

Reasons for Pakistani Women to Stay/Leave an Abusive Relation

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Abstract

The aim of this research was to investigate the reasons why women in Pakistan choose to stay in an abusive relation. It was hypothesized that 1-women who consider themselves as self sufficient would opt to leave the abusive relation rather than continuing to live with it as compared to women who are less resourceful. 2- Women who fear social rejection would continue to live in an abusive relation as compared to those women who are not afraid of isolation. Since this was a very sensitive area triangulation method was adopted for in depth understanding. A purposeful sampling was applied for sample selection. A sample of 250 women was screened with help of HITS (Sherin) out of which only 216 continued with the project. Sample included 118 abused women and 98 not abused women. The HITS (Kevin), was translated back and forth. The data was gathered by screening with HITS and later conducting an interview with them based on Choice and Lamke model. All the ethical codes and conducts were followed during the research for the safety of the participants. The data analysis indicated that the women who stayed in abusive relation were less resourceful and afraid of social isolation. There was one major limitation related to the size and representation from all provinces. The findings could help in developing rehabilitation programs for the victims by helping them to cope well. For future research purpose the study should include other variables like physical well being and support system to depict the true picture of psychological well being of victims of IPV in Pakistan.

1. Introduction

Globally, violence against women is an important concern and it is estimated that one in every three women will be affected by some form violence in their life time (United Nations Population Fund 2010)

Intimate partner violence is a wide spread health and social problem that cuts across socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic boundaries (Balci & Ayrançi, 2005; Graham et al., 2009). Within the gender role belief system, use of Force is one way in which male dominance can be supported. Hence the use of violence is justified on the premise that men have recognized power and authority over women (Sugerman & Frankel 1996). According to Stamm (2009) the newly married couple, typically married two years or less are at greater risk for becoming the victim of domestic violence. Whilst appraising the findings of IPV it is essential to note down that since it is a highly sensitive issue, and henceforth is universally under reported (Ellsberg et al., 2001). Women are seven to 14 times more likely to experience physical injury from an attack made by an intimate partner. (Muelleman 1996). Violence is not only limited to the poor or underprivileged women anymore but has penetrated in all socioeconomic groups. Women belonging to various religions and cultures suffer sexual and domestic violence although the practice of abuse is often prolonged if a woman is isolated or lacks the various resources needed to get away (Mooney 2000).

Pakistan is a federal parliamentary Islamic Republic consisting of four provincial states. With a population exceeding up to 180 million since 2011, it is ranked the sixth highly populated country in the world after Indonesia and second most populous country with the Muslim majority (Robert 1998). It is an ethnically and linguistically diversified Muslim country. In this country 97% the population is Muslim community. In Pakistan Hinduism and Christianity are the second most largest religions with approximately 2,800,000 (1.6%) descendants. Apart from these two religions there are communities belonging to Bahá'í Faith, Sikhism, Buddhism and Parses. (Library Congress 2005)

Pakistani society is largely hierarchical, emphasizing local cultural etiquettes and traditional Islamic values that govern personal and political life. The basic family unit is either the joint family system or the extended family, although there has been a recent growing trend towards nuclear families for socio-economic factor (Anwar Alam 2008)

Pakistan is a typical patriarchal society where men are considered to be superior beings than females and possess more power and authority over them. Since Pakistan shares the borders of India it is also influenced by its

culture & traditions as well. Pakistan's customs and social mores reflect different shades of Indian Culture. In India's male dominating society, males are valued more than females, just like the case in Pakistan. Men act as heads of their respective families and are the primary bread earners, decision makers and disciplinarians. Women in the family are treated as dependents and subordinates who are responsible for looking after the house hold chores and are not involved in any kind of decision making process. Men think that they are born to abide by the rules and decisions they have taken for them. Since childhood the females in Pakistan are groomed to move into with the cognitive construct that they are responsible for contributing to, the well-being of their husbands and his family (Dhuvarajan, 1993; Mullatti, 1995).

