appreciated the topic of the research while three of them were interested to know the findings of the study which the researcher agreed to share after completion of the PhD project. Interestingly, after spending time with the researcher in the field, two of the educated female gatekeepers from the urban locality (1 Christian, 1 Muslim) also became participants of the study.

The researcher exchanged contact details with participants after each interview, they had the choice to quit the study within two months after their interviews. Nonetheless, they did not make such requests during that time, the researcher contacted the participants to make the exit and disengaging process smooth (Neuman, 2003). Letherby (2003) reflects the relationship of the researcher and researched by pointing out that though the interaction may over with the fieldwork, we, as researchers 'know what our respondents want us to write' (p.117). Arguably, a researcher remains in constant interaction with the participants through the data. Besides, the role of social media and messaging apps could not be ignored; details of social media accounts were exchanged with the participants and the gatekeepers who had access to the internet and were interested to connect with the researcher.

In the rural areas, Punjabi is the prevalent dialect whereas, in the urban areas, both Urdu and Punjabi are used for communication. Interviews were conducted in Urdu/Punjabi as the researcher was fluent in both the languages which proved very effective. Women were comfortable in asking the details of questions if they were having difficulty in understanding. Additionally, the researcher maintained a fieldwork diary to keep a record of the details about informal discussions during the interview process.

4.7 Researcher's Position/ Reflexivity and Power Dynamics

The practice of an on-going self-awareness is imperative for researchers as it provides insight into the ways knowledge is produced (Pillow, 2003; Mitchell et al., 2018). Feminist scholars

also support for reflexivity in order to get objectivity and is advocated strongly in standpoint epistemology by considering differences between the researcher and the researched and the power dynamics in such relationships to make knowledge production a collective process (Harding, 1993; Sampson et al., 2008; Naples and Gurr, 2014; Hamilton, 2019). The researcher's positionality might affect the process of research; therefore, reflexivity is a process of critical self-evaluation and to take responsibility of the situatedness of the researcher in knowledge production (Harding, 1993; Berger, 2015). According to Hesse-Biber (2014, p.216) 'reflexivity in fact empowered both the researcher and the researched' by negotiating their differences and similarities during interviews that affects the quality of information participants share. The status differences are based on the personal characteristics of the researcher such as gender, age, class, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and beliefs that are important in the research process as similar social locations make the access, rapport, and understanding easier to achieve (Reinharz and Chase, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Berger, 2015; Burgess-Proctor, 2015; Leavy and Harris, 2019). For example, women may share experiences of sexual violence with a woman researcher than a man. Similarly, shared language shapes the way a researcher poses questions and makes meaning during the interview and in the findings of the study. Such similarities and differences make the researcher as insider/outsider; however, complexity does exist simultaneously as there are strengths and costs for such a status (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

In the present study, the position of the researcher was both an insider and outsider and, sometimes, more of fluid during interviews. Being a female and from a Punjabi background, the researcher was an insider for all the participants. Feminist researchers also advocate that shared gender can make the interviewing process interactive, though there may have initial anxieties. Women feel comfortable in talking to other women as it creates a particular type of identification (Finch, 1993; Oakley, 2016). Besides sharing a cultural identity and gender, the researcher was familiar with the languages, customs and norms of both the urban and the rural localities as an insider that provided her with rapid acceptance by the participants (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Contrarily, researching domestic violence is complicated and the insider status of the researcher cannot guarantee full access to the narratives of the participants. Though this gives an initial acceptance of the researcher, participants did not consider this sameness to be enough in sharing their personal stories. Simultaneously, it was difficult to be an insider with all the participants due to the diversity of the sample. Participating women were from two religious identity groups with three different age categories and half of them were uneducated.

Miller and Glassner (2011) reflect that the social categories are epistemological concerns particularly when the researcher does not share a membership with the study group. To overcome the issue of an outsider in the context of religious identity, the researcher interviewed a pastor of the Christian faith before entering the field. This helped in gaining basic information about marriage, family life, and divorce-related matters in Christianity that was useful in overcoming the barrier of an outsider with the Christian participants. Nonetheless, it was difficult to fully exclude the religious identity of the researcher during the interviews. Christian participants continue to mention "your religion", "our religion" while drawing comparisons between the status of Christians and Muslim women.

The position of the researcher as an outsider was also beneficial, women had a sense of trust that she would not share with anybody in the surrounding as she does not belong to the locality. Studying in a western university is considered a privilege which put the researcher at a position different from most of her participants. People value those who came from abroad and perceive them as more learned, this sense was creating a distance between the researcher and the participants which the researcher tried to minimise by sharing her background of living in a rural locality of the Punjab. At various occasions during interviews, the researcher felt herself more into a fluid status rather than strictly an insider vs outsider. While sharing experiences of sexual violence, marital status of the researcher was a concern for women. Though the researcher was an outsider for Christian women due to religion, her status as a married female was enough for women and the outsider status was side-lined during such conversations. Thus, 'the fluidity and multi-layered complexity' of human interaction and experiences entail the importance of contexts that shapes the process of knowledge production (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009, p.60).

Punjabi culture places greater value on age and older people are treated with respect by the younger ones. Five of the women were more than fifty years, interviewing them was challenging particularly asking them sensitive questions could be perceived as disrespectful. Two women called the researcher *baita* (its literal meaning in Urdu is 'son' but is used to address both girls and boys for expression of affection and to equate someone like their own children) which was a clear display of power and the types of questions that the researcher could possibly ask. Braun and Clarke (2013) reflect that simply avoiding power differences is not a solution and suggest that the researcher should be prepared in advance and to get benefit from the experiences of other researchers. Keeping in view the existing guidelines available in the literature and being culturally an insider, the researcher was very careful while asking

sensitive questions and did not ask for their personal experiences of violence unless the participant opened up herself. All the five women, except one, discussed the topic at length and age did not seem to create any barriers after rapport building. Hameeda was more than sixty years and had experienced domestic violence in the past. Though she shared the treatment of her husband and in-laws, she was not very open in her conversation and did not discuss the details of her experiences due to the significant age gap with the researcher. This was a way to maintain a 'safe distance' from a younger person in order to protect her high status based on her age.

Power can manifest in various ways and power differentials require negotiations during the research process (Merriam et al., 2001; Ben-Ari and Enosh, 2010). For example, in the rural locality, an uneducated rural woman commented: "Why should I give an interview to you, you [researcher] will take my interview and will go back, what is the benefit of this to me?". The researcher explained that her perspective was important to understand this sensitive issue and an invaluable source of knowledge, the researcher said: "Unless you speak on it, I will not be able to understand it. You are a confident woman who is aware of the circumstances of other women in your locality". She was convinced and replied that the interview would help to give her solace by sharing her feelings and emotions. Thus, power was mediated before and during the process of interviews with the participants.

Oakley (1981) suggests a participative approach that focuses on non-manipulative, non-hierarchical relationships between the researcher and the researched. This type of relationship makes the interview process interactive by breaking down the hierarchy and makes this relationship empowering (Oakley, 1981; Letherby, 2003; Edwards and Mauthner, 2012; Burgess-Proctor, 2015). The strategies that were employed in the current study included the choice of the participants to select a psuedonyme for themselves and answering back to their questions. One of the close members of the researcher's family had suffered domestic violence in the past, her experiences were also shared with the women participants to make them feel that they were not alone in going through all such struggles. This was particularly useful to validate their feelings and to equalise the power imbalance to make them understand that this could happen to anyone (Campbell et al., 2019). Thus, power differences were used in progressive ways and feminist strategies were employed for empowering the participants to reduce these differences (Brooks and Heise-Bieber, 2007; Miller and Boulton, 2007; Bender, 2016). Often, the participants asked the opinion of the researcher regarding the topic under discussion. It was difficult to disagree and challenge their viewpoints when the researcher was

holding a different stance. The focus was shifted back politely by showing eagerness that their perspectives were important to understand the society and the researcher was there to learn from them. Though very few women were interested in the available resources and support, efforts were made to provide them with information that they could use in the future (Campbell et al., 2010).

4.8 Emotions in Research and Emotional Reflexivity

Positivist approaches advocate an objective scientific search for knowledge without personal involvement of the researcher and, thus, emotions have been considered in binary opposition to rationality/ intellectual work (Jaggar, 1989; Holland, 2007; Johnson, 2009;). A researcher is a person who interacts with the subjects, such interaction involves a certain kind of relationship which could not be limited to the mere presence of the researcher to collect evidence without any feelings. As the feminists advocate the importance of women's personal lives in the construction of knowledge, a researcher cannot remain detached while entering into the world of participants to gain a deeper understanding of it (Holland, 2007; Emerald and Carpenter, 2015). Active listening, caring, empathy, and being supportive are the core values of feminist qualitative research to establish a relationship of trust in the field that helps understand the subjective experiences of the participants (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Emerald and Carpenter,2015; Leavy and Harris, 2019). Being empathetic, emotions are inevitable, especially when dealing with sensitive research topics like domestic violence which poses threats to the emotional well-being of both the researcher and the participants. Stanley and Wise (1995) criticised the anathema of emotions in research by pointing out that people are not just the "repositories of 'data' which can be emptied into questionnaires, interviews, ethnographies and so on" (p.161). This intimates the significance of acknowledging the emotions of the participants in the process of knowledge development (Jaggar, 1989; Hubbard et al., 2001)

In the present study, women participants expressed themselves not just in words, their silence, facial expressions and body language were conveying their feelings. Keeping in view the feminist ethics of care, emotionally supportive environment was the primary concern of the researcher (Campbell et al., 2010). During interviews, if women felt distressed then the interview was stopped, they were given comfort by providing tissues, water, and by gripping their hands and slowly talking about their feelings in an empathetic way. Reinharz and Chase (2001) advocate that studies dealing with women's experiences of violence should make arrangements to offer referrals in case of distress to the participants. Though the researcher

offered to provide information about the availability of professional support, none of the women expressed their consent for it due to the stigma attached to mental health issues (discussed in chapter 7). Those distressed during the interview were also asked for their decision about the continuity of the interview, they preferred to continue with their conversation except for a few who took short breaks or the researcher changed the topic to distract their attention for the purpose of reducing their stress (Hubbard et al., 2001; Hlavka et al., 2007; Campbell et al., 2010).

Besides the participants, researchers also deal with different kinds of emotional dangers in research that involve personal interaction particularly with intimate and sensitive topics (Lee-treweek and Linkogle, 2000; Hubbard et al., 2001). This study also carries emotional labour that impacted the researcher's well-being particularly emotional distress in the case of interviewing survivors of domestic violence and listening to the stories from women related to the survivors. The researcher entered the field to understand the perceptions of women about domestic violence but was prepared that she could encounter women survivors as the issue of domestic and intimate partner violence is worst in Pakistan (Andersson et al., 2010; Zakar et al., 2012; Murshid and Critelli, 2020). Nonetheless, more women identified themselves as survivors than expected which made the whole process emotionally straining. The use of open-ended interviews provided women with the opportunity to speak in their own ways, participants shared traumatic life events that the researcher did not anticipate. For example, Shakeela (36, uneducated, urban, Muslim) had consented for the interview as her sister was suffering violence from her husband and in-laws. The details of her daughter's abuse appeared amid the interview while she was discussing her own circumstances and her struggle for the education of her children, she said:

> My daughter was less than two years old; she was kidnapped by someone from our front door. We informed the police about the missing child, but police could not find her. We searched everywhere but ended up with empty hands. After almost eleven days, somebody told us that there is a body of a child in the fields which was my daughter. She was sexually abused and strangled to death while her eyeballs were missing.

This and such other details were not directly related to the objectives of the research but were important for the researcher to listen as women had suffered through painful experiences in their lives. Thus, the researcher dealt not only with information related to violence and abuse, she also encountered emotionally challenging details of other events. Consequently, she also struggled to control her own emotions in the field alongside the emotional demands of the participants.

Acknowledgement of emotion work in research helps in finding ways for its management and to mitigate the depleting effects of research. Various authors have discussed the self-care of the researcher and suggest ways including the role of informal and formal support networks (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Johnson, 2009; Emerald and Carpenter, 2015; Kumar and Cavallaro, 2018). In the context of the current study, the researcher's use of journal in the field was helpful to keep a record of her thought process. Nevertheless, it became complicated to identify whether physical symptoms of headache and tiredness were due to fieldwork challenges, that involved commuting to and from the study sites on a daily basis, or the stories of women. The researcher could identify her emotional fatigue during the process of interview transcriptions particularly about a participant who had narrated about the suicide of her sister-in-law. This transcription took an unexpected time due to frequent breaks and the researcher's inability to write the details (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). Studies focusing on the consequences of emotionally demanding research have also identified similar concerns about the well-being of the researcher (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Kumar and Cavallaro, 2018). Consequently, the researcher started meditation and yoga classes that helped in the management of distress. Simultaneously, women's narratives of struggle and empowerment in the face of adversity gave positive feelings that helped in the management of self throughout the research process.

4.9 Safety Issues and Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an integral part of research studies and ethical review boards of academic institutions make it a concern for the researchers to ensure the safety of the study participants and that of their own (Campbell and colleagues, 2019; Zeoli and Logan, 2019). The role of the researcher, thus, is to think and act holistically in ways that could assist in dealing with new situations in the field (jamieson, 2000). The study was approved by the ethics committee of the University of Leeds with certain restrictions to ensure the safety of both the participants and the researcher. Though various measures are taken to protect the participants from any harm, certain settings like rural areas pose additional challenges for the researcher that requires close attention (Ellsberg et al., 2001; Clark and Walker, 2011; Bender, 2016). The risk of harm could also deprive women of the opportunity to be heard in ways that might support in reducing violence against them (Clark and Walker, 2011).

Interviews were arranged at places which were safe for the participants and the researcher, and were finalised after discussing with the participants. In the rural locality, most of the interviews were conducted at the centre of the Organisation while a few women were interviewed in their homes due to their busy schedules with infants and domestic chores. These women were visited

at a time when their husbands were away for work and they were not directly facing domestic violence while two were staying at the homes of their parents. The researcher was accompanied by a base-line female gatekeeper in such visits while the male family member of the researcher and the intermediary gatekeeper were aware of the location of the researcher to overcome issues of security and possible risk of harassment.

Although both male and female researchers can have physical risk in the field, the gender of the researcher has bearing in shaping the forms of such risks (Lee- Treweek and Linkogle, 2000). The researcher was aware of the gender system of both the study sites that also helped in overcoming unexpected dangers. For example, in the village setting, it is a norm that women keep their gaze low and avoid observing men standing in the streets that were adhered during fieldwork. The researcher did not wear any makeup, dressed modestly by wearing simple and dark colour clothes and covered herself with a shawl that hide her appropriately. While reflecting on the village culture, a young participant also emphasised it, she said: "if a woman goes outside with makeup, people start rumours that she is trying to attract men". This reflects streets as gendered spaces where young and middle-aged women have to be very cautious about their appearance, otherwise, it would be easy to harass them and to do their character assassination. The researcher had fixed a time to contact with one of her family members and personal transport was used to access the study sites. Despite the pressure of achieving the desired interviews in the available time, all precautionary measures were taken for safety purposes (Jamieson, 2000).

Interviews in the urban locality were conducted at three different locations that were arranged by the gatekeepers keeping in view the convenience of the participants. These places included the office of the gatekeeping organisation, a school as it was easy for women to visit their children's school without restrictions from families, and the house of the female parliamentarian who had an office there to meet her visitors. These places were in easy access for the women interviewees and were safe for both the researcher and the participants.

Most of the interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees. They were provided with the reason that it would be difficult to write everything or to remember the whole conversation. The researcher gave them the assurance that the audio conversation would be used for academic purposes only and no other than the researcher could access the recordings. Eye contact is important while listening to the interviewee to understand the 'muted' language which becomes difficult in the absence of audio-recorder. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also assert that extensive notes during the interview disrupt the free flow of conversation between

the researcher and the participant. In a few of the cases, women were not comfortable with the recorder; important notes were taken during such interviews and no recordings were made. The researcher focused her attention more on listening and probing during such interviews and wrote all the possible details on the same day after returning from the field.

Participants were asked to allocate themselves pseudonyms for the purpose of anonymity and confidentiality of the data. Women assigned themselves with the names of their loved ones including their mothers and daughters. For example, an uneducated Christian woman started sobbing when she allotted herself the name of her mother who had passed away. This was a way to reduce hierarchy between the researcher and the participants and an opportunity for them to exercise their voice in the research process (Burgess-Proctor, 2015). The names of the villages have been changed, except the names of the districts, to maintain confidentiality and to ensure safety of the participants.

Only one woman was interviewed from a household and people in the area were not informed that the study was about domestic violence. If someone showed interest, it was shared that the study is about the roles of men and women in the society and the family relations (World Health Organization, 2001; Btoush and Campbell, 2009). As a precautionary measure, an additional guide was prepared particularly about gender relations. Participants were given the details of the study and were informed before the interview that their participation was voluntary. They had the choice to withdraw from the interview at any stage and also from the study up to two months after the completion of their interviews (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012). It is the ethical responsibility of the researcher to avoid upsetting or embarrassing the participants in the interview process (Ellsberg and Heise, 2002). They were offered information and support services to minimise any risk (Pio and Singh, 2016); however, none of the participants expressed an interest in such information except for two women. The researcher shared with them the official telephone helpline of the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women for advice and counselling. Due to the private nature of such violence, women avoid accessing any formal institution as this could further escalate violence against them if their families came across such information.

4.9.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent is an important ethical principle of research that puts the responsibility on the researcher to provide all the necessary information to the prospective participants so that they could make informed decisions (Warren, 2001; Bryman, 2008). Apparently, it seems a straightforward process and institutional guidelines ask for written informed consent of the

participants; however, the meaning and practice of informed consent becomes difficult to implement with the changing contexts and locations. Miller and Boulton (2007) argue that 'there are dangers inherent in assuming ethical universalism' (p.2199) due to complex social worlds.

Getting a written consent from the participants was difficult and sometimes proved distracting (Bell, 2014). The dynamics of consent were intricate in the Punjabi society as such practices are uncommon. Signing a document is considered very formal and women, particularly uneducated, do not take such initiatives without taking the permission of male members of their families. Besides, they were not familiar with academic conventions of data collection procedures and most of them were not interested in such details (Mason, 2018). In a study of violence against women in Pakistan, Andersson and colleagues (2009) reflected that the interviewers took the verbal consent of women by providing information about their rights in the interview process.

As the study involved both educated and uneducated women, the researcher had expectations that educated women would sign it as they were able to understand the form, but it turned out otherwise. For example, one of the participants had sixteen years of education, she politely declined the request by saying that she did not take permission from her parents to sign anything. The researcher, then, preferred to take the verbal consent of the participants by providing them with the details of the research. In the case of uneducated participants, asking them for their thumb impression on a paper which they were not able to read was a way to create suspicion for the researcher researched relationship which could hamper the quality of data. Though efforts were made to record their verbal consent, a few of the participants just shook their heads as a gesture of consent which was not possible to audio-record. Correspondingly, by considering the contextual dimensions and feminist ways of knowing ethically, situational ethics were practised by maintaining values of mutual respect and dignity instead of following procedural ethics (Miller and Bell, 2012; Leavy and Harris, 2019).

4.9.2 Data Security

Data security was another important concern due to the sensitive nature of interviews which were about the private lives of women and those of their closed ones. After returning from the field, audio-recorded interviews were transferred in the researcher's laptop which was password-protected, since M drive of the University of Leeds was not accessible from the research areas. Interviews were deleted from the digital voice recorder to ensure data security in case of unauthorised access. Any written details and field notes were kept in the locked

cabinet and were accessible to the researcher only. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants for the purpose of anonymity and to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants throughout the research.

4.10 Transcribing and Translating the Interviews

Qualitative researchers mainly use audio recordings to keep a record of evidence than their reliance on field notes and was also followed in the current study (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Hammersley, 2010). Most of the interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder with the permission of the participants except for a few where participants were not comfortable in the presence of the recording device. The process of transcription and translation were done after the fieldwork was over except for a couple of initial interviews to check its workability. As the fieldwork was conducted in Pakistan, the researcher travelled to Lahore (Pakistan) and was allowed to stay for a limited time due to certain restrictions imposed by the funding agency and the parent university of the researcher. Thus, the focus was mainly to conduct interviews, while transcriptions and translation were decided to be done after completion of the interviews. Instead of relying on memory, fieldwork journal/diary was used that proved beneficial in recording observations, thoughts, and questions.

Braun and Clarke (2013) describe transcript as 'the product of an interaction between the recording and the transcriber' (p.162). Interviews need to be prepared for the sake of analysis and the procedure involves transcription of, mostly, audio data. Initially, the researcher transcribed and translated verbatim script of one interview and discussed it with the supervisors to get their feedback. Subsequently, all the interviews were coded, transcribed, and translated simultaneously and thus, the analysis phase, that initially started in the field continued throughout transcription of interviews and afterwards.

Transcription is considered messy, time consuming and imperfect process but Braun and Clarke (2013) advocate that it is an essential skill to be learnt by qualitative researchers. As the interviews were in Urdu and Punjabi language, transcription alongside translation was a time taking activity. Besides, verbatim translation of interviews into English language was a complex process and, sometimes, metaphors and proverbs of Urdu and Punjabi language were an impossible task to achieve in English. The literature on transcriptions emphasise a lot on the quality of transcripts, gaps between the recorded interview and written text engender practical and principal issues in the research (Poland, 1995, 2001; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009;). Davidson (2009) argues that translation from one language to another is a highly complex and challenging process. To overcome this issue of translation, 'google translator' and 'Oxford

online Urdu to English translator' were consulted; however, the latter was more practical and provided good alternatives of Urdu words. Besides, the researcher also took assistance from her friends and family to further authenticate certain Punjabi words and phrases.

When a direct translation into English did not fulfil the purpose of conveying intended meanings, words were chosen that seem to provide the contextual translation (Lopez et al., 2008). For example, *ungli lagana* is a common term that denotes "instigate a person against the other", its literal translation is "touch by finger" which, in no way, is equivalent to the original word. An example of a Punjabi proverb with literal English translation is the following:

> buddi call di bajji nai mardi, baal di bajji mardi
> (a woman does not die because of hunger, she suffers and dies because of her children).

Again, a literal English translation was not enough, rather its cultural context was important as it was related to a woman's decision to stay in an abusive relationship because of her children. The researcher was knowledgeable about the cultural meanings of famous local proverbs due to her Punjabi background, while non-familiar terms/proverbs were directly enquired from the participants during/after the interviews to understand their cultural meanings that assisted in the translation phase.

Field notes were also useful during transcription, particularly in interviews consisting of long-durations. One of the examples was the interview of an educated Muslim woman that spanned for almost four hours. The researcher spent time with her and took notes of relevant details with selective recording. The details of the interview also included her job-related responsibilities and related challenges that were not directly relevant to the study. Transcription and translation of such details had of no use for the researcher. This raised ideological and practical questions regarding the level of details to be transcribed and translated. The study was designed to know the perceptions of women about domestic violence with the intention of doing thematic analysis to understand their standpoints. Therefore, it was decided to omit the parts of interviews that were not directly related to the study objectives. Academics also support 'selectivity' in transcription by considering it a practical and theoretical necessity (Bryman, 2008; Davidson, 2009; Hammersley, 2010; Braun and Clarke, 2013). This decision of editing the interviews, by skipping parts of it, was carefully done by listening to each interview multiple times. Recordings were listened in very short segments so that relevant information could not be compromised. Besides, a uniform transcription key has been used to make the quotations understandable in the analysis chapters.

4.11 Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis gives attention to variations, examine complexity, and portray meanings by making it understandable to others (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.202) and 'thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.79). Thematic analysis provides the basis for an understanding of data theoretically and gives the choice of doing both explicit and latent analysis that can assist in making theoretical contributions in the literature (Boyatzis, 1998; Crawford et al., 2008). This method of analysis has theoretical flexibility and provides a thick and detailed description of the data (Braun and Clark, 2006; Alhojailan and Ibrahim, 2012; Nowell et al., 2017).

Transcripts were analysed by using techniques of thematic analysis as the themes capture central aspects of the data and provide meaningful patterns about the phenomenon under study (Neuman, 2003; Braun and Clark, 2006; Rapley, 2011). The researcher categorised and code the data by keeping in view the guidelines proposed by Mason (2002) to treat the data as loose and flexible and also to give particular importance to the contexts while designing categories. Thematic categorisations were made and discrepancies and contradictions in the data were searched to generate conclusions about what is happening and why (Skukauskaite, 2012). Initially, data was organised and then interpreted under various themes and sub-themes.

Spenser et al. (2014) suggest four stages of data management: familiarisation with the data, constructing an initial thematic framework, indexing and sorting, and reviewing data extract. The process of data collection and subsequent transcription were the stages of familiarisation with the data. The researcher transcribed the interviews herself, it was helpful to develop initial thoughts about labelling and sorting of interviews. All the interview transcriptions were organised into four broad categories on the basis of religious identity, age, education, and urban/rural residence of the participants. Each participant was allocated a unique colour and number, for example, Sonilla (a participant) was allocated number '1' and her interview extracts were black in colour. Table below is an example of the organisation of the participants.

Table 2:Organisation of Transcripts for Data Analysis

Urban-Christians			
Number and Colour	**Name**	**Age**	**Education**
1. Black	Sonilla	35	Master
2. Red	Aini	30	Master
3. Blue	Zobia	34	Master

4. Orange	Gul Baji	55	Ten years of schooling, teaching course
5. Green	Sania	33	Twelve years of schooling

Similarly, the details of all the participants were organised into four separate Word tables with the following headings: Urban-Christians, Urban-Muslims, Rural-Christians, and Rural-Muslims. Bryman (2008) advocates a thorough reading of the data to split it into themes and sub-themes. This process was useful in developing the initial thematic framework, the extracts of each interview were sorted under various themes and sub-themes by the assigned number and colour to a participant. The review of the data started by reading each extract multiple times and comparisons were made among various categories based on the religious identity of women, urban/rural division, and the education of women. During the phase of familiarisation, the data showed more differences between educated and uneducated women instead of varying age categories. Therefore, very few comparisons would be observable in the analysis chapters based on the age of participants.

4.12 Conclusion

The chapter describes the methodological underpinnings and has provided rationales for the selection of methods to conduct this qualitative research study. The project is influenced by feminist ways of doing qualitative research and has employed the standpoint epistemology. The chapter elaborates the selection of reseach sites and justifies the use of stratified purposive sampling alongside the active role of gatekeepers in accessing the study participants. In-depth interviews were conducted with women paticipants in order to explore and understand their perceptions and experiences of domestic violence. Qualitative research is criticised for a lack of objectivity, feminist standpoint theory advocates for a strong reflexivity in order to address the issue of objectivity in qualitative inquiry. Keeping in view this aspect, reflexivity has been discussed in detail to reflect the ways knowledge has been produced by negotiating status identity and power dynamics in the field. Feminist researchers emphasise the involvement of emtions especially in research involving sensitive topics therefore, emotional reflexivity has also been discussed.

Safety of both the researcher and the participants was crucial throughout the fieldwork and after its completion. All the precautionary measures have been explicated alongside the storage of data. Ethics are an important aspect of research and feminist scholars emphasise a lot on

ethics of care in the research process. The section on ethics elaborates the gaps between institutional guidelines and the demands of changing locations and contexts. The chapter has also indicated the issues and challenges that the researcher encountered during the process of transcription and translation alongside the strategies adopted to deal with that. The last section highlights the techniques used to analyse data and to make themes.

The next four chapters are based on the analysis of in-depth interviews and represent the findings of the study. These chapter are arranged in a sequence that assist in undertstanding the issue of domestic violence in a holistic way. The first chapter of analysis [chapter 5] discusses the background and contexts of women's lives and is mainly focused on gender roles and relation in the Punjabi society. The next chapter [Chapter 6] is based on women's perceptions and experiences of violence while Chapter 7 elucidates impacts of violence on women and their families. The last analysis chapter [Chapter 8] is based on the availability of support and the possible ways to overcome this kind of violence in the society.

CHAPTER 5

PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF GENDER ROLES AND RELATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on perceptions and experiences of women regarding gender roles and relations in the contemporary rural and urban contexts of the two major districts of the Punjab Province i.e., Lahore and Nankana Sahib. Gender is significant and includes the roles that men and women perform and the expectations that women participants had from these roles. The first section analyses that the gender roles are well-defined and if men try to go against the traditional gender ideology, they are stigmatised and compelled to follow the gendered norms of the society. Though more women are entering the formal work force, it does not translate into the domestic sphere as doing the domestic chores by men are considered to reduce their honour. The role of the female members of a husband's family is significant to maintain and strengthen patriarchy that indicates the prevalence of patriarchal bargains in the Punjabi society. The next two sections reflect the social position of men and women in the Punjabi society and various factors that contribute to maintain the superiority of men. The notion of 'honour' is strong, and women are the carriers of the family honour. Though the patriarchal culture and structural inequalities are similar across both the faith groups, Christian women are at a disadvantaged position compared to their Muslim counterparts due to their minority status.

Various social factors contribute to the devaluation of daughters that has been discussed alongside financial reasons for son preference. Despite education and better economic standings, the desire for sons predominate in the families without any distinction of religious identity and place of residence. The role of the state is significant in shaping such perceptions which has been highlighted in the section. The chapter analyses the decision-making at the domestic level to highlight the positioning of both genders and to further know the standpoints of women about their expectations to be involved in decisions. In the same household, the hierarchy among women was prevalent and thus, the household system alongside education of women play a role regarding the involvement of the women participants in decision-making. The household system is both joint and nuclear; however, many women were living in a nuclear system at the time of interview. As the participants were married women, the treatment of the husband's family towards them was a crucial aspect of their lives as many had lived in joint households at some point in their lives. Thus, the women shared their experiences of living

with the affinal families and pointed out the factors that make them subordinate in the marriage relationship. All the sections in this chapter has highlighted the differences among women, wherever significant, based on their religious identity, place of residence, and education. Consequently, this chapter analyses the positionality of women and men and the hierarchies of relationships to understand the gender structure and a system of social stratification in the Punjabi society.

5.2 Gender Roles, Division of Labour and Expectations of Women Participants from these Roles

Gender roles are crucial in defining the status and position of women and men in the society. Social norms and beliefs provide the base to do gender within particular contexts and provide privileges and responsibilities to each gender (Lindsey, 2016). Pakistan is a patriarchal society where traditional social norms contribute to giving men a dominant position in both the domestic and the public sphere (Ali et al., 2011). Societal beliefs and values put the responsibility of domestic work on women, whereas financial obligations are carried out by men and usually involve tasks outside the home. However, the division of domestic and public sphere is not strictly followed as there is some degree of flexibility due to the increasing economic pressures and changing gender roles (Qadeer, 2006; Weiss, 2014). Whilst the individual situation varies, some women in both the urban and the rural contexts expressed their disapproval if men contribute to the work at home. For example, Zeenat (46, literate, Christian, rural) had a view about the work of men and women as follows:

> Our men [husband and sons] work outside the home whereas I do domestic work and had my own stitching centre. Men should not do the domestic work, nor our men do that. They should be given respect as they are men.

This indicates that division of labour is defined for both the genders and doing the household chores by men is not considered appropriate as it reduces their respect. Concurrently, it illustrates that the household work, which is mostly done by women, is less valuable compared to the bread winning role of men. This is similar to what Risman (2011) has said, while explaining gender as a structure, that individuals learn to do gender-typical behaviour through socialisation and develop gendered identities. Women and men internalise gender norms and women, themselves, strengthen it by accepting the superior position of men as gender is embedded in our personalities, cultural rules, and in the institutions (Risman, 2004). However, it is not necessary that everyone do gender according to the expected cultural standards forging masculinities and femininities in alternative ways. In such instances, individuals who deviate, face pressures to conform to the gendered expectations at the interactional level. For example,

in some instances, women consider it a matter of disrespect for men if they were found involved in doing domestic tasks. They showed their disapproval if other women in the family particularly the daughter-in-law involved her husband in the domestic work as expressed by Shabeela (uneducated, urban, Christian):

> Everything is different for my daughter-in-law as she is very confident. We have brought her for domestic work, but she asks my son to help with her. Men are not supposed to do domestic work. If a woman involves her husband in domestic work, she will not be able to return this debt whole of her life.

Gender roles and expectations change over time and is evident from this narrative. However, such a change is not easily accepted by those who adhere to the hegemonic gender beliefs and consider it a moral burden on the woman who involves her husband in household work. Adeela, a young Muslim woman belonging from the rural locality, had similar views. She believed that domestic work does not suit men, they should only do the work that is assigned to them (bread winning role); whereas, women can do both types of work i.e., domestic work and job/economic activity. The researcher was interested to know why men cannot do both types of work which women can do, the participant had a perspective that the respect attributed to men was paramount and doing the domestic chores reduces their respect within the family and the society. This reflects that women are socialised in a way that they consider it inapt for men to be involved in the household responsibilities that are usually performed by women. Conversely, it is not necessary that women always strengthen the hegemonic gender beliefs and norms, men do not consider it appropriate to be part of the domestic tasks. They believe that it is a disgrace to be involved in the domestic sphere or help their wives. Kishwar (34, educated, rural, Muslim), living in a nuclear family, expressed her views like this:

> My husband and other men in my affinal family consider it their insult to do the domestic chores. I think that men should help women in the home to some extent, but I never asked my husband to do so as it will initiate a dispute and he will be annoyed with me.

While restraining from any such activity that is strictly considers a woman's sphere according to the cultural context, men try to maintain their hegemony in the home. Such strict gender binary is appreciated and valued at the local level and, through this, men are able to maintain their domination as is apparent in the above quote of Kishwar. Though she wanted her husband to be a helping hand in the domestic sphere, she was aware of the consequences of any such demand from her. For this, Connell uses the concept of hegemonic masculinity which is considered the most legitimate way of manhood and tends to stabilise patriarchal power (Pease, 2019; Fattah and Camellia, 2020). In the Punjabi society, traditional division of labour maintains the gender inequality and men, who believe and practice strict gender roles,

strengthen the hegemonic masculinity. On the contrary, there were situations when men got involved in the domestic chores as shared by some of the participants including Sadia (28, no education, rural, Muslim): “My husband does not do domestic work but if I get sick, he helps me. We are in the village, if people observe that he is doing domestic work, they criticise him, but he does not bother”. Despite that she was living in a nuclear household system, her husband had to face the criticism. Though men practice various forms of masculinities, the most honoured way in the local rural context is to perform the hegemonic one otherwise men have to face the criticism from others. Such a pressure forces them to comply with the gender structure of the society despite the desire of those who disagree with such arrangements. Besides, household system has a significance, it is easy in a nuclear household system for men to support their wives due to the absence of other members like their parents and siblings. A similar experience was shared by Salma (41, illiterate, rural, Muslim):

> If my mother-in-law and sister-in-law are at home, then it is difficult for my husband to help me in domestic work. He has to listen that he is subordinate to his wife otherwise there is no issue for my husband to help me when in need.

Faira had an analogous opinion as of Salma. She had a choice marriage (38, literate, urban, Muslim, second marriage), and was a working woman. Her husband was very supportive in the household chores and in taking care of children as they had a nuclear household system. It is easier for men in such a family setup to avoid cultural constrictions of not giving any support to women in the domestic tasks. However, it was not the case in the rest of Faira’s family as men were not supportive of women. The criticism, for helping the wives, was mostly from the female members of the family particularly the mother and the sisters of a man. The rural areas are considered more adherent to traditions; however, the changing gender patterns were apparent in the rural settings as Sadaf (24, illiterate, rural, Christian) shared her experience in the home:

> My husband and I do domestic chores together and I, sometimes, go with my husband on brick kiln if we need to work more. As I am tired at night, my husband gives milk to children while I asleep.

Sadaf had a choice marriage, she was living with her parents instead of in-laws at the time of interview. The researcher observed that for a few young Christian women, husbands were cooperative in domestic work as the women were living with their parents after marriage. Men did not hesitate in assisting whether women were housewives or doing some jobs. As the men were living with their in-laws, they were not in any obligation to maintain their dominance over their wives as is expected of men when they live with their parents and siblings. The data shows that many of the participants were in favour of taking support from their husbands in time of

need. However, women had a sense of pressure if they were not able to perform domestic roles appropriately due to some reasons. A woman considers that domestic work is ultimately her responsibility, if a man has to do that, she feels upset and embarrassed:

> I had arthritis so he [husband] used to do work for me. Then one day I asked him that he could do another marriage as he had to look after me and the children. Though second marriage is not allowed in us [Christianity], I still asked him to do so which he refused (Sarah, 52, literate, urban, Christian).

Sarah had a choice marriage and was working in an NGO at the time of interview. This illustrates that an urban educated woman feels compelled that the ultimate obligation of household chores is that of a woman. If a man is providing such a support, it is his love for his wife, which she considers as a burden for him as he is also involved in financial commitments. This indicates that women try to fulfil the cultural expectations by not putting any domestic responsibility on men despite changes in their own roles as both housemakers and earning for their families. It is those cultural expectations and moral accountability that, according to Risman (2004), constrained gendered division of household labour that needs to be changed. Besides, it is not just domestic chores, women have to provide caring responsibilities in the joint households, they also served the elderly and sick despite their jobs and children. They had expectations that the in-laws would treat them nicely in recognition of their services they were providing. However, they were not valued despite all their efforts as Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim) shared her experiences within the joint family:

> I used to do all the domestic work, did teaching and also looked after my sister-in-law who was bedridden due to paralysis. I have taken care of her for almost twelve years. I cooked in the morning before going to school, cleaned her diapers after coming back from school, looked after my kids, and did all the domestic chores. I have spent my life taking care of my in-laws, but they always abused me. I was full of life, but I lost myself during all these years.

The work of women is taken for granted and is considered that this is what they are supposed to do. Women also internalise the superior position of men and make efforts to be efficient in their domestic responsibilities. There were instances when a woman has to suffer the consequences in case of food or other work not done timely as mentioned by Sugra (29, uneducated, urban, Muslim). Her husband used to beat her if she did not serve food timely. She was twelve years old at the time of her marriage whereas her husband was about forty years and had a second marriage to her. In such circumstances, she made every effort to follow the orders of her husband and did gender according to the requirements of her affinal family. Being a child bride, without any exposure to education, she internalised the hegemonic masculinity and had similar expectations from her daughter-in-law.

In the Punjabi culture, women live with their husbands and the affinal families after marriage. Due to a man's role as the breadwinner of the family, he is considered responsible for the living arrangements of the wife after marriage. However, the situation was quite opposite in the case of Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian), she rented a house before her marriage, she had a job, so the financial responsibility also shifted to her:

> we are living in a nuclear family, I rented a house and made a setup to live before our marriage, my husband did not take any such responsibility. I have to do all the domestic chores despite that we both work.

As educated women in the urban areas are entering the formal labour market, doing a job increases their burden of responsibilities. Besides, they are expected to contribute financially in the family that reduces the burden of men while, for a woman, it is the opposite as she gets involved both in the public and the private sphere. Ultimately, economic empowerment of women doubles their responsibilities whereas this situation benefits men, they face less economic pressures and are not involved in the domestic chores. Though institutional changes make it possible for women to enter the job market, the patriarchal ideology of the society has not changed. For example, Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christian) viewed the situation of working women, both educated and uneducated, similar in the domestic sphere despite financial differences between them. While comparing herself with her domestic helper, she expressed:

> All women are similar whether it's my maid or me, there are no differences between us. There could be differences among men and such differences are, sometimes, because of education, social environment, but…men are after all men. I did a job and also carried my household responsibilities, I know how I managed all that. But a man thinks that a job, he does, is such a huge favour that he gives to a woman, if her family would wash his feet and drink that water (paaon dhoo k piay) is less than enough.

It is not compulsory that living in a nuclear household system would compel a husband to help with domestic chores when the wife is also doing a job. The gender structure of the society and the way men internalise it at the individual and interactional level are important contributors. The above quote of Sonilla evidences the superior position of men that shows the patriarchal ideology of the society.

Though, in most of the cases, women were responsible for the household chores, the amount of work that they had to do in the domestic sphere was also dependent on two factors: their differential positionality in relation to other women in the same house and the type of household system. The differential positionality of women was contingent to the treatment of husbands towards their wives in the domestic sphere. In the joint household system, a wife had more pressures especially when the husband was not giving her due respect. Aneela (24, illiterate,

urban, Muslim) was carrying dual responsibilities within the domestic sphere. She was performing not only her own household tasks but also that of her sister-in-law and of her children as the sister-in-law was working. The mother-in-law had put all the domestic pressures on Aneela to perform these tasks, she was dependent financially on her mother-in-law for her day-to-day expenses. There was no option for her except to do all that and it became a source of dispute between Aneela and her husband. She shared her situation like this:

> I live with my mother-in-law [she is also my mother's sister] and married sister-in-law…both women are responsible for the domestic expenses while my husband does not give me a single penny. I do cleaning, cooking, washing…all by myself for my own children and that of my sister-in-law's children.

The control of a daughter-in-law is a way to exercise authority in the domestic sphere by a mother-in-law. In classic patriarchy, sons are assets for women as they are able to practice authority over their daughters-in-law. For this, Kandiyoti (1988) uses the concept of patriarchal bargains to explain the agency of women in the domestic sphere. In the Punjabi context, power of a mother-in-law is accepted and normalised which indicates that patriarchal bargain is still useful and applicable. However, as mentioned in the above quote of Aneela, women are differently located in the same household. It is not just the mother-in-law; a sister-in-law also derives power from her relation with the man and controls the woman who enters the family after marriage. Such power structures further strengthen when a husband does not value his wife that provides the opportunity to other members of the family of a man to exploit his wife. Thus, power operates in diverse ways at the local level and creates deep structures of domination particularly in a joint household system. Besides, in the joint household system, the presence of the family members discouraged the participation of men in domestic chores and women were burdened of domestic labour. Simultaneously, in-laws may influence the relationship of spouses despite living in a nuclear system. Zobia's in-laws were living in another city, they often used to enquired their son (Zobia's husband) about his routine over the phone. On sharing that he was engaged in kitchen, they made fun of him and stopped him in doing such tasks. He was not doing any formal work (job) at that time and, after such criticism, he ceased helping her wife who was doing a job that ultimately increased her burden of work a lot. There was only one woman whose husband used to help his wife in the presence of his mother as described by Roqueea (40, illiterate, rural, Muslim):

> I had very young children, so my husband used to help me a lot in washing, cleaning, and everything. I stopped him in doing all that, but he used to say that it is not possible to handle all that alone with children. I believe that men should contribute to domestic work then women can also support them in time of need.

In the case of Roqueea, her mother-in-law was also her aunt. She (mother-in-law) used to be very supportive towards Roqueea and compelled her son to take extra care of his wife in pre and post-natal time. In her case, socialisation might be the substantial reason for the supporting behaviour of her husband as he was not educated and was belonging from the village of Nankana Sahib.

In conclusion, the roles of men and women are well-defined, men are supposed to be the breadwinners while women's primary responsibilities are domestic chores and provision of care to the family members. Women, particularly uneducated, believe in the superior position of men and they contribute to maintain this patriarchal ideology of the society. Those who try to change this traditional ideology have to face a lot of resistance. As domestic chores are considered inferior and a domain of women, men who believe in the hegemonic masculinity do not contribute to any such tasks while those who try to facilitate their wives, in times of need, are forced to comply with the gender structure of the society. The trend of helping the wives was less significant in the urban area as compared to the rural area and was more observed in the Christian women's narratives. Some of these Christian women had choice marriages that could be the reason of support from their husbands. Men's education seems to have no contribution in the provision of support to their wives, it was the household system and the personal intention of an individual that were important. Men who wanted to be supportive to their spouses were more able to do so in nuclear families as they were not under any pressure to comply with the traditional gender roles. However, women feel it a favour if they get support from the spouses. The employment of women has increased workloads due to their dual responsibilities whereas men are compelled to follow the traditional gender roles, or they are not ready to be involved in the domestic sphere. Besides, there is no culture of acknowledging the domestic work women do that make them feel unvalued. Moreover, uneducated women having child marriages had to face the consequences if they did not fulfil the required standards of doing domestic tasks. The role of the women of the affinal family was significant in maintaining the traditional gender structure and to control a woman, who enters the family after marriage, to extract her services fully. Thus, the patriarchal bargain works in the Punjabi society as a woman is controlled by her mother-in-law and other female relatives of the affinal family. Besides, number of children, men's education, and women's employment did not appear to influence men's participation in the domestic labour. The burden of household chores on women was dependent on the position of a woman in the family and the type of household system. Nevertheless, majority of the women expressed their desire that

men should assist in domestic chores particularly when women are involved in economic activities outside the home.

5.3 Societal Perceptions about Men

Gender is an analytic category and its meanings are spatial and temporal. The role of social factors like race, class, nationality also contributes to defining the category of gender (Fernandez-Alvarez, 2014). In order to understand violence, it is imperative to discern the gender order as a context (Akyuz & Sayan-Cengiz, 2016) by reflecting the varying positions of men and women in the urban and the rural Punjab. Participating women discussed the roles and position of men at the institutional and the societal level and the agents that strengthen the hegemony of men in the local urban and the rural context of Punjab. A vast majority of women denounced the undue power that is given to men by the social structure and a few of them expressed their desire for a change in it. They echoed views about the physical strength of men- one of the traits of hegemonic masculinity in the local context, and the way men depict themselves socially as they have privileges in the homes and in the public sphere provided by the macro and micro social systems. While discussing her views about Pakistani men, Gul Baji (55, literate, urban, Christian) was antagonistic about the position of men, she believes that the presence of a husband gives a sense of protection and people do not object a woman's mobility outside the home:

> Pakistani men are very unmannerly and same is the case with my husband. They are very proud of their manliness. In our society, a woman is considered protected and has the liberty to move around and do her job if she is under the custody of her husband.

In a patriarchal society, men are socialised to be dominant and guardian of women of their families. Therefore, a woman gains respect and liberty due to the presence of her husband. Such an ideology of male domination gives them a sense of superiority and they use it to exploit women; however, it is not necessary that every man practice hegemonic masculinity despite their discretion to do so. As discussed in the previous section, men are considered responsible for providing financial support to the families. Such a support gives them a privileged position in the domestic sphere, they maintain their hegemony by controlling economic resources. Though there are variations among men as they carry different positions in the society based on their social standings overall, they maintain an ascendency over women inside the home. Besides, there is a culture of patrilineal descent; therefore, children, especially male, are considered an asset of the father as they carry the lineage of the family.

> Men are treated like a king in the home. My husband does nothing at home. I prepare everything for him, even put all the luggage in the car that he has to take to the shop. He

> has just to drive and that's it. Children are also considered the property of a man (Maria, 47, educated, urban, Muslim).

The quote is a reflection of the duties of a woman and the privileges a man have as he does nothing at home and simultaneously, children are recognised through their father. It was a recurrent theme in the conversation of many urban Muslim and Christian educated women about the asymmetry in the marriage relationship. A man is not socialised in how he has to carry on the responsibility as a husband, he is not trained to change himself whereas it is expected from a woman to get adjusted to the new circumstances of the marital life. Men expect from women to adjust according to the conditions provided. Abigail (26, educated, urban, Christian) was living with her parents at the time of interview as she had a dispute with her husband and in-laws, she expressed:

> When men get married, they are not ready to change themselves, they are not socialised about their obligations in a marriage relationship. They give priority to themselves and that ego is the main problem of conflicts. A husband also needs to change himself with his wife as there is a new person in his life that is attached to him.

Such a point was observed across different age groups that reflect that the roles of men have not changed as much as those of women over the period of time. A husband is considered to be superior in the marriage relationship whereas, a wife is expected to compromise in case of a dispute. The predominant status of a man is also apparent when the dowry is provided. It is a form of financial support from a woman's side at the time of marriage that depicts the raised position of men. Sometimes, the family of a prospective husband can ask for particular items in the dowry and failing to fulfil such demands results in the negative attitude of in-laws. One of the reasons for the male domination in the marriage relationship is the authority of a man to divorce, a divorced woman is stigmatised and disliked by the society. In such circumstances, women make every effort to continue with their marriages despite dysfunctional relationships. Due to the strict gender binary and structural inequality between genders, women and men are differently positioned. Such arrangements make women vulnerable to the coercive control of men (Anderson, 2009). This coercive control is enforced through macro structures of the society and also by everyday interactions at the domestic level. Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) reflected that as follows:

> A husband is some form of Pharaoh in our society and by calling him *majaazi khudaa* (another god for a wife), society has spoiled him a lot. I can make a lot of progress in my social work, but I am not allowed by my husband.

As is mentioned in this quote, various proverbs are used locally in everyday life to express male superiority, individuals internalise and accept this dominance of men from an early age and practice it without questioning. Such a domination of one gender over the other creates a

sense of insecurity particularly among women having no sons as there are feelings that men are the guardians of women and their presence provides a sense of protection. Maria (47, literate, urban, Muslim) increased her family size due to the desire of a son but ended up with seven daughters. She had uncertainties about the future of her daughters: “I have no son, I feel upset that my daughters will have no support in future of any male from their family”. This reflects the strong roots of patriarchy as a woman requires support of the male members of the natal family otherwise a sense of deprivation is always there.

