



Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan: Reasons and Possibilities

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ABSTRACT

Gender-based violence is a significant and growing problem in the modern world, and Pakistan is also grappling with this issue. It highlights significant shortcomings in the current systems of justice and laws. This research aims to address gender-based violence concerns in Pakistan by identifying the shortcomings in the current adjudication system and proposing reforms in the policy of interpretation and adjudication to eradicate gender-based violence. Gender-based violence has been a clearly characterized and effectively tackled problem in recent decades. An important achievement in this context was the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Gender-based Violence, which offered the first authoritative clarification of gender-based violence. Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 guarantees equal legal protection to all people, irrespective of their gender. In October 2019, the National Judicial Policy Making Committee (NJPMC) instructed Pakistan's high courts to establish dedicated tribunals just for handling cases related to gender-based violence, as part of ongoing efforts to combat this issue in the country. This study will examine the problems associated with gender-based violence in Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan, women, transgender, Gender Based Violence courts, SCMR, PLD, GBV,VAW

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the exploration of the issue of gender-based violence as a grave issue in Pakistan. It tries to investigate the issue from the perspective of question numbers first and second of the research whether or not the issue of gender based violence is taken as one of the grave issues of Pakistani society and whether the laws dealing with

the issue are quite enough to eliminate gender-based violence in Pakistan.

Concept and Definition of Gender-Based Violence

The Gender based violence has been well defined and well addressed only in the last few decades. Any act of violence against anyone on the basis of gender that causes her bodily, sexual, or emotional injury or suffering is considered violence against women. It includes all forms of terrible acts such as beatings, bullying, stalking, violence, mistreatment, rape, acid throwing, honour killings, etc.(Kimberlé, 1989)ⁱ

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women 1993, defines violence against transgender and women as an act "that causes or is likely to cause physical, sexual, psychological, or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether in public or private life" (UNDEVW,1993)ⁱⁱ.

Causes of Gender-Based Violence

Gender-based violence has numerous causes, and its intersections contribute to its potential for severe consequences. Irrespective of their background, all women dread masculine aggression and modify their conduct in order to avert it. There are multiple factors behind the issue of gender-based violence and are given below:

Community's Mind-set

The incidence of violence and the rates of reporting can be significantly influenced by a community's ideas towards gender roles, sexuality, familial violence, and sexual assault. Cultures that uphold male dominance over women stigmatize those who have been harmed. Males and women agree, for instance, that violence can be justified and that rape occurs when males cannot control their sex needs or when women "ask" to be raped. Excusatory loopholes are provided by culture and legislation that allow acts of cruelty against women in the form of defences, justifications, and mitigating factors (Moeen Cheema, 2008)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Gender discrimination

Most of the discrimination causes gender-based violence. Gender-based violence (GBV) targets women since they are its majority victims. Women are disproportionately affected by gender-based violence. Any discrimination, exclusion, or limitation that prevents women from practicing their human rights and basic freedoms, regardless of marital status, is gender prejudice. This bias is based on gender equality and can show in politics, economics, society, culture, civil rights, and other fields.

Cultural Rigidity

Cultural rigidity and traditional practices sustain in the society and support discrimination against women. These norms and procedures reinforce preconceived notions of gender. The cultural policies serve to reinforce gender stereotypes. Even though Islam is recognized as the state religion of Pakistan and 96.47 percent of the population identifies as Muslim, the majority of cultural norms regulating gender roles and relationships are interpreted through the lens of regional subcontinental customs or traditional practice.

Institutionalized Policies

The gender-based policies of the institutions have become a major challenge and an irrefutable social standard. This is known as structural or systemic discrimination.

Gender Ideology

The thought that girls are less valuable than males influences numerous aspects of a girl's development. Gender ideology manifests itself in commonplace cultural practices, such as the notion that young girls are of lesser worth or the expression of sorrow and humiliation upon the birth of a female child. Tribe, Biradari (paternal clan or lineage), and the fact that she is only temporarily residing with her nuclear family. Due to this cultural belief, preference is given to men when allocating wealth and resources, depriving girls and women of the right to inherit and portraying them negatively as evil luck bringers and even sacrificing them for male "honour"(Joseph, and Patsdaughter, 2014)^{iv}.

