



RESEARCH PAPER

**Exploring the Dark Horses of Power within Family Settings:
Patriarchy at The Hands of Woman Shaping Domestic Violence
Against Woman**

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ABSTRACT

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Patriarchy is a social structure that favours male domination in the family. A set of social relations based on the hierarchical structure creates a sense of dependency and subjugation among women. The current research aimed to explore the characters within the family settings that are not only the facilitators but also works as a support to Domestic Violence that facilitates the patriarchal form to sustain that keeps the power nexus in the hands of male intact. The universe was confined to district Rawalpindi with a population comprised of married men and women and their mothers. Twenty women for interviews and 13 respondents (male and mothers-in-law) for 2 FGDs were identified through purposive sampling. The present research employed an inductive approach of thematic analysis. The researchers identified that domestic Violence was prevailing in its different forms through data analysis, where physical and psychological Violence were the most prevalent forms. It was also analysed that the mother-in-law of a female was the basis to help sustain Patriarchy. It was also seen that the women's socialization and resocialization at her family level through the mother of woman also helps to sustain Patriarchy and the power in the hand of male of society. The current research concluded that women play an important role in the inculcation of Patriarchy in the family to preserve their authority and control over other women.

Introduction

Patriarchy is the most pervasive and powerful force in traditional and modernized societies. Patriarchy is a system in which men hold power, dominion, and privilege. The origin of Patriarchy is too long (Aggarwal,2016 and Sultana,2010). The classical form of Patriarchy in the traditional societies of the modern world is usually based on an extended family structure where the senior male (father) and after male head senior woman is the head of the family. Senior male deals with public affairs (outside of the family), and senior women deal with the private (inside the family) domain of the house (Isran & Isran, 2012; Sathar & Kazi, 2000).

Patriarchy is the deep-rooted tree of power and control sustained through social and cultural values. Patriarchy is a social structure that favours male domination in the family. It is a set of social relations based on the hierarchical structure that creates a sense of dependency and subjugation among women (Kim, 2006 and Chowdury, 2009). It is a complex multidimensional system supported by male-centered norms, social institutions, and individuals who participate in this process. Both men and women participate in internalizing and transferring patriarchal thinking to the next generation through socialization. The patriarchal norms and practices are enforced/exhibited in families, social relations, media, and everywhere in society (Walby, 2003).

The family institution is a vital source to retaining Patriarchy in society through the phase of socialization and resocialization. Both mothers and mothers-in-law play a vital role in internalizing patriarchal ideology in the family. (Sev'er, 2005). The unimagined division of masculinity and femininity has been socially constructed and inculcated and assigned by males and females in the family. These family-based assigned roles create (actualize) the hierarchical system and not only actualize the order of that hierarchy. It also maintains and reinforces the order of that system (Miller, 2007).

The Patriarchy is inculcated through different tactics and promotes women's subjugation. The worst output raised through Patriarchy is Violence against women because it encourages male dominance in society. Violence against women in South Asia, where solid patriarchal values prevail, and domestic Violence against women is considered a private affair of the family life (Aruna, 2010). This Violence against women remained in its different form in the south Asian countries. Domestic Violence is the outgrowth of Patriarchy and a power-control structure that is operated in the families through women on behalf of cultural norms and values transferred from one generation to another generation. Domestic Violence has different forms: physical, psychological, financial, sexual, neglect, self-neglect, threats, and intimidation perpetrated by men (husbands) and women (Mother-in-law and sisters-in-law) against women (Habiba, Ali & Ashfaq, 2016). Domestic Violence is committed against women by husband's partners and close family members that have long been an issue of silent suffering within the boundaries of their houses. The central basis of domestic Violence can be seen as the social, ecological, economic, and cultural base in the society (Barker, 2016 & Billingsley, 2013).

Domestic Violence is a tool to suppress women and strengthen the roots of Patriarchy. Patriarchy is the leading cause of Domestic Violence, which controls women and retains them subordinate (Saravanan, 2016 & Patil, 2013). Despite Patriarchy, many other factors cause domestic Violence in the family, such as lack of education, jealousy and traditional rivalry between mother-in-law and daughter in law, religious fundamentalism, old and rhetorical tradition, and values, poverty, and unemployment.