The burden of responsibility and compliance in marriage institution is mostly on women and they have to pay the cost for exercising their agency. The role of a man as a husband is to control his wife and make her obedient towards himself and his family. Saima (29, illiterate, urban, Christian) deliberated the superior position of the husband in the marriage relationship and the resultant impact of any disagreement on a wife as follows:

> A husband thinks that a wife should follow his instructions after marriage as she is in his control and custody. She has to go to her parents and relatives’ homes with his permission. If she does not follow and he divorces her then abjectness is for a woman not for a man.

It reveals that a disobedient wife has to suffer the consequences. The social structure of gender in the Punjabi society stigmatizes a woman if she is divorced compared to a man. A divorced man has greater chances for another marriage while a woman has to compromise a lot to create possibilities for another marriage. Henceforth, men have not to invest in marriage to an extent as of women that becomes a reason of conflict between the couple. Thus, the dominant masculinity is a reason of dispute as women had the perceptions that men also need to invest in marriage relationships. Besides, it is not necessary that a man carries any particular form of masculinity at a time, the data shows that men perform multiple masculinities. In the case of Nasreen (34, illiterate, urban, Muslim), her husband was practising the form of masculinity which is respected in the local context whereas he practised hegemonic masculinity in the domestic sphere that was violent and dominating.

> My husband seems quite a respectable person as he has a beard and does conversation with others in a very sensible way and seems responsible husband. No one believes that he is totally opposite to what he poses.

Thus, there is a “diverse mix of male identities and ways of being men” (Fernandez-Alvarez, 2014, p.49) in the socio-cultural context of the Punjabi society. In this way, men maintain their good image in the public sphere and make it difficult for the people to believe if a woman claims her husband to be violent. Conversely, mothers of sons, themselves, foster the development of masculine traits that provide men with a privileged position. Sons are given

importance as an asset as they are expected to take care of their parents in old age; however, it is not necessary that a son fulfil his duty. While sharing the status of his brother, Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) told that how her mother got worried about her son while she (Zobia) and her married sister attended the ailing mother:

> My mother gives a lot of importance to my brother but if she gets sick, I and my sister take her to the doctor while my brother enjoys with his family. My mother, still, does not realise that her son should look after her. She gets worried if the favourite food of her son is not cooked. These sons are still decorated on heads.

Punjabi culture, as this quote indicates, gives a lot of importance to sons and despite failure in fulfilling his duties, Zobia's brother was getting all the attention of his mother which was disturbing for Zobia. The role of elderly women was crucial in promoting dominating forms of manhood. Women use proverbs of masculine connotations with the rhetoric of superiority (Akyuz and Sayan-Cengiz, 2016). Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) highlighted that mothers believe that if a boy will taste the home-made pickle first, the pickle will not spoil. The role of proverbs is crucial in making one gender superior and the other as secondary and exclusionary. However, there was diversity in defining the features of masculinity and the positionality of men in the urban and the rural context. Interestingly, the positive role of men in the family and the society was echoed by both the Christian and the Muslim women belonging from the rural context without the distinction of age and education. The privileges explicated by the participants included the physical strength of men, authoritative and leading the family, good decision makers, financial supporters, and their conflict resolution ability in both domestic and public spheres. Lubna (32, educated, rural, Christian) articulated the position of men and their importance for women in this way:

> For me, our men are our protection. They protect us from the evil eyes of other men. They are crowns of our head. There are many facilities that are provided to us by men like working outside the home and earning money.

The cultural significance of men increases due to the provision of financial and physical protection to women and signify their capacity to control and dominate. In other words, women internalise themselves 'others' or secondary in the gender hierarchy (Risman, 2004). One of the ways to consider oneself subordinate to others is to accept it and when women, themselves, prioritise men in their lives, it becomes easy for men to maintain their hegemony (Schwalbe et al., 2000). Salma (41, illiterate, rural, Muslim) was confident about the decision of her marriage as it was taken by the male members of the family. She convinced her mother on that decision as she believed that it would be difficult for women to resist:

> My husband had a second marriage with me, my mother resisted on that decision of men of my family, but I persuaded my mother. I had a view that men could carry all the burden if something bad would happen to me but if I and my mother would refuse from the proposal then it would be difficult for us to take a stand.

It is difficult to stand alone for women on a matter that does not have the support of men. Consequently, women prefer to accept what men decide for them as they foresee to get the protection. Thus, a culture of patriarchy and hegemony of men forces women to be complicit and accept this domination of men. Besides culture, the role of religion in making the position of men was ambivalent as a few Muslim and Christian women from the rural context opined that God has given superiority to a man; therefore, women should value and give priority to men. Adeela (26, literate, rural, Muslim) had left her husband's home and was living with her parents. While focusing on the rank of men, she had a viewpoint that: "God has given high importance to a man. Though women go outside and do the jobs side by side with men, men have special significance. They have a high rank". Gulnaz (31, educated, rural, Christian) had a marital life of three months as she got separated from her husband due to his violent acts. She had an analogous stance to that of Adeela regarding the status of men. She described: “According to the religion, God has given power to men. They have a priority after God and a man is called the head of a woman. Our society also gives preference to men”. Shazeena (41, educated, rural, Muslim) said that religion has given more share in asset distribution to a man and societal mindset also favours men:

> People think that a male has a priority as Islam has given a double share to a man in the property compared a woman. Men also have a monopoly in this society, they do not give any worth to women. This domination cannot be reduced as it has become a mindset.

Shazeena was one of the few women who spoke about the unequal distribution of resources between the genders and thus, the role of the religion in creating discrimination. While, for Asifa (33, educated, rural, Muslim), religion has not created any discrimination between the genders, this asymmetry is a product of societal norms and behaviours. For the rest of the rural women, they either claimed the superiority of men or believed that religion does not create any difference between a man and a woman. In a study about the beliefs and attitudes of men towards intimate partner violence in Pakistan, Zakar et al. (2013) reported that the rural-urban background of the male participants was a contributory factor as men from the rural area had strict views about women. While in the current research, women from the rural area were positive of the dominating position of men which, somehow, indicates that rural residency favours ‘gender role traditionality’ (Yamawaki et al., 2009, p.1126).

The notion of 'honour' is considered very crucial for the respect of the family and it has a special significance in the Pakistani culture (Critelli, 2010). Individuals are the carriers of honour in the family institution. Family compromises if the breach of honour is from male members while, for women, the situation is the other way round. Women are disciplined to be subordinate and protect the honour; therefore, there are strict codes of behaviour for them. A few of the women, both Christian and Muslim from the urban context and, Christian women from the rural area categorically shared that they were aware of the other women who had been into the lives of their husbands before marriage. They were told by their husbands themselves about such friendships in the past or the women participants came across the relationships of their husbands through other sources. Paradoxically, men wanted women of the family to protect their honour whereas having friendships with other women is not considered as a breach of honour for themselves. Farah (34, illiterate, urban, Muslim) shared how she came to know about another woman in her husband's life: "My husband has a friendship with another girl and he showed me his picture at the wedding night, whereas I am not allowed to go outside the home". Similarly, Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christian) described the burden of honour on women like this:

> Among male members of our families, our husbands are not the only ones who are bad to us, our fathers and brothers are equally bad. They want the women to look after their honour. Is it the responsibility of the daughter to be careful about their honour? we have put honour at one place only and all the honour is in that particular hole of the woman's body.

For Sonilla, honour resides in the sexuality of a woman. It is considered a breach of honour if a woman has any friendship or relations with another man while men do not apply this criterion on themselves. Henceforward, women who were aware of the extra-marital relations of their husbands were advised by their mothers not to share it with anybody nor to highlight it to their husbands otherwise they have to suffer the consequences. Maria (47, educated, urban, Muslim), a mother of seven daughters, was aware that her husband was having relations with another woman. While sharing the point of view of her mother, she said:

> My mother advised me to never say anything to your husband about the relationship he has with another woman outside of marriage even if that woman is sitting next to him. Otherwise, a man does the same act again and again to irritate his wife.

Women avoid sharing such relations of their husbands to others as it ultimately, reduce their honour and that of their families. They (women) feel embarrassed for the acts which they have not done. Thus, the patriarchal discourse of honour clearly depicts that it is not the men's bodies that carry the notion of honour but of women's duty to comply with this cultural pressure (Takhar, 2016). Silence is preferred in such situations particularly when women are dependent

on men economically and they are not supported by their natal families to take a stand for themselves in such situations. Though men are considered guardians of the morality of women of their families by policing their sexuality, they do not hesitate to harass other women in public spaces. Anayat Bibi (40, illiterate, urban, Christian) sarcastically expressed: "*hajj kiay huay hain* (have performed Hajj) but they consider it important to stare at women in the streets". Performing religious rituals is a criterion in the Punjabi culture that a man is pious and respectful towards others; therefore, Anayat Bibi considered it disrespectful when such men do acts of harassment towards women. Harassment by men is not limited to women walking in the streets but also to those who drive on roads. Men consider roads and public places as their spaces, they believe that they have every right to use it the way they want.

The hegemony and domination of men are supported at the structural level of the family and the society and any change into that is resisted. Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) described: "When a girl is married, everyone pushes the husband to take a dominating role. A husband could be compromising but he is pushed by the surrounding to take a lead role". With such a backdrop, role sharing of a husband in the domestic sphere is discouraged and he has to suffer a lot of resistance as such an activity reduces the hierarchized power relations between both the genders. Thus, macro conditions of male privilege and patriarchy influence the micro-structures.

> My husband was not doing a job, his family did not ask him to do whatever work is available whether it is labour work, as earning is the responsibility of a man. When he started to do cooking in the kitchen, as I was on job, my in-laws satire him by saying *tu buddi de thallay lagga* (you are now under the influence of your wife). All this made my husband irritated, he stopped doing all that and asked me to do the domestic work. If the roles were changed why didn't society accept that (Zobia, 34, urban, Christian)?

The changing economic conditions in the urban locality are evidenced in this quote where women are into formal employment and, sometimes, men struggle for jobs. However, this change does not translate into the domestic sphere despite that the man tried the role reversal. The patriarchal structure resists to any such change that tries to change its traditional ideology (Zakar et al., 2013). For women of the urban locality, socialisation has a significant role in shaping the superior positionality of men in the family and the society. Children learn the abusive role of a man first from their homes and then from their surroundings as shared by Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim): "Our society is basically abusive. I work with children and if I ask them, from where did they learn the abusive language? they mention their fathers". Children also learn through socialisation that men have to lead and to be authoritative in the family. Henceforth, the monopoly of men was a recurrent theme whereas it was the duty of a

wife to be attentive to the comfort of her husband. Both the Christian and the Muslim women from the urban background reflected on the privileges that men have particularly: the liberty men enjoy in occupying spaces and by adopting any profession of their choice. On the contrary, women, mostly, do not have such choices. On asking, how the hegemony of men could be changed, Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) had a view that society requires to change itself to overcome this situation including women:

> Society needs the training to overcome this inequality including women… Otherwise, the whole society is getting mentally disturb due to this inequality including the children. Men should not have a lead role, instead, men and women should move in collaboration. This mindset of domination is there by default. A complete wave is required to overcome this mindset. A complaint is not the solution as we are doing that since long.

This quote of Maryam is a way forward as she believes that women equally need to change their mindset of accepting the superiority of men. The roots of patriarchy and male privilege are deep and strong; therefore, complaint would not change anything. Thus, a culture of gender equality is required to be promoted for a healthy society.

In conclusion, Punjabi culture is patriarchal, presence of a husband means that a woman is under protection which gives men a sense of domination. In addition, control of economic resources and carrying the family lineage further make the position of men superior. A woman is expected to compromise and get adjusted in the marriage whereas men are least bothered for any change. The authority of a man to divorce his wife create further structural inequality and subordination of one gender over the other. Ultimately, divorce is stigmatised and women are blamed for their lack of patience, it applies equally to the Christian and the Muslim women. The role of the elderly women was crucial as they accept and promote this ascendency of men for the smooth running of the marriage institution. Besides, sons are prioritised over daughters as the provision of care to the parents in old age is considered their responsibility. The women from the rural locality shared the traits of masculinities that they believe were positive whereas a few of the educated women pointed out the role of religion in creating inequality between both the genders.

The notion of ‘honour’ has a strong significance and women are considered the carriers of their family honour. Interestingly, this does not apply to the men, it is the duty of a woman to hide the extra-marital relations of a husband to protect the family honour. Hence, the privileges available to men give them the authority to consider public spaces as their domain that results in harassment of women. Educated working women from the urban area expect role sharing in the domestic sphere and if men try to do that, they are criticised by the rest of the family

members. They had a view that the control of men should be reduced. There were no significant differences between the Christian and Muslim women about their perceptions of the positionality of men in the society; however, rural residency does contribute in shaping traditional views about gender.

5.4 Societal Perceptions about Women

Women are not unidimensional in Pakistan due to their varied identities based on region, urban-rural divide, religion, caste and class; therefore, dynamics of inequalities vary among them. The participants discussed the roles of a woman that she performs at the familial level and her status in the wider community which is influenced by the culture, traditions, and religious interpretations. Intersectionality provides the opportunity to examine through different identities that results in varying positionalities of women in the society. Literature reflects that minorities suffer oppression and discrimination from the majority group and minority women's sufferings multiplied in such situations as they agonise not only from the larger society but from their own group too (Rasche, 1988; Lee, 2000; Kasturirangan et al., 2004). There were differences between the position of a Muslim and a Christian woman, it was shared by women from both the urban and the rural context. Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christian) was a working woman in the past, she shared her experiences of being a Christian minority woman in a Muslim society as follows:

> The sufferings of Christian women are different from the rest of the women, same is the case with Hindu and Sikh women [also minorities in Pakistan]…though Pakistani woman is being exploited, the minority woman is facing double exploitation. Look we are a minority within a minority group. There is too much suffering…I started work as a journalist, could you believe, every person had an eye on me that this girl is a Christian. They think that friendship with a Christian girl is not a problem. It is so easy to take her to bed.

Sonilla expressed not only the hardships that a Christian woman suffers, she also voiced the experiences of other minority women in the Pakistani society. To approach a religious minority woman for sexual relations is considered very easy, Sonilla shared the reason for such a mindset. The Christian churches have combined prayers where both men and women pray together. This gives the impression that a boy and a girl are free to approach each other whereas Muslims are not allowed to have such religious gatherings. Resultantly, Muslim men do not feel hesitant to give sexual offers to the Christian women. Secondly, according to Sonilla, we are ignorant and backward nation who cannot differentiate between culture and religion and this amalgamation is quite apparent in the Punjabi society. On the contrary, Christian men are equally vigilant of the infidelity of women as extramarital or premarital sexual relations are a

disgrace to the family name. Men consider it their duty to protect the honour of their families that reside in the body and sexuality of a woman. Young and middle-aged married and unmarried women are discouraged to travel alone if the husband and other male members are not sure of their protection. There are societal pressures on male members, in case, they allow their females to visit abroad for a longer duration which hinders women to avail the opportunities for their personal and professional grooming.

> My 2nd husband is…a so-called liberal, he also thinks that if his wife will go somewhere alone, someone will snatch her honour from underneath that hole. Look how dirty this thinking is, and how dirty is the fact that if he allows me to go alone anywhere, I could be cajoled by any other man. It means only a man is loyal, a woman is not. I got a Chevening scholarship and had a serious dispute with my husband. He said I cannot go alone on that scholarship. I said why? he responded, 'what will people say that a man has allowed his wife to go alone' (Sonilla, 35, educated, urban, Christian).

Sometimes, men are more under societal pressure to conform their supremacy over women and to avoid criticism from their families and the larger society. The insecurity about the sexuality of a woman was also shared by other women. Nazneen (22, illiterate, rural, Christian) had a view that people believe that women could involve with other men if they go outside the home. She further elaborated that sensible women do not indulge in such relations; however, there are few women in the society who follow unacceptable paths that damage the reputation of all women.

In the rural context, minority women are more vulnerable to abuse due to various factors including poverty, lack of social support and an environment of shame and guilt that is attached to the crimes against women. This discourage minority women and their families to access formal institutions like police and judiciary in case of crimes like rape. Ghazal (32, educated, rural, Christian) shared the incident of rape of a minor Christian girl in her village, the Muslim community did not give support to the Christian family as the rapist was a Muslim man. The aggrieved Christian family was forced to resolve the matter at the village level. Ghazal shared:

> The family was forced to resolve the matter at the local level otherwise the girl would get more humiliation. Christians have a lower position. The disrespect that society gives to a woman forces her to think about her position. She wishes not to be a woman.

This shows that patriarchy alongside minority status increases the burden of oppression for women and provide confidence to men especially the dominant group that they have a 'silent' social support available and they can escape easily in sexual crimes against minority women. This further reflects that it is the woman and her family, not the perpetrator, who are the victims of humiliation and disrespect. On the contrary, the narratives of Muslim women reflect that they do not foresee any differences between their positionality and that of the religious minority

women. While sharing the incident of her eighteen months old daughter, Shakeela (36, illiterate, urban, Muslim) believed that women are not safe in this society whether they are young or old, belong to any sect, men are very harsh towards their treatment to women:

> My daughter was standing on the outside door of the house when she was abducted. She was on mother feed. We informed the police, but nobody could find her. We found her body after eleven days from far away fields when someone told us…. She was sexually abused, her eyeballs were missing.

The oppression is not limited to married women, a girl child is not safe in the society. The institutional failures to overcome such incidents were common as police were not able to recover the missing child. Besides, some of the women from both the urban and the rural area highlighted the miseries of a woman if she gives birth to a girl child. A recent study by Sattar et al. (2018) in the south of the Punjab province explicate that women had illegal sex-selective abortions of their female foetuses as they were forced to do so by their affinal families. Birth of a son brings respect and value to a woman which indicates the intricate cultural devaluation of a female that starts before her birth. Though abortions are illegal in Pakistan unless there is a threat to the life of a woman, such abortions were done clinically as women suffered violence from their husbands and/or in-laws (Sattar et al., 2018). In this study, a vast majority of the women had a consensus that the position of a woman is weak than a man in the society. However, within the category 'women', relationship dynamics were apparent as women shared that the mother-in-law and sister-in-law have a privileged position in the family while the position of a wife and a daughter-in-law is vulnerable. Such a diversity in the relationships was expressed by Shama (25, literate, rural, Christian) who had not good experiences with her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law, nor she was positive of these relationships:

> The position of a woman gets changed after marriage. I am the eldest daughter-in-law in the family, but my husband's sister and other family members misbehave with me. My husband beat me on the instigation of his family instead of talking to his siblings to resolve the issues with me amicably. It has never happened that a mother-in-law and sister-in-law have good relations with the woman, nor they will have.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the dynamics of power are complex within the same household due to the hierarchy of relationships. A woman has to create her position in her affinal family through various compromises and most of the Christian and Muslim women from both the localities reflected on it. They pointed out the compromises that a woman has to make in the marriage relationship and the stigma that is attached to a divorced woman in the local social context. To elaborate this, Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) expounded that it is expected from a woman that she should have qualities like forbearance, perseverance, and submission to her husband. Women are socialised with the mindset that they are protectors and

carriers of the honour of male members of the family. Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim) did not take divorce, she considered her father an honourable man and she did not want to exploit his respect. Though her father had passed away, she believed that people know his father; therefore, she kept her gaze low whenever she passed that area where her family used to live.

Nevertheless, honour is not the only reason that prevents a woman from taking a divorce, the future of her daughters also becomes insecure from such an initiative. As the stigma of divorce is attached to a woman, people do not like to have marriage relationship with a girl whose mother is a divorcee. Marriage is considered a lifelong relationship and parents provide dowry of hefty amounts at the time of marriage. Thus, it is a common cultural practice to cross out the text of *Nikkah Nama* (written marriage contract in Muslims) that provide certain rights to women as it is considered a bad omen to have such matters discussed on the occasion of happiness (marriage). In such an environment, a divorced woman is considered the one who failed to compromise in the marriage relationship. Consequently, there is a lot of insecurity among families for a girl whose mother is a divorcee, a 'bad woman' who did not comply with the usual family path.

> People think that a woman should survive in a marriage whatever the circumstances are. Society does not consider that an abusive relationship is difficult to continue for a woman. It is very tough for a divorced woman to have good proposals of her daughters, they are stigmatised in the marriage market (Maria, 47, educated, urban, Muslim).

Maria was one of the many respondents who expressed similar concerns regarding the stigma of a divorce for women. Their reasons for not taking such initiative was to have better future prospects for their daughters. On the contrary, marriage for a divorced man is not difficult as shared by Razia (46, literate), a Christian woman from the rural locality: "Men divorce women and then they arrange their marriages very soon, it is not a problem for them. There is no life for parents whose daughter get a divorce". The pressure of divorce puts parents in a constant stress and there was no distinction between the Christian and Muslim women regarding the enormity of divorce as both groups equally expressed their perturbation. If a woman decides to take such an initiative, parental pressure forces her to continue with the marriage whatever the hardships a woman suffer. For example, Mussarat (28, educated, rural, Muslim) approached the court for the sake of divorce; however, she took her case back due to the pressure of her widowed mother. While expressing her circumstances, she said:

> When I decided to take divorce, my mother requested me to change my decision as she was afraid of divorce. She did not want me to be a burden on my brothers and their wives. I took initiative and filed a case for divorce, my mother emotionally blackmailed me and

> asked me to sacrifice for her respect. My mother had a stance that earning respect takes a lot of time but losing respect takes a few moments.

This reflects how divorce results in a loss of respect for a woman and her family; therefore, every effort is made to compromise in the marriage relationship. Culturally, it is considered the responsibility of a woman to have more patience in her personality for the smooth working of a marriage. It is acceptable for a married woman to stay at her parental home after marriage if her husband or in-laws are not having a good treatment with her as it is a way to avoid divorce. Areeb (30, educated, urban, Muslim) was living with her parents due to the bad treatment of her in-laws, she shared: “My brother did not want me to take a divorce. He had a view that divorce is not acceptable for us. When I was divorced, I was under constant pressure for another marriage". The situation for a woman in the second marriage is more cumbersome as the husbands and their families understand that divorced women would make every effort to make their second marriage workable. Therefore, the affinal families are in a position to put all sorts of pressures on the woman. Similar concerns were expressed by Nasreen (34, illiterate, urban, Muslim) as she had a second marriage:

> Women with second marriage are in a compromising position. If I will share with others about the attitude of my husband, everyone will consider that I am the one who is not getting adjusted in any marriage.

The situation for a woman, to live independently without her husband or family, is difficult due to cultural constrictions especially if she is a working woman. Such women are subjected to community surveillance, people in the surroundings keep an eye on their daily routine and feel suspicious of their character. Thus, the moral policing is always there as who visit their homes and at what time they return homes. A few of the Christian and Muslim women from the urban locality shared that marriage provides them shelter to work outside the home and there is less scrutiny on their mobility from the community. Faira (38, educated, urban, Muslim) was a working woman, she believed that a husband’s name is a protection for a woman: “A woman cannot live alone in our society as people are like wolves. If your husband’s name is with you, no one would say anything or keep a bad eye on you”. A similar perspective was shared by Gul Baji (55, educated, urban, Christian), who was a nursing assistant in a hospital, she said:

> A woman cannot live alone in this society…people makes your life very hard to spend with your own choice. My husband is abusive, but I prefer to live with him as no one can point out at my character due to him...When I was living without him, I was afraid of everything like what people would say about me, they would point out why a particular person was coming to my house. The honour of a woman is very important, it should not be damaged in any circumstances.

The social environment for women forces them to stay in the marriage bond and in this way, they try to fulfil the social expectations. Besides being 'good women' (who compromise in the marriage), they calculate the pros and cons of being alone in the society and find it hard to be independent and protected without their husbands. Therefore, every effort is made to save their relationships despite physical, psychological, and sexual sufferings. A woman is considered a financial burden not only for parents but also for the husband and in-laws. Christian and Muslim working women from the urban locality deliberated that there is a new trend in the society to have a wife and daughter-in-law that is doing a job. This reduces the financial burden on a husband and his family, she is expected to contribute financially in the family expenses.

> Now people have started preference for a daughter-in-law who is a doctor as she will bring money and in-laws will not have to take her responsibility. In Pakistan, a husband does not consider a wife his responsibility. He does not give him money for her personal expenses and if he gives then he feels that it is a favour that he is giving to her (Ayesha, 54, educated, urban, Muslim).

Controlling a wife financially is a way to keep her dependent and subordinate in the marriage relationship and, on the other hand, a working woman remains under surveillance for her acts especially if she is earning more than her husband. Her privileged position, as financially independent, becomes a source of threat to the authority of her husband and his family. There remains a possibility that the husband and her affinal family cannot control her through financial constrictions, she can challenge the gender-based hierarchy of male control over resources. Thus, the economic independence of a woman creates a sense of insecurity to the patriarchal ideology of the family. Farnaz (36, educated, urban, Christian), a nurse in a government hospital, shared the position of a working woman in the home like this:

> Men feel a complex if a woman is earning more, they try to control her. She is not allowed to challenge their authority. If a woman has a good repute in the society, her husband cannot digest that even.

This shows how women have a subordinate position in the domestic sphere without the distinction of their education and privileged position in the public sphere. The controlling tactics of men and their families vary from physical violence to psychological abuse. The standards of a good behaviour for a man and a woman are distinct as expressed by Amna (42, urban, Muslim), a university teacher, who was quite critical of the differential standards of the society towards men and women: "My husband advised me not to laugh loudly and speak in a humble voice, I corrected myself. He, himself, laughed loudly with other women". It is a way to control women and their agency in the marriage relationship as Amna believed that the men of her family were afraid of her education and her courage.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, elderly women have a considerable role in maintaining the gender structure by reproducing the traditional hierarchy and dominance of men in the Punjabi society. Participating women shared experiences that how their mothers tried to normalise the violence of the husbands; however, women had disagreements with their mothers.

> My mother says that men, usually, consider a woman a foot shoe. I replied that he [husband] even does not consider me his shoe. We, even, take care of our shoes, we clean that, put that in a box and makes it repaired (Amna, 42, educated, urban, Muslim).

It is a common proverb in the local context to equate women with 'foot shoes' just to humiliate them and a way to express their worth for men. Moreover, putting blame on the fate of a woman is another aspect to justify the acts of a man and his family. Women questioned the dominance of men and the cultural beliefs that justify their aggressiveness towards women. Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) pointed out that women are advised to remain silent when their husbands flare up, otherwise they have to bear the consequences:

> It is generally said that the wife has made him hyper by responding to him. Why a man cannot control his anger? Is he a beast that he cannot control himself? Society expects a woman to have all the self-control for the survival of a relationship. Why relationship survive this way?

This quote indicates that aggression and control are gendered emotions as are expected from a particular gender. It is normal in the Punjabi society if a man is aggressive whereas self-control and patience are the traits that a woman should have in her personality for the smooth functioning of the marriage. With the growing awareness of women's human rights, women, particularly educated have started to question such behaviours of men as is apparent from this above quote of Ayesha. Depriving women of education is a way to control them as there is a consideration that educated women are more aware of their rights, it becomes difficult for their parents and husbands to have ascendency on them. Due to lack of education, access to information is curtailed that results in women's lack of awareness to their rights including reproductive rights in marriage. In such a situation, men control the sexuality and women have less contribution in deciding the number of children (Winkvist & Akhtar, 2000). Shakeela (36, illiterate, urban, Muslim), a mother of three children, drew attention to this lack of information by saying: "We do not have the awareness how to stop conceiving a child. We get trapped in abusive relations because of children and are unable to leave them".

Women who get married at an early age are not physically and mentally prepared for the complexities of marital life, extraction of their domestic labour and to control them is easier for their husbands and in-laws. It was observed that women who got married at an early age were submissive in their opinions regarding the positionality of a woman, whereas those who

married at a later age raised objections on the traditional roles of women in the family and the society. Shama (25, literate, rural, Christian) got married at the age of eighteen, she voiced: “It is not necessary that a woman should get married and produce children. She should have the choice to do whatever she wanted to do in her life like education, job”. On the contrary, Naseem (32, illiterate, rural, Christian) had a child marriage at the age of twelve, she compared herself to a pile of rubbish that has no worth:

> According to my experience, a woman is just like a pile of rubbish and society continues to throw garbage on it. People say that rubbish is useful too, I believe that a rubbish is always a rubbish, it has no value, and neither is there anyone who likes to carry it.

It was not just Naseem, there were other women participants who had their marriages before the age of sixteen. According to the Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 2015, the legal age of marriage for a girl and a boy is sixteen and eighteen years respectively (The Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, 2015). Studies in the context of Pakistan reveal that child marriages are prevalent in Pakistan that result in poor health outcomes for women and their new-born children (Nasrullah et al., 2014; Nasrullah et al., 2015; Mustafa et al., 2017). However, there was no evidence of the differences between the Christians and the Muslims regarding the trends of child marriages in Punjab. In the current study, complexity and contradictions were apparent from the narratives of participants regarding the phenomenon of child marriage. Women who did choice marriage or eloped for this purpose before the age of sixteen did not consider it to be a child marriage whereas parents’ or relatives’ arrangements for such marriages were perceived as child marriages.

There were stark differences between the urban and the rural women about the interaction patterns between both the genders. While it was not an issue in the urban settings, in the rural locality the interaction of women with stranger men in the public sphere was considerably noted by people in the surrounding. It is discouraged through the silent disapproval of the community as gossips start for such an interaction. Young unmarried girls are more under scrutiny if they communicate with someone in the street. Despite an environment of sex segregation, elopement of girls for a marriage of their choice was shared by the Muslim women in the village settings. In the Punjabi culture, the elopement of a girl is a shameful act and brings dishonour to her family, it becomes difficult for the family especially the male members to face other men in the village. As discussed earlier, women are carriers of family honour; however, the number of eloped girls was significant and resultantly there were no killings in the name of honour. One of the eloped girls was also a participant in this study. When the researcher inquired about her interaction with her natal family, she shared that her sisters are

in contact whereas her father and brothers did not meet her ever as she did marriage outside of her cast. In another case, Tahira (53, illiterate, rural, Muslim) told how her neighbour girl eloped with her brother before sunrise that brought disrespect to Tahira's father: "My father feels very guilty on this act of my brother and the eloped girl. My father is not able to face people as my brother brought disrespect to him". Tahira further shared about three other girls in the village who eloped for choice marriages and highlighted that the girls learned Quran by heart. Hence, religious element was apparent in the phenomenon of elopement as mentioned by Tahira. It is expected that a girl who is religious, cannot violate the cultural values and traditions of the family and the society. However, all the three eloped girls, who were considered religious according to the standards of the society, went against the societal norms that were quite disturbing for the people in the village. On the contrary, none of the Christian and Muslim women shared the elopement of Christian girls in the village. Young Christian participant women had choice marriages with the consent of their families that resulted in the unlikelihood of such incidents.

In the urban context, the dynamics of workplaces were quite challenging for Christian women whether they were doing jobs in a Muslim majority or a Christian organisation. Sonilla was a journalist by profession, she was pressurised by her Muslim colleagues to convert and become a Muslim. While sharing her circumstances, she said:

> A Christian woman has to suffer a lot. There is a group behind me from the Press Club [a union of journalists] who wanted to convert me to a Muslim. There are multiple problems here, it's difficult to tackle all that. They try to convince me that Christians cannot get higher positions in this country and give me examples of other famous people who converted into Muslims. They guide me that if I convert into a Muslim, I will be on a higher designation than this.

Though gender is important for an understanding of inequality and oppression, intersectionality framework highlights other dimensions of identity that contribute to discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991; Walby, 2009). This could be understood from this narrative of Sonilla who, being a woman and a Christian, elaborated the disadvantages of a religious minority in Pakistan. Such a positionality further marginalises a woman's social standing in the society and creates difficult circumstances as she does deal not only with the gendered inequalities, her religious identity further marginalises her at the institutional level. Though the minority women employed in the Christian organisations did not suffer pressures of conversion, women had to experience situations when their male colleagues try to invade their personal spaces. These colleagues tried to offer sexual favours to women who suffer violence and coercive control of their husbands. Such a situation was shared by Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) who had

experiences with different NGOs working for the Christian community in the Punjab where all her colleagues were Christians:

> Workplaces are very dangerous for women. If your male colleagues come to know that you have a dispute with your husband, they try to cash your situation by giving you sexual offers and want to spend time with you. Whenever my husband called me in the office and had a dispute with me, I smiled to give the impression that I am very happy with him. They used to ask about my personal life which is not appropriate professionally. I used to do a lot of makeup when I had a dispute with my husband just to avoid the questions of my colleagues about my personal life.

The above quotation reflects that workplaces are not safe especially for the Christian women. Though a couple of uneducated Muslim women also identified the sexual favours while working as domestic helpers; nevertheless, none of the educated Muslim working women shared such experiences. Resultantly, power dynamics between men and women in the formal employment were complex and Christian women were more scrutinised.

In conclusion, despite certain commonalities, the situation of Christian and Muslim women varies in the Punjabi society. Though the sufferings of Christian women were quite similar to that of Muslims, their minority status increased the burden of oppression. Moreover, place of residence alongside structural inequalities also contributed to defining their standing in the society. Christian women living in the rural locality had a subordinate position compared to their Muslim counterparts in the same village. Contrarily, Muslim women did not consider any differences between both the groups of women as they believed that they were equally oppressed. Women are a symbol of honour in the society, divorce brings dishonour to the woman and her natal family and reduces her status in the society. Resultantly, every effort is made to continue in a marriage relationship otherwise children, particularly girls, have to carry the burden of divorce of their mothers and there was no distinction between the Christians and the Muslim women. Besides, living independently is not a choice for women and thus, marriage remains the only option that provides them protection from public scrutiny. Economic independence of women is preferred for a marriage proposal; paradoxically, this also creates insecurities for the affinal families. Thus, education and privileged position of Christian and Muslim working women put them under scrutiny in the domestic sphere and their husbands and the affinal families make sure that these women could not dominate in the home. Though women described themselves as subordinate to men, they get power through their relationships with a man, as a mother-in-law and the sister-in-law had privileged positions than a wife in the family.

Emotions are also depicted as gendered by expecting men to be aggressive and elderly women have a significant role in promoting and maintaining patriarchal gender ideology. Due to subordinate position of women and a financial burden, the phenomenon of child marriage was prevalent among uneducated families. There was inconsistency among participants' views regarding child marriages before the age of sixteen. Women who eloped or had choice marriages before the legal age did not consider it as child marriages compared to the ones whose marriages were arranged by their parents. The social acceptance of a choice marriage was more in the Christian community than the Muslims, this increased the incidents of elopement of Muslim girls in the village despite restrictions on their interaction. Christian women had more challenges at workplaces particularly if they were working in the NGO sector.

5.5 Social Factors for Son Preference and Devaluation of a Daughter

According to the census of Pakistan 2017, sex ratio indicates that the number of men is higher than women; the ratio stands at 105.07 which indicates that approximately, there are 100 women for every 105 men (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). In the case of Punjab province, this ratio is 103.54 which is comparatively better than Sindh and Balochistan province where it is 108.58 and 110.63 respectively. Many South and East Asian countries have imbalanced sex ratio including India, China, and South Korea reflecting the heteropatriarchal culture of these societies and Pakistan is no exception (Moazam, 2004; Gupta et al., 2010; Puri et al., 2011; Zaidi and Morgan, 2016).

In the context of Pakistan, abortion is illegal unless there is a danger to life of a woman; nevertheless, no official data is available regarding legally induced abortions (Rehan, 2003; Sattar et al., 2018). The provisions of Pakistan's Penal Code, explaining the subject of abortion, are quite vague that discourage the medically trained practitioners to provide the service (Rehan, 2003; Awan, 2017). In patriarchal societies like Pakistan, abortion is a phenomenon that has social reasons for its occurrence more than concerns about the health of a woman. Specifically, it is linked to gender-based inequalities and positionality of women in their families and in the larger society as the desire for a son is predominant. A vast majority of the urban and the rural participants of this study highlighted the devalued position of girls in the society. Although they shared societal reasons for the preferential treatment with boys, nobody endorsed any discrimination, they do as mothers, among their children except for one in the rural locality. Kishwar (35, educated, rural, Muslim) was a mother of three sons and two daughters, while sharing her attitude towards her children, she said:

> Boys are important to survive in this world as they are the future assets. Daughters are a blessing too and we love them. However, sometimes I give more food to my son but, later on, I feel guilty that I have discriminated with my daughters.

It shows that boys are considered valuable as they have to look after parents in old age while girls have to move to their husbands' homes. As a result, most of the women cannot support their natal families or to provide care to parents in old age. Therefore, women face pressures to produce sons as boys are assets for the parents and families. Three of the Muslim participants from the urban locality had girls only, they increased their family size for the desire of a son. Interestingly, these women were educated and two of them were doing jobs which reflects that son preference is a phenomenon that requires attitudinal shift as education of a woman is not the only factor that could undermine it. While desiring for a baby boy, Faira ended up in four daughters. Though Faira (38, educated, urban, Muslim) was optimistic about the future of her daughters as she deliberated the positive mindset of society simultaneously, she pointed out the support that sons provide to their parents, she said:

> In a big city like Lahore, people think that there is not a great difference between a boy and a girl as women are contributing in every profession. However, boys look after parents in the old age and are a support whereas girls got married and shift to their husbands' home.

This indicates that women force themselves to think about the increasing equality of both genders in the society, but their own future security still remains a source of worry for them. This insecurity is mainly due to a culture of extended family where parents live with their married sons, and less concern of the government in provision of social benefits to the elderly such as free health care, housing subsidies and other such facilities. Though the government has established ten care homes for the elderly in the big cities of the Punjab, societal attitude towards people living there is sympathetic, they are pitied for living in these places. People abhorred the sons who leave their parents and do not provide them care in old age. It is considered against religious values and the traditions of the Punjabi culture to ignore parents in their old age. Henceforth, elderly women acknowledged the role of their sons in improving their lives and they were very proud of them. Hameeda (65, illiterate, urban, Muslim) spent her life in the Lahore city, away from her husband due to his abusive behaviour, and brought up her four children alone. She was proud of her only son who proved to be the source of comfort in her old age. She shared: "My circumstances have changed in old age because of my son. He went abroad, earned money and God bestowed us everything. Parents have to live with their sons". This reflects the desirability of sons not only for cultural reasons but also for economic

factors as men are supposed to carry out the economic responsibility of their families (Winkvist and Akhtar, 2000).

In a male dominated society, sons are considered to carry the family lineage, taking care of parents in old age, and requiring no dowries at marriage (Puri et al., 2011). Whilst, dowry is not the only reason to make parents worried, they are afraid of the future of their daughters. As discussed earlier in this chapter, right to divorce is assigned to a husband in marriage relationship. Women are subordinate to their husbands and in-laws that make the parents apprehensive of their destiny. In the Punjabi culture, people attach mistreatment of a husband and his family to the bad fate of a woman. Sadia (28, illiterate, rural, Muslim) expressed similar concerns about her daughter: "I love my daughter more as I feel that she has to get married and I get afraid of her fate. I am not sure what type of husband and in-laws she could have". Similarly, Nasreen (34, illiterate, urban, Muslim) had a trust in God Almighty about the good future of her two daughters while she did not mention such concerns for her only son. On the contrary, birth of a son improves the social status of women in their respective families and the larger society. Pregnant women are bestowed with prayers that God bless them with sons, there is no such prayer for a daughter unless there are enough sons (Hassan, 2017). Women who produce more sons feel themselves privileged due to the cultural dignity they receive from their surroundings. Maria (47, educated, urban, Muslim) shared the position of a woman having sons like this:

> It is a society of men and boys and people give importance to those who have boys, position of a woman also improves due to her sons. I suffer violence as I have given birth to seven daughters. I produce more children just for the desire of a son.

Mothers of son/s carry hopes that they would be in a better position compared to those having daughters only. Besides, women are considered responsible for producing daughters whereas the scientific facts are contrary to that. The improved position of a woman, after producing a son, is apparent from the narrative of Aini (30, educated, urban, Christian) who was residing in a rented house with her husband and a daughter as she was expelled from home by her in-laws. After giving birth to a son, her in-laws asked the family to return home. She shared: "My in-laws have given this place to us when my son is born. They said that their heir should have a proper place to live".

As there is no law in Pakistan regarding the disclosure of foetal sex, most of the parents become aware of the sex of their baby before birth. In case of a baby girl, female foeticide is an option, though not legal in normal circumstances, that is also shared by one of the Muslim participants from the urban locality. According to Zoreena (58, educated), her sister-in-law conceived for

the desire of a son and aborted two female foetuses as she already had daughters. This shows the intentional human interference to deprive the female baby from her fundamental right to life due to cultural constrictions (Sattar et al., 2018). If the number of daughters increases, a woman suffers the consequences despite the established scientific fact that the sex of a baby is decided by the male sperm.

Nasreen (34, illiterate, urban, Muslim) was one of those women the husbands were disappointed and annoyed at the birth of a girl, she said: "When my second daughter was born, my husband did not visit me for two months. I used to weep a lot, it was not my fault. Then, God blessed me with a boy, and he was happy. Similarly, Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) shared the attitude of her neighbouring man who did not see the wife and his new-born baby as she was the third daughter. The social stigma of "too many daughters" deprives a woman from the care and attention of her husband as he feels a public humiliation in the form of sympathy from others while there is no such thing as "too many sons" in the sociocultural context of the patriarchal societies (Gupta et al., 2003; Puri et al., 2011). Though couples desire their first child to be a boy as it reduces the burden on a woman, producing girls without any male heir is something unacceptable that caused women a lot of mental stress. It is useful to mention that the education and economic standing of a couple do not seem to be a contributory factor when it comes to desiring a male child. The role of men in such situations was both disheartening and supportive for their wives and it was dependent on the birth order of the child. Usually, conceiving the first child as a baby girl was acceptable for the husband with the hope that their next baby will be a boy; however, the attitude of in-laws in such cases is worth mentioning. Aini (30, educated, urban, Christian) shared that they came to know that they were expecting their first child to be a baby girl. Her husband advised her to keep the secret otherwise she would have to suffer the consequences, she expressed:

> My husband said that his family would have a weird attitude towards me. I was quite astonished to hear that as I thought my mother-in-law is a woman and she has a daughter too. Our culture values a baby boy more than a baby girl. Usually, in-laws do not behave properly to a woman who has a baby girl as her first child. On the contrary, the status of a woman increases due to producing a baby boy, in-laws treat her as if she has achieved a milestone in life.

Aini raised an important aspect of the cultural devaluation of daughters by pointing out that, despite having the same sex, a mother-in-law disliked a girl child. Moreover, if a woman gives birth to girls only, it is used as a taunting tactic by other women in the family to abuse and insult her as expressed by Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim), a mother of four daughters: "My sister-in-law insulted me by saying that I have to give birth to daughters only while my

husband never pointed that to me". However, according to Puri et al. (2011), such a silence from husband's side seems contributory to and encouraging of the pressure exerted by other family members. When parental desire for a son is not fulfilled, it impacts the physical and mental health of a woman. Ironically, there were no concerns for the health of the woman and the new-born baby as stress leads to complications in pre and postnatal situations (Hassan, 2017). The structurally situated phenomenon of son preference forced women to follow the orthodox culture and they use different traditional medicines, dietary methods, and religious tactics to conceive a male heir (Sattar et al., 2018). Though women mentioned the discrimination that is prevalent in the society between both the genders, they reassured that their attitude was not prejudiced toward the girl child that was interesting for the researcher as the concept of society was something which they did not consider themselves as part of.

> Our society gives importance to boys as people have a thinking that boys are their future asset whereas it is not appropriate for the parents to stay with their daughters in old age. I have observed that a lot but for me, both are equal. We do not differentiate between our son and daughter (Lubna, 32, educated, rural, Christian).

Many participants, both Christians and Muslims, from the rural residency expressed the worth of daughters by mentioning that they are more sensitive towards their parents and a blessing of God. They also stated their desire to advance the education of girls. Some of the uneducated women, who were in low income occupations, were investing in the education of their daughters equally despite their limited resources with the hope of better futures of their daughters. An interesting aspect of the consequence of the preferential treatment to the boys was raised by Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian). She shared that the privilege that boys receive in their early years impact negatively on their personality. While discussing the attitude of her husband in this context, she expounded:

> Boys are pampered from the beginning resultantly, they do not want to do hard work and look for shortcuts in life. Parents spoil the son while his wife suffer the consequences. My husband is not going to work as Christmas is approaching. He has no tension for the financial consequences of it. His parents have given all this training to him. On the contrary, his sisters are hardworking, doing their duties in day/night as they are in nursing. My husband, if sneeze, prefers to stay at home by declaring himself sick. I have to be on work whether I am sick or not.

This shows the impact of differential socialisation on both the genders and its long-term consequences. With such a background, the burden of a female spouse increases particularly if she is in the formal labour market alongside household work. On the other side, financial pressure, to be the breadwinner of the family, decreases on men. In this context, economic empowerment of women doubles their burden of responsibilities particularly when men are not ready to contribute in the domestic chores.

Various factors have been identified by the scholars that contribute to a decline in son preference that include modernisation, urbanisation, socio-economic improvements, legal reforms and a rise in women's status (Gupta et al., 2003; Hesketh, 2011; Lynch, 2011). Though education and economic participation of women have improved in Pakistan, less have been focused to have policies that raise awareness about the value of daughters. Economic participation has helped women improved their lives in material ways; however, such empowerment has re-shaped and strengthened gender hierarchies in traditional ways by considering them as 'perfect' in both the domestic and the public sphere (Khurshid, 2016). Besides, the society resists to any alterations to the conventional family system. For example, when a married woman starts living with her parents in their home, her husband is ridiculed by calling him *ghar jawai* (house son-in-law) as such a family set up is not the norm of the Punjabi society. It is the duty of sons to look after their parents in old age. Gupta et al. (2003) has critiqued the role of a state in promotion of such a setup. In a residential system, where women are responsible for caring the elderly especially parents of their husbands, the burden on the state to provide services to its old people reduces. Whilst Gupta et al. (2003) focused on India, China, and South Korea, similar customary practices are prevalent in the Punjabi culture where a daughter-in-law takes care of her parents' in-law. In such circumstances, a daughter-in-law should have a dominant position in the family; however, this is not the case as a husband controls his wife financially and through his right to divorce in marriage that put her in a subordinate position in the affinal family. While comparing the circumstances of western Europe to that of Asia about 'missing' women, Lynch (2011) has aptly identified the presence of joint household system in Asia where the ascendant kin influences the reproductive choices of young married couple which is not the case in Europe. Therefore, fundamentals of household system need to be changed that could help improve the status of women in Pakistan.

In conclusion, the desire for a son predominates across all the groups of women and there are social and financial reasons for it. Men have a social responsibility to provide care to their parents in old age and to maintain them financially whereas women moved out of their parents' home after marriage. They also require dowries at the time of marriage and their subordinate position in the affinal families remain a source of stress for parents. Besides, a husband's authority to divorce and, societal attitude towards divorced women make the parents apprehensive about their daughters' future. Therefore, women, having daughters only, suffer a lot of pressure from the family and the society and are blamed for not producing sons that impact on their physical and mental health. Number of children were higher among uneducated

women compared to educated women in the urban area except for one Muslim woman who was educated and had seven daughters. Similar patterns were observed across the rural area without any variation between the Christian and the Muslim women. Moreover, level of education and economic standing of the spouses were not preeminent when desiring for a male child. Despite economic and social changes, a daughter is considered a burden due to the notion of honour that is attached to her and she is not able to provide any assistance to her parents in old age. The role of the state was passive as the caring roles of women in the families benefit the state and reduces its burden in provision of services to the elderly. The change in attitude towards son preference requires active role of the state through policy making, changes in family residential patterns, and amendments in divorce laws.

5.6 Decision-making at the Domestic Level

This section deals with the autonomy in the context of decision-making ability of the urban and rural women residents of the Punjab. Women's ability to make decisions is crucial to their development as it depicts their autonomy and empowerment (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan and ICF International, 2013). Involvement of women in decisions depend on the nature of the matter that ranges from less important and mundane decisions related to women themselves to more strategic that involve matters related to money which can be an indication of their agency in the domestic sphere (Basu and Koolwal, 2005; Javed and Mughal, 2018). Women's authority in decision-making provide them control over their own lives and helps to reduce gender-based hierarchies in the families. However, in the context of South Asia, particularly in India and Pakistan, Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) point out that women are largely excluded from the routine decisions and they are clearly aware of their limitations to have their say in economic matters.