Lack of Education

Experience indicates that these regional customs and attitudes are ultimately rooted in the educational policies. Not only explicit instruction has an impact on education. They erupt forcefully from the responsible use of political official power and from the reality- changing effects of living under the law, which occur practically subconsciously. Take women and education as an illustration. Islam places a lot of value on education. However, a sizable number of girls are forbidden from continuing their education past the primary level due to traditional and conservative cultural attitudes that are mistakenly misconstrued as religious practices (Ioan Voicu, 2002)^v.

Protected Characteristics

The concept of "protected characteristics" refers to specific attributes or traits that are safeguarded by legal provisions to prevent discrimination and provide equal rights. Because only one gender experiences pregnancy, pregnancy discrimination is unquestionably one of the most difficult cases to prove. Childbirth and breastfeeding, which are only experienced by one sex, fall under this category. We will solely talk about pregnancy and maternity in this conversation. It is preferable to begin by assessing whether the prejudice is direct or indirect in the majority of pregnancy discrimination situations. For instance, it constitutes blatant discrimination if a pregnant woman is fired only because of her pregnancy, as happened to Beatrice Fernandez (Amjad, and Afzal)^{vi}.

Intersectional Discrimination

A person who goes to court may have experienced prejudice in other ways besides gender. For instance, a poor lady can experience two downward pressures. She can face prejudice because she is a woman and a low-income person. Another example is that male relatives frequently make these decisions for female victims, denying them the liberty to determine whether to file or withdraw a complaint. Also, economically disadvantaged people are more likely to be coerced and intimidated, which may lead them to not testify against their rapist or to falsely accuse someone of misidentifying the perpetrator. She faces bias owing to her gender and because justice is impartial, as the saying goes. Unfortunately, people with different degrees of visual impairment have unequal legal access (WHO)^{vii}.

Types of Gender-based Violence in Pakistan

Gender-based violence includes the most prevalent form, intimate partner violence, as well as acts of violence committed in online forums. Multiple instances of

violence can occur concurrently and reinforce one another because they are not mutually exclusive. Violence may also be motivated by a person's experiences with discrimination based on their race, handicap, age, socioeconomic status, religion, or sexual orientation. All women experience violence and discrimination based on gender. The following are examples of gender-based violence which include, Child marriage, Honour killings, genital mutilation of women, Slavery or sex trafficking, Partner violence in the home, Physical discipline, Sexual assault, Emotional aggression, and Psychological aggression (John Simister, 2007)^{viii}.

Rape and Sexual Assault

In accordance with Section 377A of the Pakistan Penal Code of 1860 punishes individuals with rape rather than child sexual abuse, if it is relevant. Engaging in sexual assault or attempting to sexually assault a child has same gravity and consequences as committing rape against an adult.

Zina

A man and a woman who are not wedded to one another and engage in consensual sexual activity through penetration are said to have engaged in Zina. To prove Zina, four morally decent Muslims must testify that they saw ilaj, or sexual intercourse, without confessing. Zina can only be done by men or women. Although men and women commit zina, women are more likely to be charged and convicted. Despite males being engaged, Justice Haziqul Khairi noted in a 2017 speech that just 1,600 women had been charged with adultery (Aziz, and Sicangco)^{ix}. In *Safia Bibi v. State*, an incredibly blind domestic worker (zina bil-jabr) claimed that she had been sexually assaulted. She had a baby. Under to Section 10(2) of the Zina Ordinance, the lower court imposed a three-year jail term, 15 lashings, and a PRs100 fine upon her. Upon appeal, she was acquitted. In the case of *Zafran Bibi v. State*, the lower court rendered a verdict stating that "Ms. Zafran had admitted to her offense by alleging that her brother-in-law had raped her." Furthermore, it is worth noting that she does not disavow her illegitimate kid, and the fact that Zafran Bibi's sentence was reversed on appeal serves as evidence of her involvement in zina (*Zafran Bibi v. State* (2002)^x.

Acid Attacks

Between 1999 and 2019, more than 3,400 instances of acid burning were documented. Chemical burns, which feel like being scalded by boiling water and cause excruciating pain that extends deeper into the bones, teeth, and eyes, are among the most agonizing injuries. Women are humiliated or disfigured by intentional damage after obtaining a divorce or rejecting a marriage proposal. Section 336B requires a 14-year prison sentence and a PRs1 million fine. However, judicial gaps let many perpetrators go free.

