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# **How Battered Women in a Pakistani Rural Village of Sohan Experience Domestic Violence in their Marriages**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Lancaster

May 2019

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**Supervisors:** Dr. Ian Convery and Dr. Alison Spurgeon-Dickson

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A special thanks goes to my family, especially to my two little boys as I have always told them that mama will be finished one day so I can spend more time with them. My younger son is ecstatic that I am nearly done and that I can finally run around the house with him and bounce off the walls. Undertaking this PhD has truly been a life-changing experience for me and it would not have been possible without the support of my mother. I am truly grateful to my mother for her never-ending encouragement, patience and prayers that have sustained me thus far.

### **DECLARATION:**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere

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## ABSTRACT

This research investigated how battered women in a patriarchal Pakistani rural village of Sohan experienced domestic violence in their marriages. The study sought to answer a number of relevant research questions to understand women's experiences of domestic violence. This research examined the cultural and structural factors that supported the perpetration of domestic violence in the participants' marriages. It explored factors that shaped participants' attitudes towards their own victimisation in their husbands' homes. An in-depth analysis of the risk factors together with an exploration of obstacles and barriers that deterred women from leaving their abusive marriages was presented. It was found that the participants who exercised limited household decision-making autonomy at home became increasingly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in their marriages. The findings suggested that a woman indoctrinated with subservient qualities was more likely to accept domestic violence in her marriage. It was further demonstrated that religious beliefs and societal expectations dominated the participants' thinking about marital sex. Denying sexual access and conflict over reproductive rights were most commonly occurring risk factors in the battered women's accounts. A woman's financial dependency and patriarchal child custody laws emerged as the most significant deterrents to leaving an abusive marriage. *(197 words)*

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## GLOSSARY OF URDU LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY

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<i>Allah</i>	God
<i>Baji</i>	Older sister, big sister
<i>Bebas</i>	Helpless
<i>Bebasi</i>	Helplessness
<i>Dehati</i>	A villager
<i>Hadith</i>	Believed to be the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Majazi-khuda</i>	Image of God, next to God, partially God, like God
<i>Purdah</i>	Loose garment worn by women to cover their bodies in front of other men (Figure 3.1 Appendix IIA)
<i>Run-mureed</i>	Subservient to one's wife, weak, powerless, less of a man
<i>Saber</i>	Patience

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

*Who doesn't have marital problems.... every other household has fights, it's normal (a mother-in-law, Sohan village)*

### **1.1 Chapter Overview**

This introductory chapter presents the rationale, research questions and corresponding aims and objectives of the study alongside the definition of 'domestic violence' used in the research. The chapter also provides an overview of the key theoretical constructs that underpin the research.

### **1.2 Introduction**

A growing body of research highlights the issue of domestic violence in culturally diverse and formerly ignored communities around the world (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). In general, this work has placed a greater emphasis on understanding domestic violence and its various levels of impact including individual, dyadic, family and community (Roberts, 2002). As such, domestic violence is no longer seen simplistically as arising from "normal stress and interpersonal conflict" within a family (Worden, 2000, p. 222).

The World Health Organization recognises domestic violence as a multi-faceted phenomenon that can lead to serious injury, mental health issues, disability or even death (WHO, 1997). Based on the latest statistics, about 35% (1 in 3) of women worldwide experience some form of domestic violence in their intimate relationships (WHO, 2018). In contrast, about 59% of women in Pakistan reported domestic violence in their homes

(Ashfaq, Kamran, & Niazi, 2018), and a 2002 report by Amnesty International found that domestic violence poses the biggest threat to the wellbeing of women in Pakistan (*Amnesty International*, 2002; Bari, 2000; Berrios & Grady, 1991; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008).

### **1.3 Why Research Domestic Violence?**

I have a recurring childhood memory of witnessing a horrific domestic violence situation. Whilst memory can be a notoriously unreliable witness, this is something that has stayed with me for much of my adult life. One day my mother took me over to a neighbour's house to visit a friend. I was probably four years old at the time, and I recall that the neighbour was engaged in an argument with her husband. At some point the husband appeared with a kitchen knife, and my mother quickly grabbed the woman and we locked ourselves in a room. I can still remember the fear on that woman's face. I cannot remember what happened afterwards or how we got out but memory of that day stayed with me for years. I often wondered how that woman lived with so much fear and whether she survived her violent marriage. As an adult working in a domestic violence organisation providing services to the victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, I wanted to better understand the journey of a woman in an abusive marriage from being a victim of domestic violence to a survivor.