In the current study, positionality of a woman in the affinal family was crucial for her participation in deciding about various matters regarding herself and her family. This positionality was based on the type of household system, presence of the family members of a husband, power relations between a husband and a wife, and a woman's own views regarding her self-worth. Moreover, gender and generation had a significant role in developing hierarchies within the families and it was expressed by the participants who were either living with their parents-in-laws or had a chance to live with them at some point in their marital lives. In such circumstances, mother-in-law had a predominant role in making decisions about her daughter-in-law that ranges from purchase of clothes to mobility related decisions as expressed by Aneela (24, illiterate, urban, Muslim), a young mother of two daughters: "My mother-in-

law makes all the decisions; what I have to cook, what I have to wear, what my kids have to wear, where can I go. She decides everything for me, and I have no choice". Whilst Aneela wanted to exercise her agency regarding her mobility outside the home and minor household purchases, any resistance from her side lead to a dispute, she was threatened by her mother-in-law that she would be expelled from home. On the contrary, living in a nuclear household system provided some women with the opportunity to make important decisions regarding themselves and about their children which they were not able to exercise while with their in-laws. Nonetheless, in nuclear household systems, authority of a husband was a significant aspect of a woman's decision-making power. In some situations, husbands had a confidence in their wives; therefore, women exercised their agency without any influence. In the case of Aini, her husband relied on her ability to handle various matters independently without any interference whereas, in the past, she was dependent on the will of her parents-in-laws for every decision that was related to her, she shared:

> I am a decision maker in my home as I am living in a nuclear family. When I was living with my in-laws, it was very difficult if I had to go somewhere. I had to submit an application [sarcastically] almost five days ahead of the visit, then my in-laws used to think about that for about five days. Finally, the decision was communicated to me through my husband.

This reflects that a woman may face double pressure that restrict her ability to take independent decisions: one from her in-laws and the other from her husband. A few of the women from the urban and the rural residency believed that men provide economic support to the family; therefore, it is their right to be the primary decision-makers in important matters of the family. These 'important matters' did not include the mundane and routine decisions about cooking or daily household purchases rather the matters that could challenge the gender power differentials in the domestic sphere like mobility of women, marriage, and major economic decisions. Adeela (26, educated, rural, Muslim) was living with her parents, she emphasised the role of men particularly in a rank order as she expressed: "Our elders should make decisions. First it is father, after that, it should be done by brothers". Interestingly, women from the rural locality emphasised the involvement of elderly men in important household decisions side by side with a husband and a wife. Shumaila (23, illiterate, rural, Muslim) had a choice marriage at the age of fourteen which is considered inappropriate in the Punjabi culture. All the decisions regarding her mobility and household purchases were done by her mother-in-law and father-in-law, she always followed them for the smooth running of her marriage. Her parental family was annoyed with her elopement, she did not visit them for the last nine years. In such a situation, there was no option for her to resist any decision, she expressed: "I think

elderly of the family should make decisions, but we should also be asked about that". This shows that contextual factors are important as is apparent in the above quote. Due to her elopement, she had lost the support of her natal family and the only choice left was to follow the decisions of her in-laws.

Education seems to have a contribution in shaping women's perceptions about their equal involvement in the decision-making. Women who were in favour of men and elderly to make decisions were mostly uneducated or educated to a moderate level (uptil 12 years) whereas those who were highly educated (16 years and above) and employed believed in the equal rights of spouses in decision-making. Besides, women who had been facing violence from their spouses or other members of the affinal family were less involved in any kind of decisions. In few instances, these women were able to decide about daily cooking choices that were, in a way, not a form of decision-making, rather a liability as they were vigilant and well-aware of the food choices of their husbands and/or other family members.

Restrictions on the physical mobility of women also impact on their independent decision making whereas women whose inputs are part of the major decisions are considered to have access to resources and are able to use them (Desai and Johnson, 2005). Curtailment of the mobility of non-working, especially young, women by their husbands and in-laws was common in both the urban and the rural locality. Rabia (28, educated, urban, Muslim) was a highly educated woman who had to quit her job due to the demand of her fiancée right after getting engaged. Thus, she was controlled even before marriage while, she shared her circumstances after marriage like this: "My husband used to make all the decisions, I was not allowed to go anywhere without his permission". Education and employment are considered to provide autonomy to women; however, these factors become a threat for men as the independence of women could challenge the patriarchal authority of men. Consequently, women who were into better jobs seem to be less involved in the domestic decisions or their decisions were not given worth. They were dependent on their husbands for routine matters and if they did not take permission, they had to suffer the consequences. Amna (42, urban, Muslim) had M.Phil degree in English and was a university teacher at the time of interview. She expressed her helplessness like this: "My daughter was required Math tuition, I pleaded my sister-in-law, who has a predominant role at home, to convince my husband for permission as he does not listen me". Interestingly, fee for this activity had to be paid by Amna, she just required the consent of her husband as any such violation would lead to threats to Amna and her children. Similar situation was faced by Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian), who had a prominent position in an NGO,

she was not able to spend her earned money without the consent of her husband. While sharing her role in decision-making, she said:

> My husband makes decisions, I just give suggestions. Every time he makes decisions, we suffer a lot, he does what he believes is right or his family guides him to do. Most of the time it is my money, but I cannot decide about that…All his decisions about buying a new car, furniture or anything else were wrong.

Besides major decisions, Zobia was not able to have a choice in the kitchen. She used to cook what her husband asked for, otherwise he would scold that she held a different choice in food. Though she had access to her income, she had no control over that. A few of the women had not even access to their earned income, Maryam (40, urban, Muslim) had an M.Phil in Biotechnology and used to work as a teacher before her divorce. She had no access over her earned income and that of her husband as her parents-in-law used to draw her salary. She mentioned:

> My husband had no decision-making ability, he used to say that his father is asking for this or that and we had to follow that. My in-laws used to make all the decisions and I was not involved in anything. They even used to take my salary and that of my husband and I was given 2000 rupees [almost £12] to spend every month. I wore two dresses throughout my pregnancy. My mother-in-law used to decide when I had to sleep and wake up, what I had to eat. I was not allowed to meet my family. The decision about my divorce was taken by my husband and my in-laws collectively.

It is not always a husband who makes decisions, role of his parents and other family members was significant especially if they were dominant in running the day-to-day expenses of the family in a joint household system. Thus, the inability of the husband to make decisions was also apparent in the narratives of Maryam and also mentioned by Faira as she had a view that not every man has competence to take initiatives, she said: "Every man cannot be a good decision-maker and some men do not have this ability despite education, at times women are good at that due to their exposure". This reveals that educated women were well-aware of the dynamics of masculinity in the Punjabi culture and inability of some men to make decisions. However, these women did not point out such matters in their own families as it could be considered a disrespect of their husbands. Interestingly, other women in the same family particularly mother-in-law and daughter-in-law had predominant positions, so it was not the category 'women', instead the hierarchy of relationships was dominant in defining the status of a woman in the family.

Economic decision-making, access to and control over economic resources are important dimensions of autonomy of a woman (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001). The findings of this study reflect that women who were educated and employed had limited authority to spend income with their own choice which shows that employment status of a woman does not guarantee autonomy in the other dimensions of her life (Sathar and Kazi, 2000). As educated and employed women were well-aware of their rights, they had more sufferings due to this awareness and it was apparent from their narratives. Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim)

had been working in the past, she quit her job due to some health issues. She expressed her health problems that were requiring some decisions that her husband had to take while he was not concerned about her needs, she said: “We get oxygen with the permission of husbands. A woman cannot do what she wanted to do. I am consistently requesting my husband for a commode to be installed in the toilet”. It is important to mention here that women, themselves, can access the service providers for installation of new items or repairs in the house. However, they are able to do so only if their husbands have given them permission otherwise visit of a labourer or manual worker, when there is no male member at home, is disliked. While in the case of Zoreena, her husband was short tempered and violent, she could not think of taking any such initiative by herself that could put her into a situation of danger despite her urgent need.

Henceforward, in particular circumstances, women were using their agency despite resistance from their spouses. However, this trend was apparent in the nuclear household system only as women were not under the influence of extended families and were able to manage their husbands. Shakeela (36, illiterate, urban, Muslim) was a beautician by profession and used to give services to women in their homes. Her husband was addicted to drugs and was not earning on regular basis. She decided to send her children for education despite their financial constrictions, she said:

> I am earning and he [husband] is an addict. I make decisions and my husband has a dispute with me on that. He wants the eldest son to do work for money, but I am giving children education as it is very important for their future. I don’t want them to suffer the way I am suffering.

An important dimension of such a confidence in decision-making was that women were not financially dependent on their husbands and were not afraid of divorce. Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) mentioned her independence in financial matters and pointed out that economic dependence of women make them insecure and if, a husband threatens for a second marriage, it becomes a biggest threat to a woman. She had given written consent to her husband for another marriage if he wanted, she said:

> I am not dependent on my husband financially. I received inheritance from my parents, and I have fixed that money in the bank. I have my own car at my name, he cannot control me financially. If a man wants another marriage, let him do that, God will provide with everything. It is the weak personality of a woman that she does not allow a man for the second marriage.

Life situations and financial security are important dimensions of decision-making alongside household living arrangements (Sathar and Kazi, 2000). In the case of Ayesha, she was a senior woman having more than 50 years of age and her children were grown up and well-settled in their lives. Being a social worker, she had lots to do and had also the support available of her

married son which was not the case with women of the same age group having no sons or they were financially dependent on their husbands.

As mentioned earlier in this section, mobility of women is another dimension of autonomy that provides them the opportunity to exercise their choice (Desai and Johnson, 2005). The social system of rural settings discourages free mobility of young women, families remain vigilant due to the pressure of social norms. Usually, men in the community keep a check of a woman who roams around and try to find out the reasons for her frequent mobility otherwise different rumours spread that could tarnish her reputation and that of her family. Shama (25, literate, rural, Christian), a mother of four children shared the environment of her village: "If a woman stands with a man to talk about something, everyone stares with a suspicious eye that she might be interested in him or have some relations with him". Such a social environment do contribute in providing reasons to the families to control the free movement of young unmarried and married women. Besides, Punjabi culture puts restrictions on a woman to take permission from her husband and/or parents' in-laws if she wanted to visit her parents, relatives, market, or any other place. Women who were into formal employment, particularly in the urban area, had an edge over non-working women. They were able to visit markets during their office hours that provided them with the opportunity to buy things of their choice or they were able to visit parents or relatives that were into proximity. It gave them relative freedom from domination which is considered a sign of empowerment in a patriarchal society (Abrar-ul-Haq, 2017). Women from the urban area spoke about the ways that provided them with some relief of the curtailment of their liberty. Areeb (30, educated, urban, Muslim) expressed that her mother-in-law and sister-in-law used to keep a check on her mobile calls. Whenever she was upset, she managed to call her family from office or visit her mother's house by taking a break from office while her in-laws were not aware of that. Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) also shared similar perspective, she used to visit market during her office hours and exercise her choice in buying items for herself and for her daughter. She used to manage her husband by sharing that her family had given those items as her mother and married sister were living nearby. However, it was not the case in the village settings as those who were into some form of employment were either home-based workers or they were accompanied by the male members to their workplaces. Thus, they had less opportunities or had no 'genuine' reasons to come out of their homes.

In conclusion, involvement of women in decision-making moves on a continuum; this ranges from total control by their husbands and in-laws to a complete independence to a woman.

However, only a few women were able to make all the decisions and that complete independence was apparent in nuclear families only. Thus, the household system and the role of the elders especially parents-in-laws was dominating particularly when they were involved in running the family expenses or their sons were not ready to disobey them. Women's level of education was an important aspect regarding decision-making as those who were highly educated wanted to have equal participation; however, families try to control educated working women so that they comply with the traditional ideology of the society. Besides, the positionality of women varies within the same household due to hierarchy of relationships that also contribute to their involvement in the decision-making. Mobility of women provides them the opportunity to exercise their choice in material things and to interact with others. Thus, the urban employed women were able to visit the markets and relatives in proximity without the permission of their husbands and in-laws during their office hours. On the contrary, rural women were at a disadvantaged position due to social norms that put mobility constraints on them. There were no differences between women based on their religious identity.

5.7 Treatment of the Affinal Family Members with Women Participants

This section provides insights into the structure and dynamics of relations in the family institution that would assist in understanding multiple social hierarchies that members of a family particularly women occupy. Women have conflicting identities due to changing roles in their life stages which reflects that they are not a monolithic category. A daughter-in-law has to struggle to create her position in the affinal family. Unlike the nuclear household system of the west, women in the Punjabi culture live both in extended and nuclear families. The authority within a family depends on the structure and function of the family. The authority of an individual in a household is considered to take "responsibility for maintenance of family and plays a dominant role in decision making in any affair for the family irrespective of sex" (Wasim et al., 2008, p.31). In many instances, parents-in-law had a dominant role particularly a mother-in-law was authority, she had the support available of other family members in controlling and disciplining the daughter-in-law. The role of a husband was significant in such cases, he was either a silent observer which is a form of endorsement of what other family members do with his wife or he was part of the bad treatment with his wife. Within patriarchal gender arrangements, the authority of a mother-in-law is similar to what Kandiyoti (1988) calls patriarchal bargains. In the context of this study, the authority and control of a mother-in-law over a daughter-in-law is a routine matter and is considered culturally normal. Besides, the siblings of a husband also derive power from their relations as was the case of Anayat Bibi (40,

illiterate, urban, Christian). She was controlled by her mother-in-law and married sisters-in-law. She had to face the physical violence of her husband too, she shared:

> It was a joint family of ten people, I used to do all the cooking and domestic chores. I had no importance except to do the work. My sister-in-law used to say that I had been brought to this house for domestic chores. I was treated badly as my in-laws knew that my husband did not give me any value. I was asked to bring money from my parents. My in-laws often expelled me and used to throw my furniture outside the house.

In the joint household, controlling the new daughter-in-law is a mechanism to keep her subordinate. A mother-in-law and other members of the affinal family try to maintain domination and make sure that a daughter-in-law follows instructions otherwise their authority would be at risk. Poverty seems to be a contributory factor; the family makes sure that their son avoid spending money on his wife due to limited resources. To achieve this, women of the affinal family particularly the mother-in-law and/or sisters-in-law try to create a hostile environment for the daughter-in-law by gossiping against her that instigate a husband to commit violence against his wife. However, this was not the case in situations where a husband, himself, was violent without the influence of his family. In the case of Anayat Bibi, she was mistreated both by her husband and in-laws and was often forced to bring money from her parental family. The in-laws had a stance that her natal family was in a position to provide with the money. Paradoxically, her mother used to advise that she should bear all that mistreatment of her husband and in-laws as it is considered customary. A woman is expected to bear that in order to establish her position in the affinal family. Thus, the dynamics of power and patriarchal bargains continue to sustain due to the approval of the wider patriarchal structure of the society. In the Punjabi culture, bad treatment of in-laws is justified by saying "in-laws behave this way, you have to create your position among them". Women were quite aware of this attitude of their in-laws as expressed by Shama (25, literate, rural, Christian):

> My in-laws [mother-in-law, sister-in-law] misbehave with me but it is expected that I should remain silent. If I respond to them, I will get into trouble. If I am doing good acts that is fine at that particular moment, otherwise I am a bad woman and it is the habit and nature of all the in-laws. They cannot accept you as a family member.

Usually a woman makes her position in the affinal family through her children particularly by giving birth to a male heir. However, it does not guarantee that the attitude of a husband and his family would change. The data shows that a man, who is under the influence of his family, is found involved in beating his wife despite having son/s. In most of the cases, women of the affinal family were more involved in instigating a man against his wife. This is what Hunnicutt (2009) argues while defending patriarchy as a theoretical tool to interpret violence against women. According to her: "There are labyrinths of power dynamics in patriarchal systems.

Violence against women cannot be understood as a simple formula of "oppressor and oppressed" (Hunnicutt, 2009, p.555). In the Punjabi context, such dynamics of power are quite apparent as it is not just a situation between a husband and a wife, patriarchal family structure and hierarchy of relationships interact in complex ways and create oppression.

Conversely, not all men were violent, though they were mistreating their wives due to the influence of their families and to show their domination. However, these men change their attitude towards their wives after shifting into a nuclear household system. This indicates that men, who are not abusive, do so under the pressure of patriarchal ideology where a man is supposed to suppress his wife. There were six women participants who were previously in a joint household system and their husbands treated them badly. Of these women, four of the husbands changed altogether in the nuclear household and stop abusing their spouses while the other two did not change. Among those four men, only one was educated while rest of the three men were uneducated which shows that education seems to have no apparent contribution while the role of household system appears to influence a couple's relationship. Bushra (32, illiterate, rural, Christians) mentioned the variation in her husband's attitude: "I was treated very badly by my in-laws and husband but since we have separated from my in-laws, situation has improved".

Usually, family members instigate a man against his wife, husbands were involved in physical violence against their wives while family members were more involved in verbal and psychological abuse. Nonetheless, five of the women suffered physical and/or sexual violence from their father-in-law, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law. Compared to other family members, a mother-in-law was found involved in instigation for violence instead of the sole perpetrator of physical violence. Among these five women, four were from the urban area (1 Christian, 3 Muslims) and one Christian woman was a rural resident. None of these women took divorce except in the case of Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim), her in-laws expelled her from the house and later on, sent her divorce papers. She shared the treatment of her in-laws:

> My mother-in-law used to wake me up before sunrise for domestic chores. Then they also asked me to do a job. My brother-in-law attempted to rape me twice when he was in high school. My in-laws blamed me for that happening by saying that I tried to attract him, he is innocent and of young age. Shouting and using abusive language was common in that home. I was not allowed to meet my parents. I did not meet my father after marriage and saw him when he had passed away. When my husband expelled me from home…I had no idea where to go. I was a motivational speaker and I thought I can change people, but it was my thinking.

Despite all that happening, Maryam did not want a divorce. Though there are multiple factors for a woman's decision not to take a divorce, courts are male dominating spaces, it is not convenient for a woman to go there alone for the purpose of seeking divorce. Women do not take any such initiative unless they have a support available from their parental families. Besides, it is difficult for a woman to live alone without a male member in the Pakistani society. If women have to live independently, they choose particular areas in a city that are safe for them and there is less interference from the people in the surrounding. In such situations, desire for a male child is strengthened as a man is a source of protection in accessing places where women feel hesitant to go alone.

Whilst there were different tactics that the affinal family was using to control the woman, a few of the participants shared the involvement of a mother-in-law in their intimate life. For example, Areeb (30, educated, urban, Muslim) told that her mother-in-law started using abusive language since her marriage day and raised questions on her virginity, she expressed:

> My mother-in-law visited my room with one of her relatives in the morning after the marriage day and asked me weird questions about my virginity. She had her own assumptions and used to say that we should not have sexual interaction daily.

Of all the participants, Areeb was the one who took divorce due to the ill-treatment of her in-laws while her husband was not directly involved in any sort of violence towards her. She had a viewpoint that he was not ready to leave his family for the sake of saving his marriage while her mother-in-law and sister-in-law were not giving her a breathing space. She was also taken to a lady doctor by her mother-in-law to have a check whether she had previously any pregnancy before marriage. Despite all these circumstances, her natal family was not agreeing to take a divorce. Her brother wanted her to compromise, he had a view that situation would improve when she would be having children. This mindset of 'compromise' is expected more from a woman as saving a marriage is considered mainly her responsibility. Failing to do so, the woman suffers the consequences more than a man as the society judged the personality traits and character of a woman by declaring her impatient. Hence, it takes more time for women to readjust after divorce due to a lack of stability in their social status compared to men in Pakistan (Nizamuddin, 2017).

There are various ways through which in-laws control a woman; the most prominent were to keep her deprive of money, putting all the domestic responsibilities on her and also make her realise that she has been brought for this purpose, fabricate issues to flare up a husband against his wife, controlling her interaction with the natal family, insulting her by pointing out mistakes

in the chores she does and in her personality, blaming her parents for not socialising her properly, and raising questions on her character.

For Christian women, religion was one of the significant reasons to compromise in their marriages along with cultural pressures. Whilst most of the Christian women shared that divorce is not allowed in Christianity, four women took the decision of their divorce themselves. Of them, two were from the urban area and the other two from the rural area. Three of these women had spent less than a year in their marriages, their families support them in taking a divorce as the women had no children. Katherine was the only one who took divorce after spending significant years of her life in the marriage, she was fifteen years of age at the time of marriage. She took initiative of divorce after the children were grown up as women compromise because of them. She was from the rural residency and took divorce through court after having six children. While sharing her circumstances, she said:

> I was from the city but got married in the village. I did everything from making dung cakes for fuel to putting mud on the house walls, but nothing could change the attitude of my mother-in-law and other family members towards me (Katherine, 50, Rural, Christian).

In the case of Katherine, she made this decision due to the support of a male relative and she did her second marriage with him. Divorce is a difficult decision for women, they do not foresee any future out of marriage. Besides, their natal families spend hefty amounts in the form of dowries and they want their daughters to compromise. In such a situation, finding a new match for a divorced woman is challenging. There is no guarantee that the second husband and his family would not mistreat. Therefore, women prefer to stay in abusive relationships particularly when they are not able to financially support themselves and are not ready to face the social pressure.

Besides religious and cultural factors, a crucial aspect of mistreatment by a husband and/or his family is the age of the woman at the time of marriage. Of all the participants, 13 had child marriages and their age ranges were from 10-15 at the time of marriage. Some of them were not sure of their age and thus, shared their estimated ages, or the researcher calculated herself by asking questions that could provide some clue about it. Among these thirteen women, two had a choice marriage and they were from the rural residency. Both the women did not suffer violence from their husbands. All the women, having child marriages, were uneducated except for one Christian woman from the rural area who had 2-3 years of schooling. Naseem (32, illiterate, rural, Christian) was just twelve years old at the time of marriage, she highlighted how the in-laws controlled her the way they wanted, she shared:

> I used to serve water and tea to my sisters-in-law at their beds in the morning. I used to wake up early in the morning and remained busy until midnight and looked after the livestock too. I was not allowed to talk to anybody. If I talked to somebody, my in-laws created rumours about my infidelity while I was not a person of bad character. My sister-in-law dragged me from hair and was beaten by my brother-in-law too.

An important aspect of a young woman's life is her character which is very sensitive because women, particularly in the village, are not allowed to interact with men outside of the family. It is the easiest way for a husband and in-laws to control the mobility and outside interaction of a woman by putting blame that she is interested in other men. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the relationship dynamics in the domestic sphere are complex and women of a husband's family were dominating. Moreover, some form of matriarchy was also apparent where a woman was heading the family and was in an authority position to control the affairs of a family. Also, non-support of the natal family or absence of support for a woman provide her in-laws the confidence to control whatever way they wanted. In the case of Aneela (24, illiterate, urban, Muslim), she had younger brothers and her father had divorced her mother. Thus, her parental family was not able to take any stand on her behalf despite that her husband was her first cousin, she told:

> I am living with my mother these days as I was treated very badly. My mother-in-law is my aunt, but she does not remember while doing mistreatment with me. My sister-in-law blamed that I am interested in her husband and asked me that I should sleep with him. My husband and her husband were also listening, but no body stopped her…If we had to attend a ceremony, my mother-in-law used to bring clothes for me, rest I eat what is cooked daily and that's it. I wanted to learn stitching so that I could fulfil expenses of my children, but my mother-in-law did not allow and said that I should have learnt it before marriage.

The use of abusive language and blaming for illicit relationships with other men is a way to degrade and insult a woman. Besides, control of a woman through financial restrictions is a way to make her docile particularly when she is having children. The above quote of Aneela evidences that all women are not powerless in the Punjabi society; consequently, the power that a woman has in the domestic sphere is dependent on multiple aspects of family life. The gender asymmetries are not just between men and women, rather it is also visible among women within the same household. Another illustration for such a multidimensional nature of relationships are the cases where women were occupying the position of a mother-in-law and were facing violence. In such instances, the elder woman was not able to make herself strong due to the bad treatment of her husband, a daughter-in-law was in a strong position. A possible explanation for the privileged positions of their daughters-in-law is the role of their sons who were not violent towards their wives. These sons were either silent on the mistreatment of their fathers towards their mothers or they tried to stop them. These findings contradict with the

evidence that domestic violence shifts from one generation to the next (Agarwal and Panda, 2007).

The situation of educated and employed women was difficult due to expectations of their families to contribute equally in the domestic chores. Moreover, a husband and his family try to control a woman having a good career to make sure that she is subordinate in the domestic sphere and is not able to exercise her privileged position. Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) expressed:

> It was exciting for my husband that a successful woman was coming home. The male mindset in our society wants to marry women who are educated and have successful careers; however, they want these successful women to do all the cooking and domestic chores because men feel a sense of satisfaction that they have controlled a successful woman whom the world appreciates and gives respect.

Controlling behaviour is a precursor of violence and men, married to better off employed wives, try to undermine them to maintain domination in the domestic sphere (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan and ICF International, 2013). According to Agarwal and Panda (2007), there is a difference between the position of an employed woman and the one who owns a property in the domestic sphere. Women having property are less vulnerable to violence and mistreatment compared to employed women (Agarwal and Panda, 2007). Whilst women have land rights available in the Punjab, most of them do not claim from their parental families in the Punjabi culture otherwise they can lose the support of their brothers and parents in difficult times. The educated and employed women were aware of their self-worth in the domestic sphere as their routine was monitored by the husbands and in-laws and thus, women face the insulting behaviour.

> I am doing job and domestic work and have a fatigued life. My mother-in-law guided my husband not to give me enough money, she believed that educated women are spendthrift. My sister-in-law and husband say that they are not aware where do I go and what I do. They comment that I am fond of outing that is very upsetting for me (Amna, 42, educated, urban, Muslim).

This shows that a working woman get influenced by the routine conversation of her family and it impacts on her mental and psychological health. This further hinders her capabilities, the privileged status outside the home becomes a reason for her to struggle within the family. Whilst women shared the ill-treatment of their husbands and in-laws, many Muslim and Christian women believed that if a husband does not give value to his wife, no one respects her. On asking, how women should be treated, Shabeela (40+, illiterate, urban, Christian) said: “Beauty of a woman lies in the good treatment of her husband”. She shared a Punjabi proverb, *banda howay wull te vaira dian thul* (if my husband would be nice to me, I would have the

courage to change everything). This reflects that a woman is not able to do anything unless she has the support of her husband. Besides, a woman should not expect positive attitude from her in-laws if her husband does not give her any importance and it has wider social ramifications on her life.

Moreover, the burden of expectations from a newlywed woman, to get used to with the new environment and taking care of her in-laws, was discussed by Sarah (52, educated, urban, Christian):

> Our society expects a woman to make her in-laws happy as soon as she gets married. No one thinks that she has left her family and is new here, she has certain worries and adjustment issues. She needs to be taken care of instead she has to take care of everybody in the affinal family.

Most of the women highlighted this fact that a woman, who becomes part of a new family after marriage, is not treated as a family member. Paradoxically, in-laws expect her to carry most of the domestic responsibilities by declaring that it is her home now. Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim) linked the good behaviour of a husband to his socialisation, she said: "If a man keeps his wife in a reasonable way it means he has been groomed by a well-mannered mother". Women believed in the equality and mutual understanding of the spouses and emphasised on respecting each other instead of unequal partners in the marriage relationship. In situations where women were observing others spending respectable lives, they wished it for themselves. Robeena (27, illiterate, urban, Muslim), a domestic helper imagined her life in the following quote:

> When I observe the family where I am working, I wish my husband would also treat me in a good way and talk to me in a respectable manner. I feel upset of my condition when I compare it with others. I wish I could have a small but a comfortable house where I could do whatever I wanted with calm and tranquillity.

This shows that the mistreatment of a husband and his family is not what women accept as their fate, rather they visualise a future where they are respected and loved as human beings. A vast majority of the women desired themselves to be treated like humans which reflect that they were concerned about their exploitation by the husbands and other women of their affinal families. Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christian) was quite critical of the unequal treatment with women in the home, she said:

> Women should be treated the same way we treat men at home…only men are human in this society whereas a woman is something that could be fitted anywhere (*railoo katta*). If there will be tight situation financially, she is expected to do any job whether it is cleaning, washing or any other petty tasks. Household work is 100% the responsibility of a woman, a man is not responsible for that. At least, consider her a human and give her equal rights.

This comparison provides a snapshot of the situation of a woman and the way she could be 'fitted' in all sorts of circumstances. Conversely, domestic work is not expected from men; however, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, some of the men in the rural locality were supportive of their wives in household chores. Besides, women who were not able to fulfil their expenditures wanted that their husbands should give them money for their daily needs.

In conclusion, patriarchy alongside patriarchal bargains was apparent, though in complex ways, in the family institution. The family of a man had an active role in controlling his wife, make her subordinate in the home and were also involved in violence instigation. The treatment that a woman receives in the domestic sphere is dependent on the type of household system, age of a woman at marriage, and the value that a husband gives to his wife. Education does not seem to contribute in good treatment by the in-laws, rather a highly educated and employed woman becomes a threat for her husband and in-laws, they take additional measures to make her subordinate in the domestic sphere. Various factors contribute to the subordination of women in the marriage relationship including: stigmatisation of divorce, economic dependence of women on their spouses, unavailability of support from the natal families, inaccessibility of women to the police and judiciary, and unprotective environment of the urban and the rural areas that makes it difficult for women to live independently. Poverty impacts a woman severely if she is living with the affinal family and it is also a way to make her submissive to the family members. Though a culture of compromise in marriage is expected from women across the faith groups, Christian women have more issues in seeking divorce compared to the Muslim women. Besides, rural residence impacts the physical mobility of women and their interaction with men, outside the home, are disliked. Though women want money for their expenditures and some rest from their daily chores, they value love, respect, and equal treatment in the family more than anything else.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on gender relations between women and men and also amongst women belonging from the urban and the rural context of Punjab. To understand the occurrence of domestic violence, it is crucial to focus on gender relations as gender inequalities are understood through it (Agarwal, 1997). The focus of this chapter, therefore, remained on the hierarchies of gender relations and women's position due to the complex intersection of household system, education, urban/rural settlement, age, religion, societal norms, state policies, and the value a husband gives to his wife. Overall, families are patriarchal, and men have a dominant position; however, women of the natal families of men have a predominant

role in controlling the affairs of the family. A married woman has to struggle to create her position in the affinal family. Whilst domestic chores are primarily the responsibility of women, they were getting support from their husbands in the rural locality particularly when they had young children while this trend was less apparent in the urban area. Men have economic obligations that provide them dominant position in the family and the society and elderly women have a significant role in the promotion of this ascendency. Women who earn for themselves, through some form of employment, are controlled in the home to keep them subordinate. Urban women want more egalitarian relationships between the spouses without any distinction of their religious identity. In this study, the religious identity of women plays a significant role as the minority status of the Christian women contribute to increase their hardships. At the societal level, Christian women experienced more sufferings if they were living alongside Muslim population or they were in the formal employment. However, acceptability for a choice marriage was more apparent among Christians while elopement was observed among Muslim women that is considered a taboo in the Punjabi villages.

Besides, the desire for a male child predominates across the urban and rural localities and between the Muslim and Christian women. Though women blame the society and the in-laws for an attitude of male preference, they get social and financial benefits for having sons. Parents are the responsibility of their sons in old age, family linage also continues through a male child. Contrarily, a daughter is considered a carrier of family honour that needs protection and security and is a responsibility as she requires dowry at the time of marriage. Parents get worried for appropriate marriage proposals of their daughters and girls are always bestowed with prayers of good destiny whereas there are no such prayers for sons. Divorce is a stigma that puts a woman and her family under social pressure. Therefore, every effort is made to continue a marriage relationship that provides a privileged position to a husband and his family whereas it is expected from a wife to compromise. Christian women believe that divorce is not acceptable in Christianity, they bear the mistreatment of their husbands and other members of the affinal families especially when women are not educated and are financially dependent. They are advised to compromise as they or their parents do not foresee any future for them outside the marriage.

In the nuclear household system, women were more involved in decision-making while parents-in-laws had a predominant role in the joint or extended households. Highly educated women were aware of their rights while their husbands and in-laws tried to control them that increased their sufferings. Those who were employed in the urban area were exercising their

agency whenever they found the opportunity to do so. This chapter has also showed that women are differently positioned in the same house and putting them in one category is misleading. A newly married woman not only negotiates her relationship with her husband but also with the husband's relatives particularly his mother and siblings who have a predominant role in the family. In the Punjabi culture, if a man follows his wife, he has to face the resistance of his family, the data also revealed that some of the men were abusive towards their wives in the joint household and stopped their bad treatment in a nuclear setup. This was a way to do gender and to maintain hegemonic masculinity. Age at marriage is also worthy of attention in the Punjabi society as it is quite easy for a husband and his family to control a minor girl. Simultaneously, a few of the women did choice marriages below the age of sixteen- a legal age for marriage in Punjab. Divorce is never a choice and very few women took the initiative of divorce themselves. Towards the end, the patriarchal culture of Punjabi society is predominant and the narratives of women of both the faith groups reveal that they share the same culture. However, rural residence restricts the mobility of women that impacts on various aspects of their lives.

This chapter has provided an overview of the roles of both the genders and their relations with a particular focus on the status and position of a woman with regard to her husband and the affinal family. The next chapter will elaborate women's perceptions and experiences of various types of domestic violence in Punjab.

CHAPTER 6

PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

6.1 Introduction

This chapter details the understandings and experiences of domestic violence by the Christian and Muslim women in both the rural and urban localities. The previous chapter has provided the socio-cultural context of the Punjabi society and the dynamics of relationships in the household that would assist in better understanding women's experiences and their perceptions of this issue. The first part of the chapter reflects on the perceptions of women regarding the pervasiveness of violence against them in the domestic sphere. It highlights the private nature of the phenomenon and its cultural normalisation that keep women silent. The next section analyses types of violence and is further divided into subsections that provide a detailed discussion on economic violence, sexual abuse, child marriages and pre-marital and post-separation abuse. Patriarchal ideology and subordination of women in the society provides the underlying conditions for violence and women consider it a process that continue with or without concrete acts. The complex nature of economic violence has been argued as women, both educated and uneducated were suffering. The section further discusses the limited opportunities for rural and uneducated women that keep them dependent on their spouses. As discussion about sexuality is a sensitive issue, sexual violence and extra-marital relations of a husband were not easy for women to share. The data indicates that the Christian women were more open on this matter compared to the Muslim participants while uneducated women were having difficulty in using words to express themselves. The section on child marriages reflects that despite the law to combat, early age marriages are prevalent in the Punjabi society and are equally common in both the faith communities. The analysis points out the vulnerabilities and sufferings particularly of the Christian women due to lacunas in the laws. Pre-marital and post-separation abuse are important dimensions of violence against women as the perpetrator try to control through various tactics. Thus, the section covers the ways women were controlled and abused despite that they were not staying with their abusers.

The household system does influence the relationship of spouses; therefore, the chapter discusses the involvement of the husband's family in instigating him against his wife and their direct or indirect involvement in cases of domestic violence. This culture of inequality in the domestic sphere was equally influencing all groups; however, uneducated women suffered physical violence from their affinal families. The next section argues the diversity in women's

interpretations of violence, it was very much dependent on their own understandings and exposure. Women avoid blaming their spouses if they commit violence due to the influence of their families. It also states the contribution of education and exposure of women in shaping their opinions. As women in this study belong to the Christian and the Muslim identity, religion is an important dimension that shapes their domestic life. Therefore, the section regarding role of the religion points out the support and barriers religion create for them. It is worth mentioning here that the analysis does not focus on the actual interpretations of the teachings of the Christianity and Islam about the rights and obligations of women and men in the marriage institution as this is not the objective of this study. As a result, women's understandings about their religion have been the focus of analysis rather than the religion itself. The second last section of the chapter analyses the reasons that make women vulnerable to abuse and force them to continue with their relationships. Though the cultural factors were similar between the Christian and the Muslim women, the notion of honour was mostly shared by the Muslim women whereas use of alcohol and subsequent violence was suffered by the Christian women. Towards the end, the role of the community has been evaluated through their responses to such incidents. This would assist in understanding the societal attitude to the violation of women's basic human rights. All these are configured around faith identity, geographical location (urban/ rural residence), and education of women.

6.2 Women's Perceptions of the Prevalence of Domestic Violence in Pakistan

Violence against women in the domestic sphere is conceived in different terms that include intimate partner violence, spousal violence, domestic abuse, wife battering, spousal abuse, and in some instances as family violence (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International 2013; Ali et al., 2016); however, the most frequent terms used are 'domestic violence' and 'intimate partner violence'. This study has used the term 'domestic violence' to explicate violence of any form against an ever-married woman by her current or former husband and/or her in-laws. While the term 'intimate partner violence' covers instances where a spouse is involved in committing acts of violence, role of family is significant as Pakistani culture values a strong family system and the members influence the relationships of spouses. The active role of the family provided grounds for using the term 'domestic violence' against women rather than engaging with other terms that could limit the scope of the study (Ferraro, 1996; Susmitha B., 2016; Boyle, 2019).

The family institution is considered to exist in a private boundary and any act of violence that is committed in the domestic sphere is considered a private matter of the family. National level

data about domestic violence in Pakistan was not available until the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13 (PDHS) incorporated a module on domestic violence for the first time. According to PDHS data, 39% ever married women had experienced physical and/or emotional violence from their spouses and more than half of these women never sought any help or revealed the incident(s) (National Institute of Population Studies Pakistan & ICF International, 2013). However, PDHS did not consider the religious identity of women to observe any variations regarding domestic violence against women belonging to different religious groups.

Due to the asymmetry of gender relations, domestic violence is widespread in Pakistan; however, its reporting is limited due to personal and societal reasons unless there are cases of the physical injury or death of a woman (Gracia, 2004; Madhani et al., 2017). In the current study, most of the women had a view that it is very common and is 'a story of every home'. Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) was a survivor of domestic violence, she was divorced by her husband and was living alone with her son. While using different metaphors to explain domestic violence as a routine matter, she shared this:

> Domestic violence is just like 'we wear clothes' in daily life, so is the violence. It is so common that we don't even consider it violence. It is just like a defective kidney which is not painful yet as women are bearing it. Educated girls suffer more as they know their rights and they have to bear violence. They remain depressed, and such mothers do not focus on their children's socialisation. The whole society is getting sick because of all that.

The social normalisation of violence is apparent from the narrative of Maryam and it is also reflected in the Punjab Gender Parity Report 2018 which indicates that most of the cases reported to the police in the category of domestic violence in year 2017 were of murder or an attempted murder (Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, 2018). The normalisation of violence is considered a way to discipline a woman and to enforce traditional gender norms. Women and their natal families are also part of hiding incidents of violence against them, it is considered shameful for a woman and her family that she is suffering through it which provide reasons for a husband and his family in escalating such incidents. Thus, a man and his family use the private sanctity of home to keep incidents of violence within the territory of the home and makes violence a personal matter of the family. In such circumstances, domestic violence does prevail, its prominence as a major social problem becomes hidden. The covert nature of domestic violence was discussed by Faira (38, educated, urban, Muslim) whose sister was suffering violence from her husband and in-laws since her marriage day. She shared:

> It is very much [emphasis] prevalent in Pakistan but people usually hide it and consider it their insult if others would come to know about it. In-laws are directly or indirectly part of it, but the family of a girl do not let the survivor discuss it somewhere. Women of rich and poor families are equally facing this. There is a woman in my family who is suffering it as

> her husband consumes alcohol and beats her a lot. Divorce is not allowed in our family, she stays there despite all that sufferings.

An important aspect of bearing violence and not reporting it anywhere are the consequences that a woman and her natal family has to suffer that may result in more violence or divorce. The marriage contract has certain clauses that provide women the right to divorce her husband; however, these provisions are simply crossed out while filling in the contract at the time of marriage. It is considered a bad omen to discuss such matters at the occasion of happiness (marriage). Besides, family values are sacrosanct in the Punjabi culture and any violation to that brings disrespect to the family. Such a mindset disguise widespread prevalence of domestic violence against women despite that it is a central aspect of women's lives (Rose, 2015). Although many women share their sufferings with their families and friends, they avoid making complaints to the formal institutions like hospital authorities or police and this hinders the estimation of prevalence rate.

Women from the rural residency believed that domestic violence against women is more prevalent in the villages. People in the villages live in close-knit relationships and are aware of the domestic circumstances of each other. In such settings, it is difficult to hide it, community in the surrounding area especially neighbours are quite aware of it as shared by Bushra (32, illiterate, rural, Christian): "According to my observation, it is very common. As we live in the village, if anything happens then it is known to the other people quite easily". Though women's perceptions about 'what constitutes domestic violence against women' vary, still a vast majority across the rural locality believed that it is very common and is considered a routine matter. Nonetheless, Asifa (33, educated, Muslim) was the only woman from the village participants who had a view that though it prevails, it has reduced compared to the past. She said:

> It is common but has reduced than before. Previously, there were oil stoves that used to burst and always a woman was burnt, no man ever suffered in such burnings. Such incidents have reduced now.

Use of kerosene oil stove was common in the homes where gas was not available for cooking, there used to be incidents of burning of women. Gradually, government has provided gas for domestic use in most parts of Punjab that resulted in reduction of such burnings. However, the victims had never been a mother-in-law, sister-in-law or any male members that always made such incidents dubious. It is significant that usually acts of a physical nature are considered to count as violence whereas in cases of verbal and emotional abuse it is difficult to provide any proof of violence that gives an indication that domestic violence has reduced over the period

of time. Moreover, media attention and police reporting are assumed to use as a measuring tool for the prevalence of violence in a particular locality. There seems less attention to a culture of social silence that is an important aspect of domestic violence incidents. This phenomenon of social silence was apparent from the narratives of participants particularly when they were asked 'whether they know someone who has suffered violence or is suffering in their family, friends?' an expansive number was aware of women either in their families, friends, surrounding, or workplaces who were suffering violence or the participants identified themselves as survivors of violence which explains quite aptly the culture of silence (Gracia, 2004).

It is concluded from this section that domestic violence against married women does occur in the home and is considered a private domain that hide its prevalence and occurrence. Besides, societal attitude towards violence against married women as culturally acceptable make it a normal and routine act which contributes significantly in diluting its importance for redress and low reporting rates to the police. Christian and Muslim women equally believe about its widespread prevalence; however, women from the rural residency had a view that it is more common in the rural areas.

6.3 Types of Domestic Violence

It is worth mentioning here that this research study was initially based on the perceptions of women about domestic violence. During the interviews, many of the participants identified themselves as survivors of domestic violence. They had either suffered it in the past or they were still experiencing it in their lives.

Violence does not occur in a vacuum, contexts are important in intimate partner violence and domestic violence (McHugh et al., 2005). Domestic violence is a complex phenomenon and contexts assist in discerning the types of relationships and aspects of social lives in which different forms of violence occur. The types of violence that women share also reflects their understandings of the violence. Violence takes many forms and types and was apparent from the narratives of women. They suffered multiple forms simultaneously that include a wide range of acts and behaviours. Physical violence and other forms of controlling behaviour were quite common and men use different objects to control and dominate their female partners. Rania (28, educated, urban, Muslim) and her husband had a significant age gap, she was his second wife. He was a civil servant and was occupying an influential position. He used to beat Rania on petty issues particularly if he came home upset due to his workplace stresses. She shared:

> On my birthday he got hyper and beat me so severely that his platinum rings were inside my head wounds. He started beating me on a petty issue…and then asked me to cut the birthday cake. I did all that as I was scared that if I refused, he could beat me more. He even beat me in the car in front of the driver while he [driver] requested my husband to stop doing it. I stopped myself from screaming just to avoid any further insult infront of the driver.

In this quote, love also exists side by side violence that complicates the experiences of women in a marital relationship (Mitra, 2013). Raina's husband happened to be guilty after physical violence and tried many times to compensate that through his gestures of love and affection by arranging surprise parties in elitist clubs for her. This provides her the reasons to stay in the relationship despite facing all the physical torture and was helpless in that situation which was an indication of her vulnerable position. Raina had no idea of the first marriage of her husband, she came across it after a few months of her marital life. The context in such a situation is the empowered position of a husband in the public sphere that provides him with the authority to exercise his dominance in the domestic sphere with the mindset that his wife is not in a position to take any adverse initiative against him. A woman is strengthened in this belief of a man through her fear and by following all the instructions of her husband. The gender traditionalism of the husband could be one of the reasons in such circumstances as Rania's husband had a view that 'a woman has no importance except a sexual object that could be used any time' (Cheung and Choi, 2016). Such a mindset reflects the patriarchal ideology where men consider it their 'right' to abuse their wives whichever way they want. She was an empowered woman before her marriage and was economically independent. The husband asked her to quit the job which she did just to follow his instructions and was trapped in the abusive relationship. Ultimately, she was divorced when the husband asked her to abort the pregnancy which she refused.

Divorced women are considered less desirable for marriage in the Punjabi culture. They remarry with lots of compromises that increase their chances of abuse and mistreatment from their subsequent husbands and in-laws (Eng et al., 2020). A woman is generally blamed for showing impatience and lack of compromise that resulted in divorce for her. There were circumstances that were beyond the control of women and divorce was the only option left. Nazra (35, uneducated, urban, Christian), an attendant in a local hospital, shared the miserable condition of her sister who was in a situation where her second husband had a strong dominance and control over her. She was suffering severe forms of physical violence and had no escape except to stay some days with Nazra whenever her husband expelled her from home and

snatched her daughter. While sharing the reasons of her sister's first divorce and treatment of her second husband, she said:

> In the first marriage, her husband was impotent, but they did not tell us before marriage. My sister shared with me after one year and then we took divorce through *panchayat*. We arranged her second marriage, her husband beats her brutally. He expels her from home whenever he wants.

Sexual matters between a couple is considered their private matter and women, therefore, hesitate to discuss it with their natal families. It is also apparent from this quotation that a man and his family can easily spoil the life of a woman by hiding such information before marriage without considering its consequences on her future. The stigma of divorce makes a woman's position vulnerable and forces parents to make undesirable compromises for choosing a second partner for their daughters. In the case of violent partners, remarriage traps women in such relationships and there are no escapes available when they have children and are financially dependent on their male partners. The second husband 'effectively' uses this vulnerability of a woman and exploits her whichever way he wanted. Sania (33, educated, urban, Christian) sought divorce because of the sexual impotency of her first husband who happened to be her first cousin. Her parents arranged her second marriage after almost six years of a gap, this second husband had also divorced his first wife. She shared the compromises which she was making just to save her second marriage:

> My husband has divorced her first wife, she approached the court for her dowry items to be recovered/ equivalent money to be given to her. My husband and his family pressured me that I should sell my gold jewellery [received from parents as dowry] to pay his first wife. I do not want to sell it, but I cannot refuse it.

Women have a special attachment to the gold jewellery and dowry items they receive from their parents especially when they are not financially independent. This gold is their asset that they keep to use it for rainy days. As discussed earlier, remarried women carry a marginalised status that forces them to be more subservient than the first-time married women to restore their social status in the society (Eng et al., 2020). On the contrary, society does not stigmatise a divorced man, a single unmarried woman is easily available to him for marriage. In some circumstances, the divorced man was having children and the newly wed woman has to deal with that alongside financial issues with the new husband. There are instances when a man and his family did not share about his previous marriage/marriages and the new wife came across that fact later on. Women had no other choice except to compromise and they did despite many obstacles. Mussarat (28, educated, rural, Muslim) was forth wife of her husband, she knew it after her marriage. Her husband was abusive and used to get instigate on minor issues. She said:

> Once he beat me severely and blamed that I am a woman of bad character. He said that he would chain my neck and would tie me outside the home to let people know that I am interested in another man.

In the village setting, animals are usually tied in front of the home if no appropriate place is available. In the extract of Mussarat, physical violence and language of threat, that the husband used, depicts that she would be treated like an animal to teach her a 'lesson'. It is quite common tactic to control a less powerful partner by blaming her character to justify the beatings and to maintain the superior position of a husband. It is not necessary that a man finds any fault to commit physical violence, intimidation and to humiliate the wife is a way to snub and keep her silent if he is interested in another woman. In the case of Mussarat, her husband was involved in a neighbour woman and when she approached this with him, it resulted in physical violence. She was living in a violent and dysfunctional relationship, her husband failed to take the financial responsibility of Mussarat and her children that pushed her to work as a labourer.

To count certain acts as violence is difficult as violence is a process that continues in a relationship in varying and overlapping forms (Mitra, 2013). It is not necessary that physical acts would be count as domestic violence as is apparent from this extract of Adeela (26, literate, rural, Muslim) who was a mother of a child and was living with her parents for the last few years.

> My husband is my first cousin, my mother arranged my marriage with him despite knowing that he was not a responsible man. He was not working properly and did not give me any money for expenditures. He was interested in another woman…his lover used to visit our home and spent time with him. I used to prepare breakfast for them on the order of my husband. She was very confident… [and] used to stay all day in our home.

