

Association between In-Laws Relationship and Domestic Violence Against Women

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the impacts of in-laws' relationship with domestic violence against women followed by the quantitative analysis approach, based on a positivist paradigm usually based on a large sample size with statistical interpretation. The study was conducted in three villages of Union Council Darora such as Bar Cham, Koz Kas and Qala (Gandigar), District Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. The data were collected from 248 women above 25 years of age through questionnaires. The data were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The research found that domestic violence is often associated with in-law relationships. The resistance of women to their family obligations, lesser amount of dowry, restriction on women's movement and excessive social interaction are associated with domestic violence. Similarly, controlling women's autonomy by their mother-in-law, maintaining family honor, social stigma and more demands of women were the common reasons associated with domestic violence against women. Economic empowerment programs should aim to enhance women's economic security, independence, and decision-making power. Social Support services, including counselling, legal aid, and shelter, should be strengthened and expanded to reach more survivors of domestic violence.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Women, In-Laws Relationship, District Upper Dir, Economic Empowerment Programs

Introduction

Domestic violence is a worldwide issue, which greatly affect the family structure. The in-laws relationship influencing domestic violence is one of the important but little researched topic (Kim et al., 2007). The extended and patriarchal family system, place daughter-in-law in a subordinate position and role-playing. In South Asian context, conflict occurs due to the power structure and its distribution with in family. Studies show that women who facing violence from husband were also more likely to experience emotional violence from their in-laws, such as frequently include public humiliation, economic control and forced domestic works (Rahman et al., 2025; Raj & Silverman, 2007).

According to a number of studies and media reports, domestic violence against women in husband family is a significant issue in Bangladesh (Bhuiya et al., 2003). Domestic violence is often reinforced by cultural norms and vary from culture to culture and male authority. The starting point of abuse by in-laws is dowry in India, which escalate violence against daughter in law (Rew et al., 2013). Likewise, in Tajikistan, violence against women is perpetuated by in-law's involvements in marital disagreements and patriarchal attitude (Amnesty International, 2009). This empirical study show that the deep-rooted cultural norms and beliefs indicated that violence are using as a tool of discipline or remediation. Maintaining cultural standards, violence in families is passed down through generations to generations. According to Simons and Johnson (1998), violence is a learned behavior by mother in-law, which transmitted from generation to generation and expected role of mother in-law to control over their daughters-in-law. Data suggest that mother in law is a key actor to participate in abusing the sons' wives. Parents-in-law and other family

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members are considered as assailants for violence (Turaeva & Becker, 2022; Jewkes et al., 2019). Ethnic minority and black women in UK are the victims of honored based violence and domestic abuse. Control and compulsion is the important ways for in-law to maintain violence in order to depriving the victims from their personal freedom (Robinson & Ryder, 2013). Women who are economically and socially empowered are less likely to be abused by their mother in-law (Rew et al., 2013).

Methodology

This research study followed the quantitative analysis approach, based on positivist paradigm usually based on large sample size with statistical interpretation. The study was conducted in three villages of Union Council Darora such as Bar Cham, Koz Kas and Qala (Gandigar), District Upper Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan. The data were collected from 248 women above 25 years of age as per the criteria of sample determination table (Sekaran, 2003). The sample size was further allocated to each villages according to proportional allocation formula (Agrawal et al., 2018; Chaudhry & Kamal, 1996).

$$n_i = \frac{n \times N_i}{N}$$

n_i - Required sample size
n = Overall sample size
N_i = Number of population in each Muhalla
N = Overall Population

Table 1
Allocation of Sample Size to each Village’s MUHALLAS

District	UC	Villages	Population	Sample Size
Upper Dir	Darora	Barcham	200	71
		Kozkas	300	106
		Qala	200	71
		Total	700	248

The targeted population for the research study was those married women above 25 year of age and who are economically dependent on male members of the family. The data were collected through questioner, therefore, questionnaire was designed which reflected all the variables of the research study. The questionnaire was properly pretested in order to avoid any ambiguity in the research questions.

Table 2
Conceptual Framework

Independent variables	Dependent variable
In-laws relationship	Domestic Violence against women

Data analysis

At univariate analysis, the data were analyzed through SPSS version 21 to estimate the frequencies and percentage distribution of the responses. The percentage of each responses of the questions will calculated by a formula recommended by (Chaudhry and Kamal, 1996).