The following cases involve acid attack defendants' legal punishment: After his girlfriend rejected his marriage proposal, Asmatullah attacked her with acid. The attack caused facial defects in the 24-year-old, according to doctors. The culprit was sentenced to 25 years in jail for two offenses under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997, 10 years under Section 324 of the Pakistan Penal Code, and a PRs3.9 million fine to compensate the victim. A 14-year sentence was handed down by an antiterrorism court to a man who assaulted a flight attendant with acid in July 2015 after she rejected his marriage proposal.

In addition, the court ordered the perpetrator to pay more than 800,000 Pakistani rupees in diyat (compensation) to the victim, or he must serve the remainder of his sentence in prison (Anam Saleem, and Ghania Khan, 2020)^{xi}.

The Online GBV (Gender-Based Violence)

Men and women can both be targets of online harassment, but Women are disproportionately affected by cyberbullying, which has significant consequences. Internet-based dangers frequently instill fear. Internet-related gender-based violence (GBV) encompasses: Cyber stalking refers to the unwanted monitoring or surveillance of individuals on the internet or other electronic platforms and applications. An act of conduct that inflicts damage upon others. The inclusion of cyberbullying, digital threats, and extortion is present. Examining internet sexual harassment is more challenging and susceptible to trivialization. Victims are frequently advised to simply disregard it.

Intimate Partner Violence (Domestic Violence)

The survey done by the National Institute of Demographic Studies in Pakistan provides insight into the widespread problem of intimate partner violence (IPV), presenting shocking numbers that expose the magnitude of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse suffered by women from different demographic groups. It is alarming to observe that 34% of married women have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from their partners, with 26% specifically identifying physical violence as the second most prevalent kind. The Federally Administered Tribal Area, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have the highest rates of physical violence against women, whereas Sindh has a lesser occurrence of such incidents. Of particular concern is the disclosure that intimate partner violence (IPV) frequently begins throughout adolescence, with 25% of adolescent girls reporting instances of abuse. Women who experience intimate partner violence (IPV) are at a higher risk of giving birth to babies with low birth weight, having abortions, and suffering depression. Nevertheless, even if violence is widespread, a considerable number of victims choose not to speak out, and only a tiny percentage seek assistance from legal, law enforcement, or social service organizations. This is mostly due to fear or an inability to tolerate more violence. This emphasizes the immediate necessity for all-encompassing measures to tackle intimate partner violence (IPV), offer assistance to victims, and question the cultural and societal standards that sustain such acts of violence (Shmyla Khan, 2017)^{xii}.

Economic Violence

The concept of economic violence refers to the use of economic means or mechanisms to exert control, dominance, or harm over individuals or groups subject to the Constitution and any reasonable legal restrictions, every Pakistani citizen is guaranteed the right to acquire, retain, and dispose of the property in any part of the country (Kainat, Shumaila, and Wajid, 2018)^{xiii}.

However, 66.6% of Pakistani women are unable to choose their line of work. Baluchistan is the most restrictive province in Pakistan, preventing 96% of its female residents from choosing their jobs in Baluchistan, 100% of women lack the freedom to travel, compared to about 66.1% of women across Pakistan (Kaori Izumi, 2007)^{xiv}.

Denying of Women's Inheritance Rights

Islam accords women the right to inherit property and considers denying a

woman her inheritance to be a grievous sin. In His last sermon (Khutbatul Wada', 632 A.D.), the Prophet (PBUH) exhorted his adherents to "consider the life and property of every Muslim a sacred trust." Return the items you were given to their rightful proprietors. Do no injury so no one can cause you harm (MD Cholem ullah, 2020)^{xv}.

In Pakistan, mostly women are deprived of their for granted right of inheritance. Women's "natural love and affection" for their brothers are used to persuade, intimidate, or coerce them into relinquishing their inheritance rights. To retain property within the family Women are also wedded within the family or according to the Qur'an (S.K. Pakistan, 2017) ^{xvi}.

A National Commission on Women survey found that 40.81 percent of women "succeeded in acquiring inheritance," with 45 percent owning movable property and 34.5 percent owning immovable property. Realistically, although women may inherit property, the males of the family continue to have authority over the property (Z. Abdul Aziz)^{xvii}.