Since Pakistan has a male chauvinist society, women often face the threat of various forms of violence, including sexual violence by relatives, outsiders and state agents; domestic abuse including spousal murder, being burned, disfigured with acid, physically abused and threatened to be harmed or injured. Besides ritual honor killings and custodial abuse and torture, the most commonly practiced form of abuse is intimate partner violence. This is becoming a big challenge for the government of Pakistan and has also gained international attention as well. In Pakistan the situation of women status regarding the IPV varies considerably depending upon the geographical location and socio economic class they belong to. For instance in the Interior of Sind, villages of Punjab and especially the frontier provinces of Pakistan, the life for a women is very restricted and they are expected to blindly follow and comply with tribal beliefs and traditions without questioning to their authority. These social pressures make the women more vulnerable towards abusive acts of violence.

Women in Pakistan face the threat of numerous forms of violence, including sexual aggression, domestic violence, ritual honor killings and custodial abuse. (HRCP annual report 1997). According to a rough estimation each year 70% to 90% of women in Pakistan are targeted for domestic violence. According to a survey by Pakistan Human Right Commission (March 2000), reported that on average out of hundred cases of family violence at least two women were burned to death every day in domestic violence incidents. These accidents usually erupt as a sign of rage against those women who are unable to bring sufficient dowry for their husbands. Dowry is a kind of custom practiced in Pakistan in which the female's family has to give gifts to the women's in laws in the form of kinds or cash. If a woman is not given dowry by her family she has to suffer a lot of hardships in her future.

Domestic Violence is a universal problem in not confined only to our society but exists in western society as well. The biggest challenge in encountering this issue is that the reporting of such a grave issue is not done rather the facts are denied. Although the findings suggest that the health facilities more frequently utilized by the victims rather than an ordinary women (Resnik et al., 1997). Studies have documented that this serious issue of violence is not properly reported at various medical, psychological and social services. At points this problem appears to be completely invisible or the fact that it completely denied at these facility centers (Acierno, Gibbions et al., 1996). In case of Pakistani society as well it is not acceptable that a woman should raise her voice for her rights as she has to obey the orders of her husband and comply him under any condition. They deny abuse due to various reasons; they may fail to report abuse because they feel ashamed of being assaulted by their husbands; they may be afraid; they may have a sense of family loyalty. These vicious acts against women and female child are wide spread and has serious consequences on well being of communities (Bolen Russell and Scannapieco 2000). Staying in an abusive relationship can be very stressful and at the same time painful thus leading to trauma and pathologies. Women who had been exposed to such violent and distressing experiences since their childhood or as grown-up person are at high risk of being vulnerable towards various health problems, the suicide probability would also increase for them and are susceptible of getting involved in high risk behavior. (Koss, Bailey And Lither 1997). Women in the Pakistani society follow the traditional roles often assigned to them which often contribute to a feeling of being duty-bound to stay in a relation, even if it is abusive in nature. The social mores incorporated in the mind of a Pakistan's women at a very tender age are suggestive of the fact that she is required to nurture and be concerned of others needs, before she starts taking care of her own self. As a result they often identify themselves through how they relate to others. They are expected to behave selfless while caring for men, even at the expense of her own individuality, desires and ambitions. Further more the women are often expected not to abandon their spouses or end their marriage contract as it would be life long failure and act of disgrace for them. This failure of not being able to continue a relation and abandoning the husbands is mostly associated with the stigma of being worthless and possessing immoral character.

There are enormous reasons why women do not opt to leave an abusive relation and choose to continue living in the vicious relationship are multifaceted and may depend upon a diversity of dynamics involved such as conventional gender roles, economic apprehensions, distress related to her own self and her children's wellbeing and life safety.

2. Research aim and objectives:

The aim of this study was to explore and identify the reasons why women get entrapped into an abusive relation or what are the reasons that they would give up on a relation after an abuse. It further aims to explore the attitudes and beliefs about the frequency of domestic abuse in the community and its relative importance attached to other threats to safety in the community.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the study:

The mixed research method was used to study this very significant and sensitive issue since the goal was not only to identify but also to explore, henceforth both the qualitative and quantitative methodologies were incorporated for this research. This study comprised of Qualitative tools like conducting an interview and running a focus group for counseling after data collection. The Quantitative tools like various scales in order to quantify the various aspects, personal and social factors contributing to the victim's abuse. A combination of quantitative and qualitative study methods is commonly called methodological triangulation –which has also been called mixed methods and the syncretism approach (Happ, DeVito Dabbas et al; 2006. Here I would like to refer Astedt-Kurki (2001), who suggested that research within families in sensitive topics, in addition to the strict ethical principles, needs flexible methods and solutions adapted for use in particular situations. Morse (1991) argues that not only does triangulation maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each approach, but also strengthens research results and contribute knowledge.

