

**RESEARCH PAPER****Laws against Domestic Violence in Pakistan: An Appraisal****¹Muhammad Hassan Zia* ² Huma Hassan**

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ABSTRACT

Domestic violence is an ever-growing menace that has penetrated Western as well as Eastern society. Pakistan being a developing country and lagging far behind in education and awareness is suffering from domestic abuse at large. Being an Islamic state making amendments to the law for the rights of women becomes a tricky turn owing to sheer criticism from the conservative lobby. The legal body has taken action in this regard and various laws are in the process of being enacted. This paper aims to define domestic violence in legal jargon and to present an appraisal of the laws being enacted at the federal and provincial levels to safeguard the rights of the weak. It is analytical research that comprehends, evaluates, and analyzes the enactment of various human rights laws to prevent domestic violence in the Pakistani community and assesses their viability.

KEYWORDS Abuse, Acid Attacks, Domestic Violence, Dowry Killing, Hudood Ordinance, Psychological Abuse

Introduction

Pakistan continues to suffer from the menace of domestic violence. Almost 10 and 20 percent of women in Pakistan still suffer from domestic abuse (Gosselin, 2009). The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reports that 32% of women suffer physical violence from their husbands and 25% experience emotional abuse. Women are killed, maimed, or disabled due to domestic violence (Hansar, 2007). However, Domestic abuse does not merely refer to physical but also to sexual, economic, and psychological abuse (Ajmal, 2012). Pakistan, passing through political doldrums, has been unable to provide enough shelters for the women in the country, and law enforcement agencies fail to comprehend the intensity of the crime of domestic violence owing to the fact that culturally domestic violence is considered a private matter which is not meant to be publicized. Unfortunately, this mentality leaves women a meager chance to escape from a violent environment. The majority of victims of violence have no legal recourse (Zakar et.al., 2013). Pakistan is the Islamic Republic where only the legislative fraternity cannot make an independent decision without the consultation of the Islamic lobby. The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), in addition to the official government, is a significant source of legislative input. The Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), a constitutional body established in 1973, is in charge of making sure that particular legislation does not conflict with Islam, particularly the Quran and the Sunnah. 18 men and 1 woman make up the CII's membership of 19, according to the Council of Islamic Ideology.

Literature Review

Domestic abuse is an existing reality in Pakistan. Researchers have actively participated in research in this field. Accordingly, it has been found that domestic violence is intense in rural Afghan communities residing in Pakistan (Zakar, 2015). In quantitative research published in the Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences, it has been concluded that

out of 218 women in the gynecology ward, 97% had been victims of some sort of domestic violence from being subjected to beatings to non-consensual sex (Shaikh, Masood Ali, 2003). Similarly, research by the UN has shown 90% of psychological abuse and 50% of sexual violence (Nasrullah et al., 2009) and these statistics have been confirmed by the Pakistan Nation Women's Division.

In Burki's (2013) study, she examines the status of women in different periods, spanning from 1947 to the present day. One of her main focuses is the analysis of the Hudood Ordinances from 1979, which she considers to be a highly regressive period for women in Pakistan, lasting until August 1988. These ordinances subjected women to constant danger, as they faced the risk of being lashed or stoned to death for accusations of adultery. She also delves into the policies of Benazir Bhutto, who attempted to improve the lives of women by reversing the Islamization process. As part of Bhutto's governance, many women prisoners were released. (Burki, 2013). The author scrutinizes the Hudood Ordinance further and presents cases of rape, where victims were not only subjected to assault but also faced imprisonment and were socially branded as "forever dishonored" (Muzaffar, et. al. 2017; Pakeeza, 2015). Moreover, Burki highlights instances where perpetrators were often set free due to "lack of evidence". In conclusion, she argues that legislative measures alone will not be effective unless there is widespread public support and the religious elements of society stop treating women as mere possessions under the pretext of Islam (Burki, 2013).

Tarar et al., (2017) conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews in Punjab to examine the various forms of violence against women, including direct, indirect, and cultural violence. Their primary finding reveals that the majority of these cases remain unreported because they are considered to be private matters. The authors also emphasize that the criminal justice system displays gender prejudice, and reporting a case often takes a backseat to preserving family honor. Additionally, Tarar et al.,(2017) recount instances where victims of sexual assault and torture were subjected to further abuse at police stations, contributing to the ongoing reluctance to report such incidents (Dugan,2003). The authors discuss various laws relevant to women's rights, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Hudood Ordinance of 1979, the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act of 2006, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2010 (addressing sexual harassment), The Guardians and Wards Act of 1890, and the Protection against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act of 2009 (Tarar et al., 2017).