Pakistan is a patriarchal society where men are the primary authority figures and women are subordinates. Previous literature has witnessed that women also reinforce Patriarchy through different means. Domestic Violence is yielded in the game of power and control, which women play under the support of patriarchal norms and values (Parker & Reckdenwald, 2008; Rehman et.al., 2009:2016; Wahab, Ahmed & Ali, 2021). Violence is the one output of Patriarchy that is internalized and

functioned through women to suppress other women in the family (Kandiyoti, 1988 & Kibria, 1990). Most women feel frightened to disclose violent situations in front of others because domestic Violence is considered a family's private matter (Sperry, 2013). Women do not disclose Violence against them due to a lack of family support and feelings of embarrassment to sharing Violence (Sharma, 2014). Violence against women is acceptable due to the fear of disgrace and stigmatization in society, so women cope with these abusive conditions (Safdar & Ghani, 2018). Domestic Violence against women adversely affects their physical, psychological, and spiritual health. Women battering also affects children brought up in and healthy socialization phase (Ghani, 2014). The worst output that can be seen in the game of power and control is the Violence against women. The cooperation of married couples is seen as vital that enables women's capacities to reach their full potential. Instead of shedding tears on their fate, they take the adequate steps to support their family and keep their own lives. Raising awareness and law enforcement to its full potential is also necessary to overcome the problem.

The current research intends to explore the characters within the family settings that are not only the facilitators but also works as a support to domestic Violence that facilitates the patriarchal form to sustain that keeps the power nexus in the hands of male intact.

Material and Methods

The present study used qualitative methodology to explore the phenomenon of power nexus and domestic Violence. The universe was confined to district Rawalpindi. The population comprised of both literate and illiterate married men and women. At the time of research, the total population of the targeted area was 3500, which comprised 577 families, of which 56% females and 44% males were present in the study area. The researcher also noticed that the prevalent family system was a joint family. The occupations of the people were diverse. The occupation of the people of the targeted area was farming, daily wage laborers, armed forces personnel, and technical workers, and some were migrants working in other countries. The area is well developed with three schools and one hospital. The literacy rate of girls is higher than boys. Furthermore, in Rawalpindi, divorce cases are rising as 32 thousand cases were registered during 2021 (Asad, 2021).

The current research considered purposive sampling and snowball sampling to select the sample. An initial survey was done before conducting the research to locate the Violence cases in District Rawalpindi. Researchers identified many cases by employing the sampling, but twenty case studies matched the criteria for the study. The researchers also considered the two FGDs (one from husbands and one from the women who have the status of mother-in-law) to develop insight into the data from the interviews. Seventeen respondents completed the interview while one respondent left the interview incomplete, and two respondents denied participating in the interview. The age limit of participants was 17 to 46 years. The interviews from the respondents were done during November and December of 2021. The researcher took females to bring valid and more informative data to explore and understand the reality of the dark horse in the family context, where it was emphasized that what is at the back end of Patriarchy that suppresses the women in the household given the power and control structure. The current research used in-depth interview research

to unveil the factors responsible for the sustenance of Patriarchy in the researched area.

For this reason, a pre-tested and self-developed interview guide was employed to investigate the household power and control structure that helps Patriarchy instigate and sustain in the family exercised through women in the family. The interview guide was translated into the native language (Urdu and Punjabi) before commencing the fieldwork and checked in the Pretesting phase. Pre-testing involved three in-depth interviews and one FGD in testing the reliability of the interview guide. It was flexible and thoroughly probed to explore the phenomenon in the family. Based on the result of pre-testing, specific changes were incorporated into the interview guide by keeping in view the cultural settings of the area. The researchers took the informed consent by explaining the researcher's purpose to the respondents. The research is culturally sensitive, and the researchers ensured the respondents that their identity will not be revealed in any case. So, the anonymous names were used while reporting the results. The present research employed an inductive approach of thematic analysis because previous studies did not analyse the phenomenon of Patriarchy, social power, dependency in the family relationships to preserve power and control, and the contribution of women to the sustenance Patriarchy. The triangulation of the tool of data collection aided in investigating these issues. The demographic percentages were calculated using excel, while the data was analysed by identifying themes. The response rate remained 85%. The population comprised of both literate and illiterate married men and women. It was also seen that the respondents who took part in the study were 80% literate and 20% illiterate. 47% were male, and 53% were female who participated in the study. The majority (60%) of the respondents were linked with the profession of farming, and 15% were doing jobs in various departments. The farming profession also includes the women working as housewives and working with their husbands in the fields.

Results and Discussion

This study contains the thematic analysis of the collected data to explain a broader context of the issue within the societal settings where the study was carried out. We extracted the broader themes from the data followed the sub-themes for each context explained by the respondents during the interviews. An overview of the theme was incorporated for the overarching them following the explanation and respondents' views within the sub-themes, followed by a discussion. We allocated the English alphabets to the respondents to identify them and keep their identity anonymous.