Section 498A of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) was amended in 2010 to make disclaiming an inheritance a criminal offense. a crime to deny women's rights(S.498 PPC)^{xviii}. In 2012 and 2015, Section 135A of the Punjab Land Revenue Act of 1967 was amended in order to facilitate the speedy transfer of inherited property. In cases of inheritance, the Punjab Partition of Immovable Property Act of 2012 made it simpler to swiftly partition urban real estate. Both laws included provisions that ensured women's access to their inheritance. In the case of Mst. Kausar Bibi vs. Mst. Ayesha Bibi and 6 others, the Lahore High Court reprimanded the judicial official who disallowed the deceased's daughters from receiving their appropriate shares of the inheritance in favor of the deceased's son. The judge "should not be tolerated within the system," the court stated. both the judge and the recipients should be held accountable. The High Court ordered the court registrar to locate the judicial officer and, if he was still employed, to forward the case to the administrative judge for further action (Mst. Kausar Bibi vs. Mst. Ayesha Bibi and 6 others)^{xix}.

Honour Killing

Honour killing is the murder of women on the basis of their gender. Even though only 20% of homicides are committed by an intimate partner or family member, 82% of intimate partner homicide victims are women and girls (UNODC,2018)^{xx}. According to a report by the Office of Drugs and Crime of the United Nations, "the most dangerous individuals in women's lives are family members and intimate partners, who are responsible for 64 percent of all murders of women and girls. It is revolting and cannot be justified. However, brutal killings are portrayed as honourable and justified because certain actions of (typically) women in the family (such as choosing their own spouse, speaking with a man, or singing at a party) dishonour the males of the family, Wedding, messaging, and improperly preparing roti (bread).^{xxi}.

According to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the majority of the victims of Pakistan's honour killings are female, making Pakistan one of the country with the highest rate of honour killings worldwide. The murderer attempts to justify his or her actions by asserting that they were committed in the name of *ghairat* (honor). It may also upraise the slayer's societal standing in the minds of those unfamiliar with what Almighty

Allah commands in the Holy Qur'an. Even more lamentable is the fact that such murders lack honour. Until recently, those who committed femicide in the name of honour claimed that the victim was provoked into losing control, which led to the murder (Sidra Jamil, et al., 2021)^{xxii}.

Forced marriage

When at least one of the partners is forced into approving the union, it is considered forced. It infringes the fundamental right of parties (Paloma Duran, 2008)^{xxiii}.

The PPC's Section 365B makes it illegal to kidnap or take a woman where it is likely that she will be forced into marriage or persuaded to do so. Detaining a woman with criminal intent for illegal sexual contact is covered by PPC Section 496A. It seems that the authorities have a preference for the allegations under Sections 365B and 496A. However, relying just on criminal legislation is insufficient for preventing forced marriages. The government must tackle the cultural, economic, and social conventions that combine to expose girls and women to the danger of being married off at a young age and against their will.

Child Marriages

Child marriage is forced because minors cannot consent. Girls as early as 16 can marry in most regions, while guys must be 18. Sindh's marriage age is 18 for males and women. Betrothing and marrying a kid is illegal under CEDAW Article 16(2). Pakistani law prohibits this method. Section 366A PPC makes it unlawful to acquire a minor girl for forced sexual activity. Cultural norms and low rates make child marriage laws hard to enforce. According to data from 20 newspapers, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child found that girls are subjected to more harmful traditional practices than boys. Many weddings are not registered, making this issue hard to research (S.342 PPC)^{xxiv}.

The Watta Satta

The concept of "Watta Satta" refers to traditional practice in South Asia when two families agree to exchange marital partners. This is a form of marriage exchange. For example, a woman or girl from family A marries a man or boy from family B, and a woman or girl from family B marries a man or boy from family A (Sanchita Bhattacharya, 2020)^{xxv}. Occasionally, there may not be a suitable match, but because exchange marriages are required, they are compelled to marry. This is a common occurrence for families of all socioeconomic backgrounds, whether they reside in the metropolis or the countryside (Amar, Arshad, and Kashif.)^{xxvi}.

Ghag

Avaaz Lagana, also known as ghag, signifies the act of announcing something. Without the girl's or her family's consent, it is Pashtun's custom for a man to proclaim a woman to be his fiancée. The custom is still practiced despite being contrary to Islam, the Constitution, and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elimination of Customs of Ghag Act of 2013 (Amar, Arshad, and Kashif)^{xxvii}.