3.2 Sample:

This is a very sensitive issue and involved a lot of risk in the participants home it was very essential to seek prior permissions from the volunteers. Before stating on with data collection frequent visits were made in the areas where it was mentioned in the areas for data collection, so that the people in the locality do not get threatened by the presence of the examiner and rather feel at ease. The Purposeful sampling was employed to allow for the selection of the participants based on their knowledge and experience of the issue under investigation .Participants were at various stages within the abusive relationship ,with the difference in duration and severity of abuse. Overall 300 hundred women were approached and screened with the help of HITS Scale but approximately 88 of them with drew from the research due to social pressures especially from their spouses.

Hence the research could be continued with 212 participants. The age range also varied from 18 to 60+. The age range was not limited for the sample keeping in view that the data collection for this sensitive area would be limited.

4. Research Instruments

4.1 Demographic Sheet

The following demographic characteristics would be included: for the women, current marital status, age, race/ethnicity, education, number of people living in the respondent's household, usual occupation, number of guns in the household, alcohol or other drug use problem, and whether the respondent's father was either emotionally or physically abusive toward her mother; for their current male partners, age, race/ethnicity, occupation, and whether the woman perceives him to have an alcohol or other drug use problem .The nature of abuse And the duration of abusive relationship.

4.2 Screening Violence

Hurt, Insulted, Threatened and Screamed (HITS) Scale

HITS is a domestic violence screening scale developed and tested in a female population at Christ hospital in Chicago. This tool was developed as a Simple, brief instrument for use in clinical practices Hurt, Insulted, Threatened and Screamed Scale (HITS) (Sherin, 1998) ; HITS (Appendix) is a very popular short screening scale for domestic violence and intimate partner violence. It has been frequently used in family practice to screen physical and verbal abuse in

intimate relations. It is comprised of four items. The respondents rate items on 5-point rating scale to report how often their partner physically Hurt, Insulted, Threatened with harm and Screamed at them. These four words make the abbreviation HITS. Each item is scored from 1=Never to 5=Frequently. The scores for this inventory range from 4-20. The cutoff score of 10 is used to indicate presence of Intimate Partner Abuse (IPA).HITS has been translated into various languages and has been validated on a wide range of populations from different parts of the world.

4.3 Interview for Measuring factors for staying or leaving an abusive relationship

Based on Choice and Lamke Model an interview was designed to address the questions like Will I be better off? Will be addressed with following areas:

(a) Quality alternatives.

This area will explore what options a Pakistani women has when her relation becomes a burden and source of humiliation for her

(b) Irretrievable investment

This area would tap that how much weight age a women gives to costs and benefits involved while leaving a relation or deciding to continue living in the same relation

(c) Level of satisfaction.

This area would explore the level of satisfaction of a women with her life and the significant others who are the reason for her to continue the relation of withdraw from the bond

(d) Subjective norms(respecting others wishes)

This area would explore how much consideration is given to the social demands and personal belief system to sacrifice for the sake of others wishes

The 2nd question Can I do it will be covered in following areas:

(a) Personal resources

This area would explore the strengths of women to continue and cope with crisis situation

(b) Personal barriers

This area would explore the weaknesses of women to effectively deal and cope with unstable and difficult relations

(c) Religious barriers

This area would explore the religious constraints a woman has to deal with while deciding to leave /stay in a relation.

5. Results

5.1 Descriptive analysis of qualitative data

Table 1. Responses to the Question 1- If you leave your spouse do you have any options?

Options to leave spouse		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	113	52.3	52.3	52.3
	1	10	4.6	4.6	56.9
Some what	2	11	5.1	5.1	62.0
	3	7	3.2	3.2	65.3
Few	4	20	9.3	9.3	74.5
	5	30	13.9	13.9	88.4
Average	6	19	8.8	8.8	97.2
	7	6	2.8	2.8	100.0
Good enough	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

52% did not have any options while 48% had various levels of options

Table 2. Responses to Question 2 –How much do you think the relation in which you invested is irretrievable?

