EFFECTS OF RADICALIZATION ON FORCED MARRIAGES & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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* Illustration for the cover page have been adopted from The Social Network and Pakistan Criminal Records Web page

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# Acronyms / Abbreviations

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<thead>
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Norwegian Church Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>Khyber Pakhtunkhawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KII s</td>
<td>Key Informant Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD s</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFLO</td>
<td>Muslim Family Law Ordinance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW</td>
<td>Violence against Women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Project Information:

Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) is implementing the “Local Action to Combat Gender Injustices” program in Pakistan. The program focuses on strengthening community initiatives to challenge violation of women’s rights, with special focus on issues related to consent in marriages and inheritance rights with the crosscutting sub-theme of gender based violence. The three year program has been designed after extensive, as well as intensive consultation with stakeholders, core partners and resource organizations. The program is being implemented in five districts Bahawalpur, Layyah and Gujarat (in Punjab), Mansehra and Haripur (in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa).

The overall goal of the program is to reduce deprivation of women’s rights to inheritance and choice in marriage in target communities in Pakistan through social and collective action. The specific objectives of the program are:

1. Assist target communities in preventing forced marriages through local partners;
2. Facilitate women in the community to get their share of inheritance;
3. Raise awareness so that community groups respond to the issue of gender based violence, with particular focus on forced marriages and women’s inheritance rights issues through collective social actions.

The present report will provide an in-depth understanding of the interplay between gender dynamics, more specifically forced marriage, domestic violence and the growing radicalization in Pakistan. The study suggests strategic policy recommendations to inform advocacy work by NCA and other stakeholders in an effort to influence prevention of violence in Pakistan. NCA will engage with various stakeholders through dialogue and wide public dissemination of the findings of the report through various civil society forums. The study uses a structured methodology, based on quantitative and qualitative techniques and enables state and non-state actors to develop strategies to work towards the reduction of forced marriages and domestic violence. Important recommendations for stakeholders including civil society and the government are also shared through this study.

1.2 Overall Objective of the Study

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR), this study highlights critical and strategic information on the impact of growing radicalization and intolerance on forced marriages and domestic violence. The study analyzes the trend of radicalization as it correlates with the aforementioned problem. Information has been obtained from implementing partners, analyzing their interventions and assessing the impact of actions taken so far under the Gender Justice program.
The following were taken into account and addressed in the study:

- Use of primary and secondary data to conduct a situation analysis of women’s consent for marriages and domestic violence in Pakistan
- Generating an understanding of fluctuations in the rates of domestic violence committed against women as well as the phenomenon of forced marriages in an increasingly radicalized society and to establish the basis for broad-based lobbying and advocacy;
- Investigating best practices in dealing with domestic violence and forced marriages in the context of a highly conservative and radicalized society;
- Analyzing the influence of social structures especially religious institutions over women and men in practicing their right of consent in marriage and discouraging domestic violence
- Based on the findings, recommend follow up actions that may be pursued jointly by NCA and its partner organizations regarding gender justice issues

1.3 Methodology:

The methodology adopted for this study centered on the objectives outlined earlier. Forced marriages and domestic violence are both sensitive topics and therefore the development of tools was done tactfully. A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted. A survey based on a semi-structured questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were carried out. Thereafter, analytic techniques were applied to identify correlations and linkages between variables. The primary research focused on:

- Exploring the causes behind forced marriages and domestic violence
- Investigating the current perceptions and trends prevalent in the communities with respect to these two issues
- Analyzing the role played by social and religious institutions, governing agencies and legislative bodies.

Furthermore the study focused on developing recommendations. Below is a discussion on the overall process and implementation, revealing details on the content design, rationale and approach.

1.4 Sampling:

In order to obtain a representative sampling, the TOR proposed to select 4 districts initially to which Swat was added after the preliminary meetings. The selection of the districts was not random rather was done so as proposed by the NCA team. The target districts are as shown below:
The sampling size for the interviews comprising of focus group discussions and personal semi structured interviews was **250 individuals in all**. For the personal semi structured interviews the sampling technique breakdown is explained as follows.

The total sample size was bifurcated into two urban and two rural Union Councils per district. The following Union Councils were chosen for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahawalpur</td>
<td>UC 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layyah</td>
<td>UC 12</td>
<td>City no 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haripur</td>
<td>Chaman Shah</td>
<td>Central Haripur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>Darwesh</td>
<td>City No 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swat</td>
<td>Shaukatabad</td>
<td>Rang Mohalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bherkund</td>
<td>Malook Abad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sangota</td>
<td>Kokarai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The target population was then sub divided into married men, unmarried men, married women and unmarried women. For the FGD, a group of ten to twelve people was targeted which were segregated according to gender so two FGD’s were conducted per district.
1.5 Instrument Development:

The research objectives of the study necessitated a combination of quantitative (survey based on semi-structured questionnaires) and qualitative (In depth Interviews and FGDs) approaches. The qualitative aspect of the study was vital to understanding elements of the subject understudy, which is underexplored. This approach helped us understand the complexity of issues related to consent in marriages and domestic violence and delineate underlying relationships and patterns. At the same time, the quantitative approach provided the research objectivity and added to its reliability. Instrument development was a critical stage in this study.

Based on the literature review and team discussions, Semiotics team designed a detailed questionnaire for the identified set of respondents (Annex I). The questionnaire was developed and customized according to the objectives of the study. It was divided into two sections whereby the first section focused on forced marriages and the second on domestic violence. Broad themes were established in order to facilitate the subsequent analysis.¹

FGD guidelines (Annex II) were developed as part of the qualitative tools along with guidelines for KIIs with religious leaders, Gender Expert, Civil Society Organization, Lady Health Worker, Legislative Bodies and Police (Annex III). Since the subject matter of the report focused on very sensitive topics the language of the questionnaire was carefully chosen, so that it did not seem too intrusive or challenge religious sentiments of respondents; nevertheless, the wording and explanation of the statements was such to gauge accurate responses. The term “radicalization” was translated into the local language for a better understanding of the context and topic understudy. The term, “Mazhabi Inteha Pasandi” was used when speaking about radicalization. Some proxy indicators were used to assess the increase in radicalization as follows:

- How the concept of Purdah has evolved or changed in the recent years. Whether it has increased/decreased and what are the major causes facilitating the change? And if women are being forced into doing it. Questions were asked as to any specific time when there was a certain spike or an obvious change in trends regarding Purdah of women.

- Questions pertaining to the mobility of women. Whether women are now more free to travel without an escort to the local markets or when stepping out of the house than before or if it is vice versa. Or if women need permission to step out or escorted every time they step out of their homes.

- Tolerance level for people from other religious sects such as Shia’s, Deobandi’s, Wahabi’s, Ahle Sunnat etc. Also if there is an organized effort to marginalize or spread hatred against a specific sect.

- How is media and mobile technology looked upon as for female usage; if these are looked upon as corrupting their moral values?

¹ Responses were sought from men/women and boy/girls from diverse backgrounds in the targeted districts, victims of forced marriages and domestic violence, women or men that have witnessed/responded to forced marriages/domestic violence, persons of authority that have witnessed/responded to forced marriages/domestic violence and members of the general community.
- If attitudes towards women education have change?
- The role of madrasah's in the lives of the community members?
- The advocacy of jihad and presence of militant organizations and their influence in the respective areas.

Keeping local sensitivities in perspective, the language of the survey instrument and guidelines for the FGDs were toned down. In one of the questions respondents were asked to rank their areas and three choices were given i.e. very conservative, conservative and liberal. Respondents were informally explained the terms in local languages: “Liberal” was defined as the absence of religious influence, minimal religious influence or enlightened interpretation of religion advocating peaceful coexistence and tolerance; in short, religion was a private matter confined to the households/individual, advocating equal rights for men and women and coexistence was promoted. Next, “conservative” was defined as abiding by religious doctrines at a visible level; here, religion plays a prominent role in people’s daily lives and thereby, has an obvious influence on life in the local area. Although, coexistence and tolerance is still preached, in practice, it is less common. The mainstream religious doctrines and rules are adhered to, with guidance from the religious elders (i.e. imam of the mosque). Finally, “very conservative” was defined as a step beyond conservatism: where not only are religious doctrines strictly adhered to, but additional doctrines and guidelines set out by extreme religious groups/individuals are also followed. In particular, rules pertaining to women in the society were prescribed (i.e. related to their education, social interactions, mobility, strict purdah etc.). Sympathy and support for religious fundamentals (radicals) was captured within this definition. In extreme cases, national / provincial laws were an exception, and local religious laws held precedence.

1.6 Limitations & Challenges Faced:

The findings from this study should be seen in light of a few methodical constraints. Firstly the sensitive nature of the topics and its susceptibility to response and recall bias may lead to the under reporting of the prevalence of forced marriages and domestic violence. This reluctance tends to be more pronounced in men as compared to women. Moreover, the sample size was not large enough to give an adequate picture of the extent of the occurrence of the said issues and its underlying causes. In essence this study requires a longitudinal research to accurately assess how the society has become more radicalized over the years and the factors that have contributed to it. This can be done over time and with a larger sample size to fully understand the ground realities.

Furthermore consistent data is not readily available prior to 2004 thus making it hard to accurately gauge the impact of 9/11 which was a key event in the radicalization debate as things did change after the incident. One of the key challenges in this study was assessing the impact of radicalization which in this study implied religious radicalization (Mazhabi Inteha Pasandi) which is a highly sensitive topic and respondent’s bias, inhibitions and fears to speak on such a topic may affect the validity of the results. Despite these methodical constraints the results from this study, one of the very few studies on this topic in Pakistan, are still extremely informative and highlight how women have been victimized under the garb of cultural and religious
practices. The findings indicate a fundamental need to further research the role of religion on the said topics with a focus on the role played by religious leaders and institutions especially.

1.7 Structure of the Report:

The report has been methodically structured and divided into sections. The first section covers the project background and the methodology employed during the research while also highlighting its limitations. This is followed by the definition of critical terms for a better understanding of the study while laying the foundation for it. The report then details a comprehensive, though not exhaustive, literature review pertaining to forced marriages and domestic violence in the context of Pakistan and its socio-cultural and geopolitical environment. The third section elaborates the findings of the research which are analyzed in the background of key critical secondary resources. Recommendations have been made based on the key findings that emerged from the analysis and it serves as the concluding section of the report.

1.8 Definition of Terms:

Before delving into the intricacies of the said topic it is necessary to acquire a good understanding of the definitions that have been used in the text. Some key terms have been identified and defined as follows.

**Radicalization:** It refers to the increasing tendency to use a peculiar brand of religion, as the justification for conquest and control over territory, populations and resources, and the establishment of specific forms of judicial and social systems by the use of force.² In Urdu it is translated as "Mazhabi Inteha Pasandi".