This quote illustrates the intimacy of a woman to her natal family as Adeela's mother arranged her marriage with her brother's son despite knowing his inability to be a regular earner. Parents, sometimes, arrange the marriages of their children in their natal families with the hope that relatives would treat their daughters in a reasonable way, and in case of any dispute, it is somehow easy to resolve disputes at familial level. Adeela compromised despite the presence of the other woman just for the sake of protecting her marriage and did not show any resistance that resulted in continuous psychological and emotional torture. She left her husband when he sold her washing machine without her permission that she had received from her parents in dowry. Apparently, a single incident does not seem to be the reason of her decision, rather a history of continuum of violence that forced her to take initiative of separation. He was not able to fulfil her economic needs which is a cultural expectation from men and was also doing relationship abuse.

Women suffer physical violence in different forms including but not limited to beating, kicking, throwing objects, biting, pushing, grabbing and pulling hair, breaking body parts, hitting the head against the wall, slapping, attack with sharp objects like kitchen knives and half-moon knife. In most of the cases, women suffered physical violence from their husbands except in few cases where they were attacked by the members of the affinal family. Physical violence does not start immediately, rather it makes its position over the course of relationship (Mahapatro, 2018). Educated women start suffering psychological violence that, later on, overlaps with physical violence while, in the case of uneducated women, no justification was required for the early start of physical violence in the marriage relationship. Tehmina (29, uneducated, urban, Muslim) was living in a village before migrating to Lahore city and was the second wife of her husband. She shared:

> It was the fourth day of my marriage when my husband slapped at my face. I went to the fields for toilet purpose and he called me from a distance which I could not listen. It is like 'why a woman shakes while kneading the dough'.

In the village, toilets are not built in every home and women have to go to the fields. In this quote of Tehmina, she was called upon by her husband which she did not hear, he considered it a disobedience. This illustrates that a man does not require an appropriate reason for violence and is also explained by Tehmina through a Punjabi proverb that a woman is powerless and subordinate, therefore any irrational logic by a man is acceptable in a male dominated society. Tehmina had her finger broken as her husband twisted her hand and consequently, she had to bear a lot of pain in winter especially in doing domestic chores. An important aspect in such cases are the cultural values and socioeconomic status of the parental family that provides justification for such happenings. Elder family members especially men have a special significance and respect in the rural settings. Women are given for marriage particularly if an elder male relative of the family request for the marriage proposal of a girl for his son. Parents give their daughters in marriage despite knowing the violent nature of the future husband of their daughter which indicates that domestic violence is considered justified. Moreover, finding an appropriate marriage partner for a daughter is a daunting task especially when parents are from a lower economic background and daughters are not laced with any skills. Thus, parents shift this 'economic burden' to the bride-taking-family and these women have to struggle to make their position in the new family where they usually have a subordinate and powerless status. Robeena (27, uneducated, urban, Muslim) was living in a village before migrating to the city for earning as her husband was addicted to drugs and was not able to provide basic necessities to her and the children. She shared: "My husband used to addict before marriage,

but no one bothered as it was an exchange marriage". Robeena's stance resonates with the notion of women as burden and responsibility which parents shift to the other family despite being aware of the challenges that a woman has to face. Moreover, in the custom of exchange marriage- where a brother and a sister from one family marry to another pair of siblings from the other family, it becomes difficult to have appropriate partners which resulted in mismatched couples.

It is difficult to separate different forms of violence as it coexists and overlap. Psychological violence was most common in the form of verbal abuse, mental torture and often accompanied by physical violence. Most of the perpetrators start abuse from psychological violence and, for the survivors, endure psychological violence increased the possibilities for more severe forms of abuse including physical violence. Faira (38, educated, urban, Muslim) shared that initially her sister was abused psychologically that later on, was accompanied by physical violence: "Whenever they have a dispute, her husband drags her dupatta and expel from house even at midnight. She weeps and plead him to enter the house, but he does not open the door". The *dupatta* has a special significance in the Pakistani culture and dragging dupatta is a sign to humiliate and disrespect a woman. She had to approach the neighbours for protection when her husband expelled her that developed a sense of inferiority complex in her. She was coerced mentally and physically at home and people in the neighbourhood were also aware of it that created a sense of servitude in her.

Violence is the outcome of the coexistence of social, political, economic, and cultural contexts that situate women in hierarchies of oppression and subordination (Kelly, 2013). Parents having daughters try to make them settled in their marriages early just to reduce their pressure and with the pretext that they have fulfilled their responsibilities as parents. The non-recognition of their economic rights in the natal families are justified through dowry which is given to them at the time of marriages. On the other hand, the newly wed woman has to struggle to create her position in the affinal family which means that she will give attention not only to the needs of her husband but also other members of the family particularly her parents-in-laws. The affinal family does not recognise the economic rights easily and such a relationship creates dependence and subservience on the part of women (Choi and Ting, 2008). They perform all types of duties including elderly care to the male members despite the presence of other female relatives as is apparent from this quote of Faira who narrated her sister's responsibilities: "She looked after her father-in-law who was bed ridden by giving him bath, taking to the toilet, and changing his clothes while her mother-in-law did not do anything". The subordination of a

daughter-in-law provides the opportunity to the other family members to exploit her by adding up into her caring responsibilities. A woman cannot refuse to provide this kind of care as doing so would make her a disobedient person. This complex nature of domestic violence makes it difficult for women to differentiate between their rights and responsibilities as members of affinal families.

Women suffer violence as they had no escape and they wanted to live with their husbands due to cultural pressures. Children are a reason for them to bear all the abuse and, simultaneously, a source of motivation that their circumstances would change particularly if they had sons. Gul Baji (55, educated, urban, Christian), a nursing assistant in a hospital, was in an abusive relationship for the last twenty-seven years and suffered physical, psychological, and economic violence from her husband in different forms including beating, shouting, using abusive language for her natal family and no interaction of her husband to them. She still was not able to identify any particular reason for violence except that the husband was sharp tempered. On many occasions, she lived alone with her children, stayed with her parents for shorter durations and then returned to her husband's home. She shared:

> My husband is very abusive; he starts beating me if he is angry...He does not like my siblings and whenever he saw them, he started using abusive language. My siblings live in my area, they do not visit me because of him. I bear all the beatings…I wanted to live with him. I have grown up boys and they have a very good attitude towards me; I am stable and strong because of my sons…since my sons are grown up, he avoids beating me now, though he scolds them a lot whenever they stop him.

She stayed in the dysfunctional and violent marriage for the sake of her children and they supported their mother that resulted in cessation of physical violence against her. Her husband had an M.Phil degree, a teacher by profession which indicates that education does not necessarily contribute to change of attitude towards domestic violence. The cultural desire of women for sons is justified from this narrative as their position improve when children are grown up. Conversely, violence did not stop or change its form with grown up children where a woman had daughters only, rather these women bear violence for the sake of their daughters' future. A divorced or separated woman is looked down upon by the society and it also creates hurdles for the marriage prospects of the daughters. Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim) had a marital life of almost thirty-five years and was a mother of four daughters, three of them were married. She was a survivor of physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence and was diagnosed with depression in the past. Her husband was also educated and had spent a significant time of his life in the Netherlands. Despite educated and exposed to the western world, he did not change during all these years. On asking whether her daughters interfere

when their father abused the mother, Zoreena responded that she kept her daughters away from all this fuss and never allowed them to encounter their father. This indicates that the daughters were socialised to be respectful and submissive to the authority of the father. Conversely, Maria (47, educated, urban, Muslim), a mother of seven daughters, shared that one of her daughters resisted to her father's behaviour that resulted in use of abusive language by him. Her daughter got scared and did not do it again.

An important aspect of the resistance of sons to the abusive behaviour of their father are the differential patterns of socialisation that position boys and girls differently. In the Punjabi culture, boys have more opportunities for peer interaction and access to public spaces compared to girls who require reasons to go outside and permission of their parents. This results in more independence for boys, they also learn dominant and hyper masculinity from their surroundings and also from the attitude of their father while girls are entrapped in complicit femininity. Besides, girls left their parental home after marriage and control of them through moral disciplining by the family to make them 'fit' for marriage do not provide them space to show any resistance to the authority of the father. If some do so, as in the case of Maria where her daughter interfered with her father, dynamics of accountability are strict for girls. Thus, the normative rituals to perform gender favour men and they challenge their father in the domestic sphere while it is not the case for girls due to structural gender inequality (Anderson, 2009). Henceforward, mothers of sons are able to exercise their authority over their future daughters-in-law while, it is not the case for women having daughters only.

In conclusion, contexts are important in explaining violence against women. There are stark differences between the positionality of a divorced woman compared to a man. The former has to make compromises for a second marriage that increases her chances for further exploitation and domestic violence. Besides, explaining violence in concrete forms is difficult as it is a process that does not always involve physical acts, rather a constant atmosphere of fear and control keep women in pressure. They make efforts to comply with the demands of the perpetrator and, in case of physical violence, it is usually a husband who commits such acts.

Patriarchal ideology prevalent in the Punjabi culture provides opportunities to men to abuse their wives. This is further strengthened due to the low socioeconomic status of the families where girls are considered a liability. Adding to this, lack of education and skills-based trainings further make women an economic burden that decrease their worth. Consequently, parents wanted to have early marriages of their daughters to fulfil their responsibilities while these women also carry a subordinate position in their affinal families. Thus, in the case of

uneducated women, physical violence started early compared to educated women who, initially, suffered psychological violence that, later on, was accompanied by physical attacks. Women do not foresee any rights in their affinal families and do whatever is demanded from them including excessive caring responsibilities of sick and elderly. Henceforth, they desire for sons as they foresee their better future and was shared by women having grown up sons. Women of the urban/rural locality and belonging from both the Christian and Muslim faith were facing similar types of violence.

6.3.1 Poverty or Economic Violence

In the context of domestic violence, perpetrators use different and often overlapping abusive strategies to control and maintain their power and one of those ways are economic violence (Stylianou et al., 2013). Economic abuse and financial hardships are often described as psychological abuse that undermines its significance as a distinct form of violence against women (Eriksson and Ulmestig, 2017). Financial dependence of women on their husbands put them in a vicious trap and it becomes difficult to leave an abusive relationship especially in a system like Pakistan where there are limited state benefits available. In this study, husband was not the only one involved in such kind of violence, the active role of in-laws was apparent especially when a man was submissive and in control of his parents.

Most of the women were doing some kind of formal or informal work across the urban and the rural localities. Uneducated women from the rural locality were involved in stitching, daily wage work on brick kilns, in the agriculture fields, and domestic workers while uneducated women from the urban area were house helpers, self-employed as beauticians, and one of them was a hospital attendant. Educated women from the urban area were serving in different professions including journalism, nursing, banking, teaching, managerial positions, and front desk assistants and it was dependent on their educational qualification. However, their rural counterparts had less opportunities to such diverse professions, they were involved in teaching, dispensary work, midwifery, or daily wage workers.

Education is considered to provide opportunities for better jobs and the ability to take charge of one’s finances (Eriksson and Ulmestig, 2017; Postmus et al., 2012). From the narratives of women, they have been categorised based on their education and working status.

Table 3:Women's Education, Working Status and Forms of Economic Abuse

Qualification	Working status	Forms of Economic Abuse
Educated	Formal employment Earning more than the husband	Husband/ in-laws try to take money. Husband makes financial decisions with the wife's income without involving her (Christian). Insist to quit the job.
	Employed, also financially dependent on a husband due to children	Husband threatens to stop money. Husband deprives from money despite being resourceful.
	Not employed	Husband does not take financial responsibility. Deprive a woman from food, medicines, clothes.
Uneducated	Informal employment, Self-employed (stitching, beautician)	Taking all the money from the wife. Not taking financial responsibility of wife and/or children.
	Not employed	Husband does not allow to do work for employment. Deprive a woman from food, medicines, clothes.

In the first category, educated and employed women who had incomes more than their husbands were Christians belonging from the urban area. Sonilla (35, urban, Christian), a journalist by profession, pointed out that in Christian community women are more into higher education whereas there are few men having good educational qualifications that resulted in mismatched marriages. Christian men feel privileged that they can marry a woman of good status despite educational gaps and she had similar experiences in her first marriage when the in-laws manipulated their son's education and job to get her proposal.

> They [in-laws] knew I am a journalist as they were far-off relatives from my mother's side, I was working at that time in Daily Times [English newspaper in Pakistan]. They were aware that I had a good salary, so they lied to my parents that their son has done Master in English part1 and is doing part 2. Then they said that he is working in an NGO. After marriage, I came to know that he was not doing any masters and wanted me to give all my salary to him, he had no appropriate job (Sonilla, 35, educated, urban, Christian).

Men and their families take such initiatives as they believe that it is not easy to take divorce in Christianity. Thus, marriage becomes a profit where a husband wants her wife to earn and simultaneously, controls her to maintain patriarchal ideology so that she could not dominate in the marital relationship. The traditional gender roles assign the breadwinning responsibility to a man in terms of resource contribution whereas it is not the case in reality as many men are not able to meet those cultural expectations (Choi and Ting, 2008). According to Resource Theory, the imbalance of resources occurs when a female takes the role of a provider that challenges the power distribution in the domestic sphere and threatens male dominance (Vyas and Watts, 2009). Therefore relationships, where women contribute more than their male counterparts, may result in domestic violence especially in families that believe in patriarchal ideology and men try to reassure their hegemonic masculinity through violence and control (Atkinson et al., 2005; Choi and Ting, 2008). They use different control tactics that include but not limited to: taking salary of the wife, insulting her that could undermine her self-esteem, and through physical violence (Eriksson and Ulmestig, 2017).

Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) had a choice marriage. In the Christian community, there is more acceptability for choice marriage; however, in case of marital disputes, parents of a girl make her responsible for the wrong decision regarding the choice of a spouse as they consider themselves the authority for matrimonial matters. Though Zobia and her husband had a similar education level, she was earning more than him. He was controlling all the financial matters including her salary and kept her in a constant mental torture regarding her job and often start a dispute over the phone during her office hours despite well-aware of her busy office routine. She never shared her circumstances with her parents with the fear that they would blame for her decision to choose a spouse without involving them. She said:

> If I don't give money to him [husband], our dispute will start. Initially, I gave all my salary, but he used to spend all and then panic started. I had to borrow money from my colleagues. Whenever I stopped giving him money, our dispute started. It does not matter from where I bring money, he has no issue with his honour. If I am late in the evening, he starts a fuss with me that our dinner is late, why don't you tell your office that you have to leave early. It is a continuous mental torture for me.

In this narrative, the notion of honour is attached to the prescribed role of a man as a provider of the family and failing to do so could bring disrespect to his manhood. While comparing the

masculinity of Christians and Muslims, a few of the educated and employed Christian women identified that Christian men do not consider it a dishonour to depend on the earning of a wife whereas it is not the case with Muslim men. On further probing that how did they make this opinion, they built this narrative through their interaction with Muslim female colleagues and friends.

Henceforth, in economic violence, the decisions regarding the utilisation of money are not in the hands of women rather their spouses and/or the affinal families decide about it (Fawole, 2008; Postmus et al., 2012). Another dimension of economic abuse is to force a woman for employment and then to deprive her of earned money. Maryam had an M.phil in Biotechnology from a renowned institution. She was a survivor of economic violence in addition to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse from her husband and in-laws. Her mother-in-law used to receive her salary while she was given a limited amount of money from it. She said: "I am educated, my mother-in-law asked me to do a job. She used to take all my salary and I was given a small amount from it". Thus, it is not just the resources that an employed woman brings in, sometimes an educated woman is a 'resource' and in-laws use it to their maximum benefit. Those who had higher education and good jobs resisted physical violence at some point in their marital lives; however, they were not able to come out of economic and other forms of abuse which shows that it is intertwined and none of the survivors suffered just one form of abuse.

The second category consisted of women who were educated and employed and were belonging to both the faith communities. Women were accounted for all the expenses and despite earning, they were dependent on their husbands to compensate the needs of their children. Thus, they were further stuck in the relationship alongside patriarchal social norms where women feel insecure to live independently without their spouses and natal families. Amna (42, urban, Muslim) was a university teacher by profession and a mother of four children. For her, leaving the abusive relationship was beyond possibility, she was not able to pay the school fees of her four children on her own. While sharing the exploitative behaviour of the husband through all these seventeen years of marital life, she said:

> My child was few months old, he brought his milk and asked me not to finish before two weeks. I used to ask my mother and sister to send me money as I was in another country. If I start a job, he threats that he will divorce me, I quit jobs because of his threats. He is a billionaire and has a very good business, his money is not for me or my children and we crave for every penny. He never buys anything for them like uniforms, shoes, medicines, or something to eat. We cannot use the car that is at home. He tries to insult me and puts me in inferiority complex.

Preventing a wife from work without significant reason is a tactic to control her financially and a way to make her submissive and dependent in the marriage. Besides, marital dependency of a wife, despite earning, provides opportunity to an abusive partner to 'discipline' her and the children by restraining them from basic needs. Marital dependency theory also argues that economically dependent women are at greater risk of violence (Vyas and Watts, 2009). Though this category of women were partially dependent on their husbands, still they were not able to leave the relationship because of the economic deficit and they did not foresee any other source of support for themselves.

Economic violence is often entwined with physical and other forms of violence that makes it difficult to identify as a distinct form of violence (Eriksson and Ulmestig, 2017). Thus, it co-occurs as physical violence may accompany financial abuse and sometimes, financial matters become the reason of other forms of violence particularly in cases where a girl is brought into marriage to gain monetary benefits like dowry or other material things. The role of in-laws is pre-eminent where a daughter-in-law was expected to bring assets for the affinal family and failing to do so resulted in violence. For example, Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim) was very apt that she was brought into marriage for monetary benefits and failing to do so resulted in physical violence, mental torture, and economic abuse. She shared:

> I was the only daughter of my parents and my mother-in-law asked for property especially a house as my father had two houses in his name. When I did not bring that house in my name, she abused me from very first day of marriage and despite earning of my husband, I and my daughters were deprived from basic necessities of life.

Role of in-laws particularly a mother-in-law was influential in controlling a daughter-in-law regarding financial matters. Thus, it is not always a husband who commits domestic violence against the spouse, his family can also play a central role in such matters particularly if a son is under the influence of his parents and prefer his natal family over his wife. Similarly, Aini (30, educated, urban, Christian) quit her job after marriage, her mother-in-law and sister-in-law used to keep her under scrutiny in every matter and she was not allowed to buy anything from her husband's income.

Uneducated women had low incomes due to the nature of their work. Though poverty is a cause of economic deprivation that pushed many women to be involved in formal and informal employment, the use of control by men and their families over the earned income further strengthen feminization of poverty for such women who had no choice but to share their income with their spouses. Conversely, women who do not earn are also vulnerable to violence due to their economic dependence on their spouses (Sanders, 2015). In families with low socio-

economic status, women are considered a burden and responsibility, parents wanted to arrange their marriages 'timely' to protect their sexuality and to shift the responsibility where it belongs to i.e., their husbands. Women are laced with less or no skills and they get involve in works that is informal and low paid. Besides, in Pakistan, there are very limited formal avenues of support that could put women on welfare which resulted in limited opportunities for them to live independently and on their own incomes. Despite all these barriers, women took initiatives to live independently with their limited income in cases where their spouses were not providing financial support and were involved in physical and other forms of violence. Robeena (27, uneducated, urban, Muslim), a mother of five children, migrated to Lahore city for economic reasons. It was difficult for her to see the starving children, she started working as a domestic maid. She shared: "Whatever I earn, he takes that from me and does addiction. He has sold everything that I bought. He never thinks about our children". Despite her initiative for migration, she lacked economic self-sufficiency as her husband joined the family in the city. She resisted the physical violence of her husband with the belief that one of the primary responsibilities of a husband is to be a provider of his family, if he is not able to fulfil it then there is no reason to be silent on his beating. However, financial issues and not providing money to her husband escalated physical and verbal abuse against her (Sanders, 2015). Women never thought of divorce, a choice available to them, as it again involves economic cost to them in approaching courts and lawyers. They did not want to be in a situation where society stigmatise them and their children for such an action.

Addiction of the husband was one of the important causes of economic and physical violence in low economic category of women and shared mostly by Christian and Muslim women from the urban locality. Shabeela (more than 40 years, uneducated, urban, Christian) had a child marriage, she worked as a domestic helper and had to hand over her income to the husband. She said: "I am sick, it is difficult for me to work regularly. I do not have enough money for medicines, he shouts if I request for medicines". Her husband had a regular income of his own and was using it according to his choice but was not willing to spend on his wife.

Besides, women were restricted from learning new skills that could make them financially independent. Aneela (24, uneducated, urban, Muslim) had no means except her husband's income. He was earning despite being an addict and used to give all his income to his mother. While the husband was controlled by his mother, Aneela was not allowed to learn any skills that could assist her in some financial gains. She shared:

> I wanted to learn stitching so that I could have some money for the expenses of my children, but my mother-in-law said that I should have learnt it before marriage. If I asked for money from my husband, he replied that he had no money for me, rather I should ask my mother to send me money.

Women are asked to bring money from their natal families if they insist for daily expenses, it is a tactic to stop them. Alongside this, husbands and in-laws are also found demanding money if they believe that the natal family of a woman is resourceful. Such demands are, sometimes, fulfilled by the natal families despite lacking resources to save their daughter's home. Some of the direct consequences of economic violence include non-affordability of women to buy medicines for themselves, lack of food, and their inability to fulfil the needs of children. In such circumstances, the abusers feel themselves in a position where they can control the survivor and can get desirable behaviours through such controls. Concurrently, it is not necessary in each situation that an abuser expects certain kinds of outcomes through economic control, subordinate status of a wife in the marriage relationship provides him the opportunity for exploitation in his own ways.

Despite economic violence in various forms, women devise strategies to deal with it. Educated and employed women had access to the banking systems that provided them with the opportunity to save some amount which their spouses did not become aware of. In contrast, women from the rural locality and uneducated women had no such access available or their income was very limited to be saved. Uneducated women saved money through 'committee system'- a form of saving club where a group of local women contributes certain amount of money every month and the collected amount is given to one of the members. This system was successful to some degree and women were able to buy basic requirements of life for themselves and for their children. In such a situation, it was beneficial that the husbands were not taking financial responsibility and women were spending money with their choice. However, if a husband came across saving of the wife, he took it by creating 'genuine excuses'. Despite their difficult circumstances, women took initiatives for earning and resisted physical violence when their husbands were unable to fulfil the role of a provider. There were very few women where economic violence leads to other forms of abuse otherwise it is difficult to identify which types leads to other as many of the forms of violence co-exist simultaneously in their lives.

The findings of this section illustrate that educated Christian women were earning more than their husbands; resultantly, they were suffering economic violence. This supports the existing literature that, in patriarchal societies, disempowered men try to control their wives through

violence as they feel a threat to the traditional gender ideology (Sanders, 2015; Paul, 2016). Thus, it cannot be guaranteed that economic independence would shield women from domestic violence, rather they loose control of their money particularly women having unemployed husbands, or those earning less than their wives. Educated working women, both Christians and Muslims, were in a constant pressure from their husbands due to their jobs. Men try to control them economically and did not provide any support. This is further exacerbated by the role of in-laws in the financial matters of a couple. Economic and other types of violence against women could also escalate if they did not bring the expected dowry. They are also pressurised to bring money from their natal families if they are not employed and ask for it to their husbands or the affinal families to fulfil their needs.

Alongside other factors, economic dependency of women on their spouses is a significant cause to stay in abusive relationships. Uneducated women and those belonging to the rural residency have limited opportunities to be independent economically that forces them to stay in abusive relationships. Addiction of a husband was a significant cause of economic and other forms of violence in the low-income group of women belonging from the urban locality. Christians are legally allowed to buy alcohol in Pakistan, Christian men consumed alcohol alongside other drugs and ignored the economic needs of women or they spent the hard-earned money of women to buy it that impacted the economic well-being of women. Rural women were at a disadvantaged position, they had less opportunities available to earn money compared to their urban counterparts. In addition to that, they had accessibility issues regarding saving of their money due to the unavailability of formal systems like banks or other facilities to them. Basic financial education is very important alongside welfare support services for women especially uneducated and those belonging to the rural area.

6.3.2 Sexual Violence and Extra-Marital Relations of a Husband: A Silent Area

In Pakistan, talking about sex is a taboo, anybody who talks about sexuality or sexual matters openly is considered immodest. Therefore, women do not express their views and avoid sharing their sexual life except in close circles. Moreover, there is no concept of sex education in public schools, any such dialogue attracts criticism and outrage from the public with the pretext that it is a violation of religious and cultural traditions of the society (Shaikh and Ochani, 2018). Being an Islamic country, sex outside of marriage is proscribed and there is punishment through law for such an act.

Research regarding issues of sexuality is limited in Pakistan due to the sensitivity of the topic. Young people have very few avenues of information about reproductive biology and sexual

issues (Hennink et al., 2005). Mostly the sources of their information about menarche, sexual development, and matrimonial relations are internet, family members and friends. Many young people receive little or no information about menarche before it occurs. A few studies in the context of Pakistan highlighted the role of parents in providing information to their children. Parents were also less informed and shy because of their own socialisation in a similar environment, where discussion about sexuality is considered inappropriate (Hennink et al., 2005; Ali et al., 2006; Svanemyr, 2015). In a socio-cultural environment where honour lies in the sexuality of a woman, unmarried girls are more under scrutiny by the family members whereas boys have opportunities and accessibility to such materials and movies that could give them exposure to sexual matters. With this backdrop, women enter marriage with varied information about sexual related matters and it is very much dependent on their age at marriage, education, access to the internet and media, and role of peers in their lives (Farid-ul-Hasnain et al., 2013). In their study regarding the knowledge of young people about sexual development in Pakistan, Hennink et al. (2005) found gender differences in acquisition of knowledge. Women were more at disadvantage as the information provided to them was too superficial and vague to be educative while men had access to sexually explicit pornographic media (Hennink et al., 2005).

Sexual violence in marriage is not considered a crime and is not reported with the police. Though there is an implicit recognition of marital rape in the Pakistan Penal Code under the Protection of Women (Criminal Law Amendment Act 2006) which defines rape as an act without the consent of a woman. Rao (2017) observes that it has ample recognition for marital rape as the word ‘woman’ could be a wife also. On the contrary, Mindeel (2016) believes that it has no explicit recognition of marital rape and is dependent on the legal interpretation as it carries ambiguity with it. Besides, public knowledge regarding marital rape is limited and sexual matters are considered very private in a matrimonial relationship which resulted in no such reporting to the police or judiciary. Due to the absence of cases regarding marital rape, the position of judiciary on these matters is not clear (Rashid, 2018).

In the context of present study, women shared their views about sexual matters; however, a clear silence on this matter was apparent. Both Christian and Muslim women from the urban locality were more open, although a few of them avoid sharing their personal experiences and prefer to talk about the attitude of men in general despite mentioning their personal hatred as is apparent in this quote:

> All men have a lust for sex, nothing matter to them except the body of a woman. There are very few who actually love their wives. I really hate sex now [emphasis], there is no love in it. Sex without love is illegal and rape (Zoreena, 58, educated, urban, Muslim).

An important aspect for such a general discussion about sexual violence is shame and privacy associated with it. Men feel an ownership of women's bodies and consent in sexual relations with such a mindset is not considered necessary. Besides, patriarchal interpretations of religion contribute in making a supportive environment for men, they consider sex as an entitlement that legitimise sexual abuse of wives. Any refusal from women's side challenge their manhood as sexual virility is considered a way to express their masculinity. Rania (28, educated, urban, Muslim) was one of the few women who talked about their personal experiences though in an indirect and secretive way. She shared the types of sexual violence she suffered through in her marriage:

> He did not leave me in the car even when the driver was also there. He had no access to my body at that time, so he used to discharge in my mouth as he was habitual of oral sex. He used to do from the back [anal sex] and injured me very badly.

Rania was one of the two women who had to suffer sexual humiliation infront of others. She had no option except to be silent otherwise it could accompany physical violence. Logan et al. (2015) argues that an abuser deliberately put down a woman in sexual terms when the purpose is not to gain sex rather humiliation and degradation. Sexual demeaning of a wife in public is an expression of coercive control and an assertion that a woman is an object that could be exploited sexually, not just behind closed door but also outside the home (Das et al., 2016). The joint household system was another threat for sexual violence from other male members of the family. Thus, it is not just the husband who is a perpetrator of such abuse as is evident from the following narrative of Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim). She escaped twice from rape attempt by her younger brother-in-law who was in grade 10 at that time. She said:

> My brother-in-law [then] tried to rape me when I was pregnant. I was sleeping in my room and I thought him as my husband. When I opened my eyes, I started screaming. My husband told his parents, his mother blamed that I try to attract him, he is young and innocent. Then he tried when I was alone in the home with my child. He asked me to clean his room, and then he locked the door. I pleaded and asked that you are just like my son, please let me go. I prayed, I do not know how I escaped that day.

The insecurity and helplessness are apparent from this narrative of Maryam who was finally expelled from home by her husband. A crucial dimension for such an initiative by a grade 10 student is the low status of Maryam as a wife, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law which provided him with the courage to attempt rape as he was aware to get support from his parents. Studies regarding sexual violence in the context of Pakistan does not cover sexual abuse by the male relatives of a husband (Hussain and Khan, 2008; Kapadia et al., 2010). In an environment

where a wife avoids sharing the sexual violence of a husband, acts of such kind by the male relatives of a husband can bring shame and disrespect to a husband's family. Paradoxically, the perpetrator is protected by the family and the victim has to suffer the consequences in the form of divorce as it is easy to blame a woman to protect the honour of the family. It was not just male relatives, the role of a mother-in-law was also disturbing. Areeb (30, educated, urban, Muslim) told that her (then) mother-in-law asked her not to have matrimonial relations on daily basis. Besides, she was not allowed to throw her sanitary pads during menstruation, her mother-in-law used to check and insult her on that.

For women, sexual abuse of a husband and simultaneously his sexual involvement with other women was equally upsetting and embarrassing. Of the seven women who shared the extra-marital relations of their husbands, five were Christians while two were Muslims. Besides, a few of the Muslim women also discussed the involvement of their husbands with other women, they did not explicitly talk about their sexual involvement. Three of the Christian women had to bear with the women that their husbands brought home and maintained sexual relations. These participants were uneducated women and two of them were from the rural area. Anayat Bibi (40, uneducated, urban, Christian), in a very upsetting tone, shared the extra marital relations of her husband just to show the level of compromises she made in her marriage. She said:

> It does not feel good to share personal matters, but my husband brought another woman out of marriage wedlock…she shared bed with me while he was in the centre. My husband threatened that he would not bother if I share it to others. I never told my parental family about it.

A clear demarcation between Christian and Muslim women was apparent regarding the sexual involvement of a husband with other women. In the Christian community, there was less scrutiny and social pressure for such relations compared to Muslims who have to face strict punishments by law. In the case of Muslim women, their husbands never admit such acts, women came across their relationships through other sources or a husband suffered sexually transmitted diseases due to unprotected sex as shared by Maria (47, educated, urban, Muslim), a mother of seven daughters. Her husband was interested in another woman for the sake of having a son despite the scientific fact that sex of a child is decided through the father, it is usually women who are blamed for producing daughters. She said:

> God forbid me as it is said that we should not talk evil of a husband, he used to go to wrong women and all his lower parts of the body [sex organs] had wounds that deteriorated. I used to clean him, he was not able to sit as it started bleeding.

On further asking by the researcher that did she ever enquired from her husband about his relations, Maria had a stance that her mother had advised not to ask the husband even about a woman sitting next to him otherwise he gets irritated and does such acts again. The parental advice especially by mothers was an important dimension of women's lives and many of them followed it in their lives especially in making compromises with their husbands' beatings and extra-marital relations.

Non-consensual sex was common, any refusal from a wife was considered an act of disrespect that resulted in physical violence. Lack of sexual education, subordinate position of a woman in marriage, and norms that hinder women to talk about sexual relations provide men the opportunity to be violent. Moreover, the nature of sexual violence is not apparent to others as is the case in physical violence, taboos in discussing it with others further worsen the problem (Hussain and Khan, 2008). Roqueea Bibi (40, uneducated, rural, Muslim) had no clue of the physical and sexual violence that her newly married daughter was suffering until she came across her daughter's friend. This friend could not keep the secret and shared with Roqueea despite that her daughter had confided in her friend and took a promise not to tell her mother:

> He used to beat a lot to my daughter and was habitual of doing sexual violence a lot. Whenever she refused to have sex during menstruation, he used to hit her head against the wall, strangled and beat her severely. She hardly spent three months with him. He also threatened that he would not leave her in a condition to marry any other person (Roqueea Bibi, 40, uneducated, rural, Muslim).

Roqueea Bibi filed for divorce in the court, she was able to save her daughter although it took her daughter one year to physically recover from the trauma of abuse. A husband does not consider the context in which sex is refused and a wife is supposed to be available to avoid anger and resentment otherwise a negation could cost a woman in the form of physical violence and forced sex. Shame and honour alongside absence of words in calling sexual violence were the barriers for many women in sharing experiences of sexual abuse. Women used vague terminology that had no shared meanings: for example, Rehana (uneducated, urban, Christian) expressed the sexual desire of her husband like this: "He just wanted it at any time of the day". On further asking by the researcher, she smiled and repeated the same words with emphasis which shows the reluctance in discussing sex and sexuality and absence of naming to this type of violence (Pande, 2016). Educated women used English vocabulary to convey their views whereas uneducated women engaged ambiguous and indirect words to share their experiences. They were also concerned about the marital status of the researcher as discussing sexuality with unmarried women is considered obscenity and gracelessness in the local culture.

More women from the urban locality shared their experiences of sexual violence compared to their rural counterparts. This difference may indicate the hidden nature of domestic violence in rural areas due to social and cultural construction of gender and more traditional ideas of sexuality (Little, 2017). However, Naseem (32, uneducated, Christian), a child bride from the rural area shared sexual violence and the extra-marital relations of her husband very openly. She was not interested in living with her husband and was not afraid of him anymore that could be a reason of her openness while it was not the case with other women of the rural residency who were into a marital relationship.

Christian women shared the use of alcohol and drugs by their husbands that increase the level of sexual and other forms of violence, they avoid resisting sexual contacts when the husband was under the influence of any addiction. Christians are legally allowed to buy alcohol in Pakistan with a permit while it is not the case for Muslims. This provided Christian men with the opportunity to consume alcohol and a vast majority of Christian women mentioned the use of alcohol by their husbands. Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) shared her experience of sexual violence and the way she tackled with it particularly when her husband was under the influence of alcohol:

> When he drinks [alcohol], he continuously keeps on trying for sex but is not able to do so. It is a continuous physical torture for me. Instead, he blames that I am not involved, I remain silent otherwise our dispute starts on it. If I say I am tired or not interested, he says that I am a working woman, so I am fulfilling this need somewhere else. I need to say "yes" to all his orders otherwise situation will be worse. Even he tried to do so during menses, but I resisted. Now he stopped doing because he came to know that it is not good for his own health.

A working woman's refusal provide her husband the opportunity to blame her for extra marital relations and to psychologically keep her under pressure for consent. Consequently, she has no escape except to comply with the demands of a husband. This was shared by Muslims and Christian educated working women. Culturally, marriage is a consent to maintain sexual relations, women have no choice except to be complicit otherwise discussing their 'bedroom' matters openly could bring shame and dishonour to them. Moreover, they are not expected to express their desire as sexual satisfaction is considered the right of men only. Wives are not supposed to refuse any sexual initiation as Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christine) aptly reflected and raised questions about it, she said:

> If he wants to have sex while the woman does not want at that time, they [men] think that a woman should not have the courage to refuse…sometimes I think a woman is just like a *zar-khareed* (purchased gold with money) and you can use it the way you want…I encountered two men in my life with whom I had a sexual relation, no one is attentive to the demand of a woman, what does she want, what is her satisfaction whereas every man

> has his own demands. How strange it is. It is a big sin if a woman expresses her desire for sex and is said that she is used to of bad habits. Biologically, we are same with similar needs.

Domination of a man and his decision about sexual encounters is apparent from this narrative, it is normative that there is no place for choice and consent of a wife. Thus, men have entitlement for it, and they feel a sense of ownership for themselves (Bergen and Bukovec, 2006). Besides, women are also socialised in a way that one of their primary duties are to make their husbands happy. They try to accede to the desires of their husbands and make compromises for the smooth functioning of the marriage institution (Riet et al., 2019). Women do not know their sexual rights in marriage due to lack of knowledge about their bodily rights. They either discussed matters regarding sex and sexuality in general or shared their personal experiences with secrecy and, in some cases, with embarrassment. Hence, surviving with sexual and other forms of abuse and, simultaneously, managing one's emotions according to the expectations of the Punjabi culture was a burden and also a strength of these women.

Risk factors for sexual violence involve lack of other means of entertainment, women's complicity in sexual activity, drug and alcohol use by the husband especially within the Christian community, male patriarchal control, lack of sex education, and early girl child marriages. At the household and community level, cultural taboo in discussing sexual matters, confusion in the laws, and women's inaccessibility to the police and the judiciary are some of the factors involved in sexual violence. Comprehensive sexuality education is necessary to give awareness to young people particularly women about their bodily rights and to reduce sexual risk behaviours (Krebbekx, 2019). Awareness raising about sexual violence within marriage is necessary to give a confidence that sharing sexual sufferings is not a shameful act. Personal and sexual development of uneducated girls and women could be promoted through initiatives at community level that could provide information about such sensitive matters.

In conclusion, sexual violence by a husband and other male members of a husband's family and his involvement with other women outside of marriage is a sensitive topic in the context of Pakistan. Women from the urban locality particularly Christian women shared their personal experiences of sexual violence in a more detailed way compared to Muslim women and also the extramarital relations of their husband. Christian men were more confident in their extramarital relations. A significant contribution for such an attitude was the lenity from their community about such acts. On the contrary, Muslim men were having such relations in hidden ways as sex outside of marriage is adultery by law and a strong social pressure does prevail for it. Sex education is a complicated topic and there is a lot of controversy and opposition around

it especially from religious and traditional mindset of the society. Uneducated women, particularly, were lacking words to share their experiences and women's reluctance in talking about sexual violence was apparent without any distinction of education. However, women of the urban locality were more open to discuss their sexual matters compared to their rural counterparts. Alcohol was one of the prominent reasons of sexual violence among Christian women which is available to Christians legally whereas none of the Muslim women mentioned alcohol as a main factor of violence. However, it is difficult to claim that Muslim men do not consume alcohol rather the sensitive nature of sexual violence in marriage makes it difficult to be discussed openly.

6.3.3 Child Marriages and Controlling of Women

Age at marriage provides important insights into the status of women particularly their position in the domestic sphere (Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu and Ergöçmen, 2014). Early age marriages put young girls at a disadvantaged position and take away many of the opportunities from their lives that others of that age group enjoy. Child marriages are the outcome of a complex interplay of many factors including familial traditions, socio-economic status, patriarchal interpretations of religion, and traditional gender system which shape the social life and are beyond the control of a young girl (Nasrullah et al., 2014a; Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu and Ergöçmen, 2014; Parsons et al., 2015). In Pakistan, child marriages are illegal, the Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act 2015 penalises six months imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 Pakistani rupees for those who contract or solemnise such a marriage (Shaukat, 2015). Previously, Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 was implemented; however, very few were put under scrutiny of the law in arranging a child marriage and it is a common practice in many parts of the country which shows the strength of the custom over the law.

In the current study, thirteen women got married between the age of 10-15 years, and two of these women made the decision of getting married themselves. Both these girls were from the rural locality; Nazneen, from the Christian faith, had a choice marriage with the consent of her parents at the age of fourteen while Shumaila was Muslim and eloped from her parents' home as she was not allowed to get married to a man of her choice. Elopement brings disrespect to a woman's family due to the notion of honour attached to a female that provides justification for parents of girls to arrange their marriages early to avoid such insult in their community.

Eleven of the women had a child marriage arranged by their families, they were suffering domestic violence or had suffered in the past from their husbands and the members of their affinal families. All these women were uneducated except for one who had a little exposure to

early schooling. The women were belonging from the lower-middle or working-class background. This seems that poverty alongside social norms regarding female gender hinder educational investment in the girl child. Parents prefer early marriages of their daughters to fulfil their parental responsibilities with the mindset that women's obligations are to produce children and to do the domestic chores. It is crucial for parents that the girls get adjusted into their marital lives timely without considering the long-term implications of such marriages on the physical and mental health of young girls. Katherine (45, uneducated, rural, Christian) was fifteen years old at the time of her first marriage, she shared:

> My first husband and his family were very inhuman to me. My mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, and a brother-in-law used to quarrel a lot with me on petty issues. I used to confine myself in the room and kept on crying in fear.

The insecurity and lack of confidence was apparent from the narrative of Katherine as she was powerless to confront her in-laws. She was also deprived of money, she fulfilled her needs and that of five children by using stitching skills which shows that she was suffering not only verbal and psychological abuse, but economic violence was another way to control her. Early marriages are associated with social isolation, low self-esteem, and poor health of young brides and they are more at risk of violence, not just because of their gender, but also due to age-based inequalities as it is easier for their husbands and in-laws to control them (Otoo-Oyortey and Pobi, 2003; Turner, 2016). Thus, these intersecting vulnerabilities increase the likelihood of domestic violence against young minority women. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, non-registration of Christian marriages and outdated family laws impact on the lives of the Christian women in a complex way and the burden of exploitation is huge in case of a child marriage. For example, Martha (50, uneducated, rural, Christian) was a young bride at the time of her first marriage and went through similar circumstances in both of her marriages. She said:

> My first husband was interested in another woman…that woman was living with him out of marriage wedlock…he used to snatch my daughter and expelled me from home. I returned to him again and again because of my daughter. One night he was with the other woman in the room and I went to take something. He got furious and attempted to cut my leg, his uncle saved me that night with great difficulty. My parents brought me back, he did not give me the daughter. My parents arranged my second marriage and I have three children. After sometimes, my second husband did another marriage and I was left with my in-laws. They were happy if I worked all day but if I got sick then their attitude changed. I came back to my parents' home again with my children.

The position of a Christian woman, married as a child, without awareness of her basic human rights is evident. This narrative also shows the authority of a Christian man and his choice to have sexual relations in the presence of his wife. Though adultery is a ground for divorce in the law, Martha was a minor uneducated girl who could not find the opportunity in life to have

personal growth, she was not in a position to take any initiative to claim her rights as a wife. There were six Christian women who had child marriages arranged by their families, four of them shared the extramarital relations of their husbands as it happened in the presence of these women. Men were well-aware of their dominant manhood and their ability to control their young wives. On the contrary, women had no escape except to remain silent and to continue with their marriages.

An important aspect of child marriages are the age gaps between a young bride and her husband. Usually, age differences between the couple are larger, where a husband is older, that impacts on the power dynamics within the relationship and women are less involved in household decisions. Men and their families consider them immature and dependent, resultantly they experience various forms of violence and control and are not able to speak up for their own exploitations particularly in matters related to their reproductive rights (Parsons, 2015).

This mismatch of ages is further exacerbated by the custom of exchange marriages prevalent in many communities and is called *watta satta* in the local language (Zaman, 2014). In exchange marriages, mistreatment with one woman impacts the relationship of the other couple in the form of reciprocity by giving harm to the other woman otherwise it is considered a shameful act that a man is not taking revenge while his sister is being beaten by her husband. The role of relatives and families of the contracting parties in such an exchange is very crucial to control and settle disputes among couples that could ensure the smooth running of this cultural practice. Robeena, an illiterate woman, was thirteen at the time of her marriage, she had been given to the other family who had given their daughter to Robeena's brother in marriage. Age and personal choice for spouse selection was not a concern except that both families were willing for such an exchange. She said: "whenever he beat me, I used to go to my parents' home. Then relatives get involved and I had to come back". Robeena was suffering violence not only from her husband, her brother-in-law used to beat her on minor family issues particularly when she dared to respond her husband in a dispute situation. Besides, she had no idea of family planning and the use of contraceptive methods that resulted in five children within first few years of her marriage.

Poverty alongside lack of education and access to sexual information puts these young brides in a vulnerable position that impacts on their physical, mental, and sexual health. In such marriages, a husband is an ultimate authority and any disobedience to him could result in beating and threats of such kind as shared by Shabeela who had no choice except to comply

with her husband's sexual initiation otherwise she had to suffer the consequences in the form of beating and abusive language. She was married at a very young age of almost ten years and was a mother of seven children, she shared:

> I had my first menstruation after one month of marriage, I had no idea of anything…he demanded physical relations, I asked him that I am not well, he started beating me as he was drunk. He is obsessed about sex and wants me to be available at any time of the day. When my kids were young…it was very difficult for me to send the children outside home. He used to take me in the bathroom, it was a very small space. All that impacted my body physically, but he never understands that and do not like to use condoms. Whenever I demand money from him, he shouts at me. He threats that I was saved by his previous beating but next time he will kill me by turning my neck (Shabeela, uneducated, urban, Christian).

This illustrates that violence was embedded in throughout their marriage with all its forms including physical, sexual, psychological, and economic while both were living together for almost thirty years. Moreover, it is a woman's duty to be available for sex, refusal for any such acts are considered a disobedience that resulted in coercion and assault of a wife.

The continuity of such violent relationships is the unwillingness of women to escape such marriages as they avoid accessing the formal institutions for support. The natal families were the only escape who used to send them back to their husbands after some form of dispute resolution and then the cycle of violence started again. Fehmida (50, uneducated, urban, Christian) did sex work, her husband was an addict and used to beat her in case she was not able to provide him with money. Though she was working as a domestic helper, she was able to get money after a month from this kind of work while, in case of sex work, it was easy for her to escape violence by getting money whenever she required. Thus, domestic violence is a form of terrorism that inflicts fear and pushes a survivor to do acts that could protect her from abuse (Pain, 2012). A woman may have fewer opportunities to escape from abuse of such kind particularly when her native family also believes in the imbalance of power in the marital relationship. Fehmida was once sold to a brick kiln owner by her husband, her brother interfered, paid money, and then sent her back to her husband:

> Once my husband sold me as he was not able to pay the money for the tractor he had bought. The person who bought me was a brick kiln owner. He used to take money from other men and they abused me sexually including a police officer. My brother paid the money and sent me back to my husband.

The circumstances of Fehmida indicates that a woman is treated as a commodity which can be sold at times of need. Besides, the structural inequality deprives women of their basic human rights and in an environment of poverty, illiteracy, lack of skills, and women's subordination force their natal families to send them back to their husbands as they do not foresee any future

for them outside of marriage. Despite physical abuse, the most hurting acts for women were to deprive them of food, medicines, and to isolate them from their natal families. Anayat Bibi (40, uneducated, urban, Christian) got married at the age of thirteen and was a mother of seven children. She was trapped in the abuse of her husband and mother-in-law, with no escape from that situation. She narrated:

> My mother-in-law said that she would give me food if I would work as a domestic maid in the homes of people. I started working secretly from my husband as he did not like that, my husband beat me when he came to know about that. I asked him that he should talk to his mother, he responded that he would not interfere whatever the treatment his mother does to me.

Parents have a respectable status in Punjabi society and they have an important role in making decisions regarding marriage, separation, and divorce of their children (Ali et al., 2018). A mother-in-law gets power in the domestic sphere through her grown up sons and control the domestic matters of the family and the daughter-in-law which Kandiyoti (1988) calls patriarchal bargains. Similarly, Aneela (15years old at marriage) was controlled by her mother-in-law, she was not allowed to enquire about her mother's health on mobile phone. Aneela had a cousin marriage and her mother-in-law was her aunt. Consanguineous marriages have sociocultural reasons in the context of Pakistan and one of the advantages are the easy adjustment of a bride due to the family relations of both the parties (Hussain, 1999). Contrarily, there is a probability in such marriages that in-laws may exploit a girl and her natal family as privy to their vulnerabilities.

> My father was an addict and he used to beat my mother. My aunt helped us a lot in that time and my mother took divorce. Then my aunt asked for my proposal that my mother accepted. Now she mistreats me whichever way she wants, and my husband follows her instructions (Aneela, 24, uneducated, urban, Muslim).

It seems from this narrative that acceptance of marriage proposal was a way to acknowledge the support that was provided and Aneela's mother tried to return the favour; however, it provided her aunt the opportunity and courage for exploitation. Moreover, any resistance on the part of a daughter-in-law was useless as being aware that she was a young bride without any skills and her natal family was not able to provide any support to resist the abuse.

In conclusion, different forms of violence were overlapping in the narratives of women, married as minors, that reveals domestic violence as a complex issue and sometimes it is difficult to reduce it to discrete physical, sexual or psychological forms. Women from both the urban and the rural localities had similar circumstances. However, there were stark differences between the Christian and the Muslim women regarding forms of violence. Christian women, both from the urban and the rural locality, shared the extra-marital relations of their husbands

and a few of them suffered sexual violence from their husbands while one of them did sex work to generate money for her husband's addiction needs. On the contrary, none of the Muslim women mentioned about sexual violence. The legal dimension was crucial for the differences between women of both the faiths; family laws were not available and divorce laws were not amended that provided opportunities to the Christian men to exploit their wives. Other dimensions of child marriages are the structural inequalities that intersect with other vulnerabilities particularly women as a symbol of honour and an economic burden that contribute to their early marriages. Despite the availability of the child marriage restraint act, this custom is prevalent which denotes that it needs to be dealt at grassroot level by overcoming the subordinate status of the girl child and by empowering women through education, economic empowerment, and reformulation of the family system so that women could also contribute in the well-being of their parents instead of economic liability for them.