There is a need to highlight the issue of domestic violence and to talk about its legislative measures so as to motivate the provincial assemblies to amend and enact laws that are needed to safeguard the vulnerable. The present paper serves to bring in the limelight the process of legislation.

Material and Methods

The doctrinal legal research methodology was adopted for this article. In this research, an analytical approach is used to present and portray various judicial statements based on technological evidence. Information is gathered from a variety of legal resources, including scholarly papers, statutes, case laws, and statutory codes.

Concept of Domestic Violence

This paper primarily focuses on the appraisal of the legal perspective of domestic violence in Pakistan. Here first we look at the definition of domestic violence to clarify its scope and then evaluate and analyze different laws at the federal as well as provincial level that have been enacted to curb the spread of domestic violence in its different aspects. World Health Organization defines domestic violence as physical and psychological distress

which includes forceful sexual acts towards partners primarily women. Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2012 provides us an elaborative definition in the following words: "all acts of gender-based and other physical or psychological abuse committed by a respondent against women, children or other vulnerable persons..."

It's an encompassing definition that further narrows down to different actions that may fall under the category of domestic violence like attempt to assault, emotional abuse, psychological or verbal abuse, as well as stalking and harassment. Domestic Violence Protection Bill 2012 defines domestic violence on the same lines as discussed above. It refers to all gender-based and psychological or physical abuse against children, women, and vulnerable persons by anyone who has been in a domestic relationship with them. Moreover, this bill has elaborated upon "Emotional, psychological and verbal abuse," which means: "a pattern of degrading or humiliating conduct towards the victim, including but not limited to,— (i) repeated exhibition of obsessive possessiveness or jealousy constituting serious invasion of the victim's privacy, liberty, integrity and security; (ii) insults or ridicule; (iii) threat to cause physical pain; (iv) threat of malicious prosecution; (v) blaming a spouse of immorality; (vi) threats of divorce; (vii) baselessly blaming or imputing insanity, or citing bareness of a spouse with the intention to marry again; and (viii) bringing false allegation upon the character of a female member by any member of the shared household" (Zakar et al., 2015).

In Pakistan, dowry death is among the common violence which is reported as bride burning or "stove deaths". This issue has been elaborated upon by Shahnaz Bukhari as she explains: A terrible trend suggests these women are being murdered on purpose, or else Pakistan is home to possessed stoves that burn only young housewives and have a particular fondness for genitalia. Another form of domestic violence recurring in Pakistan is honor killing. It has been reported that there are almost 2,000 killings every four years. According to different research, honor killing is mostly done by spouses owing to alleged extramarital affairs. Moreover, it has been shown that 60.8% of the 373 women had been victims of Psychological abuse. Surprisingly, the ratio of women suffering from psychological abuse surpasses the number of women suffering from sexual or physical violence (Zakar et al., 2015).

Legal Framework of Domestic Laws in Pakistan

There have been certain efforts from women parliamentarians to enact Protection bills for women. Ms. Yasmeen Rehman proposed a Domestic Violence Protection bill in 2009 but it faced sheer criticism from the religious lobby and it was pointed out that this bill ignored elderly and weak men who also faced domestic violence. This bill was re-tabled in 2012 and it is important to elaborate on the Bill 2012 to comprehend it.

Domestic abuse has been a topic of discussion and debate for quite some time. The seriousness of domestic violence is amplified by the fact that it occurs in a private setting. It is vital to criminalize the conduct because of the trauma and intolerable suffering it causes to the victim. This bill responds to the National Policy for Development and empowerment of Women and the Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women by adopting zero tolerance for violence against women and "introducing positive legislation on domestic violence" (Ashraf, 2017).