Faces of Domestic Violence

Violence against women prevails in different forms and to different degrees in the family in Pakistan. Domestic Violence has its different faces. There is not a single way of existence of domestic Violence. According to recent studies, domestic Violence is categorized into three categories and that is physical, emotional, or psychological, and financial Violence. These kinds were stated by Flitcraft et al., (1992) that Violence against women is a behavioural pattern in which women are physically, emotionally, and sexually maltreated by their husbands and in-laws during their marital life.

Physical Violence

This type of face of Violence includes slapping, hitting, kicking, beating, and all other acts intended to do physical harm to the victim due to different reasons and problems arising in the family's day-to-day matters. Participants of the current study were experiencing physical Violence from their husbands and mothers-in-law daily. Respondent 'E' stated the cause of physical Violence as:

One day, my husband kicked and threw me in the washroom (she was talking with a careful and low voice as if somebody was listening) because I did not clean the tiles of the washroom well. He pinched my neck and continuously slapped (started weeping) until I fainted.

Respondent 'C' and 'H' told us that:

My mother-in-law asked for my jewelry, but I refused to give it, resulting in her strangling and kicking me out of the house. This refusal led me to leave the house forcefully with my parents even though my parents tried to solve the problem.

Respondent 'C' further added that:

My husband slapped me because I wanted to continue my studies. My husband's behavior was bizarre at my decision of continuation of my studies that is my basic right (she was in grief and asked us if we could help her).

Same case as of Respondent C and H was identified in the Respondent D where she said that her mother-in-law severely beat her due to not sharing her husband's earnings. Respondent 'A' told us that: *"My husband suffocated me one night and slapped me because my mother-in-law complained that I shared the whole family matters of in-laws to my parents."* Domestic Violence against women is a menace in the developing world (Alarbeed and Alhakim, 2013; Fikree and Razzaq, 2005). Ali & Naylor (2013) explored that 58% of women reported physical Violence by their in-laws in the family, and their husbands physically abused 80% due to familial conflicts.

Psychological Violence

Emotional or psychological Violence includes intimidation and humiliation through actions that involve criticizing, harassing, calling names, blaming, and showing abusive behavior towards the victim. It is the worst form of domestic Violence that tortures the victim mentally. The current study participants faced this form of domestic Violence and underwent a psychological trauma that damaged their inner self and left an everlasting impression on their personalities.

Respondent 'A' 'G' and 'I' told us how her mother-in-law and husband psychologically tortured her. They said that:

They gave birth to a female baby, and nobody came to congratulate them. Everybody, including their husbands, left the hospital after their delivery. They took them to the house, but nobody cared what they needed. Their in-laws taunted them for giving birth to a female baby. This hurts them a lot as the child's gender is the will of God.

Respondent 'B' quoted that: *"I was a widow, and my second husband and mother-in-law used to blame me for the death of my first husband. This blame took my everything, i.e., respect and care. They emotionally blackmailed me and asked for the money."* Fikree and

Razzaq (2005) identified that 95% of males use abusive language and psychologically torture their wives in Pakistan. Ali & Naylor (2013) stated that 98% of women reported verbal and emotional Violence by their husbands, and 97% experienced verbal Violence by in-laws in their families.

This study identified two types of domestic Violence within the domestic sphere that was prevalent in the Rawalpindi. These were physical and psychological Violence. Most of the victims of the Violence were women. Violence against women is an abusive power behavior of a man and his family against the woman. Sharma (2014) & Ghani (2014) explored domestic Violence against women more in-depth and justified it with various reasons. They stated that the dowry, son preferences, unemployment, and extramarital affairs were the primary cause of domestic Violence. Besides this, they explain factors like lack of family support, feelings of embarrassment to sharing Violence, considering Violence as a private matter of a family, and self-blaming at the supporting stems of domestic Violence. Women accept Violence against women due to the fear of disgrace and stigmatization in society. Women show different coping behaviours in the situation of Violence, like weeping, sharing their worries with friends, staying with their parents, and accepting Violence as their fate because Violence against women is considered a private and familial affair, supported by socio-cultural norms in the context of Pakistan. Ali and Gavino (2008) described that 70% to 90% of women experience different types of Violence on a daily basis in Pakistan. Saravanan (2016) identified that Violence against women is considered normal in south Asian countries. Many forms of Violence against women prevail in society, like physical, psychological, financial, and other forms of threat and intimidation that cause death in most cases.

Perceived Family Contextual Factors of Domestic Violence

The researchers identified many factors that were the basis of the initiation of abusive behaviour within the family. Following are the few factors in the family context that were come forth during the interviews.

