

## Original Article

# WIFE BATTERING TRENDS IN PAKISTANI POPULATION

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**Objective:** To study the present trends about wife battering in Pakistani population.

**Material and Methods:** Two hundred cases of battered wife were selected from Emergency & OPD of Islam Hospital Sialkot, OPD & Emergency of Fouji Foundation Hospital Rawalpindi, PD & Emergency Department of Railway Hospital Rawalpindi, OPD & Emergency Department of Services Hospital, Lahore, and OPD & Emergency Department of Shahina Jamil Hospital Abbottabad. The data was collected on proforma with relation to age, socio economic status, literacy rate, occupation, addiction, joint family system & residential area with the permission of authorities of the hospitals. The data was analyzed for results statistically.

**Results:** In this study the victims of battered wife were maximum at the age range 21-30 years 33 % (66 cases) as compared to age range 71-80 years 02 % (04 cases). The house wives were the maximum victims of battered wife 25 % (50 cases) as compared to belonging to business community wives 05 % (10 cases). In the lower class the victims of battered wife were 56 % (112 cases), in middle class 24 % (48 cases) and in high gentry 20 % (40 cases) victims of battered wife were recorded. Among the addicted couples the battering of wife was higher 83 % (166 cases) as compared to non addicted couples 17 % (34 cases). The battered wives were 73 % (146 cases) in case of more than one wife as compared to single wife 27 % (54 cases). Where there was sickness of the wife or husband the victims were 83 % (166 cases) as compared to healthy couple which were 17 % (34 cases). In illiterate families the victims of battered wife were 63 % (126 cases) as compared to literate families 37 % (74 cases). In joint family system the victims of battered wife were 67 % (134 cases) as compared to nuclear family system 33 % (66 cases) were seen. The victims of battered wife were maximum from rural area 67 % (134 cases) as compared to urban area 33 % (66 cases).

**Conclusion:** The tendency of battered wife is a global problem. It is increasing day by day in developed / under developed countries and nations. This trend is even going to be increased in Muslims countries where battering to the wife is prohibited (Haraam).

**Keywords:** Battered wife, wife battering, Psychological, economical, mental / physical sickness and joint family system.

## Introduction

Recently many social scientists have paid their attention towards the issue of violence against women, not only in the developed but also in the developing world.<sup>1</sup> Feminist movements for the last three centuries have been focusing on the repressive conditions being faced by women across the world but the condition of the women is still far from satisfactory and cries out for amelioration.<sup>2</sup> Recently feminist scholars have commented on strategies to safeguard women from domestic violence. Although, technological advancement, globalization, industrialization, internationalization of media and efforts made by international institutions, including international non-governmental organizations have created some space for women to compete on equal footing but the situation is unfortunately still much unsatisfactory for those

women who are living in under developed nation.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand there are few international humanitarian organizations, which are working to eliminate this violence against them.<sup>4</sup> The cumulative and even concerted efforts by struggling parties have brought little fruit and the situation still remains unpalatable and oppressive.<sup>5</sup> This brutal violence has different forms and multi-lateral dimensions.<sup>6</sup> It varies from society to society in its magnitude and intensity. Wife battering is one of the major issues and practices in violence against women.<sup>7</sup> According to Heise violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon, transcending cultural, geographic, religious, social and economic boundaries. It has come to be recognized internationally as an important issue and has become the subject of a substantial amount of research in recent decades.<sup>8</sup> The most common type of violence against wife is domestic;

violence perpetrated by intimate partner.<sup>9</sup> In the context of Pakistan social setup violence against wife has a very abnormal proportion since the societal norms encourage and perpetuate the superiority of men-folk.<sup>10</sup> Among other reasons for the dominance of the men over women, is the joint family system.<sup>11</sup> This stretched family yields excessive influence of the in-laws over the wife husband relations and is a substantial cause of wife degradation, wife humiliation and wife battering. It is usually the mother-in-law who is the major factor in this sanguine drama but she is all the same reinforced feudal make-up of family structure. It is very rare that mother-in-law comes to fend the disputes but most of time she ignites and sparkles vicious conflagration among spouses. The Pandora-box of complaints against her daughter-in-law is never exhausted.<sup>12</sup>