Domestic Violence Protection Bill 2012 has also provided a definition of sexual abuse as "any conduct of sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades or otherwise violates the dignity of the aggrieved person which may include,— compelling the wife to cohabit with anybody other than the husband; (ii) any kind of sexual abuse including sexual harassment of a member of the family. This indicates that the Bill 2012 adequately covers various forms of domestic violence by addressing different types of violence. Additionally, Bill 2012 has achieved a landmark by bringing out domestic violence out of the realm of

private matters (Gosselin, 2014). Under this legislation, "An aggrieved person or any other person authorized by the aggrieved person on this behalf may present a petition to the Court." Once a petition is received from the aggrieved party, the court issues a notice to the accused, allowing them seven days to respond and provide reasons why a protection order should not be issued against them for the alleged act or acts of domestic violence. However, the perpetrator of domestic violence is free to move about and acquire proof to support their defense during this time (Brightman, 2015).

The Bill also specifies that any adjournments made during the hearing must be recorded by the Court and that the petition must be decided within ninety days. If the Court finds prima facie evidence of domestic abuse, a number of safeguards can be put in place to protect the harmed party. These measures include prohibiting the respondent from using any form of domestic violence, breaking into the victim's place of employment or school (if the victim is a child), communicating with the victim in any way, and hurting the victim's dependents, relatives, or people who are helping the victim (Tarar et al., 2017). In addition, the Bill gives the court the authority to impose further requirements or give any required instructions in order to safeguard the security and safety of the party who is being wronged or any minors involved. Furthermore, the court has the power to direct the officer in command of the closest police station to provide security for the party that feels aggrieved. The Bill does not expressly include jail time as a form of punishment for violators. Instead, it introduces the idea of giving the harmed party financial relief (Gishkori, 2023).

The Bill 2012 only applies to the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), which is home to about 2 million people out of Pakistan's 220 million people total population. There is a widespread misperception that the measure is legislation and that it covers the entirety of Pakistan despite its narrow scope. Actually, the measure was adopted by the Senate in 2012 after first being enacted by the National Assembly in 2009. However, it is still in the debate stage and has not yet been made into law. Also unavailable is the official clearance that was published in the Pakistani Gazette (Saleem, 2017).

The Pakistani media, which frequently refers to the bill as an act or a law as well as some academics, have contributed to this misconception. The bill does not appear on the list of official ICT actions, and there has been no official confirmation from the ICT government (Senate of Pakistan, 2016). It is sometimes referred to as a bill by UN Women. Furthermore, it is widely held that laws prohibiting domestic violence can properly shield victims and discourage would-be attackers from using violence. But this presumption needs to be explored thoroughly. It is important to remember that the government is in charge of ensuring that this Act and its provisions are widely known by using print and electronic media in Urdu and regional languages (Saleem, 2017).

The development of democracy in Pakistan has been negatively impacted by the wide variety of social groups and opposing political viewpoints. Even though Pakistan was first created as a homeland for the Muslim majority population from India, the topic of how religion shapes the nation's identity is still complicated and unresolved (Widiss, 2007). In the past 70 years, Pakistan has had sudden regime transitions, alternating between military and civilian governments, which has resulted in intense violence and unrest. Despite the deployment of anti-corruption measures, the existence of corruption within political and judicial institutions continues to be a significant concern (Neudorf, 2017).

The Pakistani government has moved several pieces of legislation in an effort to hold people accountable. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2016 is an illustration of this. Eight articles of Pakistan's Penal Code (National Assembly Secretariat, 2016) have been amended as a result of this Act, which explicitly targets and outlaws honor killings. The statute shows the government's determination to deal with such horrible crimes by closing the loophole that permits murderers to be pardoned by family members (Zahra-Malik, 2016). The number of honor killings has not decreased, despite the passage of this law

(Human Rights Watch, 2017). This shows that even while there are legal sanctions in place to discourage and punish perpetrators, more ingrained societal and cultural factors may still play a substantial role in sustaining this problem. The root social norms and attitudes that support violence and discrimination against women must be addressed in order to effectively address honor killings.

Additionally, in 1986, blasphemy politics were added to Pakistan's Penal Code, making it illegal and enforcing punishments such as fines, incarceration, and even death. Political parties have resisted changing the law, even after Punjab's governor Salman Taseer, a vociferous opponent of it, passed away in 2011. The introduction of legislation that forbade traditional methods of approaching women while supporting stringent Islamic laws in Pakistan's political discourse creates a stark contrast. Rumi (2018) accurately summarizes the issue, stating that "Pakistani society is polarized between the avowed secularist civil society and the religiously inclined majority who speak an altogether different language, resulting in a breakdown".