**Moderate Religious Views:** A moderate religious view is more inclined to supplement faith with reason, the power of mind, or the freedom of thought ³

**Militant Extremists:** Zealous adherence to a set of beliefs and values, with a combination of two key features: (a) advocacy of measures beyond the norm (i.e., extremism), and (b) intention and willingness to resort to violence (i.e., militancy). ⁴

**Extremism:** Extremism in this report is specific to religious extremism and is defined as an outright opposition to rational thought in the field of religious teaching and learning. ⁵

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2 Contextual Background

2.1

Pakistan has been at the forefront of challenges brought on by a changing geopolitical environment. Studies have revealed that the country is in the midst of serious localized conflicts that are now converging and leading to bigger problems. The growth in militancy has now found its way into the heartland of Punjab and Sindh while the war in Afghanistan has led to an influx of Al-Qaeda into Pakistan along with the Taliban and other anti-state elements (Varun and Cordesman, 2011).

The increase in terrorism, insurgency and violence in Pakistan needs to be considered in the backdrop of its political landscape. One witnesses an increasing battle between the religious radicals and the military in the context of rising religious extremism and intolerance as is validated by the unprecedented acts of terrorism and the growing radicalization of the society. The assassination of the Punjab Governor Salman Taseer which was followed by the murder of Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti in reaction to reform Pakistan’s controversial blasphemy laws are key incidents highlighting the growing levels of intolerance in the society.

Figure 3 depicts the alarming situation in Pakistan whereby a total of 2113 terrorist attacks took place in 2010.
Religious intolerance has significantly risen in the recent years (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 2011). Not only are the minorities a regular target of targeted violence but within the Islamic sects, the Shia-Sunni battle has risen to new heights as well. The targeted killing of Shia’s has witnessed a significant increase in the last two years as is illustrated (HRCP, 2011).

Armed conflict within the state has choked the country socially, economically and politically. However, religious differences may well be just one of the precursors of the conflict that is now rampant in Pakistan. Political affiliations in cities like Karachi are the prime reason behind the bloody violence prevalent in the metropolitan city which is also the financial hub of the country. Countless people have lost their lives to the political wars in it.  

In addition, the peace of the country is also destabilized by unequal distribution of wealth whereby a major segment of the population is without access to basic human facilities. These pockets are exploited by the militant organizations and militia making poverty a factor that facilitates radicalization. Parents encourage their sons to accept militant incentives due to extreme poverty and young men and boys are more susceptible to recruitment by militia when they are unemployed or underemployed. The stipends paid by militant organizations in KP are half as that of what a legal, well paid unskilled job would pay (PNCA Report, 2011 p.p 33) thus a major reason behind the mounting insurgency is the rising poverty and unemployment which leaves the youth with little to no options for survival other than joining these militant organizations. This phenomenon is even more pronounced in the KP region.

Moreover, the rising militancy which was first restricted to the tribal belts in KP has now found its way into the urban centers and disrupted the social peace in mainstream cities like Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore etc. (Varun & Cordesman, 2011) The state armed forces have been battling the militancy in the tribal belt in KP and Swat; however it still remains a big threat to the stability and peace in Pakistan.

The insurgents not only have a political agenda rather they believe in instituting a strict theocratic nation and enforcing Shariah law. According to Human Rights Watch’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fatalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (until October 04)</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>380</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Hazaras killed in targeted attacks since 2001


country report on Pakistan, 2012 it was stated that “public intimidation of, and threats to, women and girls by religious extremists increased in major cities in 2011”. In the backdrop of rising extremism and terrorist violence, women suffer the most as religious fundamentalists use the notion of safeguarding their honor as a pretext for limiting their rights, mobility and consequently their access to health, education and avenues for income generation.\footnote{Coleman, Isobel. “Under the Crescent Moon: Pakistan.” Paradise Beneath Her Feet: How Women Are Transforming the Middle East. New York: Random House, 2010.} One of the main focus areas of the insurgents in Swat was hindering the education of women whereby schools were blown up and families were threatened against sending their daughters to schools. The mobility of women was strictly prohibited and women were forced to wear a veil. Women accused of immoral activities were openly flogged and beheaded. (Walsh, 2009) Similarly areas in KP, especially the remote areas in the FATA region remain under the control of militants that are severely against the education and liberation of women. (PNCA, 2010) The local population fearing the militants succumbs to pressures and avoids challenging orders which impact women the most, as they are confined to their homes with no access to education or mobility. (PNCA, 2010) Furthermore what aggravates matters are the parallel legal systems for dispute resolution in remote areas such as Panchayats that resort to customs such as Karo Kari, child marriages, Swara, Vani etc for resolution of personal matters amongst tribes and families.\footnote{Ibid}
3 Literature Review

This section will start with a review of the current situation and literature on radicalization followed by violence against women specifically forced marriages and domestic violence.

3.1 Radicalization

Radicalization is defined as the process by which people adopt extreme views, including beliefs that violent measures need to be taken for political and religious purposes (Rathore & Basit, 2010). Abundant secondary research exists highlighting the increased radicalization in Pakistan in the recent years (Nella, 2008) (Zaidi, 2010) (Yusuf, 2008) (Shapiro & Fair, 2010). The post 9/11 situation presented the gravest threat of radicalization to Pakistan especially for adolescents that are prime targets for militant recruitment. The phenomenon of radicalization has played a major role in the ongoing militancy in Pakistan. A research quotes that ‘Islamabad's obvious strategic importance in the US-led war on terror and the extent of religious radicalization in the country have made Pakistan a special focus of discourses on religious extremism and fundamentalism’ (Basit and Rathore, 2010, 11). The terms radicalization and Talibanization are sometimes used interchangeably and imply the increasing tendency to use a peculiar brand of religion, as the justification for conquest and control over territory, populations and resources, and the establishment of specific forms of judicial and social systems by the use of force (Saigol, 2010).

Understanding the varying patterns of radicalization and delineating the causes is complex in the context of Pakistan due to the many divisions in terms of ethnicities, political and ideological schools of thoughts. The writ of the state has been directly challenged by the escalation of extremist, militant groups who have transmigrated from Pakistan’s tribal areas. More importantly because of cross border infiltration from Afghanistan, Pakistan has been greatly impacted by the Taliban and as a result radicalization has become more pronounced over the few years. In March 2012 alone, 113 terrorist/insurgents attacks were reported that caused 136 deaths (USIP, 2012). Underpinning this violence is the growing radicalization in a country that is already battling a weak economy and political dilemmas (USIP, 2012). Amongst the many factors giving rise to radicalization in Pakistan, poverty and poor social indicators are the major ones. From a review of literature it is noted that the prime causes of radicalization in Pakistan are political marginalization, economic deprivation and other inequalities, social injustice, sectarian divisions, illiteracy, the role of madrassas and the indoctrination agendas of militant organizations, which exploit these factors (Rathore & Basit, 2010).

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11 The Taliban are an Islamic movement following a strict interpretation of Sharia that took over Afghanistan following the Soviet withdrawal. Taliban rule imposed draconian restrictions on women being allowed to work, go to school, or even leave the house -- which could only be done fully covered with a Burqa and accompanied by a male relative. The Taliban granted safe haven to terrorist group al-Qaida, leading to their overthrow by a U.S.-led invasion in 2001. The Taliban have regrouped in the mountainous region straddling Pakistan and Afghanistan, and have continued to operate as an insurgent movement.
Other than the violence perpetuated by the radicals, their forcible ideological persuasion has resulted in loss of popular cultural space, disorder of socio-political institutions and depletion of natural resources amongst many other fatal consequences of the effects of radicalization especially in KP areas and FATA. (Gul, 2009) Speaking strictly in terms of how radicalization tends to impact women, the effects are all the more stringent.

As can be seen from the table below there has been an increasing trend in the cases of violence against women since 2001 onwards; a substantial increase from 2000 to 2001 can be seen as the statistics have quadrupled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Violence/Abuse</th>
<th>2000 (Jan-Dec)</th>
<th>2001 (Jan-Dec)</th>
<th>2002 (Jan-Dec)</th>
<th>2003 (Jan-Dec)</th>
<th>2004 (Jan-Dec)</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>1422</td>
<td>1583</td>
<td>1636</td>
<td>1458</td>
<td>6495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td>4041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torture/Injury</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>1570</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1630</td>
<td>6602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Killing</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>736</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>3339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn Cases</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>1241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpses Found</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abduction</td>
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<td>1404</td>
<td>1759</td>
<td>1397</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1053</td>
<td>1112</td>
<td>1412</td>
<td>1327</td>
<td>5542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>7941</td>
<td>9751</td>
<td>8305</td>
<td>35080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Violence Against Women 2001-2004

Source: Madadgar Database

A key incident that defined the year 2001 was the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11. 9/11 had a profound impact on Pakistan's foreign policy. Almost instantly Pakistan became a frontline state endorsing the counter terrorism campaign under President Musharraf's tenure. While many Pakistanis died fighting the terrorists; scores of terrorists died fighting the government. The state was in the midst of a severe internal conflict and there was a great sense of an identity crisis. Thus this sharp increase needs to be analyzed in the then prevalent geo-political situation which was that of chaos and disorder after the 9/11 incident in Pakistan. Numerous researchers have postulated that partner violence is more prevalent in places where war or other conflicts or social upheavals are taking place or have recently taken place.

Furthermore the conflict within the country contributed to greater lawlessness with anti-state elements wanting to establish their own socio-political system. This was seen in Swat when the Taliban established their rule there, it was compulsory for women even very young girls to wear a veil. The code of veil was akin to that enforced by the Taliban in Afghanistan and any woman violating the code was beaten publicly. The

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Taliban headed by Maulana Fazlulla\(^\text{15}\) passed a verdict stating girls would only study till the primary level. Working women such as nurses, and others working for international and local NGOs were threatened to quit their jobs or face dire consequences. In short, women suffer the most in such scenarios as their mobility is restricted and they become completely dependent on their men who then make all decisions for them be it their education or marriage.

### 3.2 Violence against Women

VAW\(^\text{16}\) is a common problem in Pakistan largely due to the fact that violations against women's rights are often sanctioned under the garb of cultural practices and norms, or through misinterpretation of religious tenets. Theoretically, **culture is a macro concept that incorporates religion as an integral part of the cultural fabric of a society.** Culture and with it religion are the sources of the gender construct (Raday, 2008). Thus in the case of Pakistan a country largely governed by theocratic rules (Saigol, 2010) and a patriarchal culture; gender roles tend to be strictly defined. **A prime reason why violence against women is so ubiquitous is the fact that cultural norms and misinterpretation of religious teachings erect barriers in women’s emancipation.**

The focus of the present study is on two types of VAW; forced marriages and domestic violence.