Percentage of the respondents = f/N * 100
F = frequency of elements
N = Number of observation

Similarly, at bi-variate analysis, the data were analyzed through chi-square test in order to find out the association between in-laws relationship and domestic violence against women. The following procedures were used for chi-square test as devised by Tai (1978) and used by (Ullah, Jan, Alam & Tasleem, 2025) to study discriminations, vulnerabilities and social exclusion: a quantitative study of Pakistani illegal labours in overseas labour markets.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{(O_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}}$$

To check the strength of an association between in-laws relationship and domestic violence against women, the odds ratio analysis was used as used by (Ullah et al., 2025).

$$\text{Odds Ratio} = \frac{PG_1 / (1 - PG_1)}{PG_2 / (1 - PG_2)}$$

Results at Univariate Analysis

Table 3 indicated about the frequency and percentage distribution of the responses about the in-laws relationship and domestic violence against women. The table explored that that (69.8 %) of the respondents agreed that challenging the authority of in-law cause domestic violence against women while 30.2 % of the respondents disagreed.

Similarly, (76.2%) of the respondents agreed that, the maladjustment between wife and husband often leads to domestic violence while 23.8 % did not agreed with that statement.

Moreover, (72.6 %) of the respondents approved that, lessor amount of dowry also because domestic violence against women while 27.4 % of the respondents disapproved that statement.

Further, (70.6 %) of the respondents acknowledged that the restriction on women movement by family members often women stay in abuse relationship, while 29.4 % of the respondents did not agreed with the statement.

Furthermore, (74.2 %) of the respondents accepted that controlling women autonomy by mother-in-law domestic violence while 25.8% of the respondents rejected that statements.

Likewise, (69.4 %) of the respondents reflected that restriction on excessive social interaction of women associated with domestic violence while 30.6 % refused that statement.

The table further indicated that, (72.2%) of the respondents agreed that social stigma leads to violence against women while 27.8 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Similarly, (77.0 %) of the respondents accepted that more demands of women associated with domestic violence against women while 23.0 % rejected the statement.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Responses about the In-laws Relationship and Domestic Violence against Women

In-laws relationship and domestic violence against women	Yes	No	Total
Challenging the authority of in-laws cause domestic violence against women.	173 69.8%	75 30.2%	248 100.0%
Maladjustment of wome with husband often leads to domestic violence	189 76.2%	59 23.8%	248 100.0%
Lessor amount of dowry also cause domestic violence against women.	180 72.6%	68 27.4%	248 100.0%
Restriction on women movement often women stay in abuse relationship.	175 70.6%	73 29.4%	248 100.0%
Controlling women autonomy by mother-in-law domestic violence.	184 74.2%	64 25.8%	248 100.0%
Restriction on accessive social interaction of women associated with domestic violence.	172 69.4%	76 30.6%	248 100.0%
Social stigma leads to violence against women.	179 72.2%	69 27.8%	248 100.0%
More demands of women associated with domestic violence against women.	191 77.0%	57 23.0%	248 100.0%

Results at Bivariate Analysis

Table 4 indicates about the association between in-laws relationship and domestic violence against women. The table show that challenging the authority of in-laws are significantly (P = 0.001) associated with domestic violence against women. The odds ratio (OR = 6.423) indicated that those women who challenging the authority of in-laws are almost 6 time at the risk of domestic violence then those who do not challenging the authority of in-laws.

Table 4*The Association between In-laws Relationship and Domestic Violence against Women*

In-laws relationship and domestic violence against women	Statistics
Challenging the authority of in-laws cause domestic violence against women.	($\chi = 12.428$) (P = 0.001) OR = 6.423
Maladjustment of women with husband often leads to domestic violence	($\chi = 10.947$) (P = 0.001) OR = 5.765
Lessor amount of dowry also cause domestic violence against women.	($\chi = 8.939$) (P = 0.004) OR = 3.843
Restriction on women movement often women stay in abuse relationship.	($\chi = 26.277$) (P = 0.000) OR = 7.345
Controlling women autonomy by mother-in-law domestic violence.	($\chi = 25.361$) (P = 0.000) OR = 6.945
Restriction on excessive social interaction of women associated with domestic violence.	($\chi = 10.408$) (P = 0.003) OR = 5.125
Social stigma leads to violence against women.	($\chi = 12.810$) (P = 0.001) OR = 6.945
More demands of women associated with domestic violence against women.	($\chi = 11.082$) (P = 0.001) OR = 5.342