To view the occurrence of problem representation, we will examine its relationship to relevant Pakistani legislation and human rights agreements. The concept of women's responsibilities and position in Pakistan underwent a radical change when the Protection of Women Act was passed in 2006. It gave women the chance to seek legal representation in rape and incest cases, allowing them to seek justice through Pakistan's Penal Code procedures rather than through Shariah Courts. The law has, however, consistently been attacked by Pakistani Islamists who claim it is not Islamic. The Hudood Ordinances' repressive effects were successfully countered by the act, which was a huge victory for Pakistani women despite their efforts (Burki, 2013).

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2004 declared honor killings to be murders and authorized prosecution. The measure forbade the custom of marrying off women to settle disputes and stipulated a maximum sentence of ten years in prison for disobedience (Ellis, 2020). In order to allow for the prosecution of cases involving honor killings, 12 articles of the Code of Criminal Procedure were changed. The Penal and Criminal Codes, as well as other Ordinances and laws, underwent major and progressive modifications in 2006 as a result of the Protection for Women Act. According to the modified law, anyone found guilty of "buying a person for purposes of prostitution, etc." could spend up to 25 years in jail (Malik, 2016). Similar to murder, rape carries a death or prison sentence. The amendment also covers crimes including kidnapping and creating the impression that a marriage is legal. The revision of the Offence of Zina Ordinance, 1979, which permits non-Muslim witnesses in rape cases involving non-Muslim accused, as well as precise criteria for the court to determine witness reliability, are notable inclusions (Muzaffar, Met al. 2018)

Similarly, Sharmeen Obaid in her documentary brought attention towards the crime of acid attacks (Rodriguez, 2012). It has been reported by the Acid Survivors Foundation that almost 150 attacks occur every year and the majority of the victims are women. The Pakistan Penal Code has been amended by the Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act of 2011 to include a new offense called "Hurt caused by a corrosive substance" (Neudorf, 2017). Under this rule, those who commit acid assaults could receive a mandatory punishment of one million rupees, a life sentence, or both. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention against Torture (CAT) can both be referenced in this crucial step that protects women by making acid attacks illegal (Neudorf, 2017).

Legal Scenario of Domestic laws at the Provincial level

A number of provisions are introduced to protect women's rights by the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices - Criminal Law (Third Amendment) Act of 2011. It includes penalties for giving a woman in marriage, a ban on preventing women from inheriting

property, a ban on forced marriage, a ban on marriages based on the Holy Quran, and a ban on provincial governments meddling in rape convictions. The Balochistan Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, which closely resembles the Bill 2012, was passed in February 2014. But by acknowledging that a person who feels wronged can also be a guy, it made a significant distinction. In addition, the act expanded the definition of a vulnerable person to include those who are engaged as domestic help or servants. The new legislation also made certain procedural adjustments, intending to resolve the application within 30 days rather than the previous 90 days, and cutting the period for issuing the initial hearing from seven to three days (Gishkori, 2023).

In an effort to defend women's property ownership rights from being violated by harassment, pressure, force, or fraud, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government passed the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act in 2019. Despite being passed in 2019, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence (Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2019) Bill is not yet accepted as a valid law. The province's Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) measure was rejected by the CII in 2014 for being "anti-Islamic and blasphemous," which contributed to the delay in enacting the measure (Shaukat, 2016). Passing a bill to prevent domestic abuse was made more difficult as a result of this refusal. In the definition of a victim in the bill, women are clearly included but not children, men, or any other weak people. Additionally, gender-based violence is not specifically mentioned. The bill also severely restricts economic abuse, which is defined as "denial of food, clothing, or shelter in a domestic relationship to the victim (ibid)." Psychological abuse is described as the "psychological deterioration of the aggrieved person, which may result in anorexia, suicide attempt, or clinically proven depression " (Shaukat, 2016).

The Punjab Protection of Women Against Violence Act's adoption in 2016 demonstrated the KP government's commitment to defending women's rights. However, 30 political and religious groups fiercely opposed the Act, calling it un-Islamic (Hanif, 2016). The act was publicly rejected by the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), which claimed that it would undermine the authority that husbands have over their wives and that it should not disrupt the current subjection of women. The CII stressed the dominance of men over women and asserted that the act would be harmful to Pakistan's family structure, citing passages from the Quran (Siddiqi, 2016).

