

## PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AGAINST MARRIED WOMEN LIVING IN A RURAL COMMUNITY OF LAHORE

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**Abstract:** Domestic violence against women is a global issue that encompasses physical, sexual, and psychological abuse within intimate relationships. It is a significant public justice concern in Pakistan, yet formal reporting channels and statistics databases are lacking. This study aimed to explore the socioeconomic causes and prevalence of domestic violence against women in a rural community of Lahore. A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 150 married women residing in the Lakhodair rural community of Lahore. A close-ended questionnaire, including demographic information and a domestic violence questionnaire, was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 23, and prevalence rates of domestic violence were determined. Most participants were uneducated (93.3%), and prevalence rates of domestic violence were assessed across ten questions related to various forms of abuse. The prevalence of domestic violence is high in our study. Notably, 66% of respondents reported experiencing physical injury from their partners, and 65% had encountered physical violence, such as being struck, pushed, grabbed, thrown, or choked. Additionally, 55% of women reported experiencing sexual violence, while 51% faced forced sexual activity. Emotional abuse was also prevalent, with 52% feeling regularly belittled by their partners. This study revealed that more than 50% of women experience domestic violence after marriage in rural areas. It underscores the urgent need for awareness programs, women's education initiatives, and empowerment programs to address this grave concern. Future research should consider qualitative approaches to gain deeper insight into participants' experiences and feelings. Furthermore, focusing on domestic violence against males is essential to comprehensively address this complex issue.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence, Intimate Partner Violence, Women, Rural, Community

### Introduction

Domestic violence is an exploitation of authority and supremacy. It is the command and control, compulsion, bullying, and harassment of one person by another by somatic, sexual, or emotional means within intimate relationships (Weisberg, 2019)." In Pakistan, domestic violence against women is a public justice issue (Hadi, 2018). Regrettably, no formal reporting channels or statistics databases regarding domestic violence against women exist. Domestic violence against women includes more than just physical, sexual, or psychological abuse against the victim; it also includes violence against an intimate partner, partner sexual abuse, violence connected to dowries, marital rape, and sexual harassment at domestic jobs. The current study was carried out by researchers to examine the socioeconomic causes of domestic violence against women (Jan et al., 2021).

Domestic violence is the least reported and most pervasive violation of human rights worldwide. Intimate partner violence, courting violence, domestic violence, domestic abuse, spousal abuse, beating, and forced marriage are a few more words used to refer to the phenomenon. Due to inconsistent definitions, inadequate reporting, and a dearth of statistical research, it is challenging to quantify the frequency of violence against women. Ten to sixty-nine percent (10- 69%) of the women in 48 population-based

studies from various regions of the world reported experiencing physical abuse at the hands of an intimate partner at some point in their lives. Every 15 seconds, a woman is beaten, generally by her intimate partner, and more than three women are killed by their intimate partners (Ali and Gavino, 2008).

Domestic abuse is not a proper subject for evaluation, prevention, or policy initiatives in Pakistan since it happens within the home and is seen as a personal matter. Due to the ethnic and religious traditions that Pakistani society upholds, women must deal with prejudice and abuse regularly. An estimated 70 to 90 percent of Pakistani women experience domestic abuse. Domestic abuse can take many forms, including physical, mental, and emotional abuse. Honor killings, spousal violence, including marital rape, acid assaults, and being burnt by family members are typical examples. Socially, spousal abuse is rarely seen as a crime until it takes the severe form of attempted murder, such as driving a woman to death.

Determining the prevalence of domestic violence among married women living in rural communities of Lahore is crucial. Families and relatives of those who have experienced intimate partner violence in rural Pakistan face enormous difficulties due to the prevalence of such violence. The only way to resolve this issue is by identifying

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and eliminating the underlying causes of interpersonal violence as quickly as possible. Therefore, studying such an important topic in Lahore is essential.

Our society is male-dominated, and females often encounter domestic violence. Nowadays, women are experiencing human rights violations in different forms. This study focuses on educating young people about the root causes of violence in their communities, involving peers and others to work towards preventing it, and helping them learn where they can access support if they experience violence. By determining the prevalence rate of domestic violence, we can control this grave concern, ultimately saving the lives of hundreds of married women in our society. This study will also assist future researchers in providing a pathway to conduct different studies relevant to domestic violence, how to deal with it, and the impact of dealing with this curse.