Household Work

We have found that negligence in the household work is another cause of Violence against women. It is a minor reason, but women are abused because of not doing household work. Respondent 'K' and 'L' told that: *"My husband kicked me just because I did not clean the house well due to illness. Mostly he abused me physically just for household work."*

In the south Asian culture, it is mandatory for females to do the household work not only for their husbands but also for the family of husbands. It does not matter how much the woman is literate and earning, but how she can handle the house and the work in the house. This household work is called *Saleeqa* (well mannered) and *Ghar gharasti* (Home and the belongings). If the woman starts working right after the marriage, then the women from the neighbourhood congratulate the mother-in-law for bringing the *Slaeeqa mand Bahu* (well-mannered daughter-in-law). If the situation is otherwise, it became the daughter-in-law's different life. Everyone not only curses the mother-in-law but curses the family of the daughter and called by stigmatic words like *daand*, *bail* (notions used for ill-mannered stupid daughter-in-law), *maan nay issy tameez ni di* (mother didn't socialize her about the life after marriage) and *issy koi saleeqa ni hai* (she doesn't have manners). People stigmatize and conclude that she

might not last long in the marital relationship. These factors also intensify the situation and lead to domestic Violence.

Son Preference in the Family

Son preference in the family is among the fundamental causes of domestic Violence. Due to son preference, women have no control here because deciding gender is not in anyone's hands. Even though people claim a daughter is a blessing from Allah and a son is a gift, there is no practicality in people's turn. Respondent 'Q' told that: *"My husband left me because I had two daughters and could not give him a son. He did second marriage and took her whole property forcefully. After that she hardly spent her life with her two daughters."* Ali and Gavino (2008) accounted that 29% of women lived in abusive conditions due to son preference in their families. In South Asian countries, sons are preferred over daughters because it is a common thought that males continue their family's name.

Husband's Joblessness

The primary factor contributing to domestic Violence is the husband's dependency on the family's resources due to joblessness. Respondent 'O' told us that:

My mother-in-law forced me to ask my parents for money as her family could not bear the expenditures because my husband was unemployed. I refused to do so then, my in-laws, especially my mother-in-law, physically abused me and did not give me meals for the whole day. Sometimes, I have to spend two to three days without food (she starts crying and shedding tears on her present condition).

Ali and Gavino (2008) described that the husband's joblessness causes Violence against women in the family. Approximately 21% women were maltreated by their husbands due to financial reasons.

Dark Power Horses within Domestic Spheres

It is believed that In-laws, including husbands, are the main perpetrators of domestic Violence in Pakistan. Gundappa and Rathod (2012) stated that the domestic Violence in the families of South Asian countries was due to in-laws and husbands where the role of the male remains prominent. In comparison, respondents said that their mothers and sisters-in-law are the main actors of Violence. They play their role behind the male. They scripted the whole situation and asked the male to perform. Respondent 'A' 'K' 'N' and 'P' told that:

My mother-in-law told her son that I (Respondent A) would take her son away from their lives and asked him not to obey what I (Respondent A) told him to do. My husband followed his mother's instructions because she is a widow, so she always took the advantage and blackmailed my husband emotionally, and in turn, my husband used to maltreat me.

Respondent 'F' added that: *"My sister-in-law provoked my husband emotionally and wanted to control him because her husband was jobless. She thinks that if my husband gave me attention, I would deprive them of the money they used to take from my husband."*

Respondent views instigated that the domestic Violence is something that the husband executes in the family that was vested in the scripts of the mother and sister-in-law. These scripts entail different gains, and apparent among these gains were financial gains. In South Asia, Mother-in-law plays a vital role in the domestic sphere,

especially in the joint families. The joint family is dominant in Pakistani settings. Mother-in-law has the authority to finalize the household's decisions concerning the females in the house. Most of the Violence at the domestic level occurs due to the mother-in-law's interference in the day-to-day activities of the daughter-in-law. The interference by the mother-in-law instigates the conflicts between husband and wife (Habiba, Ali and Ashfaq, 2016) at the household level. This interference also instigates abusive behavior among married couples. In Southeast Asian culture, a common notion prevails that woman must follow and respect her husband and his family. The mother in the house is responsible for sustaining the oppressive and dominated nature of the patriarchal system in the household sphere. This sustenance of Patriarchy is because of the well-known rivalry between the mother and daughter-in-law, known as the competition between *Saas* (mother-in-law) and *Bahu* (Daughter-in-law) to hold the house's resources. Zakar (2006) pointed out this rivalry as the traditional rivalry penetrating South Asian culture. It appears that a mother-in-law would torture her daughter-in-law because she has gone through the same with her in-laws. The controlling behavior of the mother and daughter-in-law enhances the act of domestic Violence. In this competition for control, Saas wins in most cases because of their superior position as a mother, and once the position clears, things intensify for the other counterpart in the family (Murugan et al., 2021).