#### 3.2.1 Forced Marriages:

Forced Marriage is an issue that is often misunderstood and misrepresented. In particular, there is confusion between arranged and forced marriage as they are often used interchangeably, however, the distinction between both is clear and lies in the right to choose. Forced marriage is defined as a marriage that takes place without the consent of one or both individuals, i.e. it does not entail free and full consent on the part of at least one of the parties. Usually consent is extracted under duress including but not limited to: fraudulent inducement, violence, physical abuse and (especially in the case of minors) psychological/emotional manipulation.\(^\text{17}\) On the other hand in arranged marriages, the families of the man and women to be married take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.\(^\text{18}\) However, according to the Global Justice Initiative, "**Insofar as the distinction turns upon the presence or absence of full, free and informed consent, there is no meaningful difference between a forced and an arranged marriage where at least one of the intended spouses is a child.**" Furthermore the UN Division for the Advancement of Women states that, "**As a child under the age of 18 is not capable of giving their valid consent to enter into marriage, child marriages are**

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\(^\text{15}\)Popularly known as Maulana FM because of using FM radio as a means for ideological persuasion of his radical ideologies

\(^\text{16}\) Violence Against Women is defined as, "**Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life**" by the United Nations General Assembly.

\(^\text{17}\) May & Deepa, 2007. OCASI Professional Development Conference, Forced Marriages/Non-Consensual Marriages

considered to be forced marriages.” However, this aspect of forced marriage is beyond the scope of this study.

Forced marriages is a problem affecting women, men and children across diverse countries and communities. Even though women have equal rights in Islam to choose a spouse, practically, this is hardly the case. A woman’s consent is seldom sought for marriages, especially in remote areas, where women are married off according to their parents’/family's will.

A woman is considered the honor of the family and a “love marriage” is considered a social taboo and could lead to severe repercussions that could result in the murder of the girl involved. Once the marriage takes place, women are confined to abusive relationships and lack the ability to escape their captors due to social and cultural pressures. In addition, parents do not encourage their daughters to return home for fear of being stigmatized as a divorcee.

Forcing an individual into marriage is a punishable offence under Pakistani law; however the law is seldom enforced. In line with Islamic injunctions, the marriage contract i.e. the Nikahnama is the main pre-requisite for a couple to be pronounced man and wife. Though the legal provisions embodied in the Nikahnama protect the rights of the women, practically these are not implemented. The Nikahnama is the foundation of the Muslim Family Law Ordinance of 1961. Although the MFLO was instituted to make marital practices more transparent and accountable, it has been grossly exploited and misused. A study reveals that 75% of the women interviewed in a sample size were not aware what rights the Nikahnama entitled them to and whether they had one and if it was required (PRHS, 2004).

3.2.2 Domestic Violence:
Domestic violence against women is prevalent in both developed and developing countries. It is regarded a serious violation of basic human rights and there is abundant research indicating the health hazards and intergenerational effects that it leads to (United Nations, 1997; Heise et al., 1999; Jewkes, 2002; Campbell, 2002; Kishor and Johnson, 2004; 2006). Domestic violence is not restricted to a certain socio economic group rather it is ubiquitous and affects women from different cultures, social and economic groups.

In South Asian countries, such as Pakistan characterized by a male dominant patriarchal culture, women are at a greater risk of being abused. Since females are equated to a man’s honor and prestige in cultures such as that of Pakistan, any slightest perceived insult to a man’s honor and control can be the cause for him to beat or even kill his wife, daughter and/or sister etc. Women are conditioned to accept, tolerate even rationalize domestic violence and to remain silent about such experiences.

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20 Pakistan Rural Household Survey, 2004
According to WHO, the nature of violent acts against women may be:\(^{22}\)
- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Involving deprivation or neglect

These different forms of violence against women can take place both within and outside their homes.

3.2.2.1 Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence\(^{23}\):
According to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in 2002 over 90% of married women reported being kicked, slapped, beaten, or sexually abused when husbands were dissatisfied by their cooking or cleaning, or when the woman had failed to bear a child or had given birth to a girl instead of a boy. Furthermore, in a study in Pakistan on domestic violence from the perspective of men, with a sample size of seventy, all respondents admitted to verbally abusing their wives and over two-third admitted to ever engaging in non-consensual sex with their wives\(^{24}\).


\(^{23}\) Domestic Violence against Women (DVAV) is defined by WHO as, “any act or omission by a family member (most often a current or former husband), regardless of the physical location where the act takes place, which negatively affects the well-being, physical or psychological integrity, freedom or right to full development of a woman. Thus DVAV perpetrated by husbands or intimate partners is known as intimate partner violence against women”.

4 Findings

Important insights, perspectives and findings emerged from the survey, in-depth interviews and FGDs. The FGDs with community members including victims of marriages without consent and domestic violence led to informative and constructive discussions. They further gave recommendations which could yield practical results in their areas. Furthermore, the in depth interviews facilitated the incorporation of views of religious leaders, lawyers, gender expert and representatives from institutional bodies such as civil society organizations and police thus providing the basis for a well-rounded analysis. The following section presents the findings from the field followed by a thorough analysis of key findings in each district. Recommendations made are detailed in the subsequent chapter. The section is further bifurcated into two sections; the first highlights the findings regarding Forced Marriages and the second presents the same on the issue of Domestic Violence.

4.1 Forced Marriages:

4.1.1 Prevalent Perceptions, Trends & Beliefs

Firstly, it was important to gauge the awareness levels of the people regarding their conceptual constructs and definition of forced marriage. In the backdrop of a community where marriages tend to be arranged it was important to investigate whether people acknowledged the difference between forced and arranged marriages. Marriages, as stated by the respondents, are essentially decided by parents followed by the patriarchs of the immediate family (brothers, uncles, grandfathers, etc) who played an influential role when deciding such matters. Hence, the decision of the marriage shifts from the bride/groom to the family members especially parents and brothers as mentioned in the FGD’s. According to a Pew Survey conducted in 2007 in Pakistan, 55% of respondents held the belief that the family should choose a husband for woman and only 6% believed that a woman should be allowed to choose her own husband without the interference of her family (Pew Research Center, 2007).\(^{25}\) Marriages are also sometimes arranged to settle disputes between clashing tribes especially in the rural areas\(^{26}\) thus evaluating the respondents understanding towards the distinction between forced and arranged marriages was necessary. Results showed the community does differentiate between arranged and forced marriages whereby 72% of females and 69% males from the total set of respondents acknowledged forced marriage as an \textit{arranged marriage without consent} while 22% females and 20% males defined forced marriages as a \textit{marriage which takes place as a result of a decision by an authority}.

\(^{25}\)Pew Research Center (2007), Question Q.44.
\(^{26}\) A 2004 amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure prohibits and punishes this by imprisonment of three to ten year; Section 310A of the Code of Criminal Procedure, inserted via the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2004 in CEDAW (2005), pp. 23, 11
Within the sample size 10% of the respondents reported having personal experience of forced marriage while 35% said they knew/had heard of someone who was forced into marriage by parents and immediate family members. Interestingly, of the total survivors 19% were male while 23% were females that points towards the fact that while female are more vulnerable to forced marriages, the issue is not gender specific.

Other than the socio-economic reasons, 12% of the total respondents indicated that forced marriages were common in households practicing more radicalized interpretation of religion. Review of literature postulates the same that religion is used to sanction practices such as forced marriages and violence against women: more than often forced marriages and violence against women is the result of a mentality existing in patriarchal societies whereby man has the upper hand over the woman and the woman, through socialization and internalization, contributes to maintaining this status quo. This status quo is further reinforced through justification of such actions in the name of culture or religion (IMDI, 2008).

In an in depth interview with a leading Gender Expert, it was stated that religion is a façade used to further self-interest and benefit dominant groups in society in matters such as forced marriages and domestic violence. Patriarchal and selective interpretations of Islam are used to justify violation of women's rights. In another interview with a second Gender Specialist it was highlighted that forced marriages manifesting in the form of Vani and Swara are more than often justified under the Islamic concepts of “Qisas & Diyat” especially in South of Punjab. Women are deemed as commodities and used as a means to settle tribal disputes. In addition, the many incidents of Vani and Swara are one of the indicators of increased radicalization as it depicts growing tolerance towards injustices against women. In Sindh alone, 26 Vani cases were reported during one year (The Nation, 2012). Recently, local and

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27 Diyat is financial compensation paid to the heirs of a victim. In Arabic, the word means both blood money and ransom. Qisas is an Islamic term meaning “Equal Retaliation,” and follows the principle of an eye for an eye, or lex talionis, first set forth by Hammurabii. In the case of murder, it means the right of the heirs of a murder victim to demand execution of the murderer.
international media widely reported the handing over of 13 girls aged between four and sixteen from one tribe to another to settle a feud. The girls will be forced to marry members of the tribe to which they are given to as restitution for the murder of a member of the second tribe (Habib, 2012).

Another key finding was the increase in drug abuse which has risen sharply over the years as stated by respondents. A respondent pointed out, “It is easily available especially Heroin.” This needs be understood in the contextual background where opium that is derived from poppy cultivation is a major source of financing for radical militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan alike. While Pakistan’s growth of opium is not as high as Afghanistan, 90% of the Afghan opium passes through North and South Waziristan and Bajaur Agency. This “drug money” is used to fund militant organizations. Thus drug usage is an escalating trend and a key indicator of increased radicalization.

To fully understand how religion is used to limit the rights of the women especially in context of marriage and domestic violence it is necessary to first realize the influential role of these local religious clerics. The constitution of Pakistan clearly states that “Islam shall be the State religion of Pakistan” no law can be enacted that contradicts the basic teachings of Quran and Sunnah (Constitution of Pakistan 1973). Religion dominates the social fabric of Pakistan and is not just looked upon as a set of spiritual beliefs rather it governs the social, political and personal lives of individuals (Ayyub 2000; Farmer 2007). While there are different schools of thoughts in Islam such as Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki, Hanbali and Fiqh-e-Jafaria, slight variations exist in terms of how Islamic teachings are interpreted by each school; all Islamic schools of thought in Pakistan uphold conservative and patriarchal interpretations of the role and status of women. Furthermore the role of the mosque is crucial in the community as it is a center of social and education activity (Haddad 1986). Every village has their own mosque if not more headed by an “Imam” or a religious leader who is always a man since women are not allowed to hold this position. The Imam does not need to hold a specific educational qualification rather he needs to be adequately knowledgeable about Islamic doctrines. The role of the Imam is significant as his advice is sought for many social matters since he is looked upon as an authority in terms of religious knowledge; his authority is not be challenged. Thus what the local Imam preaches is considered as the word of God since he refers it to the Quran and Sunnah. While religion does allow women to go to the mosque there is strict gender segregation and “purdah” and as is customary women do not go to the mosque for the five daily prayers or on the Friday sermon. It is the men who come into direct contact with the religious leaders as they regularly go to the mosque and attend “dars” whereby religious teachings and social conducts are preached. (Women usually attend dars arranged in homes by women religious leaders). In this context when religious leaders preach radical interpretations of Islam it is the women who suffer the most as the men of their households who are regarded as their guardians by religion are to safeguard their modesty; this results in the confinement of women to their home sphere and all decisions regarding their marriage, mobility, education, etc. are to be taken by the patriarchs. This was endorsed


29 Afghanistan produces 93 percent of the world's opium, it is estimated that almost half of Afghanistan's GDP is generated from the opium trade.
in the FGD’s as well as women stated that religious leaders misconstrue what religion says and brainwash the men into believing radical interpretations. They are told that religion gives them the right to control their women justifying social practices such as forced marriages and domestic violence. The women participants’ of FGDs further added that more than the women learning about their rights it were more important to raise awareness amongst the men. Men needed to be made aware about the rights religion has given them in terms of inheritance and right to a marriage of her choice etc so that they can differentiate between the radicalized interpretations and what the religion states in actuality.