**Methodology**

A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study design was employed to conduct this research in the rural community of Lakhodair in Lahore. The study focused on married females living in this community, and a purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 150 individuals. Solvin's formula was used to calculate the sample size, resulting in a margin of error of 0.05. The inclusion criteria for the study were married females over 18 who were willing to participate and experiencing domestic violence. Exclusion criteria included females who were unwilling to participate or did not experience domestic violence.

The ethical committee of Saida Waheed College of Nursing oversaw the research to ensure that all rules and regulations were followed, and the rights of the participants were respected. Data was collected through a close-ended questionnaire, which included a demographic section and a domestic violence questionnaire. The domestic violence questionnaire granted permission to use and had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.75, indicating reliability. Data analysis used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive analysis was employed to understand the participants' demographics, while the

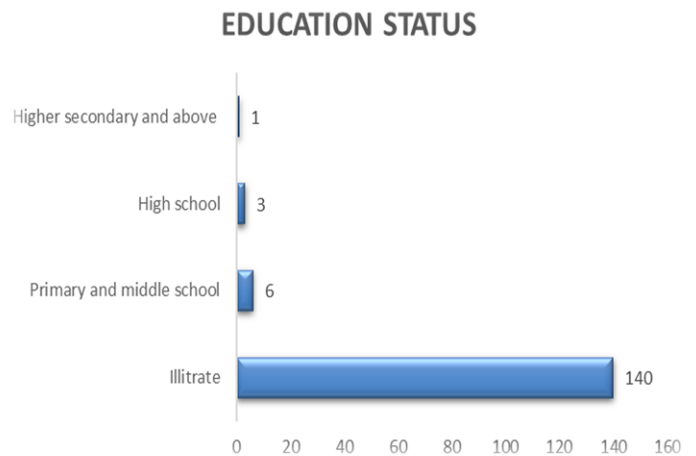
prevalence rate of domestic violence among women living in the Lakhodair community in Lahore was calculated using SPSS. Finally, conclusions and recommendations were drawn based on the results of the data analysis.

**Results**

The cross-sectional analysis included 150 married females aged over 18 and residing in the Lakhodair community in Lahore. Of these, 93.3% were uneducated, and 6.7% were educated. The other demographic details are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographics of Study Population:**

Variables	Construct	Number (n)	%age
Age	>18	150	100%
Gender	Male	-	-
	Female	150	100%
Education Status	Educated	10	
	Illiterate	140	93.3%
Marital Status	Married	150	6.3%
	Un Married	-	-



**Figure 1: Education status of study Population**

**Table 2: Different forms of domestic violence study population:**

Sr. number	Questions	Yes (n, %)	No (n, %)
1.	Has your partner threatened you Physically	99 (66%)	51 (34%)
2.	Has your partner struck you, pushed you, grabbed you roughly, thrown you, or choked you?	98 (65.33%)	52 (34.67%)
3.	Have you sustained physical injury from your partner?	86 (57.33%)	64 (42.67%)
4.	Does your partner blame you for any injury that you might have sustained from them	81 (54%)	69 (46%)
5.	Have your partner pressured you into sexual activity that made you feel uncomfortable or degraded?	83 (55.33%)	67 (46.67%)
6.	Has your partner forced you to have sex?	77 (51.33%)	73 (48.67%)
7.	Has your partner ever raped or attempted to rape you?	85 (56.66%)	65 (43.34%)
8.	Does your partner yell at you or call you names?	77 (51.33%)	73 (48.67%)
9.	Does your partner embarrass you in front of others?	85 (56.66%)	65 (43.34%)
10.	Do you feel belittled regularly by your partner?	78 (52%)	72 (48%)

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The table provides insight into the prevalence of domestic violence within a study population of 150 individuals, as assessed through a domestic violence questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of ten closed-ended questions designed to examine experiences of domestic violence within intimate relationships.