6.3.4 Pre-marital and Post-separation Violence

Though the forms of violence are similar in many of the cases, there is a need to understand the contexts which provide the opportunities to commit violence (Kelly, 2016) without any repercussions to the perpetrators. Some forms of violence related to the marriage institution are not discussed under the category of domestic violence. This research has an emphasis on pre-marital and post-separation violence as related to domestic violence.

Women shared their experiences of pre-marital and post-separation abuse which is an important dimension of domestic violence in the context of Punjab. The customary practices to arrange a marriage are certain rituals which are followed in the Punjabi society. When families of both the parties agree for the marriage proposal, a pre-nuptial ceremony is arranged to announce and celebrate the new relationship with relatives and friends. There is also possibility that some of the families arrange *nikkah* in such a ceremony and girls do not leave their parents' home until a formal marriage ceremony is arranged after a few months. Such an arrangement is considered 'authentic' and there is least possibility of breaking the relationship while it remains possible in a pre-nuptial agreement called 'engagement'. Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) was at her parental home after her *nikkah*, her father came to know that her husband had not completed his education and lied to Maryam's family. He raised the issue with Maryam's in-laws when they visited to fix the marriage date. She narrated:

> My father asked my in-laws to let their son complete his studies, they misbehaved and broke serving cups and plates in our home and said that they will send me divorce. I convinced my father for this marriage to happen as my mother had passed away and he

> was already very upset. I had a stance that it would be difficult for my other sisters to get married and to explain people why they give me divorce before marriage.

This shows the importance of *nikkah* that provides authority to the in-laws to threaten a woman and her family for divorce. Despite being aware of the situation, Maryam took the initiative to get married for the sake of her sisters and to avoid social stigma of divorce. Divorce not only reduces the social status of a woman, it also impacts on the marriage prospects of other siblings particularly unmarried sisters. Thus, the abuse started before marriage and continued throughout her three years of marital life. Though Maryam started her marital life with the positive mindset that she would be able to change the circumstances, she was trapped in a violent relationship and was abused by multiple perpetrators including her husband, parents-in-laws, and her brother-in-law. She was beaten by her husband and in-laws during pregnancy to abort her baby, her bother-in-law attempted for rape twice which she escaped. Rania (28, educated, urban, Muslim) had gone through similar circumstances, though the forms of violence varied in her case. She had to quit her job and was not allowed to visit any place while her *rukhsati* had not taken place. Her husband used to control her while she was with her parents which indicates many faces of violence that has not been established yet in the literature. A clear demarcation between an engagement and *nikkah* is the disposition of a husband and his family to threat for divorce while it is not the case in engagement. There is less social damage to the reputation of a girl and her family in case of breaking the engagement. There were two important aspects on the part of women who suffered pre-marital violence: their agency to change the attitude of the offenders and simultaneously, a compromise to maintain their families' honour.

Women who became the target of pre-marital violence also experienced more serious forms of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in their marriages. Despite all the sufferings, women wanted to continue with their marriages that provided opportunity to the perpetrators and their families to control their female partners in whatever way they wanted. Besides, an important aspect in cases of pre-marital and marital abuse was the non-availability of support from the natal families of these women. In the case of Rania (28, educated, urban, Muslim), her father had passed away, her brothers were young enough to stand for their sister whereas her husband had an influential bureaucratic position in the government. Likewise, Maryam had no brother and her father had passed away after one year of her marriage. Both these women were divorced later on, they also went through post-separation abuse alongside other women who dared to take the initiative of divorce.

Post-separation abuse is a continuation of violence that women had suffered through in their marriages; however, it differed in form as women had left their husbands and in-laws' homes. As a result, the affinal families were not able to directly control these women. Custody of the child was a significant reason for men to control their ex-partners and there were two extremes: either men did not want to leave their child, or they were not ready to accept that the child was theirs to avoid the expenses of maintenance. Women wanted their dowry items to be returned which provided men and their families the opportunity to exploit them and spreading gossips about the bad character of a woman. In the case of Rania, her husband did not want to have a child, he already had a son from his first marriage. He divorced Rania as she was not ready to abort the baby. There was an attempt to kill her by the ex-husband when she approached the court to claim the maintenance of the new-born child. The ex-husband argued in the court that he was not the father of the baby just to avoid the monthly expenditures that court usually fix in such cases. He was also furious at the courage of his ex-wife to approach the court.

Women suffered post-separation abuse due to the corrupt system of courts. This structural violence contributed to increasing the burden of women through delay in providing justice and the availability of false witnesses. In Pakistan, access to spaces are negotiated by a complex process which is shaped by gender, social status, ethnicity, age, religion, and many other factors. Courts are gendered spaces and access of women to these places are not appreciated which shows the complex relationship of space and power dynamics (Masood, 2018). In one of the cases, the child was abducted by the father and the woman had to approach the court for the custody. According to the law, the custody of a child is given to the mother; paradoxically, she lost the case and the child was given to the father. Thus, the flawed justice system, barriers for women to these spaces, and the delaying tactics on the part of lawyers all contribute in post-separation abuse. Sometimes, women bargain with their abusers to avoid the legal proceedings and preferred out of court settlements. Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) agreed to forgo her dowry against her educational degrees, which she had left at her in-laws' home, and signed a fake receipt of dowry on her in-laws' terms.

The positionality of a Christian and a Muslim woman in the Punjabi society is shaped by socio-cultural, legal, and religious trajectories. Though women suffer due to patriarchal gender ideologies, they are more vulnerable due to the intersection of other forms of oppression (Turner, 2016). Minority status carries an additional burden in Pakistan and religious minorities are discriminated against at various policy levels, in the education system, and in the laws. A crucial aspect of post-separation violence is the difference in the circumstances of Christian

and Muslim women. For Christian women, taking an initiative for divorce is cumbersome process. In the Punjab province, there is no formal mechanism available to register Christian marriages. Moreover, their laws have not been updated and they can take divorce only on the grounds of adultery. Domestic violence or other forms of basic human rights violations are not considered a ground for divorce. For a Christian woman to take divorce through court is arduous due to the complexities of judicial system and to prove adultery of her husband as the only ground for divorce. In the case of Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christine), she approached the court for divorce, it took her seven years to formally get her divorce. She was able to do a second marriage when she was sure that her first husband has arranged another marriage otherwise, she could be blamed for adultery without a divorce. Thus, it is not just the ex-husband and his family, the judicial system equally contributes in post-separation abuse of women. Therefore, very few Christian women access the formal institutions and men are well-aware of this vulnerability of women. Despite being informed of the extra-marital relations of their husbands, Christian women did not take initiatives for divorce. Though there were other contributory factors, the inefficiency of the formal institutions like police, judiciary, and the incompatibility of the Christian divorce laws with the contemporary needs forced them not to take any such initiative of separation (Suleman, 2018).

In conclusion, women remain at risk of pre-marital violence particularly if the *nikkah* is arranged. A woman is not able to break the relationship, as is the case in engagement, and formal divorce proceedings are required in such circumstances. Pre-marital violence is sometimes confused with the over-protective behaviour of the men. Besides, societal norms put women and their families in a lot of pressure, women also hope to change their circumstances which ended up in domestic violence in a marriage and also leads to post-separation abuse. Custody of the children and dowry were the driving forces to control and threaten women after divorce which disrupt with the lives of women, they could not come out of violence fully which constitutes continuum of violence (Kelly, 2016). Alongside this, the malpractices of the institutions involved in the provision of justice and male domination in such institutions furthered the exploitation of women and they avoid accessing these spaces. The divorce law for the Christians has not been amended, the Divorce Act 1869 is implemented which restricts the grounds for divorce mainly to adultery. Divorce through court proceedings is a complicated process in Pakistan and unamended laws further increases the burden for Christian women.

6.4 Multiple Perpetrators- Involvement of In-Laws

Pakistan is a society that is based on a family system of nuclear and joint household systems. Parents are given a lot of respect and they usually stay with their married son/s. Parents and siblings carry a special status and a man always try to obey his parents and be loving and kind to his siblings. The primary duty of a daughter-in-law is to serve her parents-in-laws alongside her husband and children. Certain local proverbs are commonly used to express the value of parents and the devalued position of a wife e.g., you can find another wife, parents and siblings cannot be replaced with anyone. Domestic violence occur in the context of broader family violence in Pakistan and a husband gets influenced by his family members. Besides, in-laws' abuse is normalised at the community level by considering it an expected behaviour which reflects the acceptability of domestic violence from members of a husband's family. A vast majority of Christian and Muslim women mentioned the role of in-laws in instigating a husband against his wife and they were also involved in physical violence and verbal abuse of a woman. Interestingly, women participants considered verbal abuse of the affinal family an expected behaviour and women from the rural locality described it as the 'habit of in-laws'.

Table 4:Violence by Members of the Affinal Family

Place of Residence	**Education**	**Perpetrators**	**Forms and Reasons of Abuse**
Urban Christians	Educated	Mother-in-law Sister-in-law Father-in-law Brother-in-law	Keep a check on social media activities, try to/control of salary, beating, verbal abuse and degradation, domestic servitude, interference in the privacy, provoke a husband for violence, husband's violence for the satisfaction of his family, deprive from food during pregnancy, keep in restricted resources despite money.
	Uneducated	Daughter-in-law Sisters-in-law Mother-in-law	calling bad names, deprive from food, verbal abuse and degradation, domestic servitude, provoke a husband for violence, financial

			demands from natal family, demand for a male child.
Urban Muslims	Educated	Mother-in-law Sister-in-law Father-in-law Brother-in-law	A husband's blind trust on his family, verbal abuse and degradation, provision of support in physical violence, sexual abuse, blame for black magic, criticising a woman's natal family, unfulfilled dowry expectations, insulting a woman for not bearing sons.
	Uneducated	Mother-in-law Sister-in-law Brother-in-law	Physical abuse, verbal abuse and degradation, instigate a husband, domestic servitude, blaming for extramarital affairs
Rural Christians	Educated	Mother-in-law Sister-in-law Brother-in-law	Manipulate things to instigate a man, financial control, domestic servitude, name calling, blaming for being childless.
	Uneducated	Mother-in-law Sister-in-law Brother-in-law	Financial control, domestic servitude, beating, mobility control, keep a mother away from children and use her services in the agriculture and with livestock work, make rumours about a woman's infidelity, keep under pressure with verbal abuse.
Rural Muslims	Educated	Parents-in-law Siblings-in-law	Instigation for physical violence, making false statements, not stopping a husband from beating, domestic servitude and finding faults in

			household chores, restrictions on mobility and interaction.
	Uneducated	Mother-in-law Sister-in-law	Instigate for physical violence, name calling, mobility control, beating, strict control on privacy, mocking physical appearance, domestic servitude.

Though physical violence was mentioned more by uneducated women, it was less common than verbal and emotional abuse by the in-laws. A husband is usually instigated against his wife instead of direct attacks on a woman by the in-laws. The use of online social media spaces by educated women, particularly in the urban area, provided opportunity to a husband's family to keep a check on the activities of a woman and provoke a husband against his wife. Women were careful in posting their pictures and statuses on Facebook as expressed by Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian), who had to travel a lot due to her job requirements. Her affinal family particularly her sisters-in-law and brother-in-law were watchful of her posts. She said:

> They feed my husband that I was smiling in a picture on Facebook while away from my husband and daughter. They manipulate that I am enjoying without them. My husband started noticing and now he criticises if I post my picture with other people particularly men and asks that I was standing very close to a man or I was very happy in a picture.

This narrative shows new ways of controlling a woman and keep her under surveillance. For this purpose, it is not important that a woman is living in a nuclear or joint household system, her acts could be scrutinised in any system which is a manifestation of considerable influence of family members over a couple's relationship (Ali et al., 2018). However, in some of the cases, a shift from joint to the nuclear household system minimised domestic violence or a husband stopped his violent acts altogether which annoyed his family as they were not able to directly control a woman or influence a man's behaviour.

> My sisters-in-law and mother-in-law had all the contribution in the violence that my husband used to commit against me, they were also involved in beating me. They also shared room with us. We are now living in a nuclear family. They are annoyed with my husband and do interact with him. They think that he is supporting his wife instead of his mother and sisters (Sadia, 28, uneducated, rural, Muslim).

This narrative is a typical example of expectations that a family has from a man by virtue of their role relationships with him that provide them the opportunity to control and restrict his wife (Mitra, 2013). This is one of the reasons for a woman to have son/s as she enjoys a dominating and privileged position in the role of a mother-in-law and any disobedience from a

son is considered a breach of respect towards his mother. Kandiyoti (1988) used the concept of 'patriarchal bargain' to explain that women negotiate with patriarchy, although from a weaker position, which is partially applicable here as she links it with the power that older women get as they become mothers-in-law (p.275). However, narratives of the participants reveal that siblings-in-law particularly sisters-in-law contribute actively alongside mothers-in-law in keeping control of a woman in the family which, somehow, contradicts with the original concept of patriarchal bargains. Thus, not only older women, young women of the family also carry power due to their association as siblings of a man and keep a control of a woman who joins the family after marriage. Sania (33, educated, urban, Christian) got married to her first cousin, she expressed the treatment of her [then] sisters-in-law as follows:

> I had five sisters-in-law, and all were unmarried. They used to interfere a lot in our personal life. They put the fridge and utensil showcase in our room so that they could commute around. My husband never stopped them to do so as he had a stance that they are his sisters, I was not allowed to say anything to them. I was asked by my in-laws that I should sleep while the door of my room be opened.

Privacy and personal space are considered to provide mutual understanding and open communication between a couple which was lacking in the case of Sania and many other women who mentioned that they were not allowed to talk to their husbands or sit next to them. In an arranged marriage, families or parents usually select a spouse; consequently, a couple needs time and space to understand each other which was lacking in joint household settings (Ali et al., 2018). Husbands were more under the influence of their parents and other family members regarding their treatment towards their wives. Both Christian and Muslim women participants highlighted the role of their affine in violence more often instead of directly blaming their husbands.

The role of brothers-in-law and fathers-in-law in domestic violence was less common compared to women relatives of a husband. Rather, a few of the women mentioned the positive role of a father-in-law, they found it their only support in the affinal family. Data for the current study reveals that power within family systems is in a flux and is dependent on various contextual factors e.g., there were four Muslim women from the urban and the rural locality, where mothers-in-law did not exercise their power to keep daughters-in-law subservient and/or they made efforts to protect their daughters-in-law from domestic violence. Kishwar (34, educated, rural, Muslim) told that her mother-in-law suffered domestic violence, she was very kind to her daughters-in-law and always stopped his sons for being violent towards their wives. On the contrary, Kishwar's father-in-law encouraged his sons to commit violence against their

wives that resulted in violent acts by one of his sons against his wife, she committed suicide later on. Kishwar shared:

> My father-in-law has a major contribution, he used to encourage his son for such acts. He used to ask his son to let his wife go and he [father-in-law] will arrange his son's second marriage in just one week.

Thus, there is mixed evidence of the role of parents-in-law in domestic violence and men get influenced from the instigation of their family. From the interviews, two types of behaviours were apparent: women of a husband's family were either perpetrators of oppression or they were supportive for the daughter-in-law. Though both were in a position to exercise power, some prefer not to do so despite their socialisation in an environment where they learn to bargain with patriarchy (Zuo, 2009). Thus, it is not necessary that everyone benefits from structural power which makes it more of a process with varying manifestations. Contrary to this, Tahira, an uneducated rural Muslim, emphasised that whoever possesses power in the domestic sphere try to abuse their authority whether it is a husband, siblings-in-law, or parents-in-law.

It is concluded from this section that a family has an active role to influence the marital life of a husband and wife due to the close-knit family ties in the culture of Pakistan. In many cases, a man is under the influence of his family and, sometimes, he is not in a position to go against family expectations. In-laws contribute to conflict and are also directly involve in committing violence against a woman. Thus, it is not just male domination that is a cause of domestic violence, other hierarchies based on role relationships and culturally respectable position of parents make them dominant and they perpetuate violence against a woman/daughter-in-law. Moreover, violence against women by other women in a patriarchal society is widespread and there is a dire need to rethink domestic violence not only in the context of violence by an intimate partner against his wife but also the role and contribution of other members of a husband's family particularly women relatives. New forms of exploitation in the context of social media is another way of control particularly among educated and working women. There were no apparent differences among women based on their religious identity or urban/ rural divide; however, more uneducated women suffered physical abuse from members of their affinal families compared to educated women.

6.5 Women's Meanings: Interpretations of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a complex issue and it is difficult to always define it in discrete acts. Though women discussed acts of physical nature, psychological, economic and sexual violence from their husbands and in-laws, violence for them was an ongoing process that keep them in

continuous pain and sufferings. Sometimes, they do not consider the acts of a husband as violence when they believe that he is mistreating them due to the influence of his family members. Besides, they do not conceptualise violence in any standard way that could be counted into number of times an incident occurs e.g., depriving them of money, extra-marital relations of a husband, their devaluation in the home, and ill-treatment of a mother-in-law are on-going processes that keep them in continuous suffering. Though women explained violence in their own ways, uneducated women define violence by narrating their feelings and experiences whereas, for highly educated and working women, violence is something that curtail the freedom of an individual as shared by Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) who was a survivor of severe forms of domestic violence: "Human beings are not born slaves so are women. Anything which happens to you against your will and interfere with your freedom is violence". This shows that domestic violence is a form of unfreedom in the family institution that hinders a woman to exercise her choices and a way to stop her development (Agarwal and Panda, 2007). A crucial aspect of explaining domestic violence by women in their daily lives was their exposure that includes, but not limited to, their level of education, use of social media, and the type of work they were doing in the public sphere which contribute to their understanding of and defining it.

Educated and working women belonging from the rural locality equally believed that rejecting the views of a woman and let her down through taunting behaviour are all forms of abuse as domestic violence is not always of a physical nature. Though uneducated women, particularly from the rural locality, had a view that a woman should follow the instructions of her husband, they did not favour physical violence in case of non-compliance to his instructions. They had a view that a wife should be guided by her husband and avoid beating her in all circumstances. Besides, the active role of the affinal family was highlighted by most of the women and Bushra (32, uneducated, rural, Christian) also believed that a husband can reprimand his wife when she is wrong; however, consistent attitude of this nature is inappropriate for a wife particularly if a husband is doing it under to the influence of his family. This shows that uneducated women accept the dominance of a husband and are also ready to follow him, they consider it an act of violence if a husband is not doing it with his own choice. Niu and Laidler (2015) also highlighted in their study that there is no single way to understand and conceptualise violence by women as it depends on their experiences with their husbands and other family members. Moreover, the cultural meanings are important that assist in understanding women's manifestations of certain acts as painful which apparently does not seem to be violent acts by

the husband. For example, Katherine (45, uneducated, rural, Christian) expressed: “My husband never accompanied me to my parents’ home whether there is an occasion of happiness or grief”. It reflects the cultural meanings of an accompanied husband to visit the natal family of a woman. Apparently, it does not classify as violence; however, for Katherine, it was an important dimension of her sufferings as it is a cultural practice that both the spouses participate at certain occasions as a family despite their differences. Similarly, Mussarat (28, educated, rural, Muslim) described her husband’s attitude like this: “He does not care whether I and my children have something to eat, he never takes our responsibility”. This is a manifestation of the cultural notion of spousal obligations and, nonfulfillment of it has been conceived as neglect and lack of interest in the family by the women. Thus, women’s interpretations of violence also lie in their pain and sufferings.

Inter-religious marriages are not common in Pakistan due to its low acceptability in the society. Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christine) was a journalist by profession, her second husband was a Muslim while she did not change her religion. She was suffering due to her Christian religious identity in a Muslim family. In her case, domestic violence was more of a subtle nature and it was difficult to categorise it in a particular form. Interestingly, she had to give birth to the first child and her affinal family was pressurising her husband about the religious identity of the child to be Muslim. Domestic violence suffered by the women in inter-religious marriages needs to be further investigated in the context of Pakistan as it has not previously been studied.

In conclusion, naming and defining violence by the rural and the urban women was complex and there was no standard way. They denote different meanings depending on their situation that makes it more of a process. Education and exposure of women to the outer world through employment and use of social media were contributory factors in defining what constitutes violence for them. They share their feelings and experiences that hurt them, impact on their children and those of their natal families. Simultaneously, the role of the affinal family was prominent, women avoid blaming their husbands when they do acts of violence under the influence of their families. Inter-religious marriages particularly by the Christian woman to a Muslim man further complicates her experiences whereas there were no such marriages by the Muslim women.

6.6 Women’s Perceptions of the Role of Religion in Domestic Violence

Religion plays an important role in shaping lives and religious values can both be a source of support and a barrier for women (Pyles, 2007). Women’s beliefs about religion provide them the reason to bear with domestic violence and simultaneously they use religion in coping with

this kind of abuse (Ghafournia, 2017). Besides, religion is used to promote patriarchal ideology and subordination of women and therefore, those who wanted to leave an abusive marriage suffer resistance (Ayyub, 2000). Islam is the state religion of Pakistan and every locality and village has a mosque where a male religious leader heads the prayers (Zakar et al., 2011). On the contrary, Christianity is a minority religion in Pakistan, Christian community have their churches where a male priest is responsible for performing religious rituals. For the purpose of this study, a male priest was also interviewed to get a better understanding of Christian religion in Pakistan. According to pastor Haroon, there is no condition for divorce in Christianity on the basis of ill-treatment of a husband and/or his family. The only condition is adultery of a husband or a wife in a marital relationship that provides grounds for separation. Adding to this, Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian), who had a good community exposure as an NGO worker, explained the Catholic and Protestant Church with different approach towards women's rights and position in the family and the society.

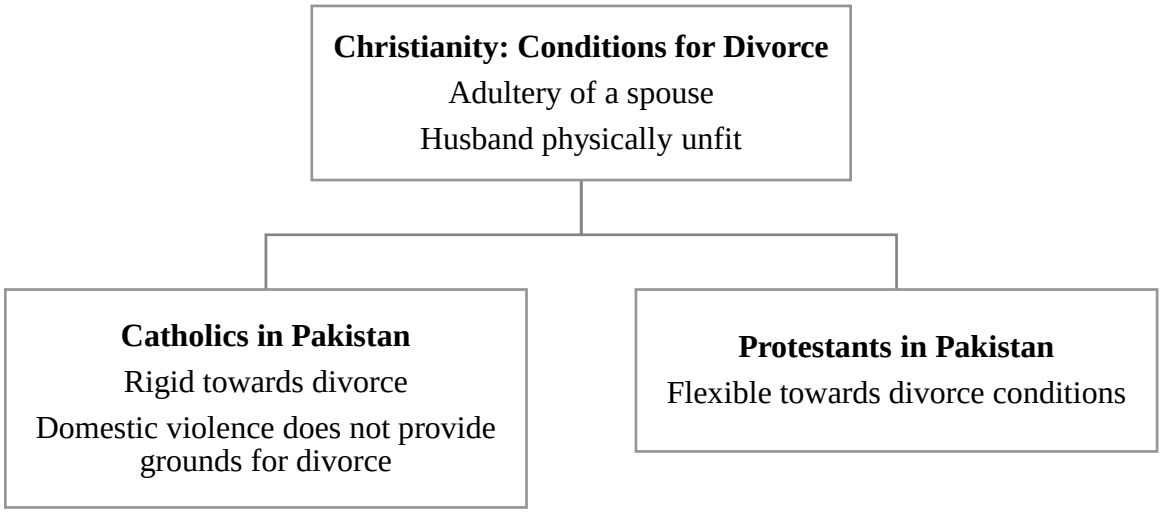


Figure 3: Christian Participants' Theological Reflection on the Issue of Divorce

Religion is actively used to undermine the position of women. Many do not take initiatives for divorce due to religious restrictions with the mindset that they would take a step which is against the teachings of Bible and ultimately, church and pastors will be against them. According to the views of Christian participants, domestic violence is not allowed in Christianity; however, church does not provide support in domestic violence situations. For example, Aini shared her personal experience of domestic violence and the role of the church in all that situation:

> I was suffering violence from my husband and in-laws during my pregnancy. My cousin took my husband to the Father [of the church] and shared the situation. Father just asked that let the baby come and situation will be better then.

Aini believed that her in-laws should have been called by the pastor, he did not take any such initiative which reflects the acceptability of domestic violence in the religion and the society. A few of the urban highly educated Christian women were quite critical of the role of religion in their lives, they raised questions on the patriarchal nature of the religions and put the responsibility of gender inequality and weaker position of women in societies on the teachings of God. They believed that God has not sent any female messenger despite the fact that a woman [Mary, mother of Jesus] can produce a Messenger of God without a man, she was not given the status of Messenger of God.

Table 5: Role of Religion in Gender Inequality and Comparison of Christianity and Islam

Urban Educated Christians	Urban Uneducated Christians
• All the religions have an active role in gender-based violence against women. • God is always called as 'He' which gives power to men. • All powerful things like sun, moon have a masculine connotation while light coming out of it has a feminine connotation. It means everything that would come out of powerful will be feminine. • God is 'He' that is why Adam was created first. • There is no female Messenger from God, all are men. • Religions have given women weaker position. • There are no protections to women in Christianity as are provided in Islam e.g., maintenance and provision of support after a child's birth.	• Divorce is not allowed in Christianity unless a husband dies while Islam allows it. • No concept of dower, thus there is no financial security to Christian women compared to Muslim women and it becomes a barrier for Muslim men to remarry. • Islam allow four marriages whereas there is no such concept in Christianity. Ultimately, Christian men get violent with their wives if they are interested in other women or they maintain relationships out of marriage.

• Muslim men are allowed multiple marriages whereas it is not permissible in Christianity that leads to extra-marital relations by Christian men.	

Interestingly, women of the Christian faith were comparing their position with Muslim women and the rights that Islam has given to women. On the contrary, none of the Muslim women made any such comparisons, they reflected more on the instructions that are given in favour of women in Islam. One possible explanation for such a comparison could be their position as a minority group who are facing social and economic implications of their minoritisation in the form of marginalization that force them to think of their position with reference to the dominant majority Muslim women. Christian women, both educated and uneducated, from the rural locality were more into defending the equality of both sexes in Christianity. They blamed the rurality where men do not understand the teachings of Christianity. Henceforth, men are less adherent to religious values and more to societal practices that discriminate against women. Nearly all the Christian women from the rural area mentioned the non-availability of divorce provision in a marital relationship except in one situation and that is adultery. Nevertheless, they mentioned the deviations from religion and a trend of divorce among Christians. Besides, they agreed the superior position of a man; however, it does not provide grounds for inequality and domestic violence.

> A woman has been created from the rib of the Adam to give him companionship, so she is equal to him. It is written in the Bible that a husband is crown of a woman's head and he carries the position after God. Religion does not allow for domestic violence, but people do not follow religion in this matter (Sadaf, 24, uneducated, rural, Christian).

Many of the Christian women shared that a woman is mentioned as a companion of a man in Christianity, she is asked to be obedient to her husband whereas a man is advised to love his wife. Moreover, a man is instructed to get separated from his parents and be connected to his wife. Despite all these teachings, religion is not followed and there is a trend of divorce despite that it is forbidden in Christianity. Paradoxically, there was complexity and contradiction on the issue of divorce as two of the Christian women from the rural locality took divorce due to domestic violence and there was no ground of adultery by their husbands. Gulnaz (31, educated, rural, Christian) took divorce after three months of her marriage and Katherine (45, uneducated, rural, Christian) accessed court after spending significant years with her first husband. The Christian Divorce Act 1869 does not permit divorce on the basis of domestic

violence, the researcher asked about the procedures of divorce from both these women; Katherine did not share more about it except that she accessed the court and took divorce formally. In the case of Gulnaz, she did not approach the court, her parents raised the issue in the village committee (*Panchayat*) and thus, her divorce was settled at the local level.

Uneducated Muslim women from the urban area did not reflect on the role of religion in creating inequality between the sexes compared to uneducated Christian women who were aware of their position in the Christianity and also with reference to Islam. In places of worship like mosques in Pakistan, Muslim women are not allowed to offer prayers with men and uneducated women have limited avenues to understand the Quran especially in rural areas. Contrarily, Christian women pray in the Church which provide them the opportunity to listen the pastor that could provide them knowledge about Christianity.

Uneducated Muslim women from the rural residence believed in the superiority of a man in Islam as expressed by Shumaila (23, uneducated): "Islam has given a higher place to a man. A woman has her own rights, she should not equate herself with a man". Similarly, Salma believed that women should take permission from men in particular matters. She said:

> Men should respect their wives and women are advised to give all the services to their men and follow their instructions in all matters especially when going outside the home. If men do not give them permission to go somewhere, women should follow that.

This narrative shows the dependence of a woman on her husband related to her day-to-day matters; however, Salma and other women of the rural area did not favour violence in case of non-compliance in such matters. Instead, they had a view that a man should make his wife understand that she should follow his instructions. Conversely, educated Muslim women highlighted the life of the last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his good treatment to his wives. They did this to make it clear about the status of women in Islam. Simultaneously, a few of them pointed out the patriarchal interpretations of religion that favours men as shared by Faira (38, educated, urban, Muslim): "Religion has put a lot of responsibility on a man to handle her wife with love. People especially men misuse the religion and give wrong interpretations". Similar concerns were shared by Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim) whose husband was a very religious man and had performed multiple Hajj [a journey towards Makkah to perform religious rituals]. He was noble in the eyes of people although he deprived her wife and children from basic necessities of life for the purpose of controlling them. Amna said: "Men use religion when they have to produce children, or they have to give divorce to women. They do not remember religion when they have to fulfil their duties as husbands". This reflects

how Muslim women were more critical towards men and their actions instead of Islam and its teachings compared to the Christian women.

Drumm et al. (2018) argues that adherents of particular faiths access the local churches and religious leaders in their times of need. The interview with pastor Haroon also reveals that mostly women turn to him for help as domestic violence is considered a private matter and women avoid accessing formal institutions for support. Likewise, Zakar et al. (2012) in their study found that using religion to solve problems is common in Pakistan and women use religion alongside other strategies to cope with spousal violence. Hence, their study found that Muslim women in Pakistan access shrines and religious leaders as they strongly believe in the problem-solving capacity of religion (Zakar et al., 2012). This indicates that religious leaders have a significant role and religion is one of the contextual factors that could be used in dealing with domestic violence (Ghafournia, 2017). One possible option could be the training of clergy and religious leaders to be proactive in their congregations. Moreover, their capacity-building regarding different resources available for abuse survivors could assist in proactively responding to those who approach them in case of domestic violence (Drumm et al., 2018). However, patriarchal ideas dominate among religious leaders too and being male, their approach towards domestic violence could be corrective (Zakar et al., 2011; Ghafournia, 2017); they could force women to change their attitudes to better adjust in their affinal families instead of getting sympathetic towards the survivors.

In conclusion, Christian women, both educated and uneducated, highlighted the complex nature of divorce that is imposed by the religion and is possible only in the case of adultery of a spouse. The Christian Divorce Act 1869 further makes it difficult for them to access the courts as it provides limited grounds for divorce that include adultery, conversion to another religion and a subsequent marriage hence, domestic violence is not a ground to seek divorce (Aqeel, 2016; Indrias, 2018; Suleman, 2018). Highly educated Christian women had a critical stance regarding the role of religions in making women subordinate in the society. The Christian women also highlighted the protections that Islam has given to the Muslim women whereas none of the Muslim women made any such comparisons between Islam and Christianity. Educated Muslim women emphasised that Islam preaches good treatment with wives. They also quoted examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarding his treatment with his wives. Nonetheless, uneducated Muslim women from the rural locality believed in the superior position of a man. Besides, discrepancy between religious teachings and societal

practices was an important theme and both the Christian and Muslim women discussed that men follow whatever suits them including patriarchal interpretations of the religions.

6.7 Reasons for Women's Vulnerability to Violence and to Stay in Abusive Relationships

Reasons of violence are varied and complex and there is no single factor that could explain the vulnerability of women to domestic violence (Mahapatro, 2018). Sometimes, women were not clear of the causes of violence against them as any act of a woman that her husband and in-laws dislike could be a reason of abuse. Thus, the intention of the abuser dominates rather than women's understanding of any significant factor for violence. According to the participants, the most common factors that contribute to violence were poverty, gender and social hierarchy in the family institution, dowry issues, extra-marital relations of a husband, giving birth to daughters, alcohol and drug use, economic independence of women, gender role transgressions, traditional gender socialisation, dominance of in-laws, and non-availability of financial and social support to a woman from her natal family.

Poverty is considered to produce and intensify domestic violence highlighted mostly by uneducated women from the urban locality and most of the women from the rural area. In low-income families, women's economic dependence on men pose a risk factor for violence which is further exacerbated if a woman is younger and living within the joint household system (Mahapatro, 2018). Due to low socio-economic status, men are not able to practice dominant masculinity outside the home resulting in stress and a wife is vulnerable to violence from her husband and other members of his family due to her subordinate position in the home (Jewkes, 2002). Farah (34, uneducated, urban, Muslim) shared: "whenever my husband was angry or had a dispute with anybody, he used to beat me. *Biwi kis liay hay, ghussa utaarnay k liay hay* (a wife is one a husband vents his spleen on)". This quote explains the vulnerability of a wife, in case her husband is angry with somebody she has to bear the consequences for that.

In many western countries, social welfare system exist that provide financial support to the underprivileged whereas women in Pakistan are mostly dependent on their families (Allen and Raghallaigh, 2013). In such situations, girls are considered a burden for parents and they prefer 'timely' marriages of their daughters. Besides, social norms discourage divorce despite that women suffer domestic violence, their parents may not be in a position to financially support them and thus, women do not find any way except to stay in abusive relationships. Thus, a sense of dependence on abusive husbands remain and the presence of children in the marriage make the circumstances complicated if women wanted to leave. Shabana (40, uneducated, rural, Muslim) had a violent father, she used to pray for her early marriage to escape her

circumstances. However, she trapped in her marriage too due to the abuse of her husband with no way out:

> I am staying in this relationship because of my children. Without me, they will have no future. Besides, my father had asked me that I can visit them whenever I want; however, I would not be allowed to stay with them after a dispute with my husband.

Non-availability of economic and social support from parents and the presence of children are the biggest obstacles for women despite their intention to quit abusive relationships. Social support from a woman's natal family may contribute to enhance feelings of self-worth and help her tackle with domestic violence. However, it is not a simple and straightforward process as many interlinked factors contribute despite women being valued by their paternal families. Shakeela (36, uneducated, urban, Muslim) shared that her sister is suffering violence, the parents asked her to come back if it is hard for her to survive. She is not able to take such a step as she is a patient of epilepsy and is dependent on medicines while the parents are not in a position to economically support her. Moreover, she has three daughters and leaving a husband will put her daughters' future at stake. Thus, poverty, illiteracy, health issues, lack of welfare policies and not giving birth to a son all contribute, and a woman is trapped in an abusive relationship with no option to quit.

> He beats my sister as she is not able to give birth to a son. If she asks for expenditures, then she is threatened for divorce. In case she responds to his violence, she becomes more vulnerable. Her mother-in-law says that how could she dare to respond to her husband (Shakeela, 36, uneducated, urban, Muslim).

Low social value of women in the Punjabi society puts them under pressure to bear sons and failing to do so provide their husbands and in-laws a reason to commit violence. Besides, responding to an angry husband or arguing with him is a strong predictor of beating as it provides 'reason' that he has been provoked. Members of a husband's family have an active role by declaring it as a direct act of defiance by the wife (Susmitha, 2016; Hayes and Boyd, 2017). It is a manifestation of patriarchal ideology as women are made realised that they have violated the social norms regarding superiority of a husband in the marriage relationship. Interestingly, arguing with members of a husband's family or confronting them in situation of conflict is also equated with a disrespect and have similar consequences as of disrespecting a husband. In addition to this, a wife is not expected to resist while a husband is beating otherwise it further challenges his authority and a woman suffer dire consequences.

> I am required to remain silent whatever my in-laws say about me or my natal family. The moment I respond, my mother-in-law guides my husband and he beat me severely without discussing anything with me. My husband and in-laws have a view that I am voluble. They want me to listen everything whatever rubbish they speak about my family. I do not stop

> my husband in beating me otherwise he does it more, he says that I am trying to be equal to him like a man (Shama, 25, literate, rural, Christian).

This extract shows the expectations from a daughter-in-law in a joint household system. She is expected to be submissive despite being abused by members of the affinal family. Breaking silence on abuse by a wife is considered gender transgression that could challenge the hegemonic masculinity of a man and he becomes more violent to maintain order. Thus, beating is a way to maintain social order and to keep a woman at her 'proper' place while women impose restrictions on themselves as a form of self-disciplining to avoid further harm (Jakobsen, 2018).

To commit violence, the intention of a person matters as violence is a choice. Nazra (35, uneducated, urban, Christian) has a view that everything is an excuse if a man has an intention to commit violence. She said: "It could be any reason: why a child is crying, why did you break the glass, why the food is spicy or if you ask for money". Similarly, Gul Baji (55, educated, urban, Christian) was in the marriage relationship for more than twenty years, she could not identify any concrete reason for violence except that her husband might not like her.

Getting financial benefits from marriage is also the intention of many families and dissatisfaction with dowry items and unfulfilled demands of in-laws were manifested through domestic violence. Though the issue of dowry and financial support from the natal family of a woman was common across all the categories of women, Christian men were expecting money from their employed wives and failing to do so resulted in violence against women. Thus, economic empowerment of women does not guarantee a protection against violence. Simultaneously, economic dependence on a husband makes a woman vulnerable to violence and, sometimes, a husband deliberately withholds money and use it for his drug and alcohol use instead of considering the need of household items or medications of a wife. Use of alcohol was common among Christian men compared to Muslims and this difference is due to the legal permission available to Christians to consume alcohol. Besides, some of the Christian and Muslim women also highlighted the drug use of their husbands. Alcoholism and drug use are associated with physical and sexual violence and conflicts between couples also arise due to it. Anayat Bibi (40, uneducated, urban, Christian) told that whenever her husband does not find drugs, he beats her.

Women also identified individual level factors of men that include inferiority complex, jealousy, suspicious nature, short temperament, and lack of decision-making power as some of the reasons for violence. Tehmina (29, uneducated, urban, Muslim) shared that she was not

allowed to interact with anybody outside the home otherwise she would have to suffer beating of her husband. A crucial aspect for this suspicion was the environment of her area where women, sometimes, elope with men that is considered a breach of family's honour and this background was enough reason for her husband to control her. She shared:

> My husband always suspected on me. Whenever he saw me talking to someone, he beat me severely. He had an issue that why did I talk to a stranger man who was not from the family. He gets angry very quickly and has a view that he cannot get relax unless he beat me. He says that he beat me when I do not follow his instructions or go against his will.

The extract indicates that protecting the honour of the family through physical violence is an entitlement that a man holds which has been provided to him by the cultural norms that maintain the domination of men in the society. Many of the women also believe in this structural inequality of both the genders. To maintain patriarchal ideology, culture and religion are used to socialise women in a way that they remain obedient to their husbands. Women identified their silence as a reason for escalation of violence against them as shared by Naseem (32, uneducated, rural, Christian): "We remain silent, people misuse the silence of women and abuse them. Harsh wives are good, they are able to get their rights". On the contrary, both educated and uneducated women also mentioned that transgressing gender norms in the form of responding their husbands and in-laws resulted in increase of domestic violence against them. Simultaneously, a few of the uneducated Christian and Muslim women identified that a wife is, sometimes, responsible as she misbehaves with her husband that makes him angry. This reflects that education has a role in changing the traditional mindset of society and many educated women questioned the uncontrolled anger of men as shared by Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim):

> A woman is not allowed to speak or respond to her angry husband. If she responds, then it is a good reason for him to beat the wife. People usually say, "he was in anger, you should have remained silent", it is not considered that a woman can also get angry. She is not allowed to speak in her protection if he is beating otherwise, he flares up more.

Societal expectations to remain silent is reflected from this extract of Ayesha and, in case of violation, blame is put on a woman which is a manifestation of patriarchal power structure of the society. On the other hand, women were compromising despite being aware of the extra-marital relations of their husbands which indicates the level of negotiations that Punjabi women do for the functioning of the family institution. Gulnaz (31, educated), a Christian from the rural locality was quite aware of the circumstance for the subordinate position of a woman. She believed that women are easily available for marriage; therefore, men do not give them value and it is easy for men to do marriage and leave them. While sharing about the second marriage of her ex-husband, she said:

> Women are considered a burden by the family and they think that it is hard to find good proposals. My ex-husband had a second marriage after few months of our separation He (ex-husband) has a good business, thus the father of the girl arranged the marriage despite aware of the fact that he is violent and used to beat me. Now, his second wife is suffering the same as of me.

Economic stability of a man is preferred over his violent personality and it is also apparent from this extract which manifests the acceptability of domestic violence. This financial strength of a husband becomes the reason for women to stay in abusive relationships due to their financial dependency. Besides, a few of the educated and uneducated women mentioned the influence of black magic on their husbands. They made their in-laws responsible for it as shared by Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim): "My unmarried sister-in-law does involve in black magic and I am doubtful that there could be a spell of black magic on my husband to control him against me".

In conclusion, various macro and micro level factors contribute to women's vulnerability to violence including poverty, traditional patriarchal ideology and subordination of women, gender norms that consider women a burden and responsibility, marriage institution as the only way to protect women, dowry and financial expectations of a husband and in-laws, lack of social support from the state to protect the underprivileged particularly women, and the active role of the affinal family of a woman to instigate violence. Though all these factors are crucial, the intention of the perpetrator is imperative as not every man is violent despite that all the above-mentioned factors shape the structure of the Punjabi society. Therefore, for women, individual level factors of men including their personality characteristics also influence and make them vulnerable to abuse. For Christian women, consumption of alcohol by their husbands was a prominent reason that was not taken seriously by the families and the community whereas, for the Muslim participants, notion of honour was strong that put them under the surveillance of their husbands and in-laws. However, no particular differences were found between women based on their geographical location (rural/urban) as the reasons of violence.

6.8 Community Perceptions and Responses to Domestic Violence

Culture has a considerable influence on the perceptions and responses of the community towards domestic violence. In a village setting, there is less anonymity and more of a sense of community among individuals compared to urban life which is equated with heterogeneity, impersonal relations and social distance (Little, 2017). Nevertheless, in both the urban and the rural areas, community responses towards domestic violence were quite similar by treating it a family issue that does not require community interference. Women from the rural locality

mentioned the normalisation of domestic violence by the community and considered it a private matter of spouses. Besides, people have a view that a woman must have disobeyed her husband that could result in violence against her which manifest a lack of community support to the survivors of domestic violence. The social norms regarding marriage and family relations emphasise that clashes with husband and in-laws are a routine matter and women are expected to maintain the respect of the family by keeping such matters confidential. Moreover, the social stigmatisation of a divorced woman further strengthens the power of a husband and his family and women are advised to solve their matrimonial problems on their own as the interference of parental family of a woman is discouraged unless there are extreme cases of violence. Nazia (27, educated, rural, Christian), a midwife by profession, had interaction with women of her community on daily basis said: "People think that the dispute of a husband and a wife is a routine matter that has no significance in the community unless there is a severe incident like an attempt for murder". This shows that physical and emotional form of abuse is not enough reason for the community to take a collective action against the abuser rather the insensitivity towards domestic violence was apparent from the narratives of participants as shared by Sadia (28, uneducated, rural, Muslim) who was living in a house where other families used to share the courtyard:

> There were three other families in our home, but no one ever saved me. Instead, they used to laugh and make fun of me by saying that I was served very early [suffered violence quite early in marriage]. If I was beaten with short durations, they said that I have been given drink [abused] again today.

Community members were spectators and they used sarcastic words to humiliate Sadia that put her into shame and guilt. She not only bore violence but also encountered humiliation from her surrounding environment. In such a cultural scenario, women avoid sharing violence against them, they do not foresee any solution rather their silence save them from public humiliation (Tonsing, 2016). Besides, women consider it pointless to share with the community as they do not find anyone that could help solve the matter. The role of relatives was quite sceptical as shared by Shabana (40, uneducated, rural, Muslim):

> Our common relatives were involved in resolving our issues. They always take side of my husband and his family instead of doing justice despite knowing that they [in-laws] mistreat me. They do not want to make their position bad in the eyes of my husband and his family.

The relatives were more concerned about maintaining good relations to keep a sense of harmony that obscure the abuse of a husband and in-laws. Thus, dealing with domestic violence through the involvement of community and relatives require that people do not condone it as a routine culture by considering the right of a husband to control his wife through beating and

verbal abuse. It is also crucial that the members of the community are in a position to extend support as violence is considered a private matter of the family. It was a recurrent theme that a sense of reluctance was prevailing among neighbours and broader community even in situations of emergency. Though such support could only be extended in cases of physical violence, still people avoid interfering in the matters of others. Tahira (50, uneducated, rural, Muslim) shared a similar situation where her neighbour woman pleaded for protection, she was bleeding from her face and wanted to escape from her husband. Tahira said: "It could have been problematic for me to give her protection, I was afraid that her husband could blame us for allowing his wife to enter the house. I requested her to leave our home". Being a woman, this extract reflects a sense of fear by Tahira, she, herself, could have been in trouble from the abuser and from her own husband for such a decision to give protection to the injured woman.

As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, being an Islamic state, alcohol is legally allowed to non-Muslims only in Pakistan. Christian women shared the alcohol consumption of their husbands, any abuse that Christian men do under the influence of alcohol provide socially acceptable justification for their violence. Henceforth, Christian community has an additional excuse for violence in addition to the cultural norms that consider violence a normal act. Sexual violence was common due to alcohol, and in a social environment that does not consider domestic violence a bad act, women do not share sexual violence even with their close family members. Besides, anonymity and social heterogeneity of urban life hinder interfering in the personal matters of others unless people live at a particular place for longer periods of time and have a sense of solidarity (Little, 2017). Shabeela (uneducated, urban, Christian) was rescued many times by her neighbours who were quite aware of her circumstances, she said:

> My husband was trying to hit my head, my neighbours saved me. They protected me many times. But it is not effective always because if I threat him that I will call the neighbours, he does not get influenced by it instead he starts using abusive language for them, so people avoid interfering.

Though a few of the women including Shabeela found supportive neighbours through their direct interference in situation of severe beating, they did not foresee it as a solution to the problem. Moreover, this type of informal support does not always help when violence is a routine and a conflict may arise between both the parties for the direct interference in the personal matters of a family. Lack of awareness about formal support and women's reluctance to access a formal institution like police was well thought out as this could make matters worse and women could be divorced or sent back to their natal families.

With this backdrop, the acceptance of domestic violence at the community level needs to be taken up as a priority and a consensus needs to be developed to change social norms that promote domestic violence (Michau, 2007). Community can play a positive role to reduce and overcome domestic violence at the local level. For this purpose, influential members of the community including religious leaders, local politicians, senior and young women could be engaged to initiate a dialogue and to mobilise the community. Existing platforms can also assist in discussions regarding power imbalances between both the genders. For example, in the rural area, a local non-governmental organisation was working and it had formed a village reconciliation committee to resolve matters at the grassroot level. One of the examples was the separation of Gulnaz (31, educated, rural, Christian) from her husband that could have been possible through this reconciliation committee instead of approaching the courts. Changing norms about domestic violence is a long-term process; however, initiation of dialogue in the community is the only way which could assist in pushing the boundaries and make domestic violence a public issue to be resolved. Moreover, both men and women require a change in their attitudes, the findings of this study reveal the active role of in-laws particularly a mother-in-law and sister-in-law in committing violence and also contribute to push a man for violence against his wife.

In conclusion, domestic violence is treated as a personal issue and is not taken seriously by the community, instead women are blamed for the ill-treatment of their husbands. Neighbours and community members avoid indulging in domestic violence situations to avoid any conflict with the abuser and his family. Besides, there was a lack of collective pressure from people due to a social environment that makes domestic violence a normalised act and a vast majority believe in the power imbalance between spouses in the marriage relationship. In the village, people also contributed in aggravating domestic violence by encouraging the abuser that further humiliate a survivor while, in the urban settings, such involvement from outsiders was not mentioned by the participants. Use of alcohol by the Christian men also provide reasons to the community to justify violence due to poor impulse control by men under the influence of alcohol. Attitudinal change towards domestic violence is a dire need of time that should be initiated at the community level as every case of domestic violence cannot be dealt by the formal institutions. Besides, it is not just men, women equally need to change themselves to eradicate patriarchy and female subordination as findings of this study reveal that women have an active role in instigation of violence against the other women.