Marriage to the Holy Qur'an

The other mal social practice is to marry a girl to the Holy Qur'an just to secure the so-called sacredness of the family (Sanchita Bhattacharya)^{xxviii}. While section 498C of the Penal Code prohibits the morally and religiously reprehensible marriage of girls and

women to the Holy Qur'an. As mentioned previously in the section on inheritance, these marriages deprive women of their inheritance rights and property ownership rights. In Sindh, more than 5,000 women were wed to the Holy Qur'an in 2000.

Badla-E-Sulha, Swara, Wannu, Sung Chatti

Another horrifying type of forced marriage is the Badla-e-Sulha, Wannu, or Swara marriage, which is forbidden by Section 310A of the PPC. These are forced weddings known as compensation marriages, in which girls are given to the party who has been wronged as payment for the wrongs perpetrated by their male relatives. Compensation unions are frequently acknowledged as a means of maintaining harmony. But girls who are forcibly removed from their homes in this way frequently experience systemic abuse and are compelled to live in virtual servitude (Kabir Ahmed, 2000)^{xxix}.

Legislative Measures to Combat Gender-based Violence

In 2012, Punjab adopted a youth policy in 2012, including a section for females under the age of eighteen. Women's skill development is prioritized in both the Punjab Growth Strategy from 2015 and its Women Development Policy from 2018 to assist women gain entry to the labour market. By means of mentoring, training, access to credit and financial services, and market awareness, the Youth Policy seeks to foster an environment that is conducive to the growth and development of young people. It also promotes entrepreneurialism. Its strategies include eradicating gender-based adolescent behavior, making campuses safe and free of violence, allocating fifteen percent of public sector positions to women, educating students about reproductive rights, and depicting boys and girls equally in textbooks and public messages. The 2018 Women Development Policy for Punjab prioritizes granting young women with opportunities to acquire top-notch education, training, and expertise in order to foster their involvement in science, non-traditional subjects, computer literacy, and the mechanical industry. This policy is designed to eradicate gender discrimination.

It suggests that girls from underprivileged districts in South Punjab should receive special consideration when developing their abilities. Previous women's empowerment programs in Punjab (2012, 2014, and 2016) provided funding and loans for daycare facilities, lowered the age requirement for women to register for public employment, and provided maternity and paternity leave.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa possesses a 2017 Women Empowerment Policy, a 2015 Population Policy, and an all-inclusive 2016 Youth Policy. The KPK Youth Policy 2016 was created to combine the three pillars of youth development political, social, and economic empowerment—and to foster a safe and encouraging environment in which young people can realize their maximum potential.(ESYAD)^{xxx}. The primary goals of the Policy are to ensure that adolescents have access to the resources and services necessary for their holistic development, education, protection from health and substance risks, and protection of their right to a high standard of living. The 2015 population policy of KPK aims to expedite investments in female education and empowerment in order to support the attainment of population sector objectives.

Baluchistan Youth Policy (BYP) 2015 was drafted as required by the 18th Constitutional Amendment, but it was only a draft. The gaps in the draught policy have not been filled, there is presently no official youth policy statement, and no development

initiatives have been established (WEPF)^{xxxii}. Due to a lack of funds, the department only offers exposure visits to adolescents (Muhammad and Qazi, 2017).

To improve conditions for women and children certain legislative measures have been taken by the parliament of Pakistan in accordance with international law and CEDAW. Following are the laws related to protection of women and transgender and women empowerment:

The Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2011

The purpose of this law is to deter and punish individuals who cast acid on women. In addition to receiving a life sentence, perpetrators are fined 500,000 rupees under Section 336-B of the Pakistan Penal Code. In accordance with Section 336-B of PPC, perpetrators are sentenced to a 500,000 rupees fine and life imprisonment. There were more than 3,400 instances of acid combustion between 1999 and 2019. Chemical burns are among the most agonizing injuries because they feel similar to being scalded with scalding water and cause excruciating pain that extends into the bones, teeth, and eyes. Here are a few instances in which Asmatullah used acid to damage his ex-girlfriend after she refused to marry him. According to the physicians, the 24-year-old woman suffered facial scarring and eye injuries (TMIL, 2015)^{xxxiii}.

The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices Act, 2011

This law prohibits a number of oppressive and discriminatory practices against women in Pakistan. Under section 310-A of PPC, giving a woman in marriage for Badl-i-Sulh is illegal act and punishable by imprisonment for three to seven years and a fine of Rs. 500,000. Under section 498-A of PPC, depriving a woman of her inheritance through fraudulent or unlawful means is punishable by imprisonment for five to ten years and a fine of one million rupees. Under section 498-B of PPC, coerced marriages are punishable by 3 to 10 years in prison and a fine of Rs. 500,000 (The Prevention of Anti- Women Practices Act of 2011)^{xxxiii}.