Relation is Irretrievable

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	62	28.7	28.7	28.7
	1	9	4.2	4.2	32.9
Some what	2	10	4.6	4.6	37.5
	3	14	6.5	6.5	44.0
slightly	4	18	8.3	8.3	52.3
	5	54	25.0	25.0	77.3
Average	6	42	19.4	19.4	96.8
	7	7	3.2	3.2	100.0
To Some extent	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

29% did not think it was irretrievable while 71% had various levels of agreements

Table 3. Responses to Question 3- After deciding to take Stay /Leave decision how much are you contended with self?

Self Satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	16	7.4	7.4	7.4
	1	14	6.5	6.5	13.9
Some what	2	23	10.6	10.6	24.5
	3	29	13.4	13.4	38.0
slightly	4	43	19.9	19.9	57.9
	5	50	23.1	23.1	81.0
Average	6	30	13.9	13.9	94.9
	7	11	5.1	5.1	100.0
To Some extent	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

7% were not satisfied with self while 83% had various levels of agreements

Table 4. Question 4- After deciding to take Stay /Leave decision how much are you contended with life?

Life Satisfaction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	21	9.7	9.7	9.7
	1	13	6.0	6.0	15.7
Some what	2	24	11.1	11.1	26.9
	3	27	12.5	12.5	39.4
slightly	4	50	23.1	23.1	62.5
	5	47	21.8	21.8	84.3
Average	6	26	12.0	12.0	96.3
	7	8	3.7	3.7	100.0
To Some extent	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

10% were not satisfied with self while 90% had various levels of agreements

Table 5. Responses to Question 5- After deciding to take Stay /Leave decision how much are you contended with Significant others in life?

Satisfaction from Significant Others

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	30	13.9	13.9	13.9
	1	17	7.9	7.9	21.8
Some what	2	30	13.9	13.9	35.6
	3	27	12.5	12.5	48.1
slightly	4	45	20.8	20.8	69.0
	5	33	15.3	15.3	84.3
Average	6	28	13.0	13.0	97.2
To Some extent	7	6	2.8	2.8	100.0
A lot	Total	216	100.0	100.0	
Too much					

14% were not satisfied with others while 86% had various levels of agreements

Table 6. Responses to Question 6-Before deciding to stay /leave how much consideration will you give to self?

Giving consideration to self During Stay/Leave decision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	33	15.3	15.3	15.3
	1	7	3.2	3.2	18.5
Some what	2	11	5.1	5.1	23.6
	3	15	6.9	6.9	30.6
slightly	4	36	16.7	16.7	47.2
	5	46	21.3	21.3	68.5
Average	6	51	23.6	23.6	92.1
To Some extent	7	17	7.9	7.9	100.0
A lot	Total	216	100.0	100.0	
Too much					

15% did not give importance while 85% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.1 Responses to Question 7-Before deciding to stay /leave how much consideration will you give to family?

Giving consideration to family During Stay/Leave decision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	14	6.5	6.5	6.5
	1	8	3.7	3.7	10.2
Some what	2	14	6.5	6.5	16.7
	3	17	7.9	7.9	24.5
slightly	4	42	19.4	19.4	44.0
	5	47	21.8	21.8	65.7
Average	6	50	23.1	23.1	88.9
To Some extent					

A lot	7	24	11.1	11.1	100.0
Too much	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

6% did not give any consideration to the family while 94% had various levels of agreement

Table 6.2 Responses to Question 8-Before deciding to stay /leave how much consideration will you give to society?

Giving consideration to Society During Stay/Leave decision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	26	12.0	12.0	12.0
	1	13	6.0	6.0	18.1
Some what slightly	2	11	5.1	5.1	23.1
	3	24	11.1	11.1	34.3
Average	4	41	19.0	19.0	53.2
	5	51	23.6	23.6	76.9
To Some extent	6	39	18.1	18.1	94.9
	7	11	5.1	5.1	100.0
Total		216	100.0	100.0	

12% did not give any consideration to the society while 88% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.3 Responses to Question 9 What personal Resources do you have related to self ?