6.9 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence in the Punjabi society. Though various terms are used in the literature to explain violence suffered by women in the marriage relationship, this study has engaged mostly with the term 'domestic violence' due to the involvement of the affinal family of a woman alongside her husband in perpetration of violence against her. The first section of the chapter has focused on the prevalence of domestic violence within the family institution. Most of the women, regardless of their religious identity, believed its widespread occurrence; however, the private nature of the family institution makes it invisible. This was also apparent from the absence of national level data until 2012-13. However, women of the rural area consider themselves at a disadvantage position and believed for its occurrence more in rural spaces. Though various social, political, and economic factors contribute to women's subordination, cultural contexts, particularly, shape the occurrence of various types of domestic violence. Intersectionality has provided the opportunity to see that women have diverse background conditions that shape their perceptions and experiences of violence. The findings reveal that types of violence were similar across various categories of participants; however, divorced women were more at risk if they enter into a second marriage. Both the Christian and Muslim women from the rural and the urban localities were suffering various types of abuse including physical, psychological, economic, and sexual. Women were into difficult situations as they face multiple types simultaneously. Their narratives establish that violence for them was a process, they did not reduce it to discrete acts. There was no possibility to compare women based on the severity of violence; however, Christian women and those from the rural locality were more at disadvantage positions. For example, rural women had less opportunities for earning that increase their sufferings and were more controlled by their husbands and in-laws. Similarly, the experiences of sexual violence and extra-marital relations of a husband were mostly shared by the Christian women from the urban area. Christian community are legally allowed to consume alcohol that contribute to exacerbating abuse of the Christian women in the domestic sphere. Besides, societal norms regarding the subordination of women are similar in both the faith communities that resulted in child marriages of the Christians and Muslims women across the urban and the rural areas. The basic point of difference is the notion of 'honour' that predominates among Muslims particularly in the rural settings. Furthermore, the analysis pinpointed that child marriages were the biggest risk factors of domestic violence across all the categories of women. Moving forward, pre-marital and post-separation abuse is another important dimension that is not taken into account. Both the Christian and Muslim educated

women from the urban locality provided detailed accounts of violence that started before marriage and continued after separation from their spouses. The narratives of women reflected that patriarchy does prevail in the structure and ideology of the family institution and all other institutions involved in providing justice and protection including the police and the judiciary.

The later half of the chapter has analysed that women were suffering violence not only from their husbands, members of the affinal family were actively involved in instigating a man against his wife or they directly commit violence against these women. Henceforth, the influence of the family members are not limited to the domestic sphere, online spaces are the new ways of scrutinising urban educated women due to their access to the internet. In the context of Pakistan, this needs a further investigation; an important dimension of domestic violence that has not been focused previously. Since women were from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, they explained violence against them in ways that, sometimes, ignore the direct attacks of a husband, rather they blamed the in-laws who forced for such acts. Besides, violence for them was not limited to just particular acts, it was an ongoing process that they were dealing with in their lives. However, marriage of a Christian woman to a Muslim man complicated her experiences of violence based on her faith identity. As inter-faith marriages are not common in Pakistan, there is a need to further investigate this aspect of domestic violence. Notably, the urban Christian women were critical of the role of religion in their lives, they pointed out the unavailability of divorce in Christianity that increases burden on them to stay in abusive relationships. There was complexity and contradiction in the narratives of women regarding the factors that make them vulnerable to violence; however, varieties of patriarchy alongside economic factors exploit women, they are forced to stay in abusive relationships due to the unavailability of a conducive environment for their independent living. Due to the private nature of domestic violence, perpetrators and their families do not feel themselves accountable to the community. Similarly, people in the surroundings consider it a routine matter unless there are serious implications for women survivors.

From a theoretical perspective, intersectionality has assisted in understanding the diversity in the perceptions and experiences of women in the Punjabi society. The circumstances for the Christian women were challenging as they carry additional burden of being a minority group. They suffer institutional discriminations, unamended laws regarding divorce, strict stance of the religious priests for the maintenance of the family institution, and legal permission to consume alcohol contribute to increase their exploitation. Similarly, women of the rural localities suffer due to restricted environment around them including limited mobility and

economic opportunities to mitigate with the abuse. However, it cannot be claimed that rural Christians have worst circumstances compared to any other group as intersectionality, in the context of the current study, does not mean adding up of their oppression. This was evident from the contexts of child marriages where both the Christian and the Muslim women had similar situations.

Besides, in this chapter, varieties of patriarchy were also apparent which were different from western contexts. The narratives of women depicted that they were not only controlled by their husbands, members of the affinal family including parents and siblings of a husband had an active role. This indicates that patriarchy and patriarchal bargains work together and create subordination of a woman in her affinal family. In the literature, patriarchal bargain is limited to the power of a mother-in-law whereas, in the context of this study, siblings of a husband also derive power due to their role relationships. In addition to this, parents of a husband may also dominate and control their son and his wife. Resultantly, variety of patriarchies are functional directly or indirectly and contexts are important to understand structures of domination and subordination in the family institution. In the end, it is important to mention that women's agency was apparent despite their difficult situations, they continue to struggle and find ways for some solace in their lives.

Chapter 5 and 6 have provided detailed contexts and conditions of domestic violence, the next chapter has a focus on the impacts of violence on women, children, and their natal families.

CHAPTER 7

IMPACTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ON WOMEN

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the consequences of different types of domestic violence that women experience themselves in their daily lives or they shared about someone close to them. The chapter has been divided into sections which should not be perceived as independent consequences as types of violence and its impacts are interlinked. However, each section has focused on analysing the varying impacts on each category of women due to their intersecting identities based on religion, location (urban/rural), and education or any other aspect that appeared significant during the analysis. The impacts were both short and long-term on women, their children and the natal families. The chapter begins by providing an overview of the cultural insignificance of domestic violence by considering it a personal matter of the family and subsequent lack of accessibility issues to the formal health related services. The next section has a focus on the women who took extreme actions to end their lives due to violence and poor mental health. It also reflects on the issue of suicide and related stigma in the society that resulted in the unavailability of data about it.

Sexual violence and related physical and reproductive health issues are not discussed openly due to cultural reasons. As a result, women suffer marital rape and gynaecological complications alongside non-cooperation of their spouses to use contraceptives. The section also points out the important role of education for women to understand their bodily rights and sexuality. Besides this, physical violence is often accompanied by mental abuse that has far-reaching consequences. Severe injuries and delay in seeking medical assistance left permanent health problems for women that keep them reminded of the incidents. The chapter illustrates the societal stigma around mental health that make women survivors of domestic violence more vulnerable to suicidal ideation and self-harm. Alongside this, the sensitive position of women in their second marriages, divorced women and their struggle with mental health have been discussed. Towards the end, the chapter analyses the extended effects of violence on children and the linkage between domestic violence and child abuse. Implications of the Social Learning Theory in the context of study findings have been discussed and the absence of a comprehensive government policy for protection of children, living with their families, has been highlighted.

7.2 Consequences of Domestic Violence on Women

Domestic violence impacts on women and their children's physical and psychological health and has social and economic costs for the family and the society at large (Susmitha, 2016). It is considered a private matter of the family; consequently, very few women approach formal health system for their psychological needs. Similarly, for physical injuries, majority do not disclose themselves as survivors of violence. Thus, there is no detailed information available that could highlight the figures around domestic violence and its effects on women's physical and mental health (Ali et al., 2013). Studies indicate that women who experience violence are at higher risk of poor mental health including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, and suicidal ideation (Wong and Mellor, 2014; Dutton et al., 2006; Ali et al., 2013; Naved and Akhtar, 2008). Ayub et al. (2013) in their clinical study from Lahore, Pakistan found that domestic violence increases the vulnerability of mental illness and causes suicidal ideation in women. On the contrary, better income and good quality intimate relationships appear to be protective against mental disorders in women (Ayub et al., 2013). In the context of the present study, depression, fear, self-denying behaviour, self-blame and self-harm, a sense of entrapment, lack of self-worth, suicidal ideation and attempt for suicide were some of the psychological consequences mentioned by women participants. The consequences were related to the type of violence that they were going through and/or they had suffered in the past. The researcher, herself, did not mention any symptoms of depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress, but rather let the women express their physical, psychological, and any other type of conditions and expressions. It helped in understanding how they see the impacts of violence on them. Though some of the uneducated women found it difficult to express their experiences, a vast majority of the women believed that their physical and mental health conditions were triggered by their difficult domestic circumstances. The absence of formal support services or a lack of awareness about it undermine their agency to resist. As a result, they avoid disclosing violence due to the fear of further harm and conceal it in case of physical injuries (Aldridge, 2013).

7.2.1 Attempts of Suicide by Women

One of the severe consequences were suicidal ideation and attempt of suicide by women. Ali et al. (2013) also found extreme suicidal thoughts in women survivors of domestic violence in Karachi, Pakistan; however, such thoughts were not associated with a particular form of violence. Though suicidal thoughts were shared by women across the urban and the rural residency, three women attempted suicide. One of them was a Christian while the other two

were Muslims: these women were belonging from the rural area. Of the three women, one died, second one was in a critical condition at the time of data collection, while the third one survived and participated in this study. Women outlined various reasons including beating by the husband, taunting and creating a sense of worthlessness by the in-laws, extra-marital relations of a husband, and economic control as prominent reasons for committing suicide. Shumaila (23, uneducated, rural, Muslim) shared about her sister-in-law's attempt for suicide like this:

> My sister-in-law took acid to end her life. She started blood vomiting but survived with great difficulty. It is almost eight months since that incident, she can drink liquid only. Life is very difficult for her both physically and mentally. After this incident, her husband has started giving expenses to her and the children but both husband and wife do not communicate with each other. Neither he has left his routine of contacts with other women. She wanted to take divorce after this incident; however, her family asked her to reconcile with her husband as she has daughters and it is not good for their future. She is displeased with her parents too.

Culturally, it is considered shameful if a husband has relations with other women particularly if he has daughters. It creates a sense of humiliation for a wife and her children. Similarly, in this above quote, Shumaila's sister-in-law tried to take her life in reaction to the psychological and economic violence she was suffering. Thus, in this case, the woman suffered the consequences of violence; however, her reaction resulted in further harm to her physical and mental health. Consequently, women are ultimate losers despite taking extreme actions of self-harm.

Similarly, in the case of Bushra, she had a routine of self-blame and self-harm due to the abuse of her husband and in-laws. Violence has a negative impact on the self-esteem of an individual and results in poor psychological health whereas life-satisfaction and optimism are considered to contribute in the psychological well-being and social functioning (Naved and Akhtar, 2008; Hassan and Malik, 2012). Bodily self-harm is an expression of low self-esteem of a woman survivor of domestic violence. In Pakistan, suicide is considered a disgraceful act due to socio-cultural and religious reasons. In case a person commits suicide, the family keeps it secret and gives reasons like a sudden cardiac arrest or other health conditions due to its social implications. Consequently, the phenomenon of suicide is under-reported in Pakistan due to the absence of a well-organised surveillance system (Naveed et al., 2017). Though there is limited evidence about domestic violence and suicide attempts by women in Pakistan, studies regarding suicide and self-harm reveal that married women are particularly at risk of committing suicide compared to unmarried women and married men. This indicates the burden of an intimate relationship on the psychosocial health of a woman (Khan and Prince, 2003; Shahid and Hyder, 2008; Hassan and Malik, 2012; Ali et al., 2013). An important dimension

of this burden is the subordinate position of women in their affinal families and also their restrictive life circumstances including the availability of limited avenues of socialisation. Besides, domestic violence is considered a matter of shame for a woman as she is blamed for not fulfilling the expectations of her husband and in-laws. This contributes in self-blaming oneself as shared by Bushra (32, uneducated, rural, Christian) who had a feeling that she was unable to keep up to the expectations. She said:

> I am a sensitive person; if my husband admonishes me, it disturbs me a lot. I remain silent and bear all that. I had feelings that I am not good as my husband does not feel satisfied by my acts. I tried many times to harm myself, I feel it is my fault that I cannot make them all happy. Such acts gave me satisfaction. Once I took expired tablets in high quantity to kill myself. My husband came to know, he forced me to drink a lot of water that helped in vomiting and I was survived.

Bushra was an uneducated rural woman who was trying hard to be the pleasing wife and daughter-in-law according to the patriarchal norms of the Punjabi society. However, consistent failures pushed her to find faults in herself that resulted in severe psychological distress and her multiple attempts for suicide. In addition, the role of a husband in domestic violence is most important in the development of suicidal ideation and attempt of it due to his dissatisfaction and abuse (Hassanian-Moghaddam et al., 2016). In the context of this study, all the three women who attempted suicide were mainly abused by their husbands. Due to the private nature of domestic violence, mental health of married women is not a priority for the family and the larger society that resulted in sufferings for women in isolation. Zakar et al. (2012) in their study found that rural women in Pakistan are at a disadvantaged position due to their weaker social position that undermines their ability to resist and take initiatives in case of domestic violence.

This section found that though suicidal ideation was shared by women across the urban and the rural localities, women from the village residency attempted suicide and all three were housewives. This seems an indication of more cultural and structural barriers for rural women and a strict patriarchal regime that normalise abuse and women prefer to conceal their psychological conditions. They do not foresee any solution to their circumstances, particularly when violence is embedded in the political, legal, and social structure, that damage their psychological health (Childress et al. 2018). Resultantly, they prefer to end their lives despite having children which is alarming not only for the family and the society but also has serious implications for the physical and psychological well-being of their children. There were no differences among women based on their religious identity.

7.2.2 Sexual Violence: Physical and Reproductive Health related Issues

Sexual violence due to addiction and alcohol consumption was more common among Christians. Though a few of the Muslim women mentioned the use of drugs by their husbands, only one Muslim woman shared that her husband used to consume alcohol in the past. In Pakistan, marital rape is not recognised as a crime and women feel hesitant to discuss their sexual matters which further put them in a situation that impacts on their physical and reproductive health. Sexual and physical violence related to drug and alcohol consumption was prevalent; however, its secretive nature makes it difficult for women to share its consequences. Shabeela (uneducated, urban, Christian) had a child marriage and was a mother of seven children at the time of interview. She was quite critical of discussing her personal life with others, she recited a Punjabi proverb to explain her situation: "*Chagga chukan tedd mera nanga hunda* (it is my family life, if I open my secrets, it is me who is exposed to the world)". Gender role socialisation develops perceptions that it is the responsibility of a wife to tolerate and keep such matters hidden otherwise, she will be blamed for shattering the family honour. Such women are considered to undermine the societal image of their husbands and are labelled as 'bad' who are not able to compromise in a marriage which indirectly impact their sense of self-worth. Thus, societal expectations forced them to bear all that with 'dignity' which increases their risk of negative mental and physical health outcomes. A crucial dimension of their silent sufferings are their apprehensions related to the consequences of leaving their affinal families and lack of alternatives that force them to bear the violence of a husband instead of carrying the burden of breaking cultural expectations (Kumar et al., 2013). Continuous sexual and physical violence and lack of money deprive these women from taking medical treatments that deteriorate their health and sense of self-worth.

There is least awareness among women, particularly uneducated, about rape in marriage. Mostly they are socialised that a woman who refuses the physical desire of her husband is a bad woman. They try to abide by the demands of their husbands as such demands are given the protection of religion without questioning that no religion allows for bodily abuse and harm (Mohsin, 2016). Women mentioned gynaecological problems due to forced sex; however, those who did not resist to the demands of their husbands saved themselves from physical violence while the others suffer beatings in response to their resistance. Forced sex is associated with decreased sexual desire and other sexually transmitted diseases (Tenkorang and Owusu, 2019). Some of the women openly told about their sexual issues including their hatred for such relations and decreased sexual desire. Sexual activity during menstruation developed issues

with excessive bleeding and difficult urination and a refusal on the part of a woman was accompanied by physical violence as told by Roqueea Bibi about the situation of her daughter:

> One night she was not willing due to her periods. He fastened her neck with a cloth and beat her severely. All her veins were swollen. He, then, had a forced sex that resulted in heavy bleeding. I brought her back to my home, doctor advised me not to send her back to the husband. I have spent a lot of money on her treatment, she still has gynaecological problems.

This shows that there is no realisation for consent in sexual activity, a man considers it a disobedience in case of refusal by the wife. Though Roqueea was an uneducated rural woman, she took the initiative for divorce despite continuous requests from her daughter's in-laws, she avoided getting trapped into compromises. Seven women from the urban area (3 Christians, 4 Muslims) and two (1 Christian and 1 Muslim) from the rural area directly or indirectly shared experiences of forced sex in marriage and most of these women were educated. Educated women were quite aware of marital rape and two women directly used this term to describe their situation. Though literature around sexual violence focuses mainly on the consequences of forced and unsafe sex on women's physical and mental health, there is lack of attention about the needs of a woman if a couple abstain from their relations due to domestic violence. Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim) shared her complex situation, it was about her desire for matrimonial relations which she, herself, refused to maintain due to the violence of her husband. She said: "We have no sexual relations since long. He is an aged man but I am young, I have physical needs. No one talks about that, it is a taboo". Amna had suffered serious complications related to her reproductive health due to the sexual violence of her husband. She had approached the doctor quite late which resulted in her internal injury getting worse. She had to go through medical treatments to recover as she got an infection. Despite all that, she preferred to stay in the dysfunctional marriage. Her husband called her brother many times to take Amna back to her natal home as he did not want to continue with her. This is a clear depiction of her mental health; both husband and wife were living in a house with little contact, she was aware of the fact that her presence was objectionable. Thus, women's subjective experiences of violence could not be restricted to particular symptoms as consequences. Rather, it was an ongoing abuse that is embedded in a relationship with diverse feelings and outcomes for them.

In the urban locality, accessing a female doctor is easy compared to the rural area where women usually access a lady health visitor or a *daai* for their sexual health related problems. In the case of a male doctor, women do not share sexual health-related issues directly due to the shame attached to it. Naseem (32, uneducated, rural, Christian) was accompanied by her husband to

the doctor, he shared the problem of his wife and they were able to get a medicine. Resultantly, women in the rural locality, sometimes, are not properly diagnosed regarding their sexual health issues which worsen their problems. Naseem said: “My uterus is swollen, I have severe pain in my lower abdomen. I cannot sit for longer due to backache and I am not able to do any work”. She was married at the age of twelve and was a mother of six children. Her eldest daughter was nineteen years of age which indicates that she had her first child when she was thirteen years old. Social vulnerability of child brides put them into a position where they are not able to control their fertility through contraceptives and domestic violence alongside sexual abuse further undermine their ability to reduce the damage on their physical and mental health.

In a study about child marriage and spousal violence in Pakistan, Nasrullah et al. (2014) found that girls, married as children, were experiencing all forms of violence including controlling behaviour, physical and emotional violence compared to adult marriages. This study was based on secondary data from Pakistan demographic and health survey which did not cover sexual violence against young women married as children (Nasrullah et al., 2014). Early girl child marriages impact the physical and sexual health of women due to limited access to information regarding reproductive health and least control on their lives and bodies. Six of the women married as children had 5-7 children. These women had least awareness about birth control methods during initial years of their marriage, or they continued producing children until they gave birth to a male child. They controlled further births through surgical procedures which they came to know quite late. Besides, they also face the non-cooperative behaviour of their husbands in using contraceptives. Men did not like to use condoms, or they do not bother about the number of births and ultimately, it was a burden on women’s health as shared by Shabeela (uneducated, urban, Christian), a child bride and a mother of seven children: “He never used condoms, he did not like that. It is me who ultimately suffers”. It was not just child brides who struggled to control their fertility, a few of the educated women also highlighted the disregard of their husbands regarding desired number of children. Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) was a working woman and wanted to have a controlled family size keeping in view their resources; however, her husband had no interest in using precautionary measures, she said:

> I am taking medicines as he has no planning for kids. These medicines are affecting my health. I feel discomfort and cannot work properly in office and at home, he is not interested in taking any precautionary measures.

Thus, women fear getting pregnant and took initiatives themselves due to the non-cooperation of their spouses. Simultaneously, they are doing domestic work with economic responsibilities. In the context of Pakistan, economic empowerment of women has increased their burden of

liabilities as they are contributing both in the public and private sphere. On the contrary, men are not getting involved into domestic chores due to traditional gender norms and familial pressures which ultimately impact women directly and indirectly. Such a trend depicts a positive picture of women empowerment but mask the pile up of obligations on women as shared by Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim), who was working full time as a university teacher: “My health has deteriorated a lot, I have no time to focus on myself. I am doing all the domestic work and job without any support from my husband”. Domestic violence alongside economic responsibilities impact the general and reproductive health of women in many ways. It was common among women to ignore minor symptoms regarding their health. They were doing it to save money for other purposes including preference for children’s needs or they had no money to visit a doctor and to buy medicines.

This section focused on various aspects of women’s sexual and reproductive life. Though the main emphasis has been on the impacts of this type of violence on the physical health of women; women’s mental health was equally affecting due to stress. This has been discussed in more detail in the next section. In the Punjabi society, sexual life is considered a personal matter of spouses and open discussion is perceived as disgraceful and against the norms of the society. Due to its hidden nature, most of the women, particularly uneducated, were not aware of their bodily rights and subsequent marital rape. Besides that, child marriages were a huge burden on the reproductive health of women. Their limited or no awareness about birth control alongside sexual violence had long-term bearings on their health. Sexual violence under the influence of alcohol by the Christian men was an additional burden for women of the Christian faith. Besides that, accessibility to the health care services was an issue particularly if it was related to their sexual and reproductive health. Women of the rural locality were at a disadvantage position due to a lack of health facilities. Their burden of disease increases in the absence of a female doctor in the rural area.

Subordination of women in the society also reflect in their matrimonial relations. They are supposed to be complicit and resultantly, women are insulted for expressing their desire for sex. Thus, very few women identified this issue that was impacting them, they are socialised in a way that they do not consider it a choice for themselves. Though sex education is a controversial issue in Pakistan, women will continue to suffer sexual and reproductive health issues due to marital rape unless awareness regarding bodily rights to women and men of reproductive age are not given. Besides, a cultural appropriate advocacy is the dire need of time to teach people about the importance of consent in sexual activity.

7.2.3 Physical Injuries and Mental Health

Violence has both immediate and long-term outcomes in the form of physical injuries and psychological impacts. Some of the severe physical damages include broken bones and teeth of women and also include injuries to the little children carried by their mothers at the time of beating. One such incident was shared by Aini (30, educated, urban, Christian) who had a one-year old daughter who also got hurt alongside her mother. While sharing that incident, she told: "The baby was in my lap when my husband was beating. I hit against her head and her tongue was caught in her teeth. There was heavy bleeding from her tongue". It was not just Aini who was beaten, her one-year old daughter was also hit badly by her father just to make his family realise that he does care more to his parents and siblings instead of his wife and daughter.

For women, it added to their pain that they were not given any first aid by their in-laws, despite being present, after an injury due to physical violence as shared by Anayat Bibi (40, uneducated, urban, Christian) who had her hip bone broken by her husband while she was pregnant. She was given care by her neighbour woman for three days. Besides, in a few of the cases, women could not recover as in the case of Ghazala (45, educated, rural, Christian) who was slapped by her husband so harshly that she had to remove her molar tooth as it left its place. Similarly, women could not hide their bruises that left permanent marks and were not recovered fully from the pain as they could not get proper treatment. Tehmina's husband had broken her arm and fingers and one of her fingers could not recovered properly as she was not able to access the doctor. She had to suffer pain especially in winter that was a constant stress for her. Being a household helper, she was not able to do her job properly and had to struggle in doing her own household chores. The mobility of women is controlled by men and their families and, sometimes, facility of a doctor may not be available in the area. Thus, in normal circumstances, not everyone has access to the doctor and, in the case of domestic violence, women themselves try to hide their injuries or their husbands and/or in-laws do not let them access the doctor. In both the situations, women are the ultimate losers particularly with reference to their health, the situation further worsens when they are economically dependent on their husbands. Shakeela shared information about her sister who was a patient of epilepsy and was facing violence of her husband and mother-in-law, she said: "When she takes stress, she has more fits of epilepsy which is affecting her health badly. She is denied medicines, her husband does not care about her health". Domestic violence puts women in a vicious circle and the presence of children further undermine women's ability to resist. They endure violence to remain connected to their children.

In cases where women counter responded physically to the beatings of their husbands, men avoid using physical force, being aware of its consequences. They mostly used verbal and psychological abuse. It is considered an insult and hurts the self-esteem of a man if his wife tries to hit him back. Such acts of women are considered to depict their boldness and are not appreciated by the social norms of the Punjabi society that could result in threats to her marital life in the form of divorce. Women are expected to bear the ephemeral aggression of their husbands which would strengthen their position in the family as it fulfils the criteria of a submissive wife, a desired trait that a woman should have in the marriage relationship. Only two women responded back to the physical attacks, they reflected that they were physically strong and had a realisation that they were financially independent in case of dire consequences to such acts of theirs. However, most of the women remain passive or they tried to save themselves instead of indulging into a physical fight due to the fear of further escalation of violence against them. They tried other tactics that particularly include verbal aggression to minimise their pain.

Violence and its threat keep women in fear, they cannot enjoy freedom as independent human beings. Studies indicate that women who suffer violence in their familial life are at higher risk of depression and other mental health disorders (World Health Organization, 2000; Mburia-Mwalili et al., 2010; Hassanian-Moghaddam et al., 2016; Huang and Gunn, 2001; Campbell, 2002). There is a lack of mental health awareness in Pakistan, people with mental disorders are stigmatised by calling them *pagal* (a Punjabi word which means crazy, abnormal) (Nadeem, 2019; Waqas et al., 2014). It is alarming that only three of the women accessed the health care system for their psychological needs despite that many had reported about self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and other mental health issues. Two of these women were highly educated, one of them approached the psychiatrist herself while she took the other woman, Zoreena, for the same treatment. In the case of Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim), she was not able to pay for the medication and doctor fee, being economically dependent on her husband, which further contributed to her low self-esteem. She said:

> I was unconscious and was on the road infront of my house. My friend saw me there, she took me to the psychiatrist, I was diagnosed with depression. She also sponsored my medicines twice, my ego was hurt as I asked her for that. My husband does not give me money for medicines. He [husband] was also called by my psychiatrist, he refused to see him.

Despite physical and mental health issues due to the abuse of her husband and in-laws, Zoreena was staying with them because of her daughters. Applying stress theory to the situation of women suffering violence over a prolonged time span, studies demonstrate that extensive

behavioural readjustments put an individual in a vulnerable position and impacts her ability to cope with it that leads to negative consequences on health (Huang and Gunn, 2001; Stylianou, 2018; Tan and Yip, 2018; Tenkorang and Owusu, 2019). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), inferior social ranking, humiliation, and entrapment in a relationship becomes the reasons of depression, these are the features of violence against women (World Health Organization, 2000). The current research also supports that structurally women have a subordinate position compared to men both in the societal domain and in the domestic sphere. Women survivors had a lower rank compared to other women of the affinal family and continuous abuse further contributes to their low self-esteem. Moreover, stigma of divorce, presence of children, economic dependence, and absence of welfare policies further block their escape from violent relationships. Lubna (32, educated, rural, Christian) shared the situation of her neighbour woman who was mentally tortured by her in-laws and was often beaten by her addicted husband:

> Her husband used to throw whatever he found at her. She is no more normal and is still staying with her husband because of her three children. She either keeps on walking all day in her home or sleeps most of the time. Two of her sons are normal while the daughter was born paralysed and mentally retarded because of physical and mental violence throughout her pregnancy.

This quote indicates that domestic violence for a prolonged duration seems to be most detrimental for the physical, mental, and reproductive health of a woman. She becomes dysfunctional socially and physically in her struggle to keep the home intact. Violence under the influence of drugs and alcohol by a husband further increases the risk of torture and injury against women and Christian women were at higher risk due to the use of alcohol among Christian men. Abused women are not taken to the health care system for treatment especially in the rural context as their mobility is controlled by the families. If they access a medical practitioner due to some injury, they are treated for their physical needs and no formal institutional support is provided by considering violence a ‘personal matter’. Besides, in the Punjabi society, women keep such matters to themselves or they share it with their natal families who, sometimes, intervene; however, there is no guarantee that violence would cease to happen. Domestic violence could escalate if a husband and his family feel it offensive that a wife has complained about them, she could be threatened for divorce to keep her silent. Besides, the socio-economic status of a woman’s natal family contributes in positioning her in the affinal family. Women who were not able to get support from their parental families in any capacity were having severe impacts of domestic violence as they felt trapped with no escape. Moreover, limited options for women, who wanted to live independently in the society, further keep them

in pressure, they fear to break the cultural expectations and avoid being a 'burden' for their families of origin (Ahmad-Stout, 2018). Despite suffering all forms of abuse from her husband, Rania (28, educated, urban, Muslim) wanted to continue with her marriage but ended up in an unexpected divorce. While sharing her avoidance behaviour from her natal family and her social isolation, she said:

> I have not told my parental extended family that I am divorced, it will have an influence on the marital life of my married sisters and will also impact on my reputation. I avoid going to shopping centres so that nobody could see me alone and ask me about my husband.

Rania was a supervisor at a shelter home, for elderly and orphans, which was a far-away place from her parental home. It was not just her avoidance, she was not able to function as a normal member of the society. She did not consider herself in a position to develop positive relations with others and able to resist social pressures. Rania had a sense of powerlessness, she was not able to regain her sense of self despite divorced for three years. Similarly, Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) was quite careful in renting a house for herself, she was living independently with her only son after divorce. Despite a single earner, she was residing in an expensive area of Lahore due to its good security and an environment of non-interference by the residents. Besides, she had least interaction with people in the surroundings just to avoid questions on her independent living. She said: "This life of living alone, working hard, and facing people is very difficult. My ex-husband still makes every effort to torture me and keeps on following my activities". Thus, a sense of forced isolation and pressures of being a single parent are apparent from the life circumstances of Maryam who was socially disconnected just to avoid the societal pressures. Moreover, she was in a constant stress due to the spying nature of her husband. It is a crucial dimension of violence where an abuser keeps on following and does not leave her ex-wife to spend a life free from fear that impacts on her mental health badly. However, she was satisfied from her life compared to the one she had spent in her marriage. The divorced women were aware of its social consequences. They either had least interaction with the community or they manipulated their circumstances so that they could not be looked down upon and judged by others. As discussed in the previous chapter, women in a second marriage had no choice except to bear violence. This was due to the fear that burden of blame would be on them, their reputation will damage in the community for not adjusting in any of the marriages. Nazra shared the situation of her sister who was in a second marriage:

> He [husband] beats her brutally that has left marks on her face and body. He snatches the little daughter and expels her from home. She was staying with me, I have sent her back now due to winter season as her daughter could get sick.

The position of a woman gets weaker if she returns to her husband's home without any dispute resolution. Thus, loss of self-esteem and a sense of helplessness was apparent from this narrative. Usually, elders or relatives of both the families interfere in such matters or both the spouses agree on certain terms to continue the marriage relationship. On further inquiring, Nazra mentioned that divorce is not an option for her sister as she is into a second marriage. The biggest obstacle was the societal attitude towards divorce that forces many women to continue with their abusive partners. She was clear that, in case of divorce from a second marriage, everyone in the community will put the blame on her sister with the mindset that the problem is with the woman who is not getting adjusted in any of the marriages. Consequently, men and their families take advantage of this disposition which increases the burden of a woman and put her in more compromising situation. Similarly, Nasreen (34, uneducated, urban, Muslim) had a second marriage, while sharing the treatment of her husband, she said: "My husband used to beat me while I was pregnant. It was a very difficult time, I was not able to control my urine and used to do it in my clothes". Thus, the psychological and physical impacts of domestic violence were accompanied by reproductive and sexual health related issues which were beyond the control of women.

The implications of economic violence on women are not adequately documented in the context of Pakistan. Poverty is a direct consequence of economic violence that deprives women of food, health, and basic needs of life. They further entrap in the cycle of domestic violence that could have serious effects on their physical and psychosocial health (Fawole, 2008). Though women are working in the formal and informal sector in Pakistan, it is the general mindset that men are economic providers of families, women are supposed to be responsible for the maintenance of home, taking care of children and elderly of the families. With this backdrop, economic dependence of women put them in a situation where they can be controlled through economic deprivation; a way to assert authority on them. Such a control has a direct bearing on the physical and mental health of a woman

In a joint household system, it is usually a mother-in-law or other female relatives of a husband that keeps control of kitchen and food items. Therefore, women living in the joint household system were deprived of required amount of food during pregnancy despite having its availability as told by Abigail (26, educated, urban, Christian): "I was pregnant, but my mother-in-law did not give me food, I got unconscious twice. A few times, I took food from my neighbour when starvation was beyond my control". Depriving women of food was shared

more by women who had been married as children as they could be easily exploited by keeping them hungry.

A few of the women expressed their symptoms of disease which a medical practitioner was not able to diagnose, or they could not recover despite using medications. They believe that they are under the spell of black magic done by their in-laws which is deteriorating their health. Sutherland et al. (2001) in their studies elaborated that it becomes difficult for health care providers to assess the disease with the symptoms that women experience which could be a manifestation of stress and poor quality of life due to domestic violence.

Many women reflected on their pleasant memories that they had with their natal families. They kept on sharing the healthy relationships of their parents (as spouses) and compare that with their own marital lives. One reason for such contrast was that they had similar expectations from their matrimonial relationships as of their parents. Secondly, they wanted to bring up the sacrifices they made and were still trying to make their marriages workable. However, a few of them had lost the hope that things would change for them, they had no interest in previously enjoyable things due to their stressful lives. For example, Maria started sobbing while sharing her circumstances (47, educated, urban, Muslim): "I had a lot of attitude, my brothers' wives used to say that I would not be able to stay in a marriage relationship. I have surrendered my self-respect for this marriage". Similarly, Zoreena said: "I was full of life, I had no idea I would have tears all my life due to this marriage. I have no interest in life nor I have any desires and wishes". Both these women were mothers of daughters only and had no sons. The presence of sons gives positivity to women that their circumstances would change while daughters get married and leave their parents' homes. This diminishment of their identity made them disappointed from life, they had no hopes from future. In cases, where women were exposed to the beatings and harsh behaviour of their violent fathers, marriage was an escape as told by Shabana (40, uneducated, rural, Muslim):

> I and my mother have a similar story. My father is very abusive towards my mother, he used to beat us a lot too. I wanted to get married early in life so that I could get rid of my father. I ended up facing the similar circumstances.

A sense of helplessness is apparent from this narrative of Shabana, she had no escape in life as the only hope for women are their natal families. Economic dependence and a culture of subordination expected from women put them in a situation that they develop feelings of helplessness and a thinking that their circumstances would not change. However, those who started earning due to limited provision of basic necessities of lives by their husbands showed

some resistance to domestic violence which indicates agency of women despite difficult circumstances.

An important dimension of violence was the realisation among a few of the educated women about the negative impacts of it on them. They continuously reassured in their conversations that they were trying hard to overcome the outcomes on themselves as mentioned by Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim): “I control myself whenever I have weeping fits”. One reason for such an effort was that she did not want herself to be labelled as a patient of depression anymore as such mental health problems are taken negatively by people having least awareness about mental health issues. Similarly, Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim) said: “I scream and weep a lot, but I am working on myself and trying hard to overcome it, my children are disturbed due to it”. It was not just children, women were quite aware that their sufferings were having impacts on their parents too. This was one of the reasons for not sharing their pains with the parents as they were not able to do anything except feeling helpless for their daughters. Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim) told that she was the only daughter of her parents; therefore, all their attention was on her disturbed marital life. She said: “My father used to remain upset, he got paralysed just because of my stress”. Besides, one of the tactics of strict control by men and their families were to restrict women’s access to their parents and siblings by directly forbidding means of contact. This was a clear indication for parents that their daughters were in complex situations. Maryam’s mother had passed away, she was quite concerned about her father’s health. However, she was not allowed to see her family, while sharing her pain, she said:

> I was so much tortured that I was not allowed to listen phone and to see my family. My marriage was the occasion when I met my father last time and after that, I saw him on death bed. This is the worst part that pinch me always.

Maryam was carrying this burden of stress with her, she could not able to come out of it despite living an independent life as a divorced woman for more than a decade. This reflects that certain incidents leave long-term impacts on the psychological well-being of women.

A crucial aspect of domestic violence was its positive dimensions for a few of the educated women who had come out of it. Aini (30, educated, urban, Christian) was in a joint household system when she had violent episodes of abuse from her husband and in-laws: however, she freed from violence after living in a nuclear household. She said:

> I am a mature person by facing all that stumbling up of life. I have learnt the ability to understand the tricks of people around me [in-laws]; how much communication I need to

> do with them and in what ways, how I have to respond and in which tone. I have feelings, about that time span of my life, that I was kidnapped by terrorists and now I am free.

However, this aspect of learning from their experiences was only limited to women who were no more in an abusive relationship. Though women have learnt over the period of time about the moods of their husbands and other family members that could predict beatings and other forms of abuse against them. Most of them were not able to avoid the aggression of their husbands and hostile behaviour of in-laws except to take stress as it was beyond their control. Rania said: "I was able to recognise what would happen to me by looking at his face. I used to weep a lot and pray to God that what sin I have committed in life for which I am getting this punishment". Thus, a sense of fear and helplessness was prevalent about her situation and nobody could help to save her from beatings.

In conclusion, women had a lower self-perceived level of physical and mental health and it affects all aspects of their lives including care for themselves and their children. It is difficult to make comparisons regarding the adverse outcomes of violence on women, everybody reacts differently depending on the types of abuse, life circumstances of a woman, the status of the perpetrator, and women's subjective understandings of what constitute a violation of their rights. However, women married as children, those into their second marriage, Christian women, and women from the rural locality were having more at risk of severely impacted by it. Women suffer depression, stress, fear, insecurity, socially dysfunctional, low self-esteem and self-worth alongside physical and reproductive health damages. While comparing the findings of this study with the existing literature in the western context, it was found that abuse of women in the west becomes the reason to increase burden on the health care system as they are frequently treated due to injuries and poor health status (Campbell, 2002). This was not the case in the context of Pakistan as women hide their injuries. Besides, they have least or no access to the health care system or are not given access by the affinal families, by controlling their mobility, to avoid any shame and disgrace.

Though parents were also experiencing mental pressures due to the precarious circumstances of their daughters, divorce was not a choice or preference for their daughters. The societal attitude towards divorce and blaming women for it needs to be changed. It requires a strong political commitment so that women could get a social support in leaving abusive relations and spend a life free from fear, self-blame, and mental distress. Suicidal ideation is a serious matter as the initial step towards suicide; however, there are no avenues of support available where women could discuss and share their mental health problems in a safe environment. Women

from the rural locality were particularly at risk of attempting suicide due to their restricted circumstances. This is alarming and needs to be dealt by discouraging it as a family matter and giving women a space and confidence to speak about it instead of having a sense of shame about it. Besides, a comprehensive study is required to assess the physical and mental health of abused women and to sensitise and train the health care practitioners to identify and deal with cases of domestic violence effectively. Moreover, a system needs to be developed so that reporting by the health care system to the law enforcing agencies like police could be possible without any delays. There is a need to discuss mental health issues broadly and the role of domestic circumstances in developing mental health problems particularly among women. Also, awareness about the available resources and women's access to it particularly in the rural areas need to be made possible.

7.3 Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

Children are not only affected by domestic violence against their mothers, they can also be victims of it. Most of the children were witnessing violence in their homes which was impacting their personalities. To define child maltreatment is complex; there is a debate that children witnessing domestic violence should be considered as being maltreated psychologically or maltreatment means physical abuse of a child (Jouriles et al., 2008). In this study, child maltreatment includes direct physical and psychological abuse of the child by one or both of the parents and/or any other member of the family. In Pakistan, social acceptance of beating children to discipline them is common and such acts of parents are hardly condemned by the family and the community (Namy et al., 2017).

Parenting styles influence the personality of a child (Levendosky and Graham-Bermann, 2001). Women's stress and poor mental health leads to child maltreatment in the form of corporal punishments. Besides, children were one of the biggest barriers for women to leave their abusive relationships, they got frustrated as their natal families were reluctant to accept them due to their children. In other words, it was quite common that women's natal families were not ready to accept the children due to social and economic reasons. In the context of Pakistan, children are considered to continue the lineage of their fathers; therefore, it is assumed that they should stay with their fathers. Besides, poverty is another reason for non-acceptance of children. Martha (50, uneducated, rural, Christian) married twice but she had to return to her parents' home due to the betrayal of her husbands for other women. She shared with tears that her children were the victims of her aggression and frustration:

> My brothers and their wives were not accepting my children. They wanted me to return them to their father as carrying their expenses was difficult. I had a quarrel with my brother due to the children, I left the home. I was very upset as no one treated me well, neither my in-laws nor my brothers. I had no idea where to go what to eat. On the way I was beating my five months old son brutally. I had a thinking that neither the children were born, nor I suffered through all that. I still get upset the way I used to treat my children, it was not their fault.

It was not just Martha, a few of the other women with a history of abusive relations shared difficulties in parenting. They were not able to control the situation, the only way left out to express their frustration was young children who were dependent on their mothers. However, it is tricky to conclude that such children show more behavioural, emotional, and interpersonal problems. Previous studies also show contradictory evidence regarding children's reactions in case of the mother's victimisation (Morrel et al., 2003; Carlson et al., 2019; Stanley et al., 2012). The responses of witnessing children were dependent on their age as toddlers were not able to grasp the problem, school going children reacted mostly in depressing ways while, there was variation of responses among grown-ups. An important concern for women was that their children were adopting the same habits as their fathers, though it was not the case with all children in the family which means that each child understands and interpret violence differently. Mostly, women shared experiences about their sons who had similar personality traits like the fathers. Interestingly, boys grown up in the same household were having opposite personalities as shared by Tehmina (29, uneducated, urban, Muslim), a mother of two sons:

> My younger son is violent just like his father. If he has a dispute with someone, he starts beating the other person. He is very abusive towards his cousins also and beat them without any reason. My eldest son is totally opposite, he is married now but very kind towards his wife. If she is sleeping, he never wakes her for his own work.

In the Punjabi culture, a wife is considered responsible for the preparation of food, washing and ironing clothes, and other needs of her husband particularly in families with rigid gender roles. Tehmina was uneducated with a working-class background; she could not send her children to school due to economic hardships. Despite all that, her married son was very polite towards his wife, whenever Tehmina complained about her daughter-in-law to the son, he tried to satisfy his mother instead of getting harsh to the wife. This might be due to observance of abuse from childhood in his own home and facing the corporal punishment of his father that shaped up his personality. On the contrary, his younger brother could not take all that in the same way and had behavioural problems. According to Social Learning Theory (1978), children modelled violence, they find it an appropriate way to resolve conflicts (Widom, 2017). Thus, violence transmits from one generation to the next through this process of learned behaviour (Carlson et al., 2019). However, in the context of this study, women who shared

about their children imitating the behaviour of their fathers were having two or more boys and not all of them were adopting violent behaviours. Therefore, Social Learning Theory does not seem to be fully applicable in the current scenario as siblings behave differently, they depict either controlled behaviour or express their anger violently despite their exposure to the same environment. Faira expressed similar experiences of her sister who had two sons but the younger one was a copy of his abusive father. However, Faira was equally concerned for both of them, she said: "Such children could easily be involved in anti-social behaviours. They are deprived children due to the inattention of their mother while their father insults and humiliate them". Ineffective parenting, due to unavailability of one or both of the parents in time of need, is considered to increase chances of risk of violence among children in the later life. They observe and experience violence since childhood that does not provide them the opportunity to regulate their behaviours (Carlson et al., 2019). Besides, child neglect in the context of inaccessibility of one or both the parents for emotional support or less attention in their routine matters could result in poor academic performance and weak self-regulation of children (Jouriles et al., 2008, 222; Carlson et al., 2019). On the contrary, positive parenting practices are considered to inculcate healthy personality traits among children. A few of the highly educated women reflected on their intentional efforts to keep their children motivated despite adversities in life. However, it is difficult to claim that their efforts bear fruits as the personality of a child is shaped by many factors including the crucial role of peers, school, and overall family environment.

Though children get upset and they show fearful reactions to violence, mostly it was male children who were externalising aggressive behaviours except in the case of Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) who had a four years old daughter. She was getting upset psychologically and was also imitating the behaviour of her father. Zobia had to travel abroad due to the nature of her job, the daughter was looked after by the husband. One possible explanation for adopting her father's personality traits could be due to her attachment more to the father, he never maltreated the child. Zobia said:

> Now I remain silent whenever we have a quarrel just because of my daughter. She remains disturb for many days. My sister lives nearby, I send her to my sister's home when he mutilates my character. I do not want her to listen all that about her mother otherwise she asks questions that what is character and why her father say all that. She follows her father and get angry on petty issues which is another problem for me.

It is not just domestic violence against women which is acceptable in the society, use of physical violence against children by their parents is an acceptable social norm. It was common that men, who were violent towards their wives, had a similar attitude towards their children.

Resultantly, children were afraid of their fathers and, those who were teenagers, wanted to escape from the situation as told by Amna. Her son had a fearful reaction, he repeatedly asked the mother to run away from the house to get rid of his violent father. Boeckel et al. (2014) shared that children are at higher risk of becoming victims of maltreatment in homes where intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs. It is not necessary that a father is always violent towards children, poor mental health of a mother could also impact on her parenting style.

Educated women, who shared their concerns about the impact of violence on their children, made intentional efforts to console and hide them from violence. On the contrary, a few of the women, both educated and uneducated, told that their teenagers and grown-ups talked to their fathers on domestic violence against their mothers. Shabana (40, uneducated, rural, Muslim), a mother of seven children told that her elder ones have started talking to their father on this matter and he listens to them. Though he does not get convinced, he remains silent whatever they say. It was uncommon that a father listens to the children, rather the response was more often threatening and use of abusive language. The narratives of women reveal that boys and girls react differently to domestic violence. Girls feel scared and seem more introvert, they take less initiatives to stop their fathers compared to boys of the same age group who, usually, resisted and took stand for their mothers. This is because of the differing socialisation patterns of the family and the society towards both the genders. However, girls expressed their concerns with mothers that they would not tolerate husbands like their fathers which indicates that they had learnt from the experiences of their mothers. Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) shared that her daughter had explicitly told that she would not marry unless she has a sound career so as to escape in case of a violent relationship. This reflects how daughters were cautious about their future due to the negative experiences of their mothers. On the other hand, boys had no such concerns due to the privileged position of a man in the marriage relationship. Nonetheless, they suffered psychologically due to physical abuse and witnessing violent episodes against their mothers and expressed it in different ways as shared by Ayesha:

> My son is grown up and married but he weeps a lot, every child wants perfect parents. There is a quotation that fathers are everywhere, but real fathers are rare. Whenever he [husband] broke them, I used to heal them with my love. I never instigate them against their father, I used to console them that their father has some health problems so he gets irritated easily, but children understand things. Children have emotional needs that should be fulfilled, but in our society, fathers shatter the personality of a child.

Caregiving responsibilities of children are usually distinct between fathers and mothers. A father is supposed to financially provide for the family whereas a mother is considered to nurture the child. This is particularly rigid with families where women are not employed. In

such settings, co-occurrence of child abuse alongside domestic violence further distanced children from their fathers. They spend most of their times with mothers and the image of a father is fearful for them. All this impact on their psychological well-being with long-term consequences as is apparent from this above quote of Ayesha about the mental health of her grown-up son. He was no more a victim of his father's abuse; however, the violent nature of his father had not changed towards his mother which was a source of stress for him. These findings are consistent with the previous studies which found that violence has not only first-order effects on women, it has extended effects on those who are linked to them (Riger et al., 2002; Izaguirre and Calvete, 2015).

Domestic violence in the context of poverty leads to a risk of harm to children in the form of child labour and also neglect of children due to a woman's involvement into economic activity. Robeena (27, uneducated, urban, Muslim), a mother of five children put her twelve years old son for work, she was not able to run the family expenses with her own income as she left her husband and shifted to the city. Besides, she also suffered due to the absence of any support for child care, She said:

> I used to work all day as a domestic helper while my children were home. They used to spend their day under the hot sun, my younger daughter had an accident with a car twice. I was also afraid that somebody could take them away in my absence, I admitted them in an orphan home.

Robeena accessed the orphan home despite that her husband was alive. There is no formal social care available for children, vulnerable to harm and abuse, while living with their families. This puts parents particularly women in a situation that they hide information for the purpose of getting services for the safety of their children that are normally provided to those in need. Robeena has to lie about her husband for the sake of safety of the children, she was not able to provide care due to economic pressures. Besides this, children do not get any financial benefits in case their families are not affording which put them into child labour at a very young age. Domestic violence and early employment make children mature early in life compared to their age, they understand their domestic circumstances and avoid resisting in doing any kind of labour. Thus, domestic violence becomes the reason for children particularly elder ones to adopt adult roles and responsibilities (Stanley et al., 2012; Izaguirre and Calvete, 2015). These were not restricted to economic activity only, the nature of violence defines the form of responsibilities that children and young people were carrying in their lives. In one of the cases, the mother had taken acid as a result of domestic violence. As a result, children stopped

attending school due to their domestic circumstances. The eldest girl was looking after her younger siblings and was also responsible for doing household chores.:

> She has all the burden at a very young age, she also provides care to the infant sibling who got sick due to the unavailability of her mother. Her father gives her money to run household expenditures as her parents do not communicate to each other (Shumaila, 23, uneducated, rural, Muslim).