4.1.1 Factors Perpetuating Forced Marriages:

During FGD’s it was highlighted that with increased radicalization of thought processes there has been a rise in more extreme Islamic values especially in men who are prime targets for militant recruitments. The militants preach a radical interpretation of Islam that subjugates women and awards total control of women’s sexuality, mobility and decision making authority onto the men of the households. This ideological persuasion of men results in them enforcing the same onto their household members. It specifically impacts women as ensuring their chastity and piousness is considered an obligatory religious duty by the men. Thus women are restricted from ascertaining education as it might “corrupt” their social and religious fundamentals and also they are to be married early and according to the will of their male guardians. This was seen in Swat when Militant Islamist groups had announced that families with unmarried females should come forward in mosques so that the women/girls may be married off. Or else, they are to be forcibly married. (Guariglia, 2009) Reports have emerged highlighting parallel legal systems such as extremist religious groups and local Panchayats ordering to stone couple who marry without the consent of their families (Payam-Aftab, 2011). It is such incidents that induce fear unto the young boys and girls which translate into their unquestioned submission fearing dire consequences especially when they know that their parents would be supported a local authority which either may be a local Panchayats or a religious group/party etc.

Females are conditioned from an early age to be modest and guard their chastity as that is equated to the honor of the family. In this backdrop marriage of one’s choice or a “love marriage” is considered a taboo and akin to defaming and dishonoring the family. 38% of the total respondents stated marriage of one’s choice a social and religious violation.

Many respondents were of the opinion that the major reason why forced marriages are reported to the police or take such matters to the court is to preserve the honor of the family. Any act that challenges a decision taken by the family or entails discussing familial problems at a public platform are considered shameful and bringing disrepute and dishonor to the family. Because of this prevalent mindset females tend to suffer in silence as they are not only scared of dire consequences if they were to seek help rather they themselves also want to avoid the social shame that comes with narrating personal problems to a “third” party. The common and accepted belief is to settle dispute internally within the family and if help needs to be sought it should only be done so by involving the elders of the family or the village. However, during the FGD’s the respondents opined that local NGO’s are playing a constructive role through their
awareness seminars and victims do seek redress from them as police and other legislative bodies have proved to be a disappointment when it comes to resolving such issues. The respondents stated that local police are easily bribed therefore an objective resolution of problems such as forced marriages and domestic violence remains elusive. Due to this victims do not approach the police officials in such cases as they do not expect them to take any action. In an in depth interview with a legal expert, he mentioned that most cases of forced marriages can be traced back to issues of property and wealth; the victim fearing physical abuse, agrees to the marriage as the mechanisms of redress remain largely inaccessible due to mobility issues of women and lack of faith in an objective resolution of the problem.

An interview with a police official revealed that there has been an upsurge in the number of suicide cases (both males and females) due to parents/family’s refusal to let their children marry of their choice and impose their choice instead. In a bid to escape forced marriages, both boys/girls resort to suicide. This phenomenon is more prevalent in urban areas as girls/boys being more aware and educated do not want to marry someone they are not compatible with. In Islamabad alone, said the police official there have been 63 cases of attempt to suicide by males and 126 cases for females.  

4.1.2 Impact of Radicalization on Forced Marriages:
A key focus of the study was to investigate the impact of radicalization on forced marriages. Not only is investigating social issues such as Forced Marriages and Domestic Violence a complex task, as both are very sensitive topics on their own, but assessing the impact of radicalization on them is all the more challenging. Radicalization, which is associated with and/or regarded as religious extremism is a topic people often do not want to openly talk about. People are constrained by their fears and inhibitions thus avoid openly discussing their religious beliefs, especially when it pertains to a documented research. This was observed and reported by the local enumerators conducting the research in addition to the project team.

Based on the definitions of terms as stated earlier each of the target districts were ranked by the respondents on conservatism levels, and then cross tabulated with the occurrence of forced marriages in each individual district to gauge if the occurrence is high in areas that are more radicalized.

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30 From 1st January till date
As can be seen from the results below, 24% of the male respondents who ranked their community as "very conservative" responded affirmatively to the occurrence of forced marriages in their community; this is significant since the sample size was not very large. While one sees that there are both affirmative and negative responses, it is pertinent to note that 64% of the female respondents stated the occurrence of forced marriages in communities that are "conservative" along with 59% of the male respondents; the highest percentage collectively for a response.

When respondents were questioned regarding the role of radicalization and its impact on forced marriages they were hesitant in answering the question directly. The local enumerators opined that this was a sensitive topic and people were not comfortable answering such questions. A neutral tone was adopted probing the impact of religious extremism on forced marriages and domestic violence; respondents shared that there were certain segments of society using religion for their vested interests and propagating extreme ideologies. It was these pockets that exploit locals and ideologically persuade them into adopting extreme interpretations of religion aimed at repressing women. It was further added that in reality Islam actually promotes equal rights for women and gives them the right to marry of their choice however social concepts of honor and prestige have led to digression from the key values of Islam. Furthermore, due to lack of education and understanding of religion people indulge in such acts.

While a relationship between radicalization and forced marriages was drawn from the semi structured interviews, the extent of it could not be adequately gauged; this may be attributed to the aversion of respondents to speak about sensitive issues such as religion and marriages etc. However, results did show that people who are religiously radicalized tend to approve of forced marriages.

A religious leader, interviewed in Mansehra, opined that religion clearly states that consent of both man and woman needs to be sought before marriage and consent taken under duress renders the marriage contract null and void. However, he said that due to cultural customs and values, matters of marriage are to be decided by the parents and it is regarded as their prerogative. The potential bride and groom are not in a position to challenge a decision that has already been finalized by the parents and elders of the family. Furthermore, this is met with little protest as the victim fears abuse both verbal and physical and in some cases even fear for their lives. This came across in the survey results as well whereby respondents stated that survivors of forced marriage do not do much except retaliate verbally; organized help through Police and judiciary is hardly sought as people have lost faith in these institutions and they largely remain inaccessible to women because of mobility issues. In areas where extremist groups have issued decrees and fatwa's banning women from leaving their homes without a male escort such as the Swat Valley, it becomes impossible for women to report abuse.31

However, according to the literature, the reality on ground is starkly differing from what the religious leader stated in his interview. Religion is more than often used as a tool to subjugate women and limit their rights. The doctrine of radical Islamist groups condones the killing of women who may embrace and/or support a worldview different

from that of which is propagated by them. There have been many incidents whereby religious edicts (fatwas) have been passed restricting the rights of women and sanctioning violence as a means to “discipline” women. Renowned writer Faouzia Saeed reported a fatwa announced in the mosque of a small town Noshki, in the region of Balochistan, that any woman using a cell phone will have acid thrown in her face. Similarly in Kot Addu, militant Islamist groups warned women to wear burqas or be subjected to acid attacks. Speaking strictly in terms of forced marriages a prevalent trend is that of forced conversions of religious minorities whereby girls are raped and/or abducted and then forcibly married off to Muslims. A case in point was that of Rinkle Kumari that garnered a lot of media attention. It has been reported that there has been a rise in abductions, forced marriages and forcible conversions by extremists in rural areas. As many as 20 to 25 girls from the Hindu community are abducted every month and converted forcibly, according to Amarnath Motumal, an advocate and council member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. What compounds the problem is how the police ignores or steers away from investigating crimes that involve a Madrassa or religious clerics. Other than forcible conversions and subsequent marriages, religion is used a shield to maim or even murder couples wanting to have a marriage of choice; a couple were sentenced to death by a local jirga because the woman rejected a suitor selected by her family and wanted to marry someone outside of her tribe. While there are religious clerics that preach an enlightened approach towards religion that believes in peaceful co-existence and not imposing one’s beliefs onto the others; the vast majority advocates an alternative which spreads hate and violence and more than often the prime target of which are women.

4.1.3 Reaction by Survivors & Role of Institutions:
Both survey results and FGDs revealed that survivors commonly do not seek organized help through Police, judiciary or NGO/CSO’s. There were a number of reasons behind this. Survivors do not want to defame or bring dishonor to their families by discussing such issues at a public platform and involving an “outsider”. In addition, respondents were not aware of the laws and legislation pertaining to the offence of forced marriage or the NGO’s/CSO’s present in the local areas from which help can be sought.

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Table 4: Awareness regarding local NGOs that can be sought help from in cases of Forced Marriage

19-year-old Rinkle Kumari, was allegedly abducted from her village Mirpur Mathelo in Ghotki province of Pakistan. Rinkle was allegedly forced to convert to Islam and coerced into marrying one Naveed Shah. The ‘abductors’ were reportedly supported by a People's Party of Pakistan member, Abdul Haq alias Mian Mitho. After a legal battle between Rinkle’s parents and the ‘abductors’, which lasted nearly two months, the Pakistan Supreme Court ruled in April that Rinkle (christened Faryal Shah after the conversion) chose to live with her “husband” and “embraced” Islam of her own volition.
Asian Human Rights Commission, 2010
Furthermore, victims feared abuse from their husbands and immediate family if there were to register a complaint with the aforementioned institutions. Hence the reaction of the survivors was limited to verbal protest. Moreover, NGO’s and CSO’s were viewed as organizations corrupting social values of the respective community and bringing in a “modern/alien” and “corrupt” ideology by teaching women about their rights as highlighted in the FGDs. Thus, accessibility to such organizations is a problem as well as the women are restricted from going to such places by the family members. Extremist religious groups have issued *fatwas* against NGO’s stating they are “another name for vulgarity and obscenity”. NGO’s are labeled as “foreign agents” and there have been many reports of attacks against NGO workers in all four provinces. In an acute situation NGO staff in Shangla was forced to shut down and advertise in the local paper that they would never work for any NGO again. (Murphy, 2009) Thus in this context it becomes increasingly difficult for women to approach NGO’s for redress.
4.2 Domestic Violence

4.2.1 Prevalent Perceptions, Trends and Beliefs

Women in developing countries and societies where violence is common such as Pakistan, are more susceptible to spousal violence (UNICEF, 2000). Pakistan is a patriarchal society and most of the socio-economic sphere is controlled by men (Jafar, 2005). Due to stark gender disparities in terms of health, education and economic participation (Raza and Murad, 2010), women are usually subordinated to men (Mumtazand Mitha, 1996) and are frequent victims of violence (Nasrullah, Haqqi, and Cummings, 2009). A study revealed that 50 percent of married women in Pakistan are physically beaten and 90 percent endure emotional and verbal abuse by their husbands (Tinker, 1998). Not only is domestic violence common in rural areas rather also prevalent in urban cities such as Karachi, Rawalpindi (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan 2004; Fikree and Bhatti, 1999; Fikree et al., 2006; Nasrullah, Haqqi, and Cummings, 2009; Shaikh, 2000). Our results corroborate the same as more than half the respondents stated domestic violence as a major issue in their respective communities out of which Mansehra and Layyah had the most responses highlighting the prevalence of domestic violence in their communities as shown below.