Similarly, the maladjustment of women with her husband are strongly associated with domestic violence. The odds ratio (OR = 5.765) explained that those women who have adjustment problem with her husband are almost 5.7 time greater chances to face domestic violence then those who have no adjustment problem.

Further, lessor amount of dowry are significantly associated with domestic violence against women. The odds ratio (OR = 3.843) indicated that the women who have lessor amount of dowry are almost 4 time expose to domestic violence then those women who have expensive dowry.

Furthermore, the restriction on women movement are significantly associated with (P = 0.000) women domestic violence. The odds ratio (OR = 7.345) indicated that those women who frequently moving are 7 time at the risk of domestic violence then those who have limited movements.

The table further indicated that there were significantly association (P = 0.000) between controlling women autonomy by mother-in-law and domestic violence. The odds ratio (OR = 6.945) indicated that controlling women autonomy by mother-in-law creating 7 time risks of domestic violence for women.

Likewise, the restriction on excessive social interaction of women are significantly (P = 0.003) associated with domestic violence. The odds ratio (OR = 5.125) indicated that restriction on excessive social interaction of women created almost 5 time risk of domestic violence then no restriction on women excessive social interaction.

Although, social stigma are significantly associated (P = 0.001) with violence against women. The odds ratio indicated that (OR = 6.945) social stigma created almost 7 time risk of domestic violence for women.

Similarly, more demands of women are significantly associated with (P = 0.001) domestic violence against women. The odds ratio indicated that (OR = 5.342) those women who have more demands were 5 time at the risk of domestic violence then those women who have no more demands.

Discussion

Domestic violence is depends upon the relations of women within in-laws as shown in the table 3 and 4. When women challenging the authority of in-laws are often, expose to domestic violence. The in-laws authority are deeply rooted with the normative structure of the Pashtun society that are conflicting with women autonomy. Family forced women directly or indirectly to obey the rule regulations of family. Controlling women autonomy by mother-in-law leads to domestic violence. The study conducted by

Suneetha, and Nagaraj (2006), indicated that domestic violence is often associated with the power distribution within family.

Similarly, Maladjustment of women with her husband leads to domestic violence. Good relationship of wife with her husband is a key factor for long-term marital life. The current study shows that the adjustment problem of couples, exposing women for domestic violence.

The research shows that women with lesser amount of dowry also cause domestic violence. Dowry is a deep-rooted cultural factor that indicates the socio-economic status of women. Lesser amount of dowry degrades the women's position in husband's family. Study conducted by Ali et al. (2013), shown that women with less amount of dowry received different type of voices, which negatively affect the social position of women in husband's family.

Likewise, the women's movement and excessive social interaction are taboo in Pashtun society. The frequent movements and excessive social interaction of women outside the family is considered a stigma for family. To wash out the social stigma and restore family honors, women often face violence. The study established by Vandello and Cohen (2003), also indicated that social stigma, and family honor is significantly associated with domestic violence.

More demands of women in poor family associated with domestic violence against women. It is very hard for the husband to fulfil the extra demands of wife. If the women's consumptions are exceeded then the actual family earning that creates tension within family.

Conclusion

It was concluded that domestic violence is often associated with in-laws relationships. The resistance of women with her family obligation, lesser amount of dowry, restriction on women's movement and excessive social interaction are associated with domestic violence. Similarly, research shows that controlling women's autonomy by mother-in-law, maintaining family honor, social stigma and more demands of women were the common reasons associated with domestic violence against women. Community should be organized to promote gender equality, challenging patriarchal social norms, and raising awareness about human dignity. Economic empowerment programs should aim to enhance women's economic security, independence, and decision-making power. Social Support services, including counseling, legal aid, and shelter, should be strengthened and expanded to reach more survivors of domestic violence.

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