The domestic roles create a sense of maturity among children. They not only remain distressed, but also cannot enjoy age specific activities with peers due to pressures of responsibilities. In such situation, disclosure does not help but create a sense of embarrassment and stress for children due to their domestic circumstances.

Children especially boys were a source of hope for women; however, these children were also an obstacle for women to escape violence. Fear of leaving the children was one of the reasons for women to endure violence and they continue with their violent relationships. Besides, children are a reason for men to threaten their wives as shared by Robeena (27, uneducated, urban, Muslim) who returned to her husband's home due to the fear of losing her child. She said: "He used to threat me that he would throw my son in the canal which was a reason for me to return back to him". On the contrary, Kishwar's sister-in-law committed suicide, she was deprived of her three sons and the husband did not allow her to see them. The woman expired and children were looked after by their grandmother who was in a constant guilt that her son created an environment that forced his wife for such an extreme act. Thus, violence impacts not only children, it influences all those who are in that social network of a woman that include relatives and neighbours as mentioned by one of the neighbours in this case: "when the children cry and call their mother, my heart bleeds on that, they will not find an alternate to their mother".

It was not just violence and its impact on children, safety of them was also an issue for the mothers and there was no distinction between boys and girls. The addiction of a father made the children vulnerable in their own homes, a mother was cautious particularly about the daughters which resulted in early child marriages. Shabeela (uneducated, urban, Christian), a mother of five daughters said: "I arranged marriages of my daughters when they were very young, my home was not a safe place for them. My husband is very dangerous and if he is drunk, he is unreliable". This insecurity was regarding incest which she expressed in hidden words as it is shameful that the daughters were not safe from their father. Similar concerns were expressed by Mussarat (28, educated, rural, Muslim) regarding her school going child. She was apprehensive about the boy who was very sensitive due to domestic circumstances

and wanted to leave the father, she never left him with his father: “I do not trust my husband as fathers can also abuse their children now-a-days”. Again, the woman had concerns regarding sexual abuse of the child which is alarming as such matters are kept hidden from others due to its sensitive nature.

Abortion is illegal in Pakistan unless there are serious complications involved that could be deleterious for the health of the child and the mother (Shah, 2019). In the case of Maryam, her parents-in-law did not want a baby, they abused her physically during pregnancy and tried to kill her baby. On the contrary, Saima (29, uneducated, urban, Christian) tried to kill her baby during pregnancy in response to the verbal abuse of her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law who claimed that the baby was not theirs.

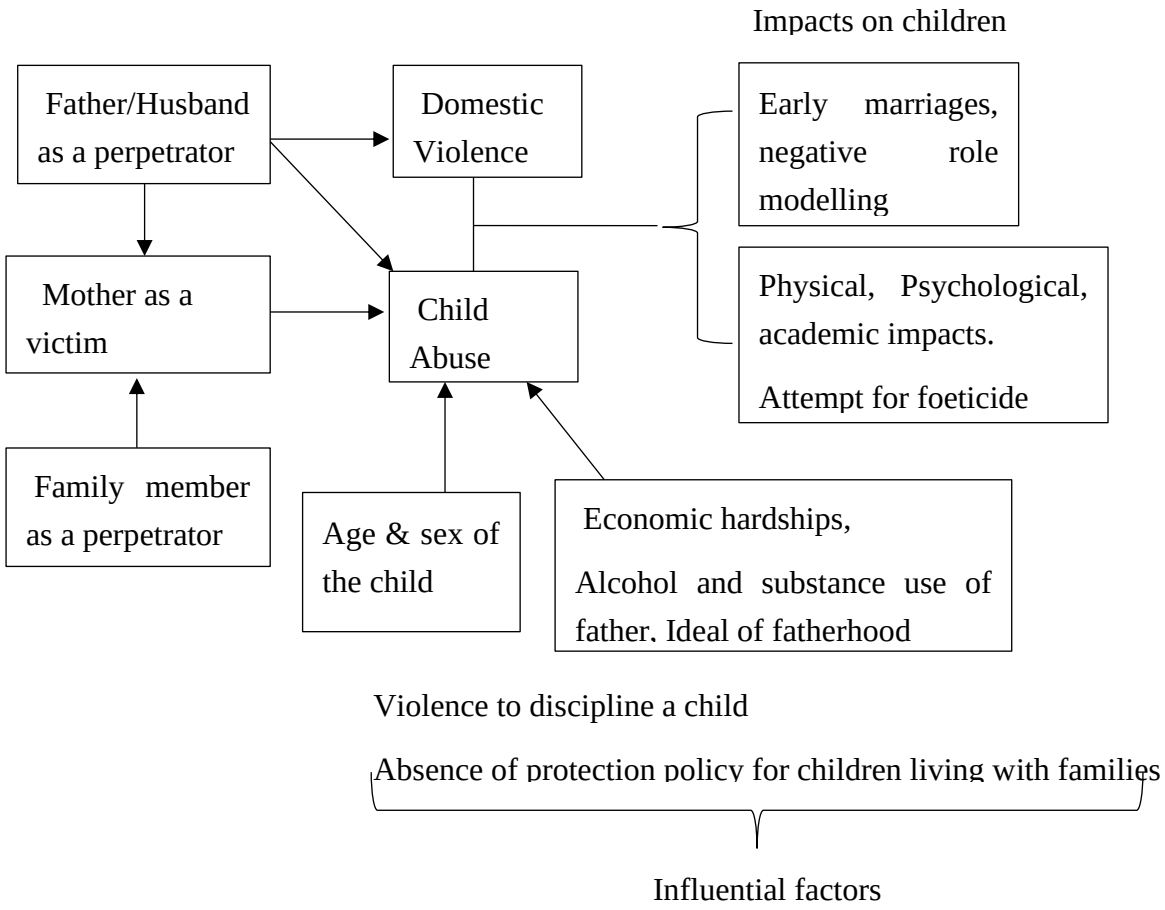


Figure 4: Conceptual Model of Violence against Children.

Government efforts to protect children from corporal punishments and child neglect are trivial due to weak institutions that resulted in poor quality services (UNICEF Pakistan, 2019). Besides, high population growth and scarcity of resources are the biggest challenges which

resulted in less focus on children living with their families and more is in line regarding elimination of bounded labour, to rescue lost and run-away children, those involved in begging or other forms of exploitation. For this purpose, government established Child Protection and Welfare Bureaus are working in major cities of the Punjab province. It is the first ever system of child protection in Pakistan which works towards the rehabilitation of these children and their reunification with their families (Child protection and welfare bureau Government of the Punjab, 2019). Thus, the traditional social welfare system is in practice which has an emphasis on neglected and delinquent children. As a result, nothing is in practice about those having problems while staying with their families which is also reflected through the available legislations regarding children (Jabeen, 2013).

Teachers are not trained to identify child abuse or to provide some counselling to children who they found disturb due to their domestic environments. Resultantly, children are left on their own to deal with their psychological problems. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, awareness about mental health is limited and it is not a priority; therefore, children and young people are not considered to require any professional mental health support, nor they are given awareness about mental health issues in academic institutions. Resultantly, children struggle to cope with stress and avoid sharing their domestic problems with others due to fear of stigmatisation and feel ashamed about it. Though domestic violence is beyond the control of children due to their dependence on parents, life skills particularly self-awareness and empathy, interpersonal communication and dealing with stress could be useful in giving them confidence. It would assist in valuing themselves and their issues regarding abuse and neglect (Jabeen, 2013). Besides, strategies that could help improve child protection in domestically violent families should have a focus on developing a clear child protection policy and its implementation by the government alongside capacity building and sensitisation of schools, hospital staff and child protection bureaus. Moreover, public awareness and community mobilisation are crucial to protect children from direct and indirect victimisation especially in the rural areas where people are more connected to each other and some are also in a position to influence others. A particular focus on sensitising men regarding ‘fatherhood and its impact on children’ could be one of the strategies to reduce domestic violence and child abuse in the home (Stover, 2013).

The findings of this section details the influence of domestic violence on children. They not only witness it in their homes, they remain at risk of getting abuse from both the parents. Stress and mental health of a mother influences her parenting style that has consequences on children. Domestic violence and child abuse in the same household impact the personalities of children

differently which partly negate the Social Learning Theory as not every child behave violently. However, gender is an important aspect when it comes to expressing themselves; boys show more aggressive behaviours whereas girls appear introvert and concerned about their future. It is not just domestic violence that children observe and experience in their lives, they carry additional burden of responsibilities based on the life circumstances of their mothers in the form of child labour and childcare of their younger siblings. Besides, safety of children, in their own homes, was an issue that force their mothers to take preventive measures. They were used as a tool to torture and exploit their mothers that resulted in suicide by one of the women from the rural locality while, in another case, in-laws tried to abort the pregnancy of a woman through beating. Government level initiatives are crucial to protect vulnerable children living with their families which are scarce in Punjab. The role of schools is significant to identify such children and to provide them mental health support alongside sensitising the families about impacts of domestic violence on children. Besides, strong institutions are the key to deal with domestic violence and child abuse. In the end, women cannot be differentiated based on the impact of domestic violence on their children as religious identity of women and their rural/urban location are not appear significant. Henceforth, educated women mentioned for their intentional efforts to console their children. This should not be assumed that an uneducated mother did not do so as children were a significant reason for them to continue with their violent relations.

7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the impacts of domestic violence on the health and well-being of women, children, and the natal families particularly parents. Though various impacts of violence are interlinked, it has been divided into sections in the chapter for the sake of clarity. The findings of this chapter reflect that despite the dire consequences ranging from fear to suicide attempts by the women, the issue of domestic violence is not getting attention due to its private nature. Women do not access the health care system, or they are not allowed to do so by their affinal families. This is further exacerbated by the absence of related facilities for the survivors of domestic violence. Overall, women from the rural locality, both Christians and Muslims, took extreme actions as a result of their sufferings. They tried to end their lives which indicate the rigid patriarchal control and limited socialisation opportunities for women from the rural areas. Besides, stigmatisation of mental health issues further worsens the problem.

The next section highlighted various dimensions of sexual violence and related consequences on women's health. One of the biggest barriers regarding sexual matters is its prohibitive

nature. Therefore women, particularly uneducated, consider that by sharing about their sexual life they are exposing themselves to others which is considered disgraceful in the Punjabi society. Besides, limited awareness about such matters make them vulnerable to marital rape that is accompanied by physical violence in case of refusal by the women. As a result, women suffer gynaecological problems that worsen due to delay in approaching a medical practitioner. Women of the rural locality were further disadvantaged due to the absence of a female doctor. They, usually, consult a traditional birth attendant for their sexual health issues that complicate in case of poorly or undiagnosed diseases. In addition to this, girl child marriages were a huge burden on the physical and reproductive health of women with least awareness about their body and sexuality particularly in the early years of their marriages. Consequently, they ended up producing more children that left long-term impacts on their health. Men were not interested in using contraceptive methods even in the case of educated women who were knowledgeable compared to the young brides. Alcohol consumption was common among the Christians, this resulted in sexual violence alongside physical and mental torture to the Christian women.

Severe physical violence in the form of broken bones and other injuries left long-term impacts on the well-being of women as they could not get proper treatments. This was particularly the case with women belonging to the rural locality and those who were uneducated and from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Besides, women with chronic health issues were suffering due to their economic dependency on their spouses and resultantly, unavailability of timely medicines to them. As violence is normalised in the Punjabi culture, high level of tolerance for physical and other types of violence among women also impact on their mental health. They struggle to continue with their abusive relationships due to cultural pressures and the presence of children. In such circumstances, awareness about mental health issues should be a priority which was absent or very limited. Rather, mental health problems are stigmatised, and the person is not considered a normal functional member of the society. As a result, most of the women were not aware of or they were not able to access the formal psychological services. This is alarming especially for women belonging to the rural areas as they have least access to any kind of healthcare services despite surviving with the abuser/s. In addition to this, divorced and separated women were going through complex emotions due to non-acceptance for such a status and subsequent lack of support for them in the society. Their ex-husbands used various tactics to harass them particularly if they had children. Violence against women equally impacts their parents particularly those who do not consider it a normal phenomenon. They wanted escape of their daughters but were not able to do so due to familial, sociocultural, and

financial reasons. The mental sufferings of the parents created a sense of guilt in the women, they were taking the blame of it that their difficult domestic circumstances caused stress for the parents.

The last section analysed that both domestic violence against women and child abuse are interlinked. Children not only witness it in their homes, they get abuse from their fathers. Besides, the poor mental health of the mother influences her parenting style that has consequences for the children. The reaction of children and grown-ups were not uniform towards violence as they express themselves through various emotions ranging from fear to aggression. However, gender of the child was significant in the expression of these emotions as boys showed more aggressive behaviours compared to girls. Paradoxically, children in the same household had different impacts of the violent environment in shaping their personalities which partially refute the Social Learning Theory. Besides that, children were carrying additional responsibilities in the form of child labour, household chores and childcare of their younger siblings due to the issue of domestic violence. Moreover, their safety was a concern for the mothers that resulted in early child marriages. The chapter also highlighted the weak institutional support for children living with their families and the important role that educational institutions can play in improving the circumstances of vulnerable children.

CHAPTER 8

PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: WOMEN'S PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF HELP-SEEKING AND THEIR MANAGEMENT OF ABUSE

8.1 Introduction

The sociocultural norms of the Punjabi society emphasise family privacy which forces women to remain silent on the issue of domestic violence and prevent them to seek any help. The chapter, therefore, examines the contexts of women's lives and the ways women devise to protect themselves from the abuse. It analyses women's perceptions and experiences of help-seeking from informal and formal support networks and the cultural, institutional, legal, and systematic barriers that women face in accessing these support mechanisms. Though informal support system consists of a range of people, it is mostly the natal families that women turn to for instrumental and emotional support. The chapter then expands on women's knowledge of and their perceptions and experiences with the formal institutions. The section highlights the role of police, judiciary, and non-governmental organisations in provision of services to the women survivors of domestic violence. Despite the availability of formal support, very few women access and get benefits from it due to issues of corruption and male domination in these institutions. In addition, women as carriers of family honour is another dimension to implement patriarchal ideology that hinders them to access the services. The control of women's mobility by their families, particularly in the rural localities, and their inaccessibility to the formal institutions have been pointed out in the section. The marginalisation of Christian women has also been discussed based on the age-old British Laws of Marriage and Divorce that are still implemented and have not been amended according to the contemporary needs of the society.

The chapter further elaborates domestic violence as a process that interferes with the day-to-day activities of women. It explains that how women devise their own strategies to manage, prevent, and escape violence based on their understandings of the situations. The section highlights that the presence of male child/ren are a strength for women, they started resisting violence when their sons were grown up. Based on the findings of this study, the concept of 'learned helplessness' has been analysed as women continue to struggle despite their difficult circumstances (Palker-Corell and Marcus, 2004). The role of the religions has been discussed, as it is important for women participants, being a source of hope in life and support their healing

process. Women were also asked about their views to eliminate domestic violence from the society; therefore, the last section reflects on the preventive strategies that women believe would help reduce violence. The suggested ways were mostly based on the primary preventions and informal support at the local level. This indicates that the women foresee a long-term solution to this problem alongside least involvement of the formal institutions. Variations among women based on their religious identity, geographical location, and education do influence their views and experiences in dealing with abuse and seeking help. This has been discussed and highlighted in the sections.

8.2 Women's Perceptions and Experiences of Disclosure to Informal Support System

Disclosure of violence is a way to find some sort of assistance in coping with the abuse and a hope to deal with it in future. It is evident from the literature that the availability of social support has positive outcomes on the psychological well-being of women (Rose and Campbell, 2000; Liang et al., 2005; Sayem et al., 2015; Tenkorang et al., 2017). Usually, women turn to their families and other informal networks including friends, neighbours, employers, and colleagues for sharing their pain and to get some solace in the form of emotional and/or instrumental support. In the context of this study, most of the women got tangible and intangible support from their informal networks. However, the contexts in which women turn to social support are crucial to understand and there are lack of studies about it (Lee and Hadeed, 2009; Andersson et al., 2010). The cultural context of the Punjabi society provides limited avenues for support due to the subordinate position of women, stigmatisation of divorce, and cultural beliefs regrading domestic violence as a personal and private matter of the family. Women were quite cognizant of the available support that they could turn to in times of need.

Those who did not try to access informal networks were aware that approaching someone will be of no use to them. They shared various factors that influence their decision. These include their perceptions that violence is considered a routine matter; resultantly, women would be tagged as habitual complainants without any genuine reason. It is considered culturally normal if a husband and his family are harsh to a woman. She is advised to remain patient as this would help to create her place in the affinal family. On the contrary, there were women who were told by their natal families that they were not allowed to return as a result of violence by their husbands and in-laws. Besides, women's perceptions had a significant contribution in approaching their natal families as many believed that their families were not in a position to provide them with any kind of support. In the case of Sadia (28, uneducated, rural, Muslim),

she was aware that her marriage was arranged in difficult circumstances due to the weak financial conditions of her parents. She believed that her family would suffer mentally if she shared the violent attitude of her husband and in-laws. She said:

> My mother and mother-in-law are sisters, but I never told my family about this violence. My family had arranged my marriage in poverty. There was no benefit of sharing with them except to escalate their worries. Whenever I visited my parents, my mother used to ask me whether I was ok with my in-laws, I always told that I am very happy.

Lack of financial resources by the families and economic dependence of women make them a burden on their families. They understand that the natal families would not be able to help anyway except that their difficult marriages would add burden on their parents. They calculate the pros and cons of taking any step and believe that approaching their natal families would be of no use, rather compromising with circumstances would bear fruits for them. Thus, most of them compromised to save their marriages, being aware of the strong social norms that put the responsibility of saving a relationship on women, as it is expected that they should have more patience and compromise to ignore 'small' acts of violence. The weak economic position of women's natal families further deteriorates the situation of abuse. The husbands and affinal families of the women know that they cannot return to their parental families to seek help as mentioned by Farah (34, uneducated, urban, Muslim): "I tried to threat him that I will go to my parents' home, he replied: go with the kids and do not come back". Thus, help-seeking and its availability is not a simple and straight forward phenomenon and domestic violence escalates where a husband and in-laws are aware that a woman cannot get any backing.

Women who approached informal networks mostly confided in their natal families in the first instance and they had mixed experiences with such informal support. Initially, the women shared their circumstances with their mothers. None of the women talked directly to their fathers, though the fathers came across the situation of their daughters from other family members. The role of mothers was very prominent in this matter, they tried to normalise violence by advising their daughters to bear all that to save their marriages and for the sake of their children. Women mentioned various Urdu and Punjabi proverbs that their mothers used as an example to convince them to bear with violence and remain silent as shared by Amna (42, educated, urban, Muslim): "My mother believes that a woman cannot leave her husband's home until her last breath". Though Amna was in a good job, her brothers and mother were not in support of her decision to live independently. Cultural norms and traditional gender socialisation were reminded to the women to bear with violence which indicates that people value their norms and values more than the sufferings of women. Moreover, type and severity

of violence, poverty, presence of children, women's attachment to their husbands and the way women problematise their situation were contributory factors in their attitude towards help-seeking and their families' responses towards them (Goodkind et al., 2003; Tenkorang et al., 2017). Though type and severity of violence had a strong contribution towards help-seeking behaviour, sexuality and related matters are not discussed openly. Women did not approach their families in case of sexual violence except in one case where the woman confided in her friend due to serious threats to her health.

Situational and contextual factors such as: child marriage, choice marriage, women into their second marriage, presence of children, economic dependence on the abuser, cultural beliefs in the inherent superiority of a husband, parents' health and financial position and their attitude towards domestic violence were important aspects in defining the provision of support to women. For example, women who got married as children were already a burden for their natal families, provision of financial support to these women was not an option for their families. In such situations, women could stay with their families only for short durations after severe physical violence and then returned to their affinal families. Similarly, in the case of a choice marriage, a woman is considered to take the responsibility of her decision. She is not expected to approach her parents in situation of violence. Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) told that her parents are not aware of their marital disputes and her sufferings: "I never shared my sufferings with my parents as I had a choice marriage and they were not agreeing to it. If I share with them, they would blame me for my wrong decision". Choice marriage further limits a woman's options for informal support. They avoid approaching their parents with the perception that they have lost backing due to exercising their free will in deciding their spouses.

Some of the women were able to stay with their natal families after the abuse and they also get economic support for their day-to-day expenses. However, due to stigmatisation of divorce, women were aware that they could not leave their husbands. If a husband and his family expelled the woman, she preferred to come back to him as shared by Zoreena (58, educated, urban, Muslim) who stayed with her parents for almost eleven years:

> My husband was abroad, my mother-in-law sent me and my children to my parents' home to avoid our expenses. Then my father got paralysed and my mother was not in a position to support us, I came back forcefully.

This shows that the parents helped their daughter both emotionally and instrumentally as long as they could do it. However, parents and the daughter were equally suffering as they wanted their daughter to stay with her husband which was beyond their control. Besides, a few of the women avoid disclosing violence with the hope that situation would get better gradually.

Presence of children was another important concern for mothers as they were not able to carry their expenses and did not want to deprive them of their fathers. Moreover, fear of repercussions keeps them silent; however, they confided in someone who they were confident would not share it with the perpetrator. This sharing was just to get emotional support to cope with the abuse and to reduce their stress. Women who had their second marriages were more careful in accessing their families. There were four women who suffered domestic violence in their second marriages, three of them were uneducated. Of these four women, two did not seek any help, they were struggling on their own to deal with various forms of violence. Nasreen (34, uneducated, urban, Muslim) provided reasons for not approaching her family, she said:

> I thought that it is my fate, I was suffering violence in my previous marriage too. I am reluctant to share as I have a thinking that people would not consider me a reasonable woman. Everyone would blame me that I am not able to adjust even in a second marriage. I would be a cause of humiliation to my family and all this stopped me to share violence of my husband.

A woman's pre-existing status of being divorced reduces her social value that puts her into a lot of pressure to carry on with her second marriage. She anticipates a lack of empathy and support from her family and society, in case of violence in her second marriage, and continue with the relationship as another divorce could further damage the honour of her family. Thus, strong social norms and lack of education contribute in considering violence as their destiny instead of a social problem. Resultantly, two of the women having second marriage returned to their families only when their husbands expelled them from homes, they had no place to go except their natal families. One of them approached her sister for stay. In the case of Martha, her husband left her, her brothers did not give her any shelter, being frustrated due to the failure of her second marriage. However, her mother started living with her and took care of her children, she worked as a domestic helper to earn her living. Thus, the nature of support and changing attitude of family members were dependent on the complex interplay of a woman's contextual factors.

Living independently is not culturally considered appropriate for women and it also poses threats to their security. Women who were facing severe violence and their families were willing to provide them shelter, they still preferred to stay with their abusers, or they went back after a short stay with their natal families. In the Punjabi context, joint household is still common both in the urban and the rural areas. It was a recurrent theme that women look towards their natal families for help, but they were not comfortable in sharing spaces with their married brothers' wives. Most of the women highlighted it as a reason to continue staying with their abusers. They weigh the level of their subordination of living with their affinal and natal

families and try to return to their husbands as expounded by Faira (38, educated, urban, Muslim): “Women consider that it is better to stay with the children in their own homes instead of serving their brothers’ wives and children”. After marriage, a woman is treated like a guest in her parents’ home, she is not supposed to interfere in the matters of her natal family particularly if she has married brothers. In case, she returns due to violence, usually she gets a subordinate position compared to her sister-in-law (brother’s wife). Her economic dependence further makes circumstances difficult for her; resultantly, a rift develops between women and their sisters-in-law that make them think of returning to their husbands. This was evident from the data as five women were living with their natal families and four of them had unmarried brothers while Farah was sharing space with her married brothers and their wives. Though she and her children had problems in sharing space with her sisters-in-law, she was engaged in stitching to earn some money and to avoid being financially dependent on her brothers.

As mentioned above, it is difficult for women to live independently; therefore, there was only one woman who took this initiative. However, she had the support of her family, her parents gave her share in property that assisted to run her expenses and that of her four children. Usually, parents give inheritance to their sons while daughters are not considered for share in that. It is a common justification that parents give dowry to their daughters; therefore, they do not deserve an additional share in property. However, in this case of Hameeda (60, uneducated, urban, Muslim), her brother arranged a rented house and shifted her with the children in the Lahore city, she used to be visited by her family and her husband as she did not take divorce.

Parents’ health and financial position were important in shaping the possibility of support. Women, who believed that their natal families were not in a position to help them in any way, did not ask for any financial or emotional support. They were aware that sharing about abuse would create further helplessness in their lives and those of their parents. Besides, past experiences of violence by the mothers of women were also a crucial dimension in refraining to share as told by Aneela (24, uneducated, urban, Muslim): “I cannot share my worries with my mother as she is a patient otherwise, she takes stress and her health deteriorates. She had taken divorce from my father due to his abusive nature”. Besides, prior experiences with informal support also determine that a woman survivor of violence will approach them again or not. In cases where women did not receive any assistance or it did not contribute in changing their circumstances, they constrained in approaching them again. Naseem (32, uneducated, rural, Christian) had a child marriage, she was strictly controlled by her mother-in-law while

her husband was abusing her physically and sexually. She had no idea where to go except her own family. While sharing the attitude of her natal family she said:

> I used to go to my parents' home, but my father always sent me back by saying that your mother-in-law is just like your mother so you should compromise with her and with your husband. He believes that it is alright if they mistreat me and discouraged me to return after a dispute. All this pushed me to look for other places and people to escape violence.

The power of a mother-in-law and her control of the daughter-in-law is culturally acceptable in a traditional family that provides the ground for domestic violence (Childress, 2018). Naseem felt unheard by her own family, she got trapped in the cycle of violence. It is an expectation that women should stay in their homes despite the abuse. If a woman does not get support from her natal family, it is uncommon that other members of the extended family would provide her with support. However, despite difficult circumstances, women find ways to tackle with their abusers which has been discussed in the later part of this chapter. The basic aim of approaching their families was to overcome the occurrence of violence against them as a vast majority were not intending to end their marital relationships. Women who had past experiences of abuse in their own families believe that they will not get any support. A few of them were told clearly by their fathers that they were not allowed to approach their natal families after a dispute. On the contrary, for a few women, the presence of father was an apparent support for the daughters. In-laws were aware that there was someone who can take stand as shared by Shama (25, educated, rural, christian): "My father had a dominating personality that's why my in-laws were in control. Since the time he has passed away, they mistreat and beat me".

The control of women's mobility and social interaction, outside the home, by their husbands and in-laws further limit their options to access other informal networks like friends and extended family members. Most of these women were apprehensive in asking for support; therefore, sharing and getting support from friends and other informal networks were possible if a woman was engaged in economic activity. Women employed as domestic helpers were getting emotional and financial support from the families they were working for and it was mostly in the urban area. For those staying at home, restrictions on their mobility left them with fewer options for disclosure. In a few of the cases, husbands directly accessed women's families and asked them that they did not want to continue with them. For instance, Ghazala (45, educated, rural, Christian) shared:

> My husband called on my brother and asked that he does not want to keep me in his house. My brother sent my mother to enquire about the dispute, she advised me to stay in the house as he is father of my children.

Cultural beliefs had a strong contribution in refraining women to get support. They believed in the inherent superiority of men in the marriage relationship and fear to break the cultural expectations (Ahmad-Stout et al., 2018). Religion was also quoted to justify this domination by both the Muslim and the Christian women; however, this was the case with uneducated women only. Moreover, the notion of a 'good woman' is to bear violence and stay with the abuser to save the honour of one's parents. Women believed that their parents arranged the marriages and now it is their responsibility to compromise in order to save their families from humiliation and insult of any kind. Grown up and economically independent sons were the biggest support for the women, though they were able to get this backing after spending a long duration in abusive relationships.

It is mostly natal family that provides financial and emotional support to women and negotiate with in-laws in situation of abuse. Due to severity of abuse, three of the women's families also involved the *Panchayat system*. Of these, two of the Christian women got divorce while in the case of the Muslim woman, the *panchayat* could not resolve the issue and the woman committed suicide later. Help and support is also dependent on the perceptions of the family members and there was variation among individuals within one family. For example, those who believe that violence against a woman is normal part of everyday life and husbands and affinal families are entitled to have such behaviours with women were not supportive to women. Areeb (30, educated, urban, Muslim) shared about this dilemma within her own family, she had the support of her sisters to take divorce whereas her brother wanted her to stay in the marriage. He had a view that divorce never happened in their family; therefore, she should bear the bad treatment of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law with the hope that situation would get better gradually. Thus, the varying attitude of family members towards provision of support further add complexity to the situation and increased her level of stress.

In conclusion, individual, sociocultural, and economic factors contribute to the decision of seeking help. This includes frequency and severity of abuse, a woman's meanings attached to violence, fear of repercussions and divorce, strong cultural norms to preserve the sanctity of marriage, maintaining the family honour, securing their children's future, limited options for women to live independently, and systemic barriers like financial and housing dependence of women contribute in their decisions to access informal networks. Domestic violence is not an event that happens at a single point in time; therefore, women had diverse experiences with a single support system over the period of time. For instance, parents providing financial and emotional support did not continue with it throughout due to their own circumstances. The

complexity of abuse and the relationship of a woman to the perpetrator all contribute in deciding when and which informal support to access. Moreover, women approach different support systems depending on their perceptions and prior experiences. Uneducated women believed in maintaining the family honour more than educated women. There were no clear differences between the Christian and the Muslim women residing in the urban and the rural localities regarding their perceptions and experiences with informal help-seeking. Though women shared with friends, neighbours, colleagues, and employers, most of them detailed their experiences with their natal families. This indicates that women rely heavily on kinship-based networks. This is in consistent with previous studies in Pakistan and other South Asian countries where women mostly confided in their family members in situation of abuse (Shaikh, 2003; Naved et al., 2006; Andersson et al., 2010). Besides, women's natal families were also involved in negotiating with the in-laws regarding abuse and a few of them also engaged the Panchayat system. However, none of the women mentioned the positive role of their in-laws in overcoming abuse.

8.3 Knowledge, Perceptions, and Experiences with the Formal Support and Institutional Responses

A significant step to overcoming domestic violence is to seek support from formal and informal networks. Mostly, women approach informal networks due to its availability and convenience compared to formal support which exists in the bureaucratic structures. Approaching the formal support depends on the knowledge and perceptions of women about these services and the way women problematise their situations (Liang et al., 2005; Tenkorang et al., 2017). In the context of this study, most of the women were aware that they could approach the police and the judicial system in case of abuse. There was variation between the urban and the rural women regarding their knowledge of the law to mitigate violence and other services like emergency helplines, shelter homes, legal services by non-governmental organisations, and the government institutions working for women empowerment including the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women. Though the rural educated working women were aware, their level of awareness about all the services was not as good as of their urban counterparts. On the contrary, uneducated and semi-educated women from both the localities were having limited information which they got from electronic media particularly from television. However, most of the women had no idea how to get benefit from these facilities. It is important to mention here that a vast majority of the women from both the localities had no interest in these services and the biggest barriers were the social pressures that they had to face after availing such services.

Besides, if they inform the police or call the emergency helpline, they would not be able to return to their husbands' homes. Violence could escalate against them for breaching the honour of the family or they could be divorced.

Though informing the police was one of the options and a vast majority of the women reflected on that, none of them accessed police for their protection or to report abuse against them. Of all, two Christian and six Muslim women shared their experiences with the judicial system, shelter homes, and the AGHS Legal Aid Cell (a non-governmental organisation). The AGHS Cell provides legal aid services and protection to the vulnerable people of the society including minority women in the Lahore city (AGHS Legal Aid Cell, 2018). Divorce, custody and maintenance of children, and getting back their dowry items after divorce were the reasons for approaching these institutions. Two women approached the AGHS Legal Aid Cell to get legal services, both the women were educated and employed in the Lahore city. They were aware that the AGHS could help them to take divorce particularly in the case of Sonilla, a Christian woman who was aware that the Christian Divorce Act 1869 does not allow divorce on the basis of abuse by the husband. Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christian) expressed her frustration of taking divorce through court as following:

> The system to take divorce for Christians is so pathetic that you cannot imagine. Christian marriages do not get registered, same was the case with my marriage. There are no laws here in this country. It took me seven years to take divorce, it is such a complicated case here.

Non-registration of marriage makes it difficult to approach the court for divorce. Besides, divorce in Christians is permissible on the basis of adultery or conversion of a spouse to another faith (Indrias, 2018; Suleman, 2018). In the case of Sonilla, she did not want to continue with her marriage due to domestic violence. She did her second marriage, her divorce case was in the court, when she was sure that her husband married again. Similarly, Martha (50, uneducated, rural, Christian) returned to her parents when her husband abstained her and started living with another woman. Martha's parents arranged her second marriage without legally taking any divorce. On the contrary, Katherine (45, uneducated, rural, Christian) shared that she took divorce through court before her second marriage; however, she was reluctant to talk about the procedures that were followed. Thus, there was complexity and contradiction about divorce and second marriage in the Christians. Lack of amendments in the Christian divorce law was a big hurdle for those women who wanted legal redress in case of domestic violence. Religion was also used to pressurise women as the Catholic church does not allow for divorce.

Dastak is a sister organisation of the AGHS Legal Aid Cell that provides support and shelter mainly to survivors of violence (Dastak, 2017). Rania (28, educated, urban, Muslim) had threats to her life, she took protection in Dastak and finally agreed to the terms of her ex-husband. She said:

> I had filed cases in the court about my dowry, dower, and maintenance of my child against my ex-husband. I was attacked by some gunmen so that I could step back from the cases. I took protection in the Dastak and stayed there with my child due to threats to our lives. Finally, I agreed to the conditions of my ex-husband, it was difficult for me to get abashed in the courts.

It is important to mention here that Rania had quit her job due to the pressure of her husband whereas he had an influential position in the government. Thus, both financial issues and security concerns became the reasons to stop confronting him in the court. Besides, the legal system has a notoriety for delaying and manipulating the decisions by taking bribes which resulted in piling up stress for women who already struggle due to financial issues. Consequently, financial dependence of women on their families and corruption in the system were important reasons besides other factors. Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim) was one of the affectees of the institutional malpractices, she could not get the custody of her child through the court in her first attempt. She was well-aware of the law and had no clue that court would decide against her, she said:

> I was thrown outside the home and was sent divorce later on while my son was not given to me. I filed a case for his custody, but the judge gave decision against me. Their lawyer had given bribe to the judge otherwise it was a simple case where the law says that the custody of the child is given to the mother in case of a divorce. I was empty handed and was financially supported by my relatives.

Financial dependency of women on their families deter them to access the judicial system and corruption further worsen the situation for them as is apparent from this narration of Maryam. She had no other option except to compromise with her circumstances. Ultimately, she secured a job and simultaneously, started pursuing law degree to equip herself in understanding the legal complexities for the sake of her son. In this way, she took services of a good lawyer and approached the higher court; however, this could only become possible due to the good amount of money which she was able to afford due to her job. In a recent study, Rogers (2019) shared similar findings in Bolivia, a developing country like Pakistan, where women do not access the justice system as it requires money to mobilise the system. In the context of the current study, most of the women were well-aware of the economic costs involved in accessing the police and judiciary. As discussed earlier, it was not just money, professional influence of the family members in the police and the judiciary also hinder women to approach these institutions. For

example, in the case of Amina (42, educated, urban, Muslim), she preferred to stay in her marriage by keeping in view the repercussions she could face by taking any such initiative, she said:

> My brother-in-law is a top lawyer. If I access the court, he will use his contacts and authority to disgrace and wretch me. I do not have enough money to hire a good lawyer and I will never be able to get my children. Besides, my family will not support me for a divorce.

Perceptions of injustice and mistrust in the judicial system is apparent from the narrative of Amina that restrained her and many other women to access the formal support. However, there was one empowering experience with the court shared by Mussarat (28, educated, rural, Muslim) who had applied for divorce in the first instance. Her husband then asked for forgiveness for his acts, the court fixed her monthly stipend and of children that the husband had to pay every month. Based on her personal experience, Mussarat had a view that women should approach the institutions to get their rights. However, it is not easy for women as approaching the police is considered a breach of family honour and a vast majority of the women from the urban and the rural localities did not access the police for the honour of their affinal and the natal families. They believed that they would not be able to return to their husbands and their own families would not accept them for such an initiative. These findings are consistent with the previous research in Pakistan by Andersson and colleagues (2010) who also found that reporting violence to authorities would bring disgrace to the family. In case the abuser is an employee of these institutions, there was a common perception among women that he would not be penalised for his acts of violence. Besides, courts and police stations are male dominated spaces and police harassment and abuse are not uncommon.

In the rural areas, people know each other well. If a woman complaint against her husband to the police, she becomes a ‘bad’ woman in her surroundings. This resulted in low reporting and domestic violence continue to occur in the private spaces. Nazia (27, educated, rural, Christian) and many other women shared similar views: “People in the village make it famous if a woman complain against her husband or police arrest him. They believe that women who approach the police are not of a good character”. In case of getting formal support, culture of stigmatisation is a way to implement patriarchal ideology which keeps women in culturally defined boundaries. They perceive it difficult to carry this additional burden alongside domestic violence and they explicitly expressed it in their narratives. Women are also a product of traditional gender socialisation and their least exposure to education further undermine their capacity to violate the norms. Resultantly, they do not consider it appropriate to inform the

police unless violence is severe in nature. Furthermore, general perceptions about the police, in resolving matters of common person, were important considerations for women in shaping their decision to take help. Besides, provision of evidence is necessary which is difficult to produce in domestic violence due to its varying nature unless there is a visible injury to a woman. Alongside this, safety and protection of a person, who wanted to give evidence in favour of the survivor, are important issues identified by educated women from the rural locality:

> There are many helplines and institutions that provide protection, but everyone wants a proof. Even people who observe violence refuse to give evidence. Those who show some willingness, police system is not supportive for them; therefore, people afraid to become witness. With such a backdrop, it becomes difficult to benefit from the institutions (Asifa, 33, educated, rural, Muslim).

This shows the loopholes of the system particularly for those who cannot provide evidence of domestic violence in case of emotional, sexual, and other types that are apparently invisible. Though this is one aspect of entrapment in domestic violence, women perceive that they would not get a redressal in case the police agrees to register their complaint. The support provided by the police could only be for a limited time as expressed by Sadaf (24, uneducated, rural, Christian): “It is not safe for a woman to share with the police or any other institution. Police cannot support a woman for long duration. She could suffer severe consequences for taking such a step”. Based on these perceptions, none of the participating women ever tried to inform the police as the perceptions were supported by the actions of the police regarding other cases. Police consider domestic violence as a personal matter of a family that needs to be resolved privately as told by Aini (30, educated, urban, Christian) who shared the experience of her cousin with the police:

> My cousin was beaten severely by her husband and in-laws. She went to the police station while crippling, a policeman accompanied her to the house. He said irritatingly that it is a routine matter of your family, how many times would you visit the police station. Nevertheless, I would ask the family not to do this again to you.

This inaction by the police is a reflection of their insensitivity and low priority towards domestic violence despite the presence of the Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016. Abusers were well-aware of this attitude of the police, they did not take it seriously whenever women threatened them to report abuse to the police. A few of the women wanted to involve the police; however, bribe was the main barrier as they had no money to give to the police. Jackson et al. (2014) in their study of ‘corruption and police legitimacy in Lahore, Pakistan’ found that corruption is a major problem, people have to pay money to the police. Thus, it supports the perceptions of women survivors of domestic violence about the police

institution and its functioning. Resultantly, the services provided by the public institutions like the police and the judiciary were not responding appropriately to the needs of women. These findings are consistent with the extant literature that show that women survivors rarely approach formal sources for help (Moe, 2007; Andersson et al., 2010; Tenkorang et al., 2017; Anyemedu et al., 2020).

Though women utilised formal services, they had a sense of disappointment except for a very few who had empowering experiences with the judicial system. Cultural pressures to silence the survivors alongside systematic impediments contribute to increasing the vulnerability of women to domestic violence (Aldridge, 2013). This is further exacerbated for those belonging to socially marginalised groups and is evident from the data that only two Christian women accessed the judicial system. Similarly, women from the rural locality were at a disadvantaged position compared to the urban women. Mobility, transportation, and an appropriate place to stay are important concerns for women of the rural areas, in case they came across services provided by the non-governmental organisations. Besides, women's own understandings about violence also contribute in accessing the institutions. For example, women who believe in the inherent superiority of men and in-laws ignore certain types of abuse as a routine matter not to be shared with others or they expect that their patience and compromise would change the circumstances for them.

In conclusion, there is paucity of knowledge among uneducated and semi-educated women about the law and available services to mitigate domestic violence which might be due to its low publicity. Those who were aware of the services had a lack of interest due to individual and cultural barriers. They were reluctant to avail such services and were more concerned about the honour of their families than their personal sufferings. As very few women had experiences with the formal support, they suffered due the following factors: lack of financial resources to get the services, corruption in the institutions, complications of the judicial system and delay in provision of justice, and an environment of male domination in the institutions.

Women who did not approach the formal support had fears that the use of authority by men to influence the institutions pose challenges for them. Besides, they do not foresee personnel from the police or judiciary to be accountable in case of perpetrators of domestic violence. Furthermore, fears of repercussions from both the affinal and the natal families, in case of reporting abuse to the formal institutions, was another dimension for not accessing the services. It is considered inappropriate for a woman to complaint about her affinal family due to the private nature of domestic violence and resultantly, a violation of the family honour. Therefore,

they prefer to continue with their marriages due to the devalued status of a divorced woman and their economic dependence on their families. Besides, the theological position of Christianity particularly Catholic Church does not recognise divorce which put an additional burden on the Christian women to maintain a marriage relationship despite difficult domestic circumstances (Bangash, 2019). The situation further exacerbates due to lack of amendments in the Christian personal laws particularly related to divorce that is a double jeopardy for them. This results in delayed response of the judicial system for those who approach for the sake of divorce.

Police and judiciary are male dominated spaces, women, particularly from the rural localities are discouraged to access such spaces. In case of approaching, women are stigmatised for ruining the family honour. Provision of evidence in domestic violence is also challenging alongside the security of the witnessing person. Besides, the general perceptions about the police were not positive due to a culture of bribery to get their services. Likewise, incapacity and non-intervention approach of the police further contribute to discourage women despite serious repercussions of abuse. All these factors are responsible for entrapment of women in abusive relationships. The traditional view of the police towards domestic violence, as a private matter of the family, needs to be changed through training and sensitisation on gender issues (Khan, 2019) so that the survivors approaching the police could get protection through pro-arrest approach. Institutional services should make women believe that bearing violence is not normal by providing them adequate and timely support. As women seeking formal help had good experiences with the non-governmental organisations, women from the rural locality and uneducated women had no awareness to such services which could be made possible through electronic media and by forming community groups.

8.4 Women's Responses to Domestic Violence and Their Strategies to Manage themselves with Abuse

Domestic violence is a complicated phenomenon and, in most of the cases, a continuous feature of the participants' lives (Cavanagh, 2003). Though women utilised informal and seldomly formal support networks, it is important that how they manage their day-to-day experiences of abuse while living in an environment of pain and fear. Literature related to stress and coping strategies is divided broadly into emotion-focused and problem-focused coping; however, women adopted multiple ways depending on their contextual factors especially by those facing various types of violence. Besides, husband was not the only perpetrator, members of the affinal family were also involved that leads to less of a coping and more of managing

themselves with the abuse. Due to complexity of relationships and changing environment of the home, women's ways to deal with violence were diverse and non-linear (Thananowan et al., 2018) and, sometimes, they were confused and indecisive in their responses. Women's economic position, number of children and their age, presence of male child/ren alongside cultural and structural constraints were the contributory factors in devising their strategies to manage and cope with the abuse. Moreover, change of circumstances also contribute in adopting diverse strategies at various stages of their lives. For example, grown up sons made women confident, they started confronting their abusive husbands which they were not doing in the past as shared by Gul Baji (55, educated, urban, Christian), a mother of three sons:

> I never confronted him in the past due to fear of violence and used to shift with my parents for short durations whenever he expelled me from home. I compete with him [husband] now, my sons are there to support me. My eldest son threatens his father in case he [husband] makes any attempt to be violent. My mother-in-law had also an active role, she has passed away and I am confident now.

In this case, keeping silent and temporary leaving were the strategies in the past; however, the changing life circumstances provided her with the opportunity to take stand for herself. This reflects the agency and resilience of women which they practice by assessing the available options at a particular time. These findings are consistent with the previous research that documents that women's strategies are dependent on the situation analysis and availability of resources during and after the abuse (Ellsberg et al., 2001; Zakar et al., 2012). Children and their future were a major concern for women, they try to change themselves by following whatever their husbands demanded instead of showing any resistance. Zobia (34, educated, urban, Christian) reflected her reasons for not fighting back and simultaneously, her ways to keep herself relax as follows:

> I have made myself very strong just because of my daughter… As she (daughter) is attached to her father more, she thinks her father is good…that is a reason for me to remain silent so that situation could not go to an extreme…I go for shopping and visits the salon with my choice, my husband does not know that. It gives me some positive energy that I am spending my money on myself and it also relieves my stress.

Zobia used to fight back with her husband physically and verbally in the early days of her marriage which proved useful to a certain level as the husband stopped beating her. However, verbal and psychological abuse continued, she did not confront for the sake of her daughter as she did not want to deprive her from the father. Secondly, divorce was not acceptable in the Christian community. Initially, she was honest in sharing her salary with the husband but started manipulating because of his lavish lifestyle while she had to pay for everything. This was common among the women, they made such efforts as a strategy to reduce violence against

them. Zobia was one of the two women who attempted to fight back physically with the husbands after they tried to beat them. Both the women were highly educated and employed, they believed that they were physically strong enough to stop physical violence and this confidence saved them from any kind of physical harm. Though, a few of the educated and working women resisted early in their marriages; it cannot be generalised to this group of women due to their varying personality traits and positionality in the social structure.

Most of the women fought back verbally which, sometimes, escalated violence especially if a woman responded to her mother-in-law or other members of her affinal family. Usually, it is expected from a woman to remain silent and give respect to the members of the affinal family despite their use of abusive language. Those who violated this norm have to suffer the consequences in the form of physical violence by their husbands. Thus, the common strategies by women were to avoid an argument, cry, and left the scene to divert their attention and many of them were advised by their mothers to do so.

> My mother advised that if I remain silent, they [in-laws] would stop making complaints against me. I forgot about my ego and made intentional efforts to remain humble and silent. Only a woman can save her home (Saima, 29, uneducated, urban, Christian).

By practicing silence and endurance, Saima was able to placate her in-laws to some extent which strengthen her belief that a woman has to sacrifice for the sake of her home. Thus, by following gender role expectations, the position of a woman strengthens in the domestic sphere and whoever violates has to suffer the consequences.

Women ended or tried to end their marriages when they were not able to cope with the situation. Divorce, suicide attempt, and temporary or permanent separation were used as a way to get rid of violence. As a result, a few of the men in the rural locality ceased to commit violence against their wives. Bushra (32, uneducated, rural, Christian) shared that her husband changed his attitude after she attempted to end her life. She was living with her husband in a nuclear family at the time of interview and was no more suffering domestic violence. Similarly, Shama (25, literate, rural, Christian) left her four children with her husband and in-laws and started living with her parents. She said:

> My husband and in-laws looked after four little children which was difficult for them. My husband, then, excused from me and my family. I have taken stand for myself and told him that I am not a person to be beaten again and again, enough is enough. I have warned my husband and my family that I will do whatever I wanted to if he abused me again. Now situation is better after I threaten him.

Though Shama had used emotion focused strategies in the past to placate abuse, it is sometimes difficult to mark clear boundaries between emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies

alongside cultural constraints (Childress et al., 2018). A woman's agency to resist abuse is very much dependent on the available resources and her own will to take stand for herself. In the case of Shama, she used her children to protect herself. She was one of the few participants who were interested in having government helpline number offered by the researcher so that she could use that in future in case of abuse. Besides, women who took initiatives to earn for themselves showed resistance to the abuse of their husbands and in-laws. Their economic dependency was one of the main reasons to remain silent:

> I used to remain silent, I was afraid that what would happen if he expelled me from home as I had very young kids. Since the time I have started earning, I am quite confident that if he left me, I would manage myself and children's expenses. Now I resist if he tries to beat me (Shabana, 40, rural, Muslim).