Culture and custom play an important role in the level of violence against women. A patriarchal culture is more likely to lead to an increase in the tolerance of the abuse of women. The “right” of a husband to beat or physically intimidate his wife is a commonly held belief in many societies. A report by the United Nations Population Fund stated that men are allowed to discipline their wives in many parts of South Asia, Western Asia and Africa. In this context it was important to investigate what domestic violence meant to the respondents in a culture where men feel they can control and

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subjugate women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979). Majority of the respondents defined domestic violence as physical abuse between spouse/family members and 30% of the respondents stated it as the emotional/psychological abuse between spouse/family members. However, only a few respondents acknowledged sexual abuse as domestic violence.

The majority of Muslim scholars consider that the husband should have a leadership position in marital relations, while the wife should play a subservient role (Frazier 2000). This belief empowers men to control and suppress women and any resistance by them results in physical and/or verbal violence. The results show that 82% of respondents agreed that the “wife” in the household was most susceptible to domestic violence.

4.2.2 Factors Perpetuating Domestic Violence:
Since the focus of the study is on forced marriages, domestic violence was restricted to within marriages. A number of reasons across the spectrum were identified, as the main causes behind the prevalence of domestic violence in marriages. The major reason identified was that of husband's addiction to drugs.

The issue of drug abuse was highlighted not only in the survey results but in FGDs as well as a key cause of domestic violence. Many respondents suggested stringent measures to curtail drug abuse as a key recommendation to overcome domestic violence. As stated earlier drug trade is a key mechanism of funding for militant Islamists groups especially in KP (Zaidi, 2010). Thus drug usage tends to be very common because of ease of accessibility.

The second most common reason that emerged during the survey result was forced marriages. Such marriages are a prime reason due to which domestic violence took place in marriages as the couple is not happy with each other and fights are then natural. Respondents stated that mental incompatibility which is more common in forced marriages contributes significantly to domestic violence.

4.2.3 Impact of Radicalization on Domestic Violence:
In a report published by CEDAW it was estimated that 2195 cases of domestic violence were reported during 2005 and 2008 in Pakistan. However, this is likely to be underestimated as the police are hesitant when it comes registering cases of domestic violence often returning women back to abusive family members and encouraging them to reconcile. The major triggers of domestic violence were more socio-cultural oriented and there was lack of significant evidence suggesting the extent to which the element of radicalization affects domestic violence. Respondents gave mixed answers when asked if people having extreme religious beliefs encouraged and favored violence against women. While 31% of the total respondents said people having extreme religious beliefs favored violence against women, 36% said the opposite stating individuals having extreme religious discouraged violence against women. However, review of literature states that radical notions of disciplining women are usually communicated in the religious idioms (Zakar, 2004).
On the contrary, 99% of the respondents stated that religion does not allow violence against women. The same was mentioned in the FGD’s as well that religion teaches men to treat their wives and women of the household with respect and kindness. The participants were of the opinion that it was actually the digression and straying from true religious values that propagates violence against women. Similarly, 92% of the respondents opined that violence against women was not justified while the other 8% stated that it was justified if a woman violates boundaries and values prescribed by religion. While the survey results did not highlight how religion is misused to sanction violence against women, the on ground reality is that it is used to justify gender based violence. There is a lack of consensus amongst religious leaders regarding a husband’s authority to physically beat his wife with many being proponents of it (Ammar, 2007). Even though Islam does not allow maltreatment of women, ironically, some religious leaders try to legitimize abuse of women by men in their homes by quoting Quranic verses.  

4.2.4 Reaction by Survivors and Role of Institutions: 
Similar findings to those of the victims of forced marriages were observed as those for the survivors for domestic violence as well who revealed that cases of domestic abuse/violence are not reported outside the immediate family. 77% of the respondents said that domestic violence is not complained against to anyone outside the immediate family (who share the same house).

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39 Akbar Nasir Khan. Country Report – Pakistan. Available at: 
http://www.unafei.or.jp/english/pdf/RS_No69/No69_16PA_Khan.pdf
Women keep silent and do not react to the violence as endorsed by 64% of respondents. At most, the maximum measure taken is to report the abuse to someone within the immediate family. Upon questioning the reason why abuse is not reported, the major finding was that victims did not report it to preserve family honor. The social belief is that domestic matters are to be resolved internally within the household and complaining to anyone outside the immediate family is considered a violation of cultural norms and akin to dishonoring the family. Furthermore as highlighted by the survivors of domestic violence, women do not want to invite the wrath of the family members by reporting the abuse to anyone outside the family as it dishonors their husband and his family's reputation. The victims further stated that they feared additional abuse and violence if they were to report abuse to the police, judiciary, NGO's for redress.

For women in Pakistan, social norms dictate that her primary responsibility is the role of a mother and wife. Her household is her sphere and her behaviour synonymous with the honor of the entire family. Thus women are psychologically conditioned from an early age not to bring shame to the family. This is the underlying cause behind women not actively reporting cases of domestic violence as it dishonors the family name. Moreover, the mobility of women is restricted especially in areas controlled by militant Islamist groups. The concept of “Purdah” restricts the movement of women thus even if someone were to complain such barriers hinder their ability to do so.

Assessing awareness levels of community members regarding legislation pertaining to domestic violence, the results showed that with the exception of a few, the vast majority remained uninformed regarding the laws and rules. While the Pakistani Government enacted the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2009) criminalizing spousal violence and making it indictable by fine or imprisonment; its impact has been limited because culturally spousal violence is regarded as a private family matter and not usually reported to the police (Zakar, Zakar, and Kramer, 2011). Moreover, not only did respondents 81% of the total respondents stated they had no knowledge or information regarding NGO’S/CSO’s that can be approached regarding cases of domestic violence. This again can be indicative of preconceived notions regarding NGO’s having corrupt social values and men not allow women to access to such institutions. This was highlighted in the FGD’s as well; a participant in the FGD stated that her husband did not know she was a part of the activity as it would create a problem at home for her.

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Speaking in regards to the reaction of religious clerics and institutions to cases of domestic violence, 49% of the respondents stated they reacted unfavorably to it and admonished such behaviour as illustrated below.

![Figure 11: Reaction of religious clerics and institutions towards domestic violence](image)

However, 23% of the respondents stated that religious clerics do not admonish domestic violence while the other 28% registered their response as “don’t know”. This could be indicative of the respondents avoiding answering a question as it is a contentious question. In a study published by the International Journal of Conflict and Violence that interviewed fourteen religious leaders on the subject matter of spousal violence all most all the leaders (13 of 14) avoided the question regarding the permissibility of spousal violence. It was quoted in the study by one of religious leader “Yes, the husband has a right to show anger or to give symbolic or very mild physical punishment, but he still has no right to break her bones or inflict injuries that could render her permanently disabled.” It was further quoted in the same study that, “The husband has the right to physically beat his wife if she develops relations with non-Mehram (males outside of the immediate family). The wife should not let down her husband by being “too independent” and “too empowered.”

In a society where the Imams or religious leaders are looked upon as “community leaders” providing counseling on matters dealing with marriage, divorces, inheritance, disputes etc; their personal disposition and tolerance towards women rights is integral as they tend to mould and shape the communities they lead. (Ali, Milstein, and Marzuk 2005; International Crisis Group 2002) Their role in shaping the community behaviour cannot be undermined; thus this area should be further explored for a deeper analysis.

Significant district wise findings have been explained as follows:

### 4.3 Bahawalpur:

District Bahawalpur has a total population of 3.5 million with a 70/30 ratio for the urban and rural split respectively. The literacy rates for both males and females are illustrated as follows.

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During the interviews, respondents stressed the need for education of girls in the rural areas as girls are not allowed to acquire education after primary or their matriculation. Moreover it was pointed out that there is an increasing trend of sending young girls to Madrasah's instead of schools. The respondents further stated that over the year's radicalization has increased. Speaking about how purdah has evolved over time, respondents both males and females agreed that Purdah was more strictly adhered to now than in the times of their mothers when they were the same age. It was elaborated by a female respondent said that “Our mothers lived in a more liberal environment and their families were not so rigid about doing Purdah. They interacted with their male cousins and did not do Purdah in front of them. But today this is not the case. We are asked to do Purdah from our cousins even. Almost 50% of the females do a “Niqab” – our mothers tell us that in their time wearing a Chaddar was the norm.” It was interesting to note that when inquired about their definition of radicalization, respondents were of the opinion that radicalization implied a strict interpretation of religious tenets whereby women are made to observe strict purdah and they cannot step out of their homes or speak to any “Na-Mehram”, religion is imposed on others and if need be violence is justified to correct the moral behaviour of people and others sects are labeled as “Kafirs” or non-believers. A key point raised during the interviews was the activism of local religious organizations such as Jamaat-ud-Dawa and Alhe Hadith that actively engage in persuading locals into taking up Jihad. Organizations such as these are sympathetic towards the Taliban and their ideologies. They mentally persuade people especially the youth in the age bracket of 16-20 into joining their organization and taking up jihad. The respondents told that many youngsters are first trained and then sent to fight in Kashmir. However majorly the respondents stated that this phenomenon was more pronounced two years back but gradually people are realizing that this is all “Dramay Bazi” as quoted by a respondents and it is becoming hard to persuade people to accept their ideologies. The reason behind this gradual shift as pointed by the participants was that education has increased due to which people have become aware that such organizations have their own vested interests thus they have lost interest in these outfits. Another key point raised during the interviews was that of sectarian strife in the Bahawalpur region which has increased over the years. A respondent quoted that, “There are groups who advocate and propagate the killing of Shia’s and are told that one will be blessed with Jannat if they were to kill a Shia as they are non-believers according to them.” The same respondent narrated an incident that took place two years back where 13 members of the same family were killed in Tehsil Khair Pur Tamiawali in sectarian violence. The family was from the Shia sect. A major finding from the interviews was that the element of sectarianism and caste system was very prominent in Bahawalpur as highlighted during the interviews. As indicated by the participants g in the FGD’s one of the key issues regarding marriage was the caste issue as it is “unthinkable to consider someone from another caste” as
quoted by a participants. From an early age the idea of one’s caste is inculcated into the minds of the children and to avoid intra castes marriages based on the personal choice of the potential bride and groom, marriages are fixed at very early marriages so as to avoid conflict later. Participants pointed out incidents where the cases of personal liking between a boy and girl from different castes have resulted in honor killings. As quoted by a participant, one such case that became really popular was that of a girl’s brother killing both his sister and brother in law in the court as they had eloped and gotten married on their own. The girl’s family had accused the boy of abducting their daughter. When the couple appeared in court to record their statement against the abduction, they were both gunned down by the girl’s brother; the main reason behind this enmity was the fact that both the bride and groom were from different castes. The element of “Qaum Parasti” is very predominant in the Bahawalpur belt as indicated in the interviews.