The factors interacting through which female are targeted in rural Punjab have specific formations. The societal norms to a large extent insist the husbands for wife battering. To some extent religion is also misused in perpetuating such acts.<sup>13</sup> The frequency of severe wife battering has resulted into a chain reaction of social malformation. The present research has unfolded a disastrous situation, the victims have an urge to live in a nuclear family rather than to live in a joint family and facing such inexorable violence. In their perception and to some extent true, it minimizes the intrusions of the in-laws thus rending part the social fabric of society. While on the other hand some of these victims are struggling to opt out of marriage contract but are faced with the dilemma of between the devil and the deep blue sea since the dissolution of such a contract is likely to result into further misfortune and complications and top of all the infliction of social stigma, that is attached to a forsaken divorce.<sup>14</sup>

### Material & Methods

Two hundred cases of battered wife were selected from Emergency & OPD of Islam Hospital Sialkot, OPD & Emergency of Fouji Foundation Hospital Rawalpindi, Emergency & OPD of Railway Hospital Rawalpindi, OPD & Emergency Department of Services Hospital, Lahore, and OPD & Emergency Department of Shahina Jamil Hospital Abbottabad. The data was collected on proforma with relation to age, socio economic status, literacy rate, occupation, addiction, joint family system, residential area with the permission of authorities of the hospitals. The data was analyzed for results statistically.

### Results

In this study the victims of battered wife were maximum at the age range 21 - 30 years 33 % (66 cases) as compared to age range 71 - 80 years 02 % (04 cases) as shown in **Table No 1**. The house wives were the maximum victims of battered wife 25 % (50 cases) as compared to business man wife 05 % (10 cases) as shown in **Table No 2**. In the lower class the victims of battered wife were 56 % (112 cases), in middle class 24 % (48 cases) and in high gentry 20 % (40 cases) victims of battered wife were recorded as shown in **Table No 3**. Were the members of addicted couple the battering of wife was higher 83 % (166 cases) as compared to non addicted couple 17 % (34 cases) as shown in **Table No 4**. The victims of battered wife were 73 % (146 cases) where there was more than one wife as compared to single wife 27 % (54 cases) as shown in **Table No 5**. Where there was sickness of the wife or husband found the victims of battered wife were 83 % (166 cases) as compared to healthy couple 17 % (34 cases) were seen as shown in **Table No 6**. In illiterate families the victims of battered wife were 63 % (126 cases) as compared to literate families 37 % (74 cases) were seen as shown in **Table No 7**. In joint family system the victims of battered wife were 67 % (134 cases) as compared to nuclear family system 33 % (66 cases) were seen as shown in **Table No 8**. The victims of battered wife were maximum from rural area 67 % (134 cases) as compared to urban area 33 % (66 cases) were recorded as shown in **Table No 9**.

**Table-1:** Battered Wife with relation to age.

| Age in Years | Number | Percentage |
|--------------|--------|------------|
| 10 - 20      | 20     | 10%        |
| 21 - 30      | 66     | 33%        |
| 31 - 40      | 50     | 25%        |
| 41 - 50      | 30     | 15%        |
| 51 - 60      | 22     | 11%        |
| 61 - 70      | 08     | 04%        |
| 71 - 80      | 04     | 02%        |
| Total        | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-2:** Battered wife with relation to occupation.

| Age in Years   | Number | Percentage |
|----------------|--------|------------|
| Student        | 14     | 07%        |
| House Wife     | 50     | 25%        |
| Factory Worker | 30     | 15%        |

|               |     |      |
|---------------|-----|------|
| Office Worker | 20  | 10%  |
| Business Man  | 10  | 05%  |
| Farmer        | 14  | 07%  |
| Labourer      | 30  | 15%  |
| Miscellaneous | 32  | 16%  |
| Total         | 200 | 100% |

**Table-3:** Battered wife with relation to socio economic status.

| Socio economic status | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| Lower Class           | 112    | 56%        |
| Middle Class          | 48     | 24%        |
| High Gentry           | 40     | 20%        |
| Total                 | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-4:** Battered wife with relation to addiction of wife / husband.

| Addiction               | Number | Percentage |
|-------------------------|--------|------------|
| Member of addict couple | 166    | 83%        |
| Non addict couple       | 34     | 17%        |
| Total                   | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-5:** Battered wife with relation to marital status.