The clergy opposed a Punjab measure in 2016 that called for stiffer penalties for marrying off girls as young as eight years old. The single female member of the CII, Dr. Samia Raheel Qazi, defended the opposition by arguing that Islam accords men of higher standing than women and that the passage of such legislation would prevent dads from correcting their daughters or husbands from speaking to their spouses (Khan, 2016).

According to the Punjab Domestic Violence Act, a dependent kid is a "male child who is under the age of twelve years" and an aggrieved person is "a female who has been subjected to violence. According to this concept, all females are victims, leaving out other possible groupings. In addition, the child definition solely protects male children, excluding all female children and those who are 13 years old or older. The statute makes everyone a potential offender by allowing anyone against whom redress has been sought by the aggrieved person to be deemed a defendant. The act defines economic and psychological abuse in restrictive terms, much like the KP bill. However, it does give the victim an additional degree of protection by enabling the court to order the offender to wear a GPS tracker on his or her wrist or ankle for the course of the investigation. Unfortunately, the statute does not define sexual violence and excludes harassment. Most crucially, it fails to make domestic abuse a crime, leaving big holes in its ability to offer all-encompassing protection (Hanif, 2016).

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act was first passed by Sindh in Pakistan in 2013, making it an official law. The definitions of an aggrieved person, child, and

vulnerable person in the act are the same as those in the Bill 2012. The government is required to provide widespread exposure of the act, and it includes broadened definitions of numerous forms of violence. The term "informer" is also used to describe someone who has reliable information about an offense being committed in violation of this law. The law clearly outlines the penalties for each form of aggression, which can range from monetary compensation to two years in prison (ibid). This act is illegal, the same as in Balochistan (Siddiqi, 2016).

The entire nation of Pakistan is covered by all of the aforementioned laws and amendments. Pakistan was listed as the sixth-most hazardous country for women in 2018 despite the existence of this protective legislation (Husni et al., 2015). The Thomson Reuters Foundation bases its ranking on a number of variables, including healthcare, sexual and nonsexual violence, discrimination, and human trafficking. While human rights treaties are created at the international level, Simmons emphasizes that they are mostly dependent on domestic players for their success and that genuine political reform can only take place within the nation itself (Simmons, 2009).

Additionally, the ratification and execution of international treaties may result in abrupt changes to a country's agenda, sparking discussions regarding the treaties' adherence (Hadi,2017). However, the emphasis should be on substantive changes and human rights situations rather than just whether a government has fully complied with the ratified treaty. It is critical to understand that ratifying human rights agreements does not automatically result in a country's human rights situation improving. The implementation of human rights commitments can be difficult and international treaties may occasionally take precedence over national priorities (Gishkori, 2023).

Notably, Pakistan's adherence to human rights laws can inspire human rights advocates in a special way and give them effective political tools. In terms of human rights treaties, Pakistan can be categorized as a strategic ratifier using Simmons' theory of commitment from 2009. Some states ratify treaties as a result of the actions of other nations, in an effort to deflect criticism and obtain short-term diplomatic benefits. The rationale for this choice, however, may be to appease domestic or international audiences, and there are unknown hazards in the future. Furthermore, Simmons notes that because human rights agreements do not have adequate oversight, governments might gain from adopting a treaty even if they do not genuinely adhere to its provisions. Pakistan makes an effort to ratify human rights instruments and create domestic legislation that is in line with them, but the country's ingrained conventions and practices continue to place home norms above international standards, resulting in persistent human rights breaches (Simmons, 2009).

The Human Rights Watch (2020) report sharply criticizes Pakistan and draws attention to the country's ongoing human rights breaches. The existence of blasphemy laws that restrict religious freedom is one of these violations, as are numerous forms of discrimination (such as the prohibition of same-sex sexual activity), false accusations made against opposition parties, a lack of freedom of expression, and various sorts of discrimination. The research also highlights the ongoing violence against healthcare workers and the disturbing prevalence of abuse against women and children, who frequently receive insufficient help from the legal system (Siddiqi, 2016).

As a result, Pakistan's acceptance of international agreements may be interpreted as symbolic support for forward-thinking Western cultural ideals. However, it encounters strong opposition from local politics and culture, resulting in a discrepancy between declaring support for human rights and actually putting those rights into practice (Rashid, 2015).