While almost all respondents stated that forced marriages do not occur in their community but when inquired if consent was sought for marriages in their community in stark contradiction to their earlier statement, majority of the respondents stated that a girl’s consent was not required for marriage as is illustrated follows. This shows the ignorance of the people towards the concept of forced marriages as unless someone is physically threatened or pushed into a marriage by force they do not deem it a forced marriage. Which again brings into perspective what was stated by the Gender Expert in her interview that for many choice is never an option especially for girls in rural areas as it is a given that marriages are to be decided by their parents and it is their right ordained by religion. Thus unless someone rebels and the patriarchs resort to violence and other forceful means it will not count as a forced marriage for them.

As stated earlier the caste system is very prominent and valued in Bahawalpur. It dictates marital choices significantly. As can be seen from the illustration below the most dominant cause behind forced marriages is to strengthen ties and links between families. Upon elaboration by the respondents, it was stated that it is considered shameful for a specific caste to marry into another as supremacist beliefs are widespread and deeply ingrained in the local cultural fabric.
Furthermore respondents added that in the recent years there has been a sudden surge in trying to “control/guard the morality” of females especially thus they are not allowed to acquire higher education since parents think it would corrupt their social values. This has resulted in increased restrictions for women. Participants stated this is one reason why one will see more women in “Niqaab” as there is increased pressure from their patriarchs to do so as it is looked upon as a means to control promiscuity and promote chasteness in their daughters/sisters etc.

Moreover another important insight was that majority of the respondents stated that the community deems marriages of one’s choice as a religious and social violation. And there are abused verbally and looked upon as individuals corrupting the moral values of their community. Such individuals are shunned and “love marriages” are akin to a social taboo and community members talk ill of a family whose daughter’s marry of their own choice.
A key finding was that forced marriages are not just limited to females rather it is a problem faced by males as well. A male respondent stated that due to the caste system more than often males too are pressurized into arranged marriages they are not interested in but because of the family pressure they have no choice but to give their consent. Sometimes young males are married to older females as the families want to strengthen their ties thus females are not the only victims of forced marriages rather men too suffer from it. Commenting on households where forced marriages are common the predominant response from the interviews was that this practice was most prevalent in families with feudal backgrounds.

A vast majority of the respondents stated that people who were religiously radicalized approve of forced marriages and do not view them as a social or religious violation. Another interesting finding was that while more than half the respondents stated that religious clerics and institutions approved of forced marriages the gender split in the responses was thought provoking. A very meager percentage
of females stated that clerics disproved of forced marriages whereas a relatively sizeable portion of males on the other hand stated clerics disproved forced marriages. This possibly highlights the bias men have towards clerics as more than often patriarchs of the family justify such acts under religious tenets etc.

From the participants that were interviewed all together, the respondents were unaware of any laws and legislations against forced marriages. Only one respondent who was female stated that she had heard that there was a monetary fine and jail.

Both male and female respondents expressed their unawareness regarding any NGO from which help could be sought for cases of forced marriages. They also expressed their concerns about the complete inability of the police to tackle such issue since they do not do anything about it. However when asked what mechanisms were effective to address these issues, majority of the respondents were of the opinion that involving religious clerics to create awareness, strengthening the law and involving village elders were effective measures against forced marriages.

It was noticed that while respondents were very vocal about the prevalence of domestic violence in their communities in the focus group discussions, the respondents were more reserved and holding back during the one on one interview’s. A respondent even went on to say that while domestic violence is a big problem in our area I do not want to talk about it much since her family would not like her discussing such issues openly to a third party while being interviewed. Even with their reservations and apprehensions, half of the respondents stated that domestic violence is a major issue in their community. Participants were more open about domestic violence in the FGD and elaborated that the prevalent notion in terms of how men treat their wives is that “Biwi Paaon Ki Jooti Hai”. This is even more pronounced in rural areas, which leads to increased domestic violence. It is essentially because of the ”Wadera” mentality as quoted by a female participant that domestic violence is so pervasive; they deem women inferior and think it is very normal to beat their wives. Other than this a key issue causing intimate partner violence was husband’s addiction to drugs and alcohol. The respondents stressed that in recent years more men are resorting to drugs because of increased frustration due to unprecedented inflation and rise in unemployment. Exacerbating the already fragile situation is the easy accessibility of drugs etc which makes this problem even more pronounced.

It was also found that predominantly females do not do anything to combat the violence rather just stay quiet and accept it. The main reason as told by respondents due to which domestic violence is not reported or complaint against publicly is to “preserve family honor”. Female respondents stated that it challenged a man’s “Ghairat” to approach an outsider and to complain against him. It was pointed out during the interviews that females are mentally conditioned from an early age to accept a compliant and submissive role when interacting with their male counterparts. They are not to challenge their decisions or say. Thus even if a married women reports physical abuse to her own family, the general trend is to persuade her to go back to her husband’s home as that is her real home and is advised to live with her fate.

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43 Implies that the wife is inferior to the husband so much so that she is equated to the footwear of her husband (in terms of her significance and role)

44 Honor
It was also found that intimate partner violence is more pervasive in households that have a feudal background and poor economic conditions. Moreover due to lack of awareness regarding laws and legislation pertaining to domestic violence the problem is aggravated as even if someone were to register a complaint they are not aware of any rules or mechanism to do so.

A pertinent question was to investigate the role of local religious clerics and religious institutions regarding their take on domestic violence. Respondents gave mixed answers with a sizeable portion stating that local religious approved of physical violence of husbands against their wives. However others were of the opinion that they did not and a majority said they were not aware of their reaction or say on this issue.

4.4 Layyah:

District Layyah is home to a population of 1,429,000\(^45\). The overall district level literacy rate amongst 15-24 year olds is 67%. It is one of the few districts having a high literacy rate for both males and females. Layyah is famous due to its Sufi history and has a rich cultural history. However a place that was once home to the Sufi mystics has now fallen prey to the threat of militant organization advocating sectarian violence and militant Jihad as stated by a participant in the FGD. According to the respondents it is the strategic location of Layyah that has actually cause the surge in radicalization. Neighboring and in close proximity to Jhang, D.G Khan and D.I Khan radical groups have paved their way into Layyah. As pointed out by the participants, outfits such as Jaish-e-Muhammad and Sipah-e-Sahaba are very active in their district. Along with this the presence of a burgeoning Madrassa culture the threat of radicalization has become pronounced over the years. As stated by one of the participants Sipah-e-Sahaba openly advocates the killing of Shia’s labeling them as nonbelievers because of which many deaths took place two years back. Majority of the respondents stated that radicalization was at its peak four to five years back. A participant stated that, "While the environment is relatively safe and calm presently but to speak accurately the radicalization threat which became very grave in 2009-2010 has come at a standstill. Since it did not get any worse we feel that things are better now.” All respondents were in agreement that the improvement in the education sector in combination with the role played by mead and the “mobile culture” has made people more aware. They are not so gullible anymore.

However the threat of radicalization still persists in the district. An incident as stated by a respondent narrated a story of two girls who were killed by their families because they were using a mobile phone. Similarly respondents stated that there has been a rise in honor killings in the last two years. They indicated that while on one hand there are more cases of honor killings, there has been a significant rise in the number of court marriages as well. In a bid to escape an arranged marriage against their will, girls especially were resorting to court marriages with men of their personal liking. Thus it has germinated a cycle whereby more honor killings are taking place since more females are eloping since it then become an issue of the family’s honor and prestige that can only be redeemed with the girl’s murder as pointed out in the interviews.

Families have adopted very rigid beliefs so much so that there are parents who do not send their male child to school because they will be wearing pants and they deem it as un-Islamic. Speaking about how women conduct Purdah and how they did so in the past, respondents said that the “Shuttle Cock Burka” was now the prevalent kind in the rural areas. However in the urban areas females are attired in Black Burkas covering their faces and leaving only their eyes visible. Interviewees stated that there was time when a big Chaddar was enough for women observing Purdah which was even used to cover their face in areas where needed such as market however over the time the full black Niqab has become the predominant norm. Respondents stated that forced marriages and domestic violence were definitely more common in the more religiously radicalized households. Practices such as early marriages and Watta Satta are still common in Layyah as pointed by the respondents.

The survey result indicated a vast majority stating the occurrence of forced marriages in their community. The major reasons attributed to this were that marriages are considered to be the parent’s decision and not that of their children thus their consent is never sought. And if one is to resist, the family pressurizes them into marrying. Another major reason behind forced marriages is to “protect their religious beliefs”. This was clarified by the respondents and also highlighted in the survey where most of the respondents stated that physical action is taken against those people who want to marry of their personal choice. Thus patriarchs feel that it is their religious obligation to ensure that their daughters/sister do not indulge in any act that will bring shame to the family and to ensure their chastity and modesty. Using this rationale they subjugate their daughters/sisters into marrying of their choice telling them that religion has given them this authority as pointed out by an interviewee.

4.5 Mansehra:

District Mansehra is the second largest city in KPK and its total population is 1,152,839 with an average annual growth rate of 2.4% with a literacy rate of 36.3%. The overall literacy rate for males and females is 50.9% and 22.7% respectively. Out of the total district population 94.7% lives in rural areas and the male to female sex ratio in rural and urban areas of the district is 98 and 106 respectively. Furthermore the average household size, both for rural and urban areas is 6.7 persons.

When inquired what radicalization meant to the respondents the predominant response was that they equated it with “Talibanization”. Essentially anyone who follows or sympathizes with the ideologies and beliefs that are advocated by hardliners such as the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan is radicalization in their opinion. It was interesting to note that they instantly equated the term “radicalization” with the Taliban both males and females alike.

While respondents stated that educationally the trends have changed over the years with more females acquiring education. However the concept of Purdah remains unchanged. The tradition of wearing a long “Chaddar” is still prevalent and one would

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hardly see any woman without it. However in terms of mobility women are now seen in markets more than before and not necessarily with a patriarch. However a key point was raised by the participants that places where there are Madrasah’s the element of radicalization is more pronounced and prevalent and that too in the rural areas. So to actually assess the impact of radicalization areas such as Kohistan need to be analyzed as suggested by the participants. The respondents also pointed out the “Ajmal Kohistani” incident as an example of the level of radicalization prevalent in that area. Furthermore on May 4 of 2012, Maulana Abdul Haleem, a former parliamentarian elected from the Kohistan district in KP said that women working in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) would be forcibly married to locals if they entered their area. He further stated killing of women in the name of honor was a “local custom and religious practice” and a man could kill the female members of his family i.e. sisters, daughters, wife etc if he saw her with a “Ghair Mehram” without producing four witnesses. Abdul Haleem had also issued a decree during Musharraf’s regime favoring poppy cultivation and trade.