Feeling of self sufficiency

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	49	22.7	22.7	22.7
	1	10	4.6	4.6	27.3
Some what slightly	2	17	7.9	7.9	35.2
	3	30	13.9	13.9	49.1
Average	4	40	18.5	18.5	67.6
	5	41	19.0	19.0	86.6
To Some extent	6	14	6.5	6.5	93.1
	7	15	6.9	6.9	100.0
Total		216	100.0	100.0	

23% did not have any feeling of self sufficiency while 77% had various levels of agreements

Table 6. 4 Responses to Question 10 Are you self sufficient in economic resources?

Economic Resources

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	59	27.3	27.3	27.3
	1	13	6.0	6.0	33.3
Some what slightly	2	16	7.4	7.4	40.7
	3	31	14.4	14.4	55.1

Average To Some extent A lot Too much	4	40	18.5	18.5	73.6
	5	38	17.6	17.6	91.2
	6	13	6.0	6.0	97.2
	7	6	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

27% did not have any economic resources while 73% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.5 Responses to Question 11 -Are you satisfied with your financial status?

Financial Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	26	12.0	12.0	12.0
Some what	1	23	10.6	10.6	22.7
slightly	2	26	12.0	12.0	34.7
Average	3	38	17.6	17.6	52.3
To Some extent	4	48	22.2	22.2	74.5
A lot	5	35	16.2	16.2	90.7
Too much	6	13	6.0	6.0	96.8
	7	7	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

12% were not satisfied with their financial status while 88% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.6 Responses to Question 12 -Are you satisfied with your Support System?

Availability Support System

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all Some what	0	56	25.9	25.9	25.9
	1	17	7.9	7.9	33.8
slightly	2	19	8.8	8.8	42.6
	3	26	12.0	12.0	54.6
Average	4	40	18.5	18.5	73.1
	5	31	14.4	14.4	87.5
To Some extent	6	18	8.3	8.3	95.8
	7	9	4.2	4.2	100.0
A lot					
Too much					
	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

26% were not satisfied with their support system while 74% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.7 Responses to Question 13 Do you face any personal Barriers related to confidence?

Lack of Confidence

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	20	9.3	9.3	9.3
	1	14	6.5	6.5	15.7
Some what	2	25	11.6	11.6	27.3
	3	24	11.1	11.1	38.4
slightly	4	42	19.4	19.4	57.9
	5	64	29.6	29.6	87.5
Average	6	19	8.8	8.8	96.3
	7	8	3.7	3.7	100.0
To Some extent	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

9% were not lacking confidence while 91% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.8 Responses to Question 14 Do you face any personal Barriers related to Decision making?

Indecisiveness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	24	11.1	11.1	11.1
	1	20	9.3	9.3	20.4
Some what	2	26	12.0	12.0	32.4
	3	27	12.5	12.5	44.9
slightly	4	40	18.5	18.5	63.4
	5	55	25.5	25.5	88.9
Average	6	13	6.0	6.0	94.9
	7	11	5.1	5.1	100.0
To Some extent	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

11% were not at all indecisive while 89% had various levels of agreements

Table 6.9 Responses to Question 15 Do you face any problems related to coping with Stressful situations?

Ineffectiveness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	0	27	12.5	12.5	12.5
	1	27	12.5	12.5	25.0
Some what	2	23	10.6	10.6	35.6
	3	26	12.0	12.0	47.7
slightly	4	57	26.4	26.4	74.1
	5	40	18.5	18.5	92.6
Average	6	9	4.2	4.2	96.8
	7	7	3.2	3.2	100.0
To Some extent	Total	216	100.0	100.0	

12% were not feeling ineffective while 88 % had various levels of agreements

TA

Women Who Left the Abusive Spouse	Women who Continued to live Abusive Spouse
64% were self sufficient	36% were not self sufficient
69% did not fear social Rejection	31% had fear of social Rejection

6. Discussion

Majority of the women stated that they would not even think of leaving the spouse (Referring to table no 55) where as a very small number of women narrated that they had various options and would abandon the relation as soon as it becomes intolerable for them. Most of the women who opt to stay in an abusive relation are those women who lack various resources .They are not having any better options .These women are of the belief that what if they abandon this relation they might put themselves in a further difficult situation and withdraw from taking a bold step and silently suffer abuse. Living in a male dominating society makes it quite difficult for a women to survive as she has to face the stalking attitude of other men ,which makes her feel more vulnerable and disgusted. At times just breaking the tie might not resolve a problem but instead ignite the issue further. Women are brought up with the norms of being submissive and docile if they want to live a peaceful life this is exactly what an abused woman thinks like in the Pakistan's Culture.