In most cases, the win-win situation for the mother is due to the acquired autonomous status that was upgraded as she grew older. This factor of mother autonomy was discussed during the focus group discussions that we have done with married males and women with mother-in-law status. They told us that:

They (mothers) experienced the ups and downs in their lives after marriage bearing rough attitudes of her mother-in-law, but now it is their turn to rule over the house and enjoys the happiness of power and control because they spent their life in subjugation and suppression during her young age while they were newly married. Now, their daughter-in-law was obliged to obey their instruction and give respect to them.

A group of men added further added:

Mothers have their respect in the house. They have spent days and nights growing them. They (respondents) cannot pay their mothers back for the things their mothers have done for them. One cannot imagine the limits of respect for mothers as God has placed the Jannah (highest place bestowed by God after the death in reward for the good deeds) under the feet of mothers.

Pathak and Mishra (2019) explained the mothers' legitimacy and control in domestic affairs as they grew older compared to when they were young. Dildar, (2015) and Jejeebhoy (2002) described that the mother-in-law is placed at the highest rank in the household hierarchy of the power and control system. The older woman enjoys more autonomy in every sphere of the house than the young woman in the family. She has the right to control financial and familial decisions ahead of the family.

Role of Woman in the Sustenance of Patriarchy

Patriarchal socialization is not only perpetuated through the mother-in-law, but the woman's parents are equally responsible for this sustenance of Patriarchy. Where the female mother socializes with her daughter based on the gender

differences in the house, these differences are defined and established by patriarchal norms of the society. Respondent 'J' 'M' and 'N' stated that:

I learned that my duty is to respect and care for my husband and his family. For this, I have to learn to cook food. My second learning was not to speak against my husband and his family. My mother told me that women's status gets upgraded after the birth of a son in the eyes of in-laws.

After marriage, the mother-in-law plays an essential role in the resocialization of women in their family structure according to set patterns of Patriarchy, making them realize that their status in the family is subjugated. Respondent 'H' stated that: *“My mother-in-law cursed and degraded me in front of my sister-in-law's son because she scolded her grandson on switching high pitch songs, and they aggravated my husband, who tortured me physically”*.

Cockburn (1987) identified that the family institution is a vital source to retaining Patriarchy in society through the phase of socialization and resocialization. Both mothers and mothers-in-law play a vital role in internalizing patriarchal ideology in the family. Male power is inculcated in social relations & society in different ways. Women are the main actors-agents for the continuation of Patriarchy as men. According to Lerner (1986) family creates (actualize) the hierarchical system and not only actualizes the order of that hierarchy. It also maintains and reinforces the order of that system. Family plays a vital role in transmitting (transferring) the patriarchal norms and values to the next generation. The unimagined division of masculinity and femininity has been socially constructed and inculcated and assigned by males and females in the family. Barker (2016) highlighted the role of women in perpetuating and sustaining patriarchal culture. Patriarchy as a system is promoted and supported by women and men equally, even though men obtain more honor and rewards from that system.

Conclusion

The current research concluded that women play an important role in the inculcation of Patriarchy in the family to preserve their authority and control over other women. The worst output that can be seen in the game of power and control is the Violence against women. Women used different tricks to attain the attention of man to subjugate other women in the house. It is confirmed that research question which explore the role of women in the sustenance of Patriarchy and internalize Patriarchy in the society through socialization process by mother and resocialization by mother-in-law. The study explored that Violence raised in the clashes of women and impaired the personality of daughter-in-law while experiencing Violence in different forms.

Recommendations

We recommended some practical strategies to resolve this issue. Man and woman are said to be the wheels to run a vehicle then; both wheels should support each other in every situation. This cooperation of men and women is possible by capacitating the women to their full potential so that instead of shedding tears on their fate, they take the adequate steps to support not only family but also support their own lives. Both men and women should try to break the notion of Patriarchy together. Awareness-raising campaigns through non-governmental organizations

and law enforcement agencies should be arranged at the local level for the ordinary people of the society to learn their fundamental rights. In this regard, the help of the media plays a vital role in disseminating the information effectively and efficiently. Religious leaders have their say among the ordinary people. The government should engage them to play their role effectively, enabling society to access the rightful Islamic teachings not to misinterpret and use them against women. Law enforcement agencies and the effective judicial system should be accessible to ordinary women to protect their rights. Government should imply rigid legal provisions against Violence and punish the perpetrators of the Violence. The traditional patriarchal structure and practices of women's subjugation should be changed through the family, which gives the first lesson of dominance and subjugation in childhood.

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