Respondents also stated that in rural areas females were not allowed to watch much television as it may “corrupt their values”. While more females do go to schools than before the prime reason in the rural areas restricting their education is the fact that it will “make them immoral and steer them towards unchaste behaviour” thus male education is preferred over females.

Speaking about forced marriages, a vast majority of female respondents in Mansehra responded affirmatively towards the occurrence of forced marriages in their area. Furthermore almost all female respondents in Mansehra stated that a girl’s consent was not required for marriage; the highest number in all target districts.

![Figure 16: Consent requirement for marriage](image)

In Islamic sharia legal terminology, a Mehram is an unmarriageable kin with whom sexual intercourse would be considered incestuous, a punishable taboo. Thus Ghair Mehram refers to all those males whom a woman is permitted to marry (e.g. a cousin or just a random Muslim male) or a male whom it is forbidden to marry at that moment in time but may become permissible to marry in the future due to a change in circumstances.
This needs to be interpreted in a contextual background. Mansehra has witnessed increased militancy and radicalization in the recent years. It has risen especially after the military operation in Malakand after which the militants fled to neighboring districts of Hazara division like Mansehra and Battagram. Enhanced radicalization can be assessed by the increased number of attacks on International aid organizations by the militants in this area. The presence of these militants in areas such as Mansehra has led to an increasingly radicalized social fabric of the community. Furthermore radical Islamist religious leaders give sermons and issue edicts against women liberties further limiting their rights.

Elaborating upon the causes of forced marriages in Mansehra respondents stated that the major cause was the concept of having the patriarch’s given their word i.e. “Zabaan day Dena”. In the KP region a man’s honor is directly associated with his ability to keep his word therefore this tradition leads to forced marriages naturally whereby marriages take place on the discretion of their will and the consent of the females is never sought.

A key finding was that the common perception amongst the respondents is that marrying someone of one’s own choice is a social and religious violation. Furthermore results from the interviews stated that forced marriages tend to be common in household that have radicalized religious environment and/or have low literacy levels especially that of parents. Interestingly a vast majority of the female respondents stated that religious radicalized people approved of forced marriages and did not deem them as a human right violation or against the fundamentals of religion. On the contrary male respondents were of the opinion that religious radicalized people disproved of forced marriages.

In terms of awareness regarding laws against forced marriages and NGO’s to seek help from, the respondents lacked great awareness. Respondents also complained against the inactiveness of the police who do not take action against such crimes.

Domestic violence was stated as a major issue by the respondents in their area. The main causes behind the prevalence were that the husband believes he has the right to resort to violence if need be. During an in-depth interview with a renowned religious leader in Mansehra, he opined that while men should not beat their wives unnecessarily but if they were to astray from the moral injunctions laid out in religion then the husband had the right to do so. Furthermore, the wife should not forget that the husband can resort to strict measures and reprimand her if need be; therefore her conduct should be moral and appeasing for her husband. The Maulana was of the opinion that this intimidation should remain intact to ensure good moral conduct on the part of the wife. Review of literature supports this finding that pervasiveness of domestic violence in Pakistan is attributed to a patriarchal culture whereby men regard themselves superior to women and religion is used to sanction this supremacy. Thus spousal violence remains an endemic form of violence against women in Pakistan. Similar to other districts, domestic violence is not reported against the prime reason behind this is to preserve the family’s honor.

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48 On March 9, 2010, six people including two women were killed when the militants attacked the office of World Vision, an international aid organization in Oghi tehsil in Mansehra
4.6 Haripur

In terms of radicalization the predominant interpretation or definition in the opinion of the locals is that it is "religious extremism" a key hallmark of which is sending their children to Madrassa’s instead of schools thinking religious education is more important than the scientific one, having very rigid religious constructs and being intolerant of other’s opinions regarding religion. However the common perception amongst the respondents was that radicalization in Haripur was not a big problem. It was more pronounced in rural areas, since Haripur is an urban city people with changing trends including increased awareness and better education; the concept of religious radicalization is on a decreasing trend. But it is still a problem in the more remote and rural areas. The respondents also indicated the peaceful co-existence of different religious sects in their community. Furthermore it was found that the unlike other areas if some girl is found doing something that may be deemed as a threat to a family’s honor, the repercussions are not too severe as stated by a respondent. For instance if some girl is found to have a liking for a certain male, the maximum punishment would be restricting her mobility. The concept of honor killing is not prevalent in Haripur.

Respondents also stated that the concept of women doing “Purdah” has also been on a decreasing trend. One will see more women wearing a normal “Dupatta” covering their heads but in comparison to before, Purdah is not very common now. Attitudes have changed over the years moving towards liberalism. People are now actively sending their daughters to school. The community also holds a good image and perception about NGO’s that was not the case before. Thus there has been a shift in behaviors and attitudes. When inquired what reasons in their opinion has facilitated this behavioural change. The respondents stated that media has played a crucial role and has generated awareness amongst the masses. People are now more aware about the ground realities. Moreover they also added that people have now realized the significance of education therefore they are focusing on educating their children so they can have a better future which has contributed towards a more aware and tolerant society as pointed during the discussions.

However a sizeable majority stated the occurrence of forced marriages in their community. The major reason behind forced marriages was to acquire/retain property within the family. Moreover majority were of the opinion that in their community a women’s consent was not required for marriage. And with regards to people wanting to marry of their choice, the community looked down upon such individuals and abused them verbally. They also considered it as a social and religious violation. Forced marriages as stated by the respondents were more common in families that had low literacy levels and poor economic backgrounds. A key finding was that religious radicalized individuals approved of forced marriages. Furthermore it was found that the major reason leading to intimate partner violence was the husband’s addiction to drugs and alcohol. Respondents elaborated that due to increased pressures and frustration drug usage has become more prevalent which is facilitated by the easy accessibility of drugs.

Domestic violence was not reported by wives to anyone outside their immediate families to “protect family’s honor.” Female respondents also added that radicalized
households tend to approve of domestic violence and even local clerics and religious institutions approve of it as stated by the interviewee’s.

Compared to other districts respondents in Haripur were more aware about NGO’s that help could be sought from in cases of domestic violence. Respondents mentioned Sahara Foundation and Aurat Foundation specifically. Also in comparison to other districts a certain percentage of respondents stated that the police does actively pursue cases of domestic violence and provides safety to the victims.

4.7 Swat

Swat is one of the districts comprising the NWFP’s Malakand Division, i.e., the Provincially Administrated Tribal Area (PATA). Swat has undergone severe political and social turmoil after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center. The launch of the “war on terror” in Afghanistan by the United States and NATO forces was not contained in Afghanistan rather it paved its way into the adjoining northwest Pakistan leading to grave disturbance in the settled and tribal FATA areas of KPK including the Swat district. Due to similarities in terms of language, geography and culture the militants easily established themselves in these areas and a militant insurgency took place. Even though the Pakistani government tried to initiate dialogues with the Taliban present in Swat to contain the insurgency but they proved to be futile and the government had to physically intervene to face the mounting threat. The Preliminary Damage and Needs Assessment report prepared jointly by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank stated, “The Government of Pakistan initially attempted to contain the militants through dialogue and negotiations. After these attempts failed, a military operation was launched in early 2009 with the consensus of the political, administrative and military leadership. This operation caused an internal migration of colossal proportions from the embattled areas, with an estimated 2 million people becoming internally displaced as a result of crisis. While the operation is seen as well-intentioned, it has imposed an immense cost on the local economy as large numbers of people have been forced to leave their homes and livelihoods and considerable damage has been caused to physical and social infrastructure.” (2009: P. 1)

In this contextual background Swat is an area that has been under a lot of scrutiny as even after the operation the threat of insurgency persists. The attack on Malala Yousafzai garnered both national and international attention and indicates that the situation has not improved very much over the years. From the information gathered through the interviews respondents were of the opinion that radicalization was a key issue that they confront as it dictates their social and political activities. The mobility of women is restricted and higher education for women is not allowed or encouraged. With the exception of a few areas the education of girls is a grave problem since the militants have issued edicts and fatwa’s against it. Thus this fear has incapacitated the resolve of families to educate their girls. Respondents further stated that over the years the Niqaab has become the staple apparel as compared to the pre militancy time; “Chaddar” was the norm then. People also complained about how tourism has been badly affected which has impacted their employment opportunities and increased frustration against the masses. A respondent stated that, “We hate these militants they have cost us our bread and butter.”
Speaking about forced marriages, the respondents stated a widespread occurrence. The major causes were outlined as inheritance issues, to protect cultural beliefs and family pressure to preserve honor. Respondents elaborated that the concept of "honor" and "prestige" is very strong in this area and it is a matters of marriage especially that of girls are equated with the family’s pride so it considered that it is their prerogative and the consent of the females is not sought.

![Figure 17: Causes of Forced Marriages](image)

A key finding in Swat was that contrary to all other districts, it was the only district where people wanting to marry of their own choice are attempted to be killed.

![Figure 18: Reaction towards People wanting to marry of their own choice](image)
Also the respondents reported complete lack awareness regarding any laws or NGO that help the victims of forced marriages. Moreover all respondents stated the police does not take any action if they are approached reporting a forced marriages.

Regarding domestic violence, the respondents stated that it was a problem in the community and the main causes that was stated by most respondents as compared to other districts was that the husband believes he has the right to resort to violence if need be. The other prominent reason was that of husband’s addiction drugs and alcohol.

Moreover it was stated that it was against their “cultural values” to report abuse to any outsider therefore domestic violence is not reported against. It was also pointed out that religiously radicalized people approved of violence against women if they are disobedient. Contrary to other district findings, survey results show that 27% of the male respondents believe that violence against women was justified. This was striking since all other districts had negated it completely. It was stated that it was justified if the woman violated any socio-cultural and religious values and steps out of the house without permission.

As in the case of forced marriages, respondents expressed a complete lack of awareness regarding laws against domestic violence or any NGO’s that could help in such cases.
5 Conclusion

Forced marriage and domestic violence are a rising concern in Pakistan, with an increase in frequency accompanying the growing radicalization in the country. However, as both issues continue to be considered a private matter, and often a justifiable response to misbehavior on the part of the wife in the case of the latter, it is extremely challenging to address and find solutions towards fighting against them. In this context, the present study highlights critical and strategic information on the impact of growing radicalization and intolerance on forced marriages and domestic violence.

A key finding of the study has been that areas in Southern Punjab such as Bahawalpur and Layyah remain at a grave threat to an organized and well-funded effort towards radicalization. Militant organizations are very active in these regions that are actively propagating, recruiting and persuading the youth into adopting radicalized and extreme Islamic ideologies with a focus on militant Jihad, sectarianism and suppressing women rights. The problems in KPK regarding issues such as forced marriages and domestic violence in conjunction with radicalization are more pronounced in rural areas such as Kohistan, Bannu etc. Essentially as you go deeper into the remote areas that is where the problem is evident. In urban areas such as Haripur and Mansehra, with the influx of media and increased education, the community has adopted a more enlightened approach towards religion therefore the impact of radicalization on forced marriages and domestic violence is less prominent.