The women in the Pakistan's society are taught to believe that marriage is the ultimate destination for a successful women .the criterion suggested for a satisfied life of married women revolves around the idea of a successful marriage life. The concept of career growth or educational achievements is not of any value till she is labeled as a responsible and good wife. Hence, being brought up in a culture like this; almost every woman tries to invest all her energies into making her marriage workout successfully. Looking at the participant's response to question 2 which was related relationship investment. Majority of the women i.e. 71% replied that it would not be possible to just leave as they had sacrificed a lot to keep and maintain this relation (refer to table 56).The theory behind this could be that longer a women stays in a relation she begins to build a castle of expectation and hope around the husband, thinking that she has done so much for him how can she leave now. Some of the abused women were of the argument that if the ultimate result had to end in breaking the relation why did they had to suffer all these years? Since the relationship had drained out all their energy and beautiful moments of young life there is no point in withdrawal after a long time hardship and sufferings.

The actual problem arises when a women has to take a decision of either to stay or leave an abusive relation. The women of Pakistan are brought up in such a way that they are under social and moral obligation to seek the permission of the head of the family even before making a small decision for her life. The women of this region are completely reliant on the elders in the family to take the responsibility of making decisions of their lives. Since the women of this region are dependent and submissive hence they always abide by the rules and norms set for them .Hence forth these women are always under tremendous pressure before taking any decision as they fear that the consequences can lead to rejection and ridicule from the family and friends .Mostly when the decision made is in accordance to the norms set for her by the family and do not cause mental turmoil to the family she feels much satisfied with self and her decision .The most crucial decision in the Pakistan's married women's life is to decide whether she will remain in the relation or leave the relation .During the parting off with the abusive relation the mental stability of the women is completely dependent on how satisfied she is before and after the decision .Some very interesting findings are revealed from the results (Refer to table 57)Very few of the participants were having dissatisfaction with self while majority of them were quite contended with the decision they took regarding their marital life. There could be various reasons for feeling contended .According to some of the participants who had left their abusive spouse narrated that ending the relation had led to peace and tranquility in their life and hence they were happy with their decision that they did not opt for further abuse and suffering .On the contrary those women who had taken a decision to stay with the spouse were also contended with their decision to some extent stating that living with him makes her feel secure and safe .She does not have to struggle on her own to make both ends meet, as the financial resources are provided by her husband. Women who decide either to stay or leave an abusive relation are mostly making the decisions to please the significant others in the family and people in social network. The Pakistani women is brought up in such a way that she is always sacrificing for the sake of her family's welfare and happiness .Henceforth she takes special care that whatever decision she would take for her life should not effect the wellbeing of the family. Referring to table 58 women who had decided in favor of the family decision were more satisfied and contended from life. During the interview majority of the women stated that they were satisfied only if their family was happy and had no regrets for whatever step they took for them .A small number of participants were not satisfied with their life as they felt helpless and completely reliant on others for making decisions for their life Some of the

women who were forced into the relation felt that they should have quit the relation as there was no mental compatibility with their spouse and if they live together will be a compromise and nothing else. Hence some participants were of the view that having a relation where there are no sentiments and feelings for the person, it is not worth spending your whole life with him.

In the Pakistani society the women lives a life for her family. Since her childhood she has been completely dependent on her family not only for the fulfillment of her basic needs but even for decisions like whether she should get education or not, which career should she select, who is the right person for her to marry etc. She had never thought independently, her thoughts and wishes are always restricted to the likes and dislikes of her family members. In this region the love for family is always on the priority list for women from all walks of life. These women are brought up with the belief that their family is their well wisher and what ever decision they will take on her behalf would be in her best interest. Referring to table 59 very few women were dissatisfied with the family members who took the decisions on their behalf. On the other hand a large number of women were contended and satisfied with the decisions taken on behalf of them. Some of the abused women were of the view that when the family takes a decision on their behalf, it reduces their stress level and vents off the social pressures.