The ages of children were an important factor for women to resist violence. Those who, themselves, took the initiative for divorce had either no children or the children were grown up. In this above quote of Shabana, she found the courage to fight for herself when her children reached a certain age. Culturally, it is considered inappropriate for a woman with young children to live alone, this also poses threat to her security. Hameeda (60, uneducated, urban, Muslim) was the only participant who started living independently with her four young children, she had financial support from her natal family who made her settled in Lahore (a cosmopolitan city) where people are less interested in the matters of others. However, women married as children, struggled to adjust and follow the instructions of their husbands and in-laws in the early years of their marital life. The resistance (e.g., tried to end the relationship) appeared later in life when their children were in a position to look after themselves. Katherine (45, uneducated, rural, Christian) left her six children at a point when she was sure that her elder children would look after the younger ones, she said: "There is a limit to what a woman can bear, I was fed up from all that situation". She held her husband and in-laws responsible for her second marriage, she believed that this was in reaction to their violent acts. Nevertheless, she had a sense of guilt at the time of interview as she could not manage to meet her children. Similarly, Naseem (32, uneducated, rural, Christian), a child bride, shared her safety planning that helped her to minimise abuse:

> I have made friendship with a man from my village. I was always blamed that I have a bad character, so I decided to become bad for my own's sake this time. I threatens my husband that I will go away with my friend if he [husband] does not stop misbehaving with me.

The concept of honour was less common among the Christian women compared to the Muslim women; therefore, such initiatives were shared by the Christian participants. Surprisingly, the safety planning to resist domestic violence, adopted by the Christian women from the rural

locality, were quite different from all other women. This might be because they were oppressed in multiple ways, being minority and living in a rural area with least access to the resources. When a woman does not foresee any kind of external support, she works out her own way to come out of that which reflects that women do possess agency in ways that are not explicit all the time. Here the concept of "learned helplessness" is challenged (Palker-Corell and Marcus, 2004). As long as women do not take a decisive initiative in life to overcome abuse, they are tagged of learned helplessness. The findings of this study show that women do continue their struggle to find out ways of escaping violence, keeping in view their circumstances. For Maryam (40, educated, urban, Muslim), violence was a source of motivation to overcome adversity, she took courageous initiatives in life which, she believed, were not possible in normal circumstances, she said:

> I was divorced and my son was taken away from me. I thought either I should commit suicide or survive with dignity. Their [in-laws] abuse dared me to take initiatives in life. I started a job and hired a good lawyer from high court. I got the custody of my son within nine months. Then I studied for Law degree as everyone was saying that his father would take him [son] away when he would turn seven years. I took license of a lawyer and made myself strong to tackle future worries. It has created my pressure on them.

Despite facing post-separation violence from her ex-husband, Maryam transformed herself through constant struggle and was recovered from the effects of domestic violence. She believed that the way she has empowered herself, with relevant education and with a good job, has created a powerful image of her. Though this resilience and recovery could have been possible after divorce, women in violent marriages kept on struggling to find ways. They took initiatives in lives that had lasting impacts. For example, Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) said: "I decided not to produce more children just because I had a realisation that my husband is abusive. I did not want to have children who had to grow up in an abusive environment". Besides, educated women shared that they used to believe that they would be able to change their husbands through dialogue which could not prove successful. For Christian women, it could not have become possible particularly if the husband was under the influence of alcohol at the time of abuse. Thus, they preferred silence and avoidance as a strategy to placate violence against them.

The most common strategy shared by the Christian and the Muslim women was their reliance on their religions and the power of spirituality that provided them strength and hope to live their lives. This is in consistent with a previous study of women's coping strategies against spousal violence in Pakistan that documented women's use of religion and various religious rituals to deal with violence and its impacts (Zakar et al., 2012). In the context of the present

study, women who could not find any solution to their problems consider it a will of God. Their spiritual beliefs had a positive impact in the process of healing after abuse, they expressed that they would get reward for all their sufferings in the life hereafter. However, young women were hopeful that God would pay reward to their patience and forbearance and their circumstances would change eventually. In Pakistan, people follow various famous religious personalities to resolve their worldly problems and visit shrines to pray. Women who shared about the power of religion in their lives also mentioned the role of famous religious leaders and their teachings that were a source of comfort for these women. Nevertheless, none of the women shared their experiences of visiting shrines except Nasreen (34, uneducated, urban, Muslim) who was into her second marriage. She also approached a few spiritual personalities, she said:

> I am bearing all that as I cannot have a third marriage. I have visited saints and requested them to pray for us. They have told me that someone has spell black magic on him [husband] so that he could not do any work, leave his wife and children and be disgraced.

A woman's belief in the power of black magic gives her the justifications for the inappropriate behaviour of the husband. Interestingly, black magic was not from someone that was unknown, she was suspecting a close female relative for involving in such an act against her husband. Women who believed that their husbands were under the spell of black magic had sympathetic feelings, they believed that things were not in the control of their husbands.

It is important to mention here that these are not the only strategies that women used to tackle with violence and protect themselves, rather the ones that proved helpful for them in certain ways. Otherwise, they shared multiple ways that they adopted over the course of their marital relationship which worked at one occasion but not at the other.

In conclusion, multiple factors contribute to women's responses and their strategies to deal with domestic violence. Children were the main concern alongside economic position of the women and the societal attitude to stay or leave a violent relationship. Women use various strategies to deal with their complex and uncertain lives which include silence, endurance, verbal confrontation, suicide attempts, and getting separation whereas fighting back physically was uncommon. Presence of male children was a source of hope as women started showing resilience in the later years of their marriages when their sons were grown up. Thus, women's desire for sons are justified due to weak support from the formal institutions and stigmatisation of divorce. They engage with strategies depending on their understandings of the situation, type of abuse and the status of the perpetrator while keeping in view the cultural constraints. Women kept on struggling to come out of the violent situations though not all of them could have been

successful. Besides, the findings also show that tagging women with "learned helplessness" is misleading as they continue to struggle for survival and to reduce violence despite their difficult circumstances. The Christian women were careful in dealing with the abuse of their spouses if they had consumed alcohol and thus, silence and avoidance were the most common strategies that could reduce escalation of violence against them. In addition, the Christians were less rigid with the notion of 'honour' resultantly, the Christian women from the rural residency tackled through problem-focused strategies by their involvement with other men. Interestingly, such initiatives were not shared by the urban Christian women, this could be due to limited opportunities to socialise and mobility constraints in the rural areas that became the reasons for these women to take such initiatives. Similarly, suicide attempts were shared by the Muslim and the Christian women of the rural locality that indicate limited avenues of support for this category. Lastly, religion had a very important place in the lives of the Christian and the Muslim women which provide them solace and hope in their lives.

8.5 Ways to Eradicate Domestic Violence from the Society

This section reflects on the ways that could help reduce domestic violence from the society. According to the narratives of women participants, the first step is to recognise it as a problem which could help finding out ways to prevent it (Mears and Visher, 2005). Besides, socialisation of boys, empowerment of women through education and their economic independence, amendments in the marriage contract, strict punishments for husbands and in-laws were pinpointed. However, a few of the uneducated women from the urban and the rural localities emphasised the traditional subordination of women to be practiced which, they believe, should be followed to reduce violence against them. These were the women who could survive due to their silence as shared by Tahira (50, uneducated, rural, Muslim):

> It is better for a woman to remain silent as is the situation in my case. My husband is short tempered, I remain silent when he is angry, and situation gets better. However, I have suppressed my ego just to survive and maintain my marriage.

It is evident from this quote that though silence worked for her, she had to struggle with herself to bear all that. On the contrary, a significant number had a view that women should take stand for themselves otherwise no one would help them to come out of their circumstances and give them rights voluntarily. Interestingly, this view of 'taking stand for themselves' emerged with an empowerment approach as women believe that financial and logistic dependence on a husband make them vulnerable to domestic violence. Therefore, education and economic independence is the way that could provide them standing in their lives and to come out of violent situations as expressed by Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim): "Parents should not

give dowry to their daughters, instead they should equip girls with education. Besides, careers are very important as money should be in the hands of women". Though women empowerment through education and economic independence is a way to reduce domestic violence, the narratives of educated and employed women revealed that they suffer violence despite equipped with it. Thus, the relationship between female education and violence against them is complex (Jewkes, 2002) due to strong gendered norms of male domination and female subordination. Resultantly, women do not get support from their families, and broadly from the society to get rid of abusive relationships despite being educated and aware of their basic right to a peaceful living. Zobia (34, urban, Christian) was educated and employed at the time of interview. She was not hopeful that violence could be eradicated from the society, she said:

> It is very difficult to change the mindset, it is a very long-term process. Making of laws will not alter the mindset. A woman tries her level best to save her home, so she bears everything. In my case, my husband tried to change the roles by cooking, but his family ridiculed and stopped him to do so.

This shows that if a man tries to support his wife, his family does not accept this role reversal including women of his family. Ultimately, he prefers to follow the traditional role which facilitate him, and the woman suffers with an additional burden of economic activity alongside her domestic responsibilities.

Change of social environment, that support superiority of men, is an important step towards violence reduction. A focus on social norms intervention could be a possible way to change the mindset of people regarding domestic violence and subordination of women (Berkowitz, 2010; Neville, 2015). Women as carriers of family honour is one of the gendered norms that put them in a lot of pressure to continue with abusive relationships as identified by Naseem (32, uneducated, rural, Christian): "We need to speak for our rights. We remain silent to protect the honour of our parents. We lose our own respect in that effort". Women emphasised on the socialisation of men and boys towards respect and equality of women. Educated women had an emphasis on changing the socialisation patterns for boys and girls. Though it is a long-term process, there is no alternative to it as shared by Sonilla (35, educated, urban, Christian), who was into her second marriage:

> We [women] have to change our next generation through socialisation. No one can change those who are grown up now, how many husbands will we change in life, one, two, three? The mindset of men cannot be changed.

This reflects that overcoming violence in the society is possible only if a mother grooms her children on the principles of equality without giving privilege to the boys. Besides, women participants defined socialisation of men in diverse ways with a particular emphasis on the

training of men to create a balance between their wives and the natal families. This point was raised by all those women who had to suffer violence from their in-laws and the husbands were also under the influence of their families. Though husbands were educated, women believed that education of men does not guarantee equality between the spouses, it is socialisation that could train men to respect their wives and consider them as equal human beings instead of subordinate to them and their families. The role of educational institutions is crucial to bring this change in the society through awareness sessions at various levels as identified by Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim): "There is a dire need for counselling of men in this society. For this purpose, there should be seminars in schools, colleges, and especially in universities". Thus, family and educational institutions are influential to shape the thinking and behaviour of individuals. These findings support the ecological framework which explicates that socialisation takes place on many levels including family, school, peer, and media which influence an individual's thinking and behaviour (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986; Ali and Naylor, 2013; Usta et al., 2016).

An important distinction between the urban and the rural women were that the latter emphasised on resolving such matters at the local level. This includes awareness sessions about the rights of women and men, change of norms through dialogue, and social gatherings to discuss sensitive issues. To do this, role of the community is critical in prevention of domestic violence by changing the social environment that strengthens the idea of inferiority of one sex over the other (Michau, 2007). Community-based initiatives are a way to intervene and resolve issues of domestic violence at the local level as shared by women from the rural locality by quoting examples of India. On further asking that how did they come to know about Indian example of protecting women from domestic violence, Bushra (32, uneducated, rural, Christian) detailed about the visits of Indian Sikh community to their temples in Nankana Sahib (one of the study sites) where they also interact with the local people, she said:

> They [Sikh] told us about a system of protection in India. There are organisations of women at the local level. They approach the family if there is an issue of domestic violence. A woman needs to make a call and then they all reach, they can also file a suit against the perpetrator. There should be a similar system here in Pakistan.

In their study about state-sponsored intervention to reduce gender-based violence in two states of India, Vindhya and Lingam (2019) reflected on a similar model where social action committees consisted of females from the local community were formulated at the village level to serve as a first response team in case of violence. Women participants of the current study, from the rural area, wanted to have a similar model to be implemented so that there could be

someone to listen to them and resolve their issues at the local level. Though there was *Aman Committee* (Peace committee) working in the village formed by an NGO to resolve issues, it had no exclusive focus on gender-based violence. Interestingly, alongside Indian examples, women of the western countries were mentioned as a reference point to make comparisons. Participants had a belief that no one can harm a woman in the west as she can approach the police and other institutions for help. By keeping in view the western scenario, they were expecting a similar environment in Pakistan. Besides, rural women believed that women of the urban areas are more empowered and aware of their rights; therefore, rural women should also be given such awareness as told by Nazia (27, educated, rural, Christian): "Like in cities, women should be given awareness in the villages too. NGOs can provide education to women about their rights through social activities". Interestingly, women of the urban area also believed that the situation of women in the rural areas is worst. Just like their rural counterparts, they exemplified western system as ideal for women and the rule of law there as a benchmark to compare themselves and their circumstances. Moreover, there is a dire need for supportive groups for women as emphasised by Gul Baji and other urban women who questioned the short-term solutions to violence reduction and emphasised on the community based supportive groups that could help women tackle abuse in their lives. One possible explanation is that women do not want to access the formal institutions, nor they are interested in taking divorces. Such an informal support is emphasised as it does not challenge the status quo and women could find safe spaces to get some solution to this problem.

Government led welfare services are not adequately available that is another reason for women to stay in their abusive relationships due to their financial dependence on their husbands and in-laws. Women need to be empowered by providing them skills-based trainings so that they could earn their living as highlighted by Sadaf (24, uneducated, rural, Christian): "We have more children and less resources. When a woman asks for money, she suffers beating and negative attitude of her husband". Women-focused technical trainings could reduce their financial dependence on their husbands that would also assist in resisting violence and abuse. Poverty is considered to increase violence against women and it also supports the assumptions of the Resource Theory which proposed that men use violence as a resource to control women when other resources like income and education are missing. However, simultaneously, educated and employed men were perpetrators in the current study which refutes the resource theory as it provides singular interpretation of a complex phenomenon and ignores the role of gendered ideologies regarding marriage and divorce.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, religion had an important role in the lives of women participants, they got strength by performing prayers and through various spiritual acts. However, the role of religious leaders and related institutions like mosque and church, about issues of domestic violence against women, is not adequately addressed in the literature in the context of Pakistan (Zakar et al., 2011). In the local settings, men lead prayers and church services, women are absent or least involved in the organisational structures of mosque and church. Resultantly, discussions regarding violence against women are missing or such matters are considered private. Though a study by Zakar and colleagues (2011) in Pakistan reflects the divergent views of Muslim religious leaders about spousal violence, perspectives of Christian clergy needs to be studied regarding their knowledge and attitude towards domestic violence. Participant women highlighted two types of support that the religious institutions and its representatives can provide in dealing with domestic violence: availability of church-based spaces to provide free and accessible services to women and secondly, training of clergy men so that women could turn to their faith-based communities in their time of need. In the absence of wider formal services to women survivors, and simultaneously, women's reluctance to approach the available services, religious institutions can help to provide guidance and intervene at the local level to resolve matters related to domestic violence. Sarah (52, educated, urban, Christian), a working woman suggested the following:

> There should be some church based centres or services where women can share such matters easily and there should not be any fee charged to them so that they feel comfortable in approaching it. The services should be in easy access with reference to distance like a centre in each residential colony so that women have not to travel to access it.

This quote signifies three important aspects in provision of church-based services: financial cost, accessibility issues and availability of help in a safe place for women. As mobility of women outside the home is controlled by their families, there is a possibility that approaching the church or mosque might be less restricted due to the sacredness of these spaces. This raises the need to equip the religious institutions by creating spaces to respond domestic violence without any additional financial cost to the survivors. Women, who shared about religion, discussed generally that religious teachings are important to change the mindset of men. Thus, religion should be given particular attention in dealing with domestic violence as many of the myths around violence against women are influenced by the idea of women's subordination by the religions. Clergy trainings are an important step to be taken as they have a role in shaping people's beliefs. Moreover, they are also involved in registering *nikkah nama* (written marriage contract in Muslims) and, usually, this activity is performed in a ceremony with a significant number of attendees. Ayesha (54, educated, urban, Muslim) suggested that the religious cleric

should speak about the issue of domestic violence at this occasion and sensitised men and their families. Aside from it, she proposed amendments in the *nikkah nama* with the provisions that a husband will not beat his wife in any circumstances and the man, getting married, should give an oath about it. This is another necessary step to be taken that will bring change gradually. Similarly, educated Christian women wanted to have amendments in the law regarding divorce so that marriages could be split on reasons other than adultery. Contrarily, a few women were disappointed and believed that there are no solutions to this problem. They had a view that if they knew how to overcome it, they could have eradicated it from their own lives.

It is concluded from this section that women focused more on primary preventions compared to secondary and tertiary preventive measures. Primary preventions include education of women and their economic empowerment, change of norms that support women subordination and consider them as carriers of family honour, socialisation of boys and girls on equal terms to promote equality, and the crucial role of educational institutions in creating awareness about this issue. The rural participants emphasised on local informal services to discuss and resolve issues of domestic violence. They also stressed the economic empowerment of women through skills-based trainings. Similarly, their urban counterparts highlighted the importance of supportive groups that they could turn to in their times of need as women were not interested in approaching the formal institutions due to threats of divorce. Besides, women who were not educated, emphasised on the role of education in violence prevention whereas educated women pinpointed other aspects not related to education which indicates that the participants suggested solutions to this problem by keeping in view their own circumstances. This reveals the complexity of this phenomenon which could not be resolved by just education, there is a need to equally consider other aspects particularly changing of norms and social environment that support women's subordination. Role of religious institutions and clerics is important, through creating safe spaces, to provide support to women survivors and by sensitising the community due to the influence of the religions in the day-to-day lives of people. Amendments in the Christian Divorce Act are obligatory to facilitate women who wanted to get divorce because of violence against them.

8.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, availability of support and women's perceptions and experiences with it has been discussed. Due to the private nature of domestic violence, most of the women took informal support and that was from the natal families. However, contexts of women's lives defined the possibility of help to them; those having child marriages, choice marriages, or who

were into their second marriages were more at a disadvantage position. The notion of honour has a strong influence which hinders women particularly uneducated to approach for help-seeking. Cultural beliefs, individual perceptions about the type of abuse and its severity, economic dependency, and changing women's positionality over their life span contributed in getting support from their natal families. Besides, women's experiences with the informal support were more of a complex nature, they made intentional efforts to resolve the issues on their own and approached their families when they were left out with no other choice. *Panchayat system* was also engaged at the village level to resolve matters related to violence and divorce of women.

Furthermore, the data highlighted barriers in accessing the formal institutions including police, judicial system, and government and non-governmental organisations working to provide support and services. Urban participants having education and exposure had more information to these services, they also get benefit from it whereas it was not in easy access of the rural women. The interviews of women highlighted stark differences among them due to their religious identity. Christian divorce Act 1869 has not been amended that hampers a woman's choice to leave her husband on the basis of violence. The situation gets complicated further due to the patriarchal interpretations of the religion. Besides, non-registration of Christian marriages further jeopardises the lives of the Christian women. Institutions are patriarchal in nature and accessing it for support particularly in cases of domestic violence are considered a dishonour. Resultantly, none of the women ever approached the police; however, experiences with the judicial system did appear in the interviews which reflected issues of corruption and malpractices in the judiciary. Thus, women have to pay the financial and emotional cost of accessing the institutions. Women's position and location in the social structure are crucial in getting formal help-seeking. As a result, Christians and women of the rural residency were at a marginalised position.

The findings of previous chapters of analysis show domestic violence as more of a process, women cannot turn up to their support systems every time they suffer from their perpetrators. Thus, their strategies to manage themselves were diverse and were dependent on situational factors, their financial position, availability of resources at a particular time and concerns for their children. For example, Christian women preferred silence and avoidance when the husbands were under the influence of alcohol. Women's desire for sons was quite understandable as the sons protected them or provided a hope that their circumstances would change. Nevertheless, such a shelter further strengthens patriarchy and hegemony of men in

the society. Besides, giving respect to the husband and his family, despite their violence, is socially desired and women are expected to remain silent and endure it which would strengthen their position in the affinal family. However, those who could not cope with their situations took initiatives of divorce, separation, or attempted suicide. The findings of the study showed that rural women were more at risk of attempting suicide due to strict gender norms to protect marriage, financial dependence, and less available spaces for them to share their distress. Interestingly, women's agency was quite apparent from their narratives as they kept struggling despite their limited resources, they also used children as a resource to protect themselves. This refutes the concept of 'learned helplessness' that is used to explain the passive behaviour of abused women. Religious affiliations were also a source of strength to live lives and women hope to get the reward of their patience in the life afterward.

The last section discussed the ways women suggested to mitigate domestic violence from the society. The focus was more on primary prevention that included education, employment opportunities for women and socialisation of men and boys towards changing the gendered norms that strengthen subordination of women. Amendments in the Christian divorce law is inevitable to protect them. Role of the community, particularly in the rural areas, and religious institutions are also crucial to bring change and provide safe spaces for women to share their experiences and get support. Women idealised India (a neighbour country with a similar family system like Pakistan) and western countries in provision of support to the survivors of domestic violence which indicates lack of holistic and integrated approaches to violence prevention at the local level.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the main points of the analysis by summarizing the findings and the theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions of this study. This research has addressed a significant gap in the literature by focusing on women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence by considering their religious identity and place of residence in the context of Punjab, Pakistan. The findings of this research enhance our understandings of the contexts of women's lives, the complex trajectories of domestic violence and the significant contribution of the intersectionality to grasp it. The research highlights that variations among women, based on their identities, require policy considerations which has been discussed alongside practical recommendations for attitudinal changes towards patriarchy and domestic violence. Towards the end, the chapter provides suggestions for future research.

9.2 Summary of the Findings

This section details the main findings of the study in relation to the research questions. The opening data chapter has examined the circumstances and conditions that shape the status and position of women and men in the society. Throughout this chapter, relationship dynamics at the domestic and societal level have been reflected. The sociocultural norms of the Punjabi society emphasise traditional gender ideology that contribute to strengthen patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. The role of women has been significant to maintain this gender order alongside men; however, educated women held different views and they wanted to change this ideology. The participants believed that men's control of economic resources, their right to carry family lineage, and by giving them the authority to divorce, the society maintains patriarchy and male superiority. On the contrary, women are symbolised as an honour of the family and this notion is mostly attached to their sexuality. They are expected to follow the set norms and values of the family and the society otherwise they could bring disrespect to their families. The most significant finding emerged from this study is that the minority status carries additional burden with itself. Being the religious minority, Christian women are oppressed and stigmatised at the societal level both by their own community and by the wider society. This study has established that male domination and the preference for a son would predominate unless any changes to the following: a) dowry system given to women at the time of marriage, b) women as carriers of family honour, c) divorce laws that benefit men, d) household system

where parents are the responsibility of sons in old age, e) least involvement of the state in provision of services to the elderly, f) traditional family residential patterns as married daughters are discouraged by the society to stay with their parents and to look after them, g) lack of safe housing for women to live independently, h) marriage as the only option that could provide protection to women and, i) divorce as a stigma for them. Despite women being educated and economically independent, they were controlled in the domestic sphere to keep them subordinate to the husbands and the affinal families due to the factors mentioned above.

An important theme of this chapter- that reflects autonomy of women in the domestic sphere- is their involvement in decision-making. This study shows that the joint/extended household system has a significant contribution. The cultural norms of Punjabi society put a lot of emphasis on the respect and superiority of parents. Resultantly, in a joint or extended household, the active role of the husband and the affinal family undermine the positionality of the wife alongside patriarchy and the patriarchal bargains that actively contribute to it. Besides this, the traditional socialisation patterns make women believe that men are superior as they are heads of the families and earn for them; therefore, decisions made by them should be endorsed and accepted. The most influential factor to change this mindset is the role of education as this research has found that educated and employed women hold strong views and wanted an active involvement in major decisions as equal partners in the marriage relationship. Mobility of women, outside their homes, gives them the choice to exercise their agency in some ways but rural localities are particularly restricting it due to lack of adequate transportation facilities, security problems, and a culture that a woman is protected only if accompanied by a male member of the family. A crucial aspect of this research has been the differential and hierarchical positionality of women in the domestic sphere that indicates that they are not a homogeneous category. A mother-in-law and other female members of a husband's family hold dominant positions compared to a woman who joins the family due to marriage. A wife is vulnerable to the bad treatment of her husband and in-laws if she is: i) minor (married as a child), ii) in a joint household, iii) husband does not value her as an equal partner, and iv) absence of support from the natal family in time of need. Further to this, structural and cultural factors contribute to the subordination of a wife in the marriage that require to be changed through economic empowerment of women, by providing them safe housing, making police and judiciary sensitised towards the issues and needs of women, policies to promote work and family life balance, and by removing the structural barriers that make it difficult for women to divorce their partners compared to men who can verbally divorce.

The first analysis chapter (chapter 5) has provided the context of the Punjabi society by focusing on the factors that promote inequality of genders, strengthen patriarchy and create an environment where marriages are based on hierarchical relationships benefiting men and their families. Besides, the chapter is indicative of the fact that the women share the same wider patriarchal culture of the Punjabi society despite their diverse identities. This backdrop essentially assists in understanding women's experiences and perceptions of violence and their reasons to stay in abusive relationships. The second analysis chapter extends our knowledge of the various forms of domestic violence that women were experiencing/ had experienced in the past or they shared about someone close to them. Throughout the chapter, the intersecting identities of women have been the focus of attention to compare and contrast their circumstances. The interview data has shown that the private nature of domestic violence and its cultural acceptance are the main reasons that contribute to normalise its occurrence. Women suffer multiple forms of violence and it is crucial to understand the contexts for a holistic understanding of this phenomenon as it does not always involve acts of physical violence. Rather, the surveillance and control by the perpetrator create an environment that keeps the survivor under constant fear. As the findings of the first chapter of analysis has shown, the patriarchal ideology privilege men whereas women are conceived as subordinate to them. The situation for women further deteriorates due to the low socio-economic status of their families where limited resources are not invested on girls' education as they are supposed to belong to their husbands and thus, cannot support their natal families. This results in early girl child marriages and their exploitation by the affinal families. The data reflects that uneducated women suffer physical violence early in their marriages compared to the educated women. Besides, the economic independence of women does not guarantee a life free from violence and abuse as women suffer in both ways whether they are independent economically or they are dependent for their day-to-day needs. This is because of the mindset that economic resources are controlled by men therefore, in cases where women had an income, husbands and the affinal families try to control that earnings. They create an environment where women do not get any support for household chores that increase their burden of responsibilities. The use of alcohol and drugs by the husbands had a direct impact on the economic well-being of women particularly those from the Christian faith and from low socioeconomic group.

The second important type of violence covered in this study is sexual violence suffered by women and the involvement of their husbands into relations outside of marriage. The findings revealed that women feel ashamed to share such matters due to their socialisation in an

environment where any such discussion is considered immoral and a violation of the privacy attached to the marriage. A significant difference was observable between the Christian and the Muslim women as formers were more open in discussing such matters and sharing of their experiences. The use of alcohol by the Christian men was a significant reason of sexual violence suffered by women. Similarly, the extra-marital relations of the husbands were shared more openly by the Christian women. On the basis of these findings, it is argued that there is a dire need for sexuality education to sensitise people about the importance of bodily rights. Women are particularly need to be educated about 'what constitute violation of their bodily rights' as their subordinate position in the marriage also make them complicit in the sexual activity. Besides this, the use of alcohol by the Christian men and the resultant sexual violence against their wives needs to be dealt with strictly so that they would be aware of the outcomes of their acts and regulate their behaviours. For this, the first step would be to publicly recognise marital rape in the society and a clear definition of it in the law.

This research has found that early age marriages of girls increases the risk of domestic violence against them. Of the thirteen participants married as children, eleven suffered domestic violence. The structural inequalities and cultural subordination of the girl child results in their early marriages. One of the significant contributions of this study is the identification of pre-marital and post-separation abuse in the context of Pakistan. The crucial role of the judicial system in inculcating structural violence against women is prominent that increases their burden of oppression. Though women suffer before and after divorce, the unamended Christian divorce law makes it complicated to seek divorce for women of the Christian faith.

This study has demonstrated that the affinal family of a woman control her alongside the husband and inculcate violence against her. The role of parents and siblings of a man are prominent as patriarchy and patriarchal bargain assert its control and provide authority to those related to a husband. Thus, women suffered various forms of violence; however, it was uneducated women who suffered physical violence from their affinal families. The findings are indicative of the fact that domestic violence is not limited to certain acts of the husband or in-laws, the narratives of women reflected that it is a process that is embedded into their daily lives. As the religious identity of women is a crucial dimension of this study, educated Christian women were critical of the role of religion in their lives compared to the Muslim participants. They believed that adultery is the only ground for divorce in Christianity and the Christian Divorce Act of 1869 further exacerbated their situation by reinforcing this ground and limiting their right to a life free from violence and abuse.

Structural inequalities including poverty, illiteracy alongside patriarchal ideology of the society make women vulnerable to domestic violence. Besides, patriarchal structure of the institutions, unamended laws, and passive role of the state to protect women and minorities furthered the situation of violence against women. Alongside this, women prioritise the individual traits of men as the reasons of violence. In a recent article, Dekeseredy (2020) is of the view that by focusing individuals solely, the broader sociocultural, economic, and political forces responsible for violence could be side-lined. The findings of this study agree to this viewpoint of DeKeseredy that macro level factors shape the structure of the society and promote patriarchy. Simultaneously, the narratives of the women are indicative that individual traits of men cannot be ignored as all men do not commit violence. The data reflects that the response of the community is not encouraging, towards incidents of domestic violence, due to a widespread patriarchal culture that makes it a personal matter of the family. Instead, a woman survivor is blamed for the acts of her husband and in-laws particularly if she resists to physical violence and verbal abuse, she is expected to bear all that to make her position in the affinal family. Women of the rural residency and the Christian women were at a disadvantaged position due to the attitude of the community. The consumption of alcohol by the Christian men and subsequent violence is justified by the Christian community. Similarly, the close-knit environment of the rural areas makes it difficult to hide domestic violence particularly physical and verbal abuse. Instead of discouraging, people in the surrounding either remain silent or encourage the abuser to maintain his ascendency in such situations. The findings have a strong emphasis that women and men equally need to change their attitude towards domestic violence as the patriarchal ideology is carried out by both the genders.

The findings of the third chapter of analysis (chapter 7) are based on the impacts of domestic violence on women and those related to them particularly their children. One of the severe consequences were suicidal attempts by women of the rural areas which shows that they have less avenues of support available that resulted in attempts to end their lives. As this research has highlighted the hidden nature of sexual violence in the Punjabi context, this results in lack of information to women, particularly uneducated, about their rights to bodily integrity. Reproductive and sexual health of women was particularly at risk if they were having child marriages, uneducated, or belonging to the Christian faith as the consumption of alcohol is legally allowed to the Christian community compared to the Muslim population. Consequently, violence under the influence of alcohol resulted in marital rape of the Christian women. Due to the hidden/private nature of sexual violence and lack of accessibility to the health care

system, women of the rural residency were not able to get timely medical assistance particularly if there was no female doctor in the locality. The findings emphasise the need for a culturally appropriate sex and relationship education alongside advocacy to normalise discussion about sexual health related matters so that women can identify this type of violence.

This thesis has explained that the impacts of domestic violence on women vary due to their diverse circumstances; however, very few accessed the formal health care system for their psychological issues or physical injuries due to control of their mobility by the affinal families and the stigma attached to domestic violence. Besides this, the natal families of women, particularly their parents, were also having stresses due to the difficult circumstances of their daughters. As mentioned earlier in this section, Christian women, those from the rural areas, women married as children, and those into their second marriages were at risk of severely affected by the impacts of violence, the situation further exacerbates due to absence of supportive community and stigma of divorce that pressurise women to continue with their marriages. Domestic violence in the home is also a risk factor for children to get abuse from their parents that have consequences on their personalities. The findings of this study demonstrate that not every child learn to be violent which contradicts with the postulates of the Social Learning Theory. However, gender differences were apparent as boys were aggressive compared to girls, while expressing themselves, in response to violence and abuse. Besides, children are also used as a tool to exploit women and many do not take initiatives to get separated from their abusers because of children. The role of the government and schools are crucial in this regard to identify and protect such children living in an environment of fear and abuse. However, inattention of the government and lack of training of teachers, related to such matters, further contribute to increase the burden of stress for children.

The last chapter of analysis (chapter 8) is related to the protection of women from domestic violence and covers the formal and informal support available alongside women's own measures to protect themselves. The findings reflect that the process of seeking informal help is complex and shaped by the individual circumstances, socioeconomic factors, cultural norms and systemic barriers. While comparing women, it was found out that uneducated women were more concerned about the honour of their families. The data indicates that most of the women turned towards their natal families to get support; however, there was inconsistency in the provision of support to women due to lack of resources and changing circumstances of the natal families. In addition, the role of the *Panchayat system* was also highlighted by the women particularly from the rural background to resolve such matters. The patriarchal ideology of the

society and the gendered spaces also reflect in the formal institutions and women were aware of it. Resultantly, very few women accessed a formal support particularly when they were left with no other choice. These women have to suffer barriers due to male domination, complex judicial processes, and malpractices particularly in the police and the judiciary that poses additional challenges. Paradoxically, in domestic violence, the honour of the family is considered paramount than the basic rights of a woman to live with respect and dignity. Therefore, one of the considerations for women were to protect the honour of their families alongside structural barriers that hinder them in approaching the formal support system.

Alongside cultural barriers to preserve the family honour, religious restrictions also contributed in the case of Christian women as they are discouraged through the preaching of Christianity that marriage is a lifelong relationship. The findings have shown that accessing the courts by the Christian women was not feasible due to lacunas in the Christian divorce law. The dissolution of a Christian marriage is not permissible based on allegations of domestic violence. This research has a strong emphasis in changing the police attitude towards domestic violence through training and awareness and making women, particularly from the rural areas, more aware of the services provided by the non-governmental organisations. Due to the complex nature of domestic violence, the accounts of women demonstrate that their responses to violence and strategies to deal with it were diverse. However, they continue their struggle to deal with it which denotes that the findings of this research are in contradiction with the notion of 'learned helplessness' as women, sometimes, delay their resistance keeping in view their circumstances (Palker-Corell and Marcus, 2004). The women of the rural localities had extreme reactions to violence in the form of suicide attempts. Similarly, Christian women of the rural residency got involved with other men outside of their marriage which indicates that the rural environment put more control on women and provide less avenues of support that results in such responses. However, religion was a source of support that gave them hope to live their lives.

One of the main emphasis to eradicate domestic violence from the society, according to the study data, is education of women and their economic independence. Another area that women highlighted is the change in gendered norms benefitting men and consider women as subordinate and carriers of their family honour. Socialisation of both genders on equal footing is the way forward to change the patriarchal mindset of the society. As a secondary prevention, women were less interested in approaching the formal institutions. Therefore, they focused more on the informal support services at the local level particularly those from the rural

localities due to their mobility constraints and fear of divorce in case of approaching the police. Places of worship like church and mosque could contribute effectively by providing women a safe space to discuss issues of domestic violence and provide them support in a confidential manner. There is a possibility that women would face less resistance to access it due to the sacredness of these spaces. Besides, training and sensitisation of religious leaders are crucial to deal with domestic violence at the local level as mostly men head the prayers and sermons in these places. They would be in a position to dismantle patriarchal ideology and influence people particularly men in the community. Alongside this, legal barriers need to be removed through amendments in the law particularly affecting Christian women's right to divorce.

On the basis of the above findings, it is argued that domestic violence is a complex phenomenon due to the intersecting identities of women, structural and cultural barriers, and the involvement of the members of the affinal families to control women. The passive role of the state, through institutional inefficiencies and lack of amendment in laws, contributed to strengthen patriarchal structure and ideology. Hence, this research has shown that the traditional gender roles suits the state as it does not have to provide care to the sick and the elderly, as women perform the role of carers by giving such services to their families without any cost. Alongside this, domestic violence is normalised by the non-interfering approach of the institutions despite legislations to stop it which indicates the hegemony of cultural values and ideologies that strengthen inequality of genders (Parson, 2013).

9.3 Original contribution to knowledge and Generalizability of the Study

This is the first ever study to examine women's perceptions and experiences of domestic violence by considering their identity based on religion and geographical location. Empirically, the study has contributed to the sociological understanding of the conditions that promote inequality of genders and normalise domestic violence through detailed accounts of women's perspectives in the specific socio-cultural context of Punjab, Pakistan. Various aspects of violence that were not previously explored in the context of Pakistan have been possible thorough this study particularly, pre-marital and post-separation abuse, sexual violence and marital rape, substance abuse and violence. In addition, very little is known about women's contexts and issues of minority women that increases their burden of oppression and complicate their experiences. This study fills that gap and contributes to the field of gender and violence.

Theoretically, deploying patriarchy, patriarchal bargain, and intersectionality, in order to analyse women's statuses and positionality, particularly in the domestic sphere, has assisted to highlight the need for more nuanced understandings of the gendered power dynamics at the

societal and domestic level. It assisted to grasp the diversity within women that position them differently within the family and the society. This thesis contributes to the existing literature by highlighting that the trajectories of patriarchy and patriarchal bargains are complex in the Punjabi culture. It is not just a husband who dominates and control his wife, the active role of his parents and siblings influence him and thus, he controls the spouse according to the instructions of the family. Patriarchal bargain is denoted with the authority of a mother-in-law (Kandiyoti, 1988), but the complexity of this theoretical concept is evident from the findings of the study. In the affinal family, the power is derived by the siblings of a man alongside his mother and they use it to control his wife.

Women survivors suffer coercive control not only from their husbands but also from the in-laws. Those who confront and challenge the forms of patriarchy have to suffer the consequences. Moreover, in the context of Pakistan, religious mindset dominates and is used for personal and political gains (see chapter1 and 3). People are discriminated due to their religious affiliations and beliefs. This study furthers the intersectionality framework through the inclusion of Muslim and Christian women from the rural and the urban localities and thus, extends it beyond race and ethnicity. Alongside this, the personal narratives of women reveal that due to coercive control in their daily lives, violence is a process that curtail their freedom and, power is asserted through micro-management of their daily lives (Kelly and Westmarland, 2016). However, women continue their struggle to come out of their difficult circumstances which denotes that their passive strategies should not be tagged with 'Learned Helplessness' as they calculate the consequences of their actions and initiatives (Wilson et al., 1993; Palker-Corell and Marcus, 2004).

While discussing the impacts on children, the Social Learning Theory postulates intergenerational transmission of domestic violence as children learn aggressive behaviours through observing or experiencing in their homes (Anderson and Kras, 2005). However, there was contradictory evidence as the findings show that children behave differently despite socialised in a similar environment and not every child imitate violence later in life. The findings evidenced that the realities of Pakistani women vary as it is not just the patriarchal ideology, structural inequalities contribute and make complex trajectories of gender violence. Therefore, a single theoretical explanation is insufficient to grasp the phenomenon of domestic violence. Thus, the research extends the debate on the theoretical tools engaged in the study through the narratives of women participants.

Methodologically, the study contributes to and serves as an example of the advantages of using feminist methods of doing qualitative research to understand sensitive issues like domestic violence. Through this, women were able to share their personal stories which were hidden due to the socio-cultural barriers that discourage them to discuss violence and abuse by denoting it a personal matter. The approach adopted in this study enabled to explore and understand many facets of women's personal lives. Simultaneously, participants were able to reflect and exercise their agency despite a culture of silence to discuss matters regarding their sexual lives. In this way, the personal was political despite a lack of vocabulary to express their experiences but the feminist ways of doing research assisted to build connections between the researcher and the participants and made it possible for women to have a safe space. Thus, this method of data collection provided women a reflexive space where they were able to share, whatever they wanted to, through words and emotions.

In the context of Pakistan, this study contributes to the field of women and gender studies by voicing the marginalised groups and highlight their struggles and agency. This is the first study of this kind that has a focus on women based on their religious identity and thus, would provide a baseline for further exploration of the issues of women of the marginalised communities in Pakistan. Besides, this research has established that patriarchy has different forms in the specific socio-cultural context of Pakistan and considering men as oppressors and women always oppressed is questionable. The category 'women' is complex due to various intersections and besides, practice of patriarchy alongside patriarchal bargain by women provides nuanced understanding of gender relations and the phenomenon of domestic violence.

Although this study was carried out in two districts of the Punjab province of Pakistan, the situation is similar across the country due to the patriarchal culture of the Pakistani society and the structural barriers that create inequality of genders. This creates certain homogeneity and thus, the findings can be used for a broader understanding of the other settings of Pakistan more generally. Through this study, the lives and issues of other minority women could be understood.

9.4 Policy Implications and Recommendations

Several policy implications and recommendations emerge from this study; however, there is no 'one size fits all' solution to domestic violence. The diversity of experiences and various identities of women require different interventions and thus, the solutions must acknowledge that and sort it out accordingly (Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005). Besides, women participants emphasised more on primary prevention through education, change of culture and socialisation

practices that could prevent the occurrence of domestic violence. Therefore, a holistic approach is required as domestic violence is not a simple issue to be resolved through a few steps. Awareness through educational campaigns and social service interventions in the form of advocacy and community-based support groups should be introduced. This should also connect women to other services and agencies.

Women of the rural areas were more in support of dispute resolution at the local level. Village committees, that include women, could be formed for discussing such issues and creating awareness about the impacts of domestic violence on families, women, and children. The role of non-governmental organisations could be significant to provide awareness of women's rights at the local level and also about the available services and counselling facilities.

A gradual change in the family residential patterns could reduce son preference and patriarchal bargain. For this purpose, married women living with their parents should not be stigmatised as they would be able to provide care to their parents in old age and give them financial support. In this way, parents would equally invest in the education and grooming of their daughters. However, this would not, in any way, reduce the burden of care on women as they do the same duties with their parents-in-law. State should take responsibility of the sick and the elderly population by introducing welfare policies so that the burden of care on women could be reduced.

Religion has a strong influence in the local context, religious places and leaders could be engaged informally for community awareness and sensitisation about equality of genders and domestic violence. The first step towards this would be the training of religious leaders. Daily prayers and church gatherings could be used to discuss and reflect on this sensitive issue by focusing on the respect and equality of both the spouses in a marriage relationship. Besides, men need to be advocated about the equal respect of their wives alongside their parents and siblings. Such an initiative would assist in changing the patriarchal mindset of the society and would be more acceptable for people.

Culturally appropriate sex and relationship education, with a particular emphasis on bodily rights and the importance of consent in relationships, should be introduced in the educational institutions. Currently, there is no such curriculum to create awareness in the youth how to streamline themselves and shape their relationships. Since it is a sensitive issue in Pakistan, government needs to devise a policy and introduce it in the curriculum otherwise, initiatives from outside the government would create a hostile environment particularly by the orthodox

religious groups. Besides this, sexual violence in marriage should be explicitly criminalised as there is a confusion in the law that leads to diverse interpretations and thus, a culture of silence on this type of violence.

Sensitization of the police and health care professionals towards domestic violence is a dire need of time alongside speedy judicial process as the findings are evident that accessing formal services pose several challenges for the survivors. Moreover, issues of corruption, male domination, long-procedures to attain justice, safety of women, financial constraints, and lack of trust result in under-reporting of domestic violence. This raises the need for bureaucratic changes alongside gender sensitive trainings of the personnel which is possible through government interventions. The Government of Punjab had introduced a violence against women centre in the Multan district that provides all essential services under one roof to the women survivors including those of domestic violence (Khan, 2019). Such a model should be replicated in other districts of Punjab so that integrated services could be accessible to women.

Welfare assistance, in the form of housing and financial support, for women survivors is a way to keep them think of leaving abusive relationships. Otherwise, they have to depend on their natal families for such a support that forces them to continue with the abusers due to their own constraints. Alongside this, a comprehensive policy needs to be devised to encourage part-time work for women with affordable childcare facilities that would assist in their economic independence.

A culture that normalises domestic violence needs to be changed through open and frequent discussion on electronic media which is the most effective way in the context of Pakistan. An integrated approach is required to educate the public about the personal and social consequences of domestic violence particularly its impacts on the mental health of women and children. The use of counselling services should be made possible for women survivors of domestic violence and for their children and help them develop a safety plan for themselves instead of a culture that stigmatises such issues and disregard its importance (Kumar et al., 2013).

The existing laws need to be reviewed and amended according to the changing social circumstances. The Christian divorce law is one that needs amendment so that divorce could be possible on the basis of irretrievable breakdown of the marriage. Domestic violence under the influence of alcohol and drugs should be a crime and community should also be sensitised about this as they believe that such an attitude from a husband is normal and acceptable.

Implementation of law is an issue as child marriages are still common despite the availability of the child marriage restraint act. Education of girls is the way forward as they are considered a burden and, by doing their marriages early their families try to avoid their responsibilities. Awareness about the importance of education or alternatively, vocational and technical training of girls for their economic independence and strict implementation of the law could help decrease this trend among low-income families.

The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016 does not consider the intersections of inequalities that contribute to impact women belonging to the under-represented groups particularly religious minorities. Government needs to take additional measures to protect the minority women and those from the rural localities as these groups are left behind when accessing the available services. Besides, arrangements should be put in place to have a national level data available to identify how big is the problem, not all the women who suffer report. However, prevalence rate could be a starting point to introduce and shape up interventions.

9.5 Recommendations for Future Research

The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act 2016 had proposed several initiatives including the formation of district level women protection committees and to establish a database for monitoring and evaluation purposes. However, implementation of this law is largely unassessed. Besides this, policy review regarding domestic violence of all the provinces of Pakistan need to be done as there is lack of uniformity across the provinces and their ways to deal with the issue of domestic violence.

The perspectives of religious leaders, particularly from the rural areas and those belonging to the Christian faith should be explored. This study had interviewed one priest from the Christianity; however, a comprehensive study is required to understand their perspectives and the ways their training could contribute to change the patriarchal mindset of the society.

A large-scale study is required to know ‘how big is the problem’ with a particular focus on diverse communities including the ethnic and religious minorities. Though literature in the context of Pakistan reflects the issues of religious minorities and their forced conversions, an emphasis on the positionality of minority women in the domestic sphere and issues of domestic and intimate partner violence need to be investigated.

This research evidenced the involvement of multiple perpetrators in domestic violence against women. This raises the need for further research to understand the power dynamics in the

domestic sphere. For this purpose, the perspectives of men/husbands and their families particularly mothers-in-law are equally important to know about their perceptions of what constitute as domestic violence for them. This would assist in informing policy and broader interventions to change the society.

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APPENDIX

Interview Schedule

Name _____ **Age** _____

Education _____ **Type of residence:** Rural / Urban

Religion: Christianity / Islam **Occupation:** _____

Age at Marriage: _____ **Current Living arrangements:** Joint / Nuclear

No. of children: _____ Boys: _____, Girls: _____

A. Perceptions about Gender Roles and Relations

1. Tell me something how do you live with the family?
   What men/ women do
   What men/ women should be done
2. How do society perceive men?
3. How do society perceive women?
4. Who make decisions in your home?
5. In your opinion who should have a decision- making position in the home?
6. Tell me your experience of how do you get treated at home by the family members?
7. How should women be treated at home?
8. Tell me something about your social life (your time with friends, family)?
9. Do women in the village/ city have a social life. Give me some details of it.

B. Perceptions of Domestic Violence

1. What do you think about domestic violence, how prominent is domestic violence in Pakistan?
2. Has anybody from your friends/family ever experienced domestic violence?
3. In your opinion what type of acts are domestic violence?
4. What are the factors that influence the vulnerability of women to domestic violence?
5. In your opinion do the members from the husband's family have any role in domestic violence?
6. Do you think that the family of the woman should interfere if she is suffering from domestic violence?
7. Do you ever discuss with your son about domestic violence?

8. In your opinion what does the religion say about domestic violence?
9. Do you have any idea what is the view in your community about domestic violence?
10. If any of your friends or family member suffer violence do anybody from the neighbour ever interfere?
11. How the community respond to such incidents? Like if people in the surroundings have an idea that violence is being committed, do they interfere?
12. Do people in the community should interfere to such incidents?

C. Consequences of Domestic Violence

1. Does your friend/family member share with anybody about her circumstances?
2. What types of consequences a woman can suffer if she shares with anybody?
3. In your opinion, what could be the possible impacts of domestic violence on women?
4. Do you think she should share with her family (parents, siblings) about domestic violence?
5. Do you feel any difference between urban and rural women of the consequences of domestic violence?

D. Protective Mechanisms

1. Does your friend/family member have any help available?
2. Should women approach their parental families for protection from domestic violence?
3. Does your friend/family member is aware of any institutional protection available?
4. What types of legal and institutional protections are available to women?
5. Does your friend/ family member ever access these services (Police, Hospital, Crisis centre) in case of domestic violence?
6. What types of measures need to be taken to overcome domestic violence in the village/ city?
7. Do you think that special measures are needed for minority women to protect them from domestic violence?