Sindh Monitoring laws is difficult because of the region's ongoing warfare. No Domestic Violence (DV) Bill or Act is listed in the current list of laws adopted by the AJK

government. Instead, the AJK Penal Code includes offences against women that are identical to those in the Penal Code of Pakistan, including various types of sexual assault and harassment (Senate of Pakistan, 2017.) However, it is difficult and constrained to find information and research on the law and DV in AJK (Rashid, 2015).

No legislation addressing domestic abuse has been introduced in the Gilgit-Baltistan territory. The Gilgit-Baltistan Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, which was passed in 2013, shows that measures are being made to safeguard women and children. Additionally, the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Secretariat reported that the territory began enforcing the Gilgit-Baltistan Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Against Children Act and the Gilgit-Baltistan Child Marriages Restraint Act in 2015.

Conclusion

According to White Ribbon Pakistan, with a population of over 200 million, Pakistan is experiencing a worrying increase in violence against women, placing it in the alarming sixth place among the world's most hazardous nations for women. This tragic truth is supported by the figures that are now accessible. Women's safety in Pakistan and South Asia as a whole continues to be a hot-button subject. Due to highly rooted patriarchal attitudes that give men dominance over women and children, domestic violence is very common in Pakistan. In abusive situations, these standards frequently prevent women from standing up for their rights and asking for assistance. Furthermore, Pakistan's domestic violence laws are ill-defined, and the government has come under fire for failing to sufficiently safeguard women and children from assault. The situation regarding domestic violence legislation in different regions and territories of Pakistan is extremely chaotic, with unclear definitions and contradictory criminalization of domestic violence. The enactment of bills and acts, or their absence, adds to the complexity. Additionally, the problem is exacerbated by discriminatory treatment of certain groups, vague punishments, and excessively long delays in passing bills that can take more than eight years. Despite Pakistan ratifying CEDAW in 1996, numerous obstacles have hindered the establishment of legitimate and protective domestic violence legislation. As a result, the current legislation falls short of adequately safeguarding various vulnerable groups.

Recommendations

First and foremost, the government of Pakistan should adopt a more organized and transparent approach to tackle domestic violence. While having separate domestic violence legislation in each region is not necessarily incorrect, it would be beneficial to ensure better control over its implementation. One approach could be to establish dedicated monitoring systems independent of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII). Matters that do not directly involve religion, such as protecting individuals from various forms of domestic violence, should not be subject to questioning by religious groups.

While the CII has the authority to oppose different bills, if a domestic violence law is passed in one region, it should be applied uniformly in all regions. Prioritizing the suspension of domestic violence and implementing safety measures for the population could reduce the impact of the CII opposition. Furthermore, a comprehensive and non-discriminatory set of definitions in domestic violence laws should be adopted. This would make addressing the issue more straightforward and efficient. It is crucial for the rules governing domestic violence legislation to be more encompassing and applicable to all situations.

Nevertheless, the penalties for domestic violence should also be clearly defined and consistent across all regions. It is important to recognize that laws in Pakistan may not always be interpreted in the same way as they are in the traditional Western context. Nevertheless, the penalties for domestic violence should also be clearly defined and

consistent across all regions. It is important to recognize that laws in Pakistan may not always be interpreted in the same way as they are in the traditional Western context. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to consider an alternative approach to implementing laws (Rashid, 2015).

Since Pakistanis have their own unique understanding and interpretation of honor, the legislation could be designed to be less shaming but more focused on providing protection. To achieve this, the government should make an effort to gather and provide more comprehensive statistics and data on the prevalence of domestic violence. Such data could be utilized by both international and local NGOs to gain a better understanding of the problem, allowing local NGOs to redirect their efforts to other critical tasks. Additionally, it is crucial to introduce educational programs in schools that emphasize the importance of gender equality and present real-life experiences of domestic violence victims. By doing so, children would be encouraged to contemplate the potential consequences of domestic violence. Furthermore, targeted educational programs aimed at younger men, showcasing the negative effects of domestic violence, could be implemented with the assistance of the CEDAW commission (Widiss, 2007).

International organizations should take active measures to press Pakistan to comply with ratified human rights instruments, address the issue of domestic violence, and encourage the implementation of CEDAW. Key institutions in each region, such as the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), should be assigned more specific tasks with shorter deadlines. This would enable the production of more concise and focused reports on the concrete objectives achieved concerning the domestic violence issue. Moreover, there should be improved communication among these institutions to facilitate the exchange of reports and data (Hadi, 2017).

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