In the Pakistan's society the marital discord is not a matter of two individuals, in fact it is a matter of two families. The decisions made to either break or maintain a relation are not based on what is better for the future of women herself but what will maintain the prestige of the family. Hence before taking any decision, the women will give least priority to self and would give more weight age to the family honor and dignity. Referring to table no 60, it appears to be quite evident that while making a decision to stay or leave in the marital relation, 15 % of the participants gave least priority to self. Majority of the participants were of the view that they would give consideration to self when coming up with a decision. Almost 8% of the women were of the opinion that they would give the maximum importance to self and least to other factors, as their happiness and wellbeing mattered a lot to them.

Since a lot of importance is given to the social and family values, the women in this region strictly abide by the rules and social role norms set for them. These morals not only have a strong impact on the social life but on the personal wants and likes as well. Since family has a special place in a women's life as they are considered to be the providers and caretakers. Hence going against their decision would be like breaking off with all the links of survival. This trend can be seen in the responses of the participants as most of them stated that the family will involved and given priority to while making a big decision in their life as they are the real well wishers. (Referring to table 61) On the contrary only 6% of the women thought that it is not so important to do what the family wants as this is their personal matter and they know what is best for them. These women were of the opinion that since the family has not directly experienced what they have gone through they will not be able to make the right decision for them. Some of the participants said that it is their life and they are independent enough to take the responsibility of their decisions.

In the Pakistani society the social values are strongly embedded in the roots of all women since their childhood. Every women knows that deviating from the norm is going to result in social isolation and this is one of the biggest apprehensions they fear to face. Referring to table 62, almost 88% of the women responded that they would evaluate the pros and cons of their decision in the light of social desirability. On the contrary only 12% thought that they do not care what people think of them as they are not there to help them in the time of crisis. These women believed that norms are constructed to facilitate and make life easier for people. These small number of participants argued that there is no point in following the rigid norms to please others which would in return make them feel more miserable.

The women of this region are not empowered and they are dependent on others to fulfill their primary basic needs. Majority of the women lack various personal and financial resources, which in return make them, feel more vulnerable and insecure. This feeling of insecurity compels them to follow the commands of the care provider. Referring to table 63, almost 28 % of the women were those who did not find themselves to be self sufficient. Some of these participants belonged to the poverty line areas, some of them were not educated at all and mostly these women were house wives. On the contrary only 12% of the women were self sufficient and independent.

The financial factor is one of the biggest issue under consideration in making a decision to stay or leave an abusive relation. Referring to the table 64 almost 23% of the participants were lacking in economic resources while only 3% were having maximum resources. Referring to table 65 only 12 % of the women were extremely unhappy with their financial status and thought that the core root cause of their marital dispute is mostly based on financial constraints. According to these women their spouses were using them as escape goats to vent out their financial frustrations. On the contrary those women who were extremely satisfied with their financial status thought that they were confident and independent enough to take decisions for their lives. These women felt that they were least apprehensive regarding the issue of maintaining their children and household expenses. A large number of women participants were not having a

good enough support system to help them take the right decisions. This could be one of the major contributing factor in making a women prolong her abusive relation. Referring to table 66 almost 26% of the women did not have any support either from family or from friends. Lacking the strength of social network makes the women more vulnerable and susceptible to violence. These women reported that they were compromising on a lot of issues and were unable to take a stand for themselves as they knew that if they take any drastic steps they will have to bear and face the consequences on their own and no one will come for their savior. On the other hand only 4% of the women were extremely satisfied with their social network. These 4% of the participants reported that they always feel bold and confident before taking any decision as they are convinced that what ever their decision would be their family and friends would be backing them up and this thought gives them immense power and confidence. This is indicative that a very small number of women were having high self confidence. Referring to table 67 almost 9% of the women narrated that they belief in themselves and know how they can handle and manage their problems in a better way, while on the contrary majority of the participants felt that they lack confidence and cannot make appropriate decisions in life especially regarding marriage. The decision making process requires a good analytical skill to assess the consequences and strength to stand upright and face the consequences. The women in Pakistani society have always been dependent on the family to take important decisions of their life for them and bearing full responsibility for them. Referring to table no 68 only 11% of the women were actually able to decide for themselves and majority of the women had various issues in taking decisions ranging from minor to intense. The indecisiveness of these women had also contributed to negatively effect the social skills and made them feel ineffective to deal with conflicts and challenges of life. Referring to table no 69 almost 12% of the women felt that they were competent enough to ably deal with their personal problems. On the contrary majority of the participants felt that as the stressors and social pressures intensify, it becomes difficult for them to handle their problems in an effectual manner. The general themes that came out from the qualitative analysis