| Marital Status     | Number | Percentage |
|--------------------|--------|------------|
| More than one wife | 146    | 73%        |
| Single wife        | 34     | 27%        |
| Total              | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-6:** Battered wife with relation to mental / Physical Sickness of wife / husband.

| Sickness            | Number | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Sick wife / husband | 166    | 83%        |
| Healthy wife        | 34     | 17%        |
| Total               | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-7:** Battered wife with relation to literacy status.

| Literacy Status | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------|--------|------------|
| Literate        | 74     | 37%        |
| Illiterate      | 126    | 63%        |
| Total           | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-8:** Battered wife with relation to joint family system.

| Family System         | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| Nuclear family system | 66     | 33%        |
| Joint family system   | 134    | 67%        |
| Total                 | 200    | 100%       |

**Table-9:** Battered wife with relation to residential area.

| Residential area | Number | Percentage |
|------------------|--------|------------|
| Rural area       | 134    | 67%        |
| Urban area       | 66     | 33%        |
| Total            | 200    | 100%       |

## Discussion

Battered wife is a global problem and exists in both developed / under developed nations. The battering of wives is going to be increased even in muslims countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Saudi-Arabia etc. The battering can be decreased by observing preventive measures like.<sup>15</sup>

- Nuclear family system
- Creating awareness about human rights by seminars, religious teachings / education
- By providing psychological services
- By providing social services
- By providing economical services
- By providing treatment for mental / physical sicknesses.
- By increasing literacy rate
- By increasing religious teachings

In this study the victims of battered wife were maximum at the age range 21-30 years 33% (66 cases) as compared to age range 71-80 years 02% (04 cases), as this age the reaction to even minor problems is much more as compared old age. The house wives were the maximum victims of battered wife 25% (50 cases) as compared to business man wife 05% (10 cases), as the house wife face more problems as compared to business man wife. In the lower class the victims of battered wife were 56% (112 cases), in middle class 24% (48 cases) and in high gentry 20% (40 cases) victims of battered wife were recorded, as there are more economical problems as compared to high gentry. Where the members of addict couple the battering of wife was higher 83% (166 cases) as compared to non addict couple 17% (34 cases), as the addiction decreases the mental tolerance which becomes the cause of battering. The victims of battered wife were 73% (146 cases) where there was

more than one wife as compared to single wife 27 % (54 cases), as the number of problems increases with increase of number of wife. Where there was sickness of the wife or husband found the victims of battered wife were 83 % (166 cases) as compared to healthy couple 17 % (34 cases) were seen as the mental / physical sickness decreases the tolerance which is cause of battering. In illiterate families the victims of battered wife were 63 % (126 cases) as compared to literate families 37 % (74 cases) were seen, as the literacy increases the power of problems solving capacity which decreases battering rate in married couples. In joint family system the victims of battered wife were 67 % (134 cases), as compared to non joint family system 33 % (66 cases) were seen, as the joint family system creates the number of problems especially the mother in law as compared to non joint family system. The victims of battered wife were maximum from rural area 67 % (134 cases) as compared to urban area 33 % (66 cases) were recorded, as there are number of problems like illiteracy, poverty, load shading etc. are much more as compared to urban area.

Most of the battered women thought that it was due to the family tradition and husbands are incited or coaxed by other family members to commit such acts.

Domestic violence with wife or any other type of violence is always due to some clashes in the relationship of two or more than two individuals. Family is a basic institution of the society where all the members act as component of the system and for the smooth environment it is important that

every one play his/her role positively.<sup>16</sup>

The most important factor in the battered wife in previous studies is the crucial role of mothers-in-law in Pakistan society. It is considered as extrinsic factor which abets and encourages the husband to become batterers in their houses.

The perception of divorcing has been fundamentally associated with severity of battering. Although it is thought to be course for a female to initiate for divorce, in rural Punjab.<sup>17</sup>

## Conclusions

The tendency of battered wife is a global problem. It is increasing day by day in developed / under developed countries and nations. This trend is even going to be increased in Muslims countries where battering to the wife is prohibited (Haraam)

## Suggestions

The tendency of battered wife can be decreased by observing following measures

- a) Nuclear family system
- b) By creating awareness about human rights by seminars, religious teachings / education
- c) By providing psychological services
- d) By providing social services
- e) By providing economical services
- f) By providing treatment for mental / physical sickness

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