Firstly, many respondents reported experiencing various forms of physical abuse. About 66% of respondents indicated that their partners had threatened them physically, and 65.33% reported experiencing physical violence, such as being struck, pushed, grabbed, thrown, or choked. Additionally, 57.33% of respondents reported sustaining physical injuries from their partners.

Emotional abuse also emerged as a significant concern, with 54% of respondents reporting that their partners blamed them for injuries they had sustained and 55.33% feeling pressured into sexual activities that made them uncomfortable or degraded.

Sexual abuse was another alarming finding, as 51.33% of respondents reported that their partners had forced them to have sex, and 56.66% reported experiencing rape or attempted rape.

Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others were prevalent, with 51.33% of respondents stating that their partners yelled at or called them names, while 56.66% reported embarrassment by their partners in social settings. Moreover, 52% of respondents reported feeling belittled regularly by their partners.

## Discussion

Domestic violence is a multi-aspect, questionable, and controversial speech. Primarily, the study of this sensation as a general basis differs, with few common features. The motives and origins of abuse are most probably diverse because of the differing demographic and environmental factors. Different drafts and designs for studying domestic violence have been announced based on rational and cultural factors, a very dissimilar form of study in third-world countries. Most primary assets related to domestic violence in the research centers suggest that some psychiatric factors, such as Alcohol and other chemical materials, may contribute to violent behavior.

In the present study, demographically, all married women included those over 18 years of age; 93.3% were uneducated, and 6.7% were educated. Education and being an employee of any organization is also a vital as minimizing domestic violence and hitting society differently. Domestic violence or violent behavior or aggression comes when there is a lack of resources or balance in life, and only one person is suffering and tackling the whole family, and he is the only breadwinner of his family. Education makes a bigger difference in society. The prevalence rate of domestic violence among women is 3.77% as it involved only one community of Punjab, Pakistan, and the sample size was small enough. Another research conducted in Azad Kashmir, Pakistan, more similar to GB from a sociocultural perspective, revealed that psychological violence was higher among women than physical violence (Abdullah, 2002).

In response to question 1, 66% responded yes (experienced domestic violence) as they said they had sustained physical

injury from their partners. As a researcher, I operationalized domestic violence when scores exceeded 50%. So, in this case, 66% were those married women facing domestic violence. This type of violence is physical assault or domestic violence by their partners.

In response to 2<sup>nd</sup> statement, about 65% were those married women experiencing domestic violence in the form of being struck, pushed, grabbed roughly, thrown, or choked by their partners. This is also the type of physical domestic violence by partners experienced by married women living in the Lakhodair community of Lahore.

In response to 5<sup>th</sup> question, 55% of women living in the Lakhodair community faced sexual violence, a most common domain of domestic violence. In response to the 6<sup>th</sup> question, women forced to have sex by their partners showed that they faced sexual or domestic violence. In response to question 10, 52% were those married women living in the Lakhodair community who feel belittled daily by their spouses.

Though, subsequently, sexual ferocity still endures an unmentionable topic, and spousal rape is yet to be reflected as lust, there is a growing trend in sexual violence as well as physical and sexual violence associated. Other customs of violence, such as verbal abuse and switching behaviors, remained continuous throughout the period studied, indicating that not enough interventions have been undertaken thus far to reduce these forms of Domestic violence. Furthermore, contemplating the delicate nature of the topic, there is always an iceberg sensation present while reporting cases, thus making it difficult to measure the actual prevalence of this grave concern.

## Conclusion

The Prevalence Rate of Domestic Violence was High, more than fifty percent in our study. Awareness programs regarding human rights should be launched to arrest this grave concern. Women's education regarding domestic violence should be addressed. Women empowerment programs should be launched in this community where awareness is needed. Future studies should also focus on domestic violence against males by approaching the qualitative approach to express the participants' feelings better.

## Declarations

### Data Availability statement

All data generated or analyzed during the study are included in the manuscript.

### Ethics approval and consent to participate.

Approved by the department Concerned.

### Consent for publication

Approved

### Funding

Not applicable

## Conflict of interest

The authors declared an absence of conflict of interest.

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