6.1 Family Rejection

Pakistani women are strongly influenced by family values. They are not afraid to sacrifice their interest for the interest of their family. Family has a very significant place in the life of the Pakistani women. Her whole life since her childhood is controlled by the likes and dislikes of her family. She has never been given any autonomy of thinking and deciding for her self. Not only the Muslim women participants were concerned for being rejected for making a wrong decision but women from other religions were concerned of what their parents, peers and siblings would think of them. These women were just suffering abuse because they did not want to bring any disappointment to the family or bring a bad name to them. According to these women their spouses knew that this was their sensitive area so they kept on abusing and exploiting them. These women were entrapped due to the fear of family rejection

6.2 Divorce a Social Taboo

Although we have stepped into the twenty first century but traditionally as a Pakistani we are still living in Dark Age period where a women was not allowed to enter into a new relation and she was suppose to live with the first man she married till her death.. In Pakistan it a very sorry figure that the moment the women ties the matrimonial knot, her elders advice her that now she should come home for good only after her death. Although in none of the three religions (religion of Islam, Hindu or Christianity) divorce is illegal. But due to social norms and pressures it is still a taboo. It is ok for women to suffer abuse at the hand of her husband then to abandon him for some other man.

6.3 Concern for Children

Constant and continuous abuse creates a sense of fear among the IPV victims. Women thinks that if they leave the house, it will be of real threat to their life and their children.

According to most of the abused women their major concern was the life security of their children. These women were scared to loose their kids or see them get harmed by their violent partners who had left bruises on their bodies and souls. These women saw the World through the eyes of their children as they are their last hope for a better and secure future. It is traditionally known in this society that a woman will get all her desires Fulfilled by her sons who will later on take the charge of the house hold their security and wellbeing is of utmost importance to the battered women. Some of the women thought that their sons were their weapons to seek revenge from their violent husband According to them when he gets old and powerless I shall control him with the help of my young and strong sons and seek vengeance.

6.4 Social Stigma of Bad Women

According to the Pakistani social norms a women who disobeys her husband or complains to others of his bad behavior is not considered to be a good wife .She is labeled as a Bad Character Women .This was one of the biggest barriers most of the participants were facing .According to some they can bear the physical pain & abusive language but if some one tries to blame their character and call them as bad women is not tolerable for them .They would prefer to be abused then called as immoral. This would bring shame to them and their family. Most of the women strictly followed social and cultural norms this was one of the main reason for them to continue staying in an abusive relation .

6.5 Financial Constraints

Most of the women were financially dependent on their spouses .Since male Chauvinist society prevails in Pakistan It was difficult for most of the women to get a job and live a self sufficient life .In Pakistani society a typical male would not allow his wife to work as he thinks if she starts earning she would become confident and he will lose control over her and for this reason he does not give her access to a liberal and independent life. According to typical Pakistani male, by keeping woman dependent on his resources he will always remain strong and powerful .Financial dependency is a foremost form of dependency which gives rise to other forms of dependency like such as emotional and physical. The abusive husbands are aware of their needs and try to control their thoughts and force them to stay.

6.6 Religious Constraints

Most of the abused Muslim women were of the view that to obey and be submissive to their husbands was a part of their religious teachings .These abused women were strong in their religious faith .These women were of the view that to disobey the husband is just similar to disobedience towards God .So they dare not have the courage to stand against them or disobey them .Some of them explained that their sinful behavior will make them feel guilty and it will be difficult to live with this fear .According to the Hindu and Christen victims their religious faith did not encourage them to stand against their man. These religious constraints forced them to stay and not leave the abusive relation

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