### **1.4 Study Rationale**

There is limited data available in relation to domestic violence in Pakistan and what data there is of questionable quality and reliability. Apart from this, very few national statistical authorities in Pakistan conduct surveys on violence against women on a regular basis to

allow for comparisons over time. In addition to the difficulty in accessing female participants due to local cultural constraints (Critelli, 2012), the prolonged period of political instability in Pakistan has had adverse consequences for education and research. Successive governments in Pakistan have failed to collect data on issues concerning women including domestic violence (Critelli, 2012).

**Contribution to Knowledge: The study contributes to the limited literature on domestic violence in Pakistan**

Much of the literature on domestic violence used for my research is based on case studies from North America and the U.K., which also meant that the general understanding of domestic violence was based on a pro-feminist Western perspective. I could only identify 23 studies on domestic violence in Pakistan that were relevant to my work. I chose to exclude a number of studies on domestic violence in Pakistan due to my concerns about research quality. Given the dearth of empirical literature on domestic violence in Pakistan, my study makes a significant contribution to the current body of knowledge.

**Contribution to Knowledge: The study highlights the views of the marginalised and underrepresented rural group of women in Pakistan**

There is also a strong urban bias to domestic violence research in Pakistan. Most of the current studies on domestic violence in Pakistan were conducted in a hospital environment or the Agha Khan University Health Sciences Centre in Karachi. Hence, the women from

rural communities in Pakistan were essentially excluded from the discussion of domestic violence in Pakistan. Considering that 63% of Pakistani population lives in the rural areas ("Rural Women in Pakistan," 2008), I came across only one cross-sectional quantitative study (Zakar, Zakar, & Abbas, 2016) that sought to examine experiences of domestic violence among rural Pakistani women. My study may be the first to provide an in-depth understanding of domestic violence in a rural village and will contribute to the existing domestic violence discourse by highlighting the perspectives of rural Pakistani women.

**Contribution to Knowledge: This is the first qualitative study conducted in a rural Pakistani village**

Most of the evidence on the experiences of domestic violence among women in Pakistan comes from cross-sectional quantitative studies, conducted mostly in the metropolitan city of Karachi (F. A. Ali, Israr, Ali, & Janjua, 2009; T. S. Ali, Asad, Mogren, & Krantz, 2011; Fikree, Razzak, & Durocher, 2005; Kapadia, Saleem, & Karim, 2009, 2010; Madhani et al., 2017; Shahzadi, Qureshi, & Islam, 2012) and other urban centres (Amir-ud-Din, Fatima, & Aziz, 2018; Chatha, Ahmad, & Sheikh, 2014; Nasrullah & Muazzam, 2009; Nasrullah, Zakar, & Zakar, 2014; Tayyab, Kamal, Akbar, & Zakar, 2017). Only seven studies were qualitative (T. S. Ali, Krantz, & Mogren, 2012; Critelli, 2012; Hussain & Khan, 2008; Nasrullah, Zakar, Zakar, Abbas, & Safdar, 2015; Zakar, Zakar, & Kraemer, 2013; Zakar, Zakar, & Krämer, 2011, 2012) and two that adopted a mixed approach including a combination of cross-sectional quantitative, qualitative, focus group and/or case study (Andersson et al., 2010; Rabbani, Qureshi, & Rizvi, 2008).

My study adds to the existing predominantly cross-sectional quantitative research on domestic violence in Pakistan by adopting a methodology that allowed me to present a more comprehensive view of how rural women experience domestic violence in their homes. As such, this is the first qualitative study of its kind on domestic violence that was conducted over a period of twenty-eight months in a rural community in Pakistan.