The Punjab Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act, 2012

The passing of the Punjab Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (the Act), 2012 aimed to address the issue of workplace harassment against women and promote the reporting of such events through the Ombudsperson's office and Inquiry Committees. This Act mandates all Provincial and District Government bodies and authorities, which includes educational institutions and medical facilities to formulate inquiry committees for workplace harassment and post the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Women from Harassment at the Workplace (The PPAHWW Act, 2012)^{xxxiv}.

The Punjab Fair Representation of Women Act, 2014

The Punjab Fair Representation of Women Act of 2014 is a legislative measure aimed at promoting gender equality and ensuring adequate representation of women in various sectors within the Punjab region. This Act has amended the Statutes of 66 public bodies, to increase the representation of women to a minimum of 33% in each body. This legislation was historic and the first of its kind to increase the number of women in positions of authority within the public sector (The PFRW Act, 2014).

The Punjab Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 2015

According to the Punjab Marriage Restraint Act, any adult who marries a minor, defined as a male under the age of 18 or a female under the age of 16, faces up to six months in prison and a fine of Rs. 50,000. The penalties for a Nikah Registrar who conducts or solemnizes a marriage between two children, an adult, or a child are identical. Police/Union Council/Judicial Magistrate are able to receive complaints regarding marriages between minors. (The PMRA Act, 2015),^{xxxv}.

The Punjab Land Revenue Amendment Act, 2015

The Punjab Land Revenue Amendment Act, 2015 which amended the Section 141 of the Punjab Land Revenue Act of 1967 to ensure that women are not discriminated against during the litigation process. Instead of requiring a party to register a civil action, the Revenue Officer is required to decide the question of the division of the property. This will end the practice of compelling women to relinquish their land ownership in favor of male progeny. In order to ensure that women receive their fair portion of inheritance, property distribution has been made obligatory following the approval of inheritance mutation. The revenue officer must determine the matter of the inheritance within six months. The mutation registration fee for the transmission of inherited property to women has been eliminated (The PLR Act 2015)^{xxxvi}.

Punjab Family Courts (Amendment) Act, 2015

The purpose of this legislation was to accelerate the process of resolving family disputes, including those related to women's personal property, financial support, and inheritance rights. Women can now keep up to fifty percent of their dower, which they were previously had to give back if they applied for a khula (divorce by Judicial Order). Family Courts now have jurisdiction over proceedings pertaining to personal property, including items belonging to the wife and child, as well as other issues originating from the Nakahama. Family courts have been authorized to impose interim maintenance orders and acquire evidence of the husband's income and assets from his employment. Previously, women were obligated to refund up to 50% of their dower in the event of a khula (divorce by court order).

Women's Empowerment POLICY 2016

The objective of the Punjab Women's Development Policy is to provide a structure for women's empowerment that promotes inclusive governance and development in Punjab. The purpose of this publication is to aid all interested parties and government agencies in their efforts to eliminate gender discrimination. Under the direction of the women's development department, the province's first women's development policy was devised, which was a difficult undertaking. This policy would promote gender equality across the province (Laws for Women Rights)^{xxxvii}.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offence of Rape) Act, 2016

Through this Act Sections 376, 376A, 53A, 154, 161A, 164A, and 164B of Cr. PC have been amended in order to deter rape. Rape, gang rape, the rape of minors, and the rape of people with disabilities are all crimes punishable by life in prison and a fine. Government employees who use their position to perpetrate rape (including rape in custody) face life in prison and a fine. A maximum of three years in jail and a fine may be imposed on anybody who prints or publishes the identity of a person who has allegedly

been the victim of rape, gang rape, or outrageous modesty of a woman.

The Provincial Bar Council should provide survivors of rape with legal assistance (as necessary). A rape trial must be concluded within three months, failing which the Chief Justice of the High Court will be notified and given the necessary instructions. All proceedings shall be conducted in camera, i.e. in secret, and shall not be open to the public.(The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offence of Rape) Act of 2016) ^{xxxviii}.