Swat having experienced severe militancy is still recovering from the remnants of the Tehrik-e-Taliban faction. While locals are less sympathetic towards their ideologies now due to the economic repercussions of the combat that took place, there are households especially in the rural areas that are still under the influence of such radicalized ideologues which need to be reached out to.

Although the findings illustrated a wide variety of causes and interplay between gender dynamics which influence perceptions and trends regarding forced marriages and domestic violence and a significant correlation with increasing radicalization in selected communities included under NCA’s “Local Action to Combat Gender Injustices” project; a key takeaway from the study has been the influential role of the religious clerics and institutions such as mosques and madrasah’s in terms of shaping community beliefs and behaviours. The predominant opinion amongst the respondents was that families who send their children to madrasah’s have more radicalized religious interpretations and women from such families are not allowed to acquire education and practice “Strict Purdah”. It is these families where forced marriages tend to be more common.

The condemning of forced marriages and domestic violence by Imams or religious leaders was not apparent in the findings. It is imperative that as “community leaders” they play their role in shaping community behavior via speaking against this social evil and supporting victim.

Furthermore the mechanisms of redress remain largely inaccessible to women due to mobility issues thus novel ways of spreading awareness need to be initiated. Men need
to made aware regarding the rights women have ordained by religion as in the backdrop of a patriarchal society, the awareness of men is most necessary.

5.1 Way Forward:
The present study is one of the very few on this topic in Pakistan, and the findings are extremely informative and highlight how women have been victimized under the garb of cultural and religious practices. The findings indicate a fundamental need to further research the role of religion on the said topics with a focus on the role played by religious leaders and institutions especially.

The observations enabled the research team to develop a set of recommendations for state and non-state actors as strategies to work towards the reduction of forced marriages and domestic violence. These suggestions for stakeholders including civil society and the government are shared in the following section.
6 Recommendations

Recommendations are designed based on key findings which emerged from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Applicable secondary resources are referred to where required.

6.1 Norwegian Church Aid and Local Partner Organizations:

1. Launching of a telephonic helpline: Some key issues that were highlighted by the respondents were that they lacked awareness about laws and lacked knowledge about NGO’s that help could be sought from pertaining to forced marriages and domestic violence. Since the mobility of women is restricted in these areas therefore even if they want to complain they have accessibility issues. Thus in this context a recommendation is that a helpline be set up that spreads awareness about the rights women have both religiously and legally and provide help. The helpline should be means to not only articulate awareness to both men and women rather as a platform where psychological and legal aid is provided. The victims need to be guided towards mechanisms for redress.

2. Launch Media Programs: Study also revealed that media can play an instrumental role in shaping ones beliefs and attitudes. Thus using media to spread awareness which can be done in a creative manner through dramatics or short tele-plays can be very effective. Subliminal messages regarding rights women have in terms of marriage etc and the repercussions of forced marriages in a social context can be televised. Respondents actively stated that the change in behaviours and attitude towards liberalism was essentially because of the role played by media. Thus media programs can be very helpful in this regards.

   Animated characters can be created and leaflets and brochures be distributed that state the rights of the women prescribed by religion. The brochures may be brightly colored to attract the attention and interest of the people. A series of brochures can be made that narrate stories or answers questions regarding laws and how to help victims of such crimes. However what needs to be kept in mind is to highlights the rights as prescribed by religion so as to avoid any negative reactions.

3. Use of Local Heroes and Folklore: The districts under study have a rich cultural history and the locals take immense pride in their heritage, heroes and folklore. It is important to approach and communicate with the locals in a manner that they appreciate and approve since forced marriages and domestic violence are very sensitive topics. Thus initiating campaigns using local urban legends, heroes and folklore to spread awareness can be very effective. Linkages need to be drawn and such legends and heroes need to be identified that meet the campaign objectives. The local communities will be willing to listen and appreciate the cultural blend to the message.

4. Formation of a group of Community Workers: Under the supervision of NCA, a Community Workers group needs to be formed comprising of local individuals
(with a gender balance) that will focus on the following pertaining to forced marriages and domestic violence:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Early Intervention
- Rebuilding the lives of victims-survivors
- Accountability

The key role of the community workers would be to facilitate potential victims and victims-survivors to ascertain help depending on the nature of the incident. Be it facilitating mobility, disseminating information, counseling, arranging meetings with legal and medical professionals, etc the community workers would be actively assisting the survivors.

5. **Advocacy, Awareness and Educational Programs:** A main finding of the study was that awareness programs and forums tend to be very effective in sensitizing communities with respect to the issues being studied. Majority of the respondents suggested that awareness program need to be organized especially for men whereby they are educated and informed regarding the rights of women. The use of religion especially to advocate the rights of women prescribed by religion i.e. right to marriage with consent, inheritance rights and the harmonious conduct that needs to be maintained with the wives, daughters, etc. will be very valuable. With a prevalent sentiment that the concept of “women rights” serves western agendas and is aimed at corrupting the social values of the local communities, the best way to speak to the local communities is in a language they are willing to listen to and also hold reverence for. Thus advocating women rights though Islamic teaching with a focus on marriage with consent and the responsibilities the religion levies on the husband towards his wife need to be propagated. Incidents from the Prophet Muhammad’s (P.B.U.H) life can be narrated as his behavior towards his wife and daughters was one of unmatched kindness and love. In lieu of these findings it is suggested that NCA sponsor advocacy, awareness and educational programs in the target districts through the support of local partner organizations and/or community workers.

6. **Develop Linkages with Local Religious Clerics:** Religion plays a fundamental role in the life of the people in the target districts. With low levels of educational and Islamic awareness community members have a lot of reverence and respect for the local religious clerics and they turn to them for advice and their opinions are regarded as the final verdict. Endorsement of awareness program by religious clerics would significantly help the cause. Furthermore, religious clerics can be asked to giver sermons on women rights as provided for in Islam in the Friday “Khutba” as this would facilitate mass awareness. Also, seminars should be held for the local community members whereby renowned Islamic scholars or those well known by the local communities be invited. It is very

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50Khutba serves as the primary formal occasion for public preaching in the Islamic tradition. Such sermons occur regularly, as prescribed by the teachings of all legal schools. The Islamic tradition can be formally at the *dhuhr* (noon) congregation prayer on Friday.
important to develop linkages with the local religious clerics and gain their support for the cause as they influence the discourse. Moreover communities trust their judgment and opinions thus they would not be perceived as having any vested interests. The locals tend to doubt the motives of NGO’s, etc therefore having clerics speak about women rights as given by Islam in terms of marriage, property etc would be most constructive. NCA can develop linkages with local religious bodies and clerics whereby seminars and awareness programs are conducted.

7. **Form Local Committees:** Since victims fearing further abuse and in a bid to preserve family honor do not approach the police or other organized institution such as NGO’s etc for redress, A committee including multi sectoral representatives needs to be formed comprising of notable individuals from local communities, religious clerics, NGO’s, Police, Jurists and Medical professionals so that victims can approach the committee for the resolution of problem objectively. A major reason why victims are afraid to approach the police for help is they do not expect that any action will be taken against it thus the committee needs to actively work towards the resolution of the problem and ensure that the victim is provided helped immediately. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) are collaborating to pilot a coordinated, multi-sectoral response to violence against women in Latin America. Similarly NCA can collaborate with local partner organizations and community workers for the formation of these committees.

8. **Training and Community Support Services:** Law enforcers, legal and medical professionals who come in direct contact with victims need to be trained to get a better understanding of gender violence. Police, prosecutors, magistrates, judges, and doctors need to be trained so that they are in a better position to help the survivor regarding the procedures to report abuse and provide psychological counseling. Doctors, especially, could be effective in maintaining proper evidence for criminal proceedings in cases of domestic violence. Moreover, a key finding of the research was the lack of awareness regarding legislation pertaining to forced marriages and domestic violence and local NGO’s/CSO’s working on these issues. Thus community workers need to be trained to provide information on the laws, law enforcement and NGO/CSO’s that could help victims. Community workers can play an instrumental role in providing counseling to the survivors and perpetrators.

9. **Direct Intervention to Help Victim-Survivors Rebuild their Lives:** Local partner organizations should intervene and assist the survivors to rebuild their lives by providing counseling, income generation opportunities and moral support. If the victim approaches the police and seeks judicial help or even approaches NGOs/CSOs, more than often it results in a divorce. Taking help from an “external” resources and discussing the private matter publicly is regarded as disgracing the family. Thus women who seek professional help are ostracized and often divorced and disowned. These women then have nowhere to go and

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need financial support. For this purpose partner organizations can be used for assistance. This would also encourage victims to report abuse.

10. Early Identification of ‘at risk’ Families, Communities, Groups, and Individuals: A key task given to the community workers should be that of early identification of “at risk” families so that early interventions can be planned. Community workers would identify the “at risk” individuals/families etc and report them back to the local partners. The local partners would maintain a database of potential victims. Once the root cause of the violations (forced marriages/domestic violence) for that particular individual/family has been identified, steps can then be taken to address that. NCA should monitor and review to check if they have been provided with help.

6.2 Legislative Bodies and Government:

1. Initiate dialogue and campaign for comprehensive Legislation on Forced Marriages & Domestic Violence with a particular emphasis on criminal liability of the offenders: Currently cases of forced marriages are not a criminal offence except in abduction for the purposes of marriage under section 365-B Pakistan Penal Code. Generally, such matters are treated as civil in nature and resolution of the matter is dissolution of marriage, which tends to complicate and delay the process of justice and not fixation of criminal liability. This is exploited by the aggressors and their families as they use delaying tactics and cases remain unresolved for a long period of time. The proposed legislation may include formation of a special court related to such matrimonial matters. Since the delivery of justice is not timely this deters many victims from approaching the police and judiciary. Thus it is necessary that dialogue be initiated and awareness be spread for trying cases of forced marriages and domestic violence as a criminal offence. This would require the initiation of dialogue with key stakeholders pertaining to legislation.

2. Increased Employment and Income Generation: Major factors identified as perpetuating domestic violence and forced marriages were poverty and unemployment, which led to frustration and subsequently violence. Income generation programs with suggestions by the local community should be developed.

3. Enhancing Accessibility of Women Police Stations: Since mobility of the women in such areas is restricted thus enhancing accessibility of women police stations is essential. The first women’s police station was established in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1985 after women complained that they were unable to report violations in the regular police stations fearing harassment and incredulity. Though the model has been replicated in Pakistan, accessibility is still a problem. Women are restricted from travelling long distances without male escorts and since it is essentially the male members who are aggressors, women are unable to approach the police in such matters. Therefore, to help overcome these issues, it is suggested that women police routinely visit the local community and partner organizations so that cases of forced marriages and domestic violence can be registered and handled by the Police. Further victims would feel more comfortable speaking to a women police official.
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