The Criminal Law/Pretext of Honour Act, 2016

This regulation is intended to deter and sanction those who have committed honor killings against women. The killing of a woman in the cause of honor is referred to as "Fasad-fil-Arz" and is punishable by death or life in prison. Even if the accused is pardoned by the Wali or other family members of the victim for the murder of a woman committed for the sake of honor, the court will still sentence the accused to life in prison(The Criminal Law (Amendment) (Pretext of Honour) Act of 2016) ^{xxxix}.

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016

This act penalizes various categories of electronic crimes against women. According to Section 22 of the aforementioned Act, anyone who creates, distributes, or transmits pornographic material depicting young girls engaging in sexually explicit behavior confronts up to seven years imprisonment and a fine of up to five million rupees. (The PEC Act, 2016) ^{xl}.

The Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act, 2016

The primary objective of the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence is to provide protection for women against many forms of abuse, including domestic violence, sexual assault, psychological manipulation, financial exploitation, stalking, and cybercrimes and establishing an efficient framework for safeguarding, assisting, and providing care for women who are subjected to acts of violence.. These offenses are perpetrated by individuals within their immediate familial circle, including as husbands, siblings, adopted children, relatives, and domestic employers.

Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act, 2020

The establishment of the Zainab Alert and Response Agency was prompted by the tragic incident involving the abduction, sexual assault, and homicide of a seven-year-old girl named Zainab in the Kasur region in January 2018. This agency was created with the objective of effectively addressing cases of missing and abducted children and facilitating their recovery (ZARRA Act, 2020)^{xli}.

The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021

The purpose of this legislation is to guarantee prompt resolution of rape and sexual abuse offenses targeting women and children. It aims to achieve this by establishing specialized investigation teams and courts that facilitate efficient procedures, expedited trials, access to evidence, and other relevant matters associated with or arising from such cases(The AR(Inv & Trial) Act, 2021)^{xlii}.

Right to Ownership Women Act, 2011

Women's asset ownership, especially their inheritance rights, is characterized by a well- known gender disparity. Research indicates that a significant number of women are expected to relinquish their ownership or face refusal of their entitlement to inheritance owing to the prevailing "cultural code of honor" that reinforces the patriarchal ideology.

Despite legislation supporting women's property ownership in Pakistan, such as the Right to Ownership Women Act of 2011, social norms have not changed significantly (ROW Act, 2011)^{xliii}.

Special Laws in Favour of Transgender Community

There is no doubt that the transgender population in South Asia has endured appalling discrimination. The Supreme Courts of Pakistan and India have recently made an effort to go beyond the conventional gender binary by recognizing their district gender identification as the "third sex." In 2012, in *Dr. Muhammad Aslam Khaki v. S.S.P. (Operations) Rawalpindi*, the Chief Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling. This decision recognized the transgender population in Pakistan as a member of the "third sex" legally. Such a clear inclusion of a historically marginalized group. It was anticipated that the legislative protections would progressively dispel the gender prejudices that have historically served to marginalize Pakistan's transgender minority. For all intents and purposes, the verdict has slightly altered. The primary site of contestation remains their bodies, which are problematically shaped by family, society, and the state machinery, all of which serve to further the strict gender binary. The social position of Hijras/Kinners in India, however, has been largely influenced favourably by a judgment of a similar nature handed out by the Indian Supreme Court. The practice of gender-based violence is not new; it has existed for a long time, but its nature, manifestation, and goals have changed. It has been suggested that women have been oppressed throughout history by men. Philosophies that minimize women's subordination have been developed with the goal of achieving their subjugation. The exploitation of women, as promoted by churches, has also been denounced.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the issue of gender-based violence is taken as one of the grave issues of Pakistani society. In Pakistan, violence against women is pervasive, every woman suffers insofar as her surroundings, activities, and family life are impacted by the threat or actuality of such violence. That the legislature has enacted certain laws to combat gender-based violence yet because of certain causes gender-based violence has been increasing day by day. These causes are numerous, its intersections increase the likelihood of violence, and its effects are extensive. That gender-based violence is not a private matter but a behavioral societal practice. Given that one in three women experience intimate partner abuse, this concept of men and women safeguarding each other is impractical. About 58% of all female homicides are carried out by family members.

The Supreme Court ruling, one of the most significant turning points in the transgender community's history, made it easier for them to find employment in government agencies such as the social welfare department and led to their appointment to teams responsible for polio vaccination, revenue collection, and local market rate check lists.

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