**Contribution to Knowledge: The study contributes to the limited body of knowledge that seeks to understand the influence of religion on Pakistani Muslim women's response to domestic violence**

I found that the experiences of Muslim women were underrepresented in the existing domestic violence literature. Given the scarcity of literature in Pakistan that examined the influence of religion on domestic violence, I drew on the work of researchers who investigated the experiences of domestic violence among Muslim women from Palestine/Israel (Haj-Yahia, 1998; Haj - Yahia, 2000), Africa (Hoel, 2013), Turkey (G. A. Marshall & Furr, 2010) and Muslim diaspora in the U.S (Ammar, 2007; D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003). Nevertheless, my study adds to the limited domestic violence discourse that seeks to understand the influence of religion on the experiences of domestic violence among Muslim women in Pakistan.

## 1.5 Aims and Objectives

The overarching research question is to investigate how battered women in a Pakistani rural village of Sohan experience domestic violence in their marriages. The specific aims and objectives are presented in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1:** A table to present the aims and objectives of the research

Aims	Objectives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To explore sociocultural practices in Sohan village that contribute to domestic violence in the home</li> <li>2. To understand participants' attitudes and beliefs towards domestic violence</li> <li>3. To identify the underlying causes and risk factors for domestic violence in the husbands' home</li> <li>4. To investigate factors that influence the participants' decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Conduct a systematic review of the literature on domestic violence to create an understanding of the women's experiences of domestic violence</li> <li>ii) Use the feminist perspective and the Foucault's theory of power to understand domestic violence in Sohan village</li> <li>iii) Revise participants' narratives to derive explanations for the specified aims. The procedure used to revise narratives is outlined in appendix IB steps 1 to 4.</li> </ol>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Inform the development of theory which would make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Examine the applicability of different theoretical frameworks – Feminist perspective and the Foucault's theory of power</li> <li>ii) Develop an all-inclusive theoretical model from existing theory which best explains the experiences of female victims of domestic violence in a patriarchal society</li> </ol>

## 1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions were developed based on the aims of this research. Table 1.2 presents the research questions that correspond to the aims of the study.

**Table 1.2:** A table to present the research questions

Research Questions	Research Aims
<p>How much freedom do the participants enjoy in their husband's home? Who has the control over the husband's income and household food distribution?</p> <p>Who makes the major decisions in the household?</p> <p>Do the participants talk to their husbands about managing family size?</p> <p>Are the participants treated fairly by their in-laws?</p> <p>Do the participants speak up for their rights and the rights of their children in the husbands' home?</p> <p>How do the participants' see their role in the husbands' home and outside?</p> <p>Were the participants exposed to domestic violence at their parents' home? If yes, how did their mothers react to domestic violence and how did they react to their mothers' victimisation?</p>	<p>To explore sociocultural practices in Sohan village that contribute to domestic violence in the home</p>
<p>How do the participants perceive their own victimisation in the marriage?</p> <p>What explanations do they provide to justify their victimisation?</p> <p>To what extent religion plays a role in their understanding of marriage and domestic violence?</p>	<p>To understand participants' attitudes and beliefs towards domestic violence</p>
<p>What are the major factors that create conflicts in the marriage from the participants' perspective?</p> <p>What is the role of the in-laws in inciting violence towards the participants? What role does the husband play?</p>	<p>To identify the underlying causes and risk factors for domestic violence in the husbands' home</p>
<p>When was the first time the participants reached out for help? What were the circumstances and who did they first approach?</p>	<p>To investigate factors that influence the participants' decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage</p>

<p>Is their natal family supportive of them?</p> <p>What sort of restrictions are they faced with in their husbands' home?</p> <p>Have they ever considered leaving their abusive husbands? If yes, what obstacles did they face? If not, why did they not consider leaving?</p>	
<p>Is the dominant gender paradigm adequate in understanding domestic violence in a patriarchal rural society?</p> <p>Does Foucault's theoretical framework adequately explain domestic violence in the rural environment?</p> <p>Should a gender-neutral approach be used to understand domestic violence?</p>	<p>Inform the development of theory which would make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge</p>

### 1.7 Definition of Domestic Violence

The following pages consider how domestic violence is defined and categorised across a range of literature, in doing so I will present a working definition of domestic violence for the purpose of this research and explain why I selected the term 'domestic violence'.

Over the years (and across disciplines), researchers have conceptualised and defined domestic violence in a number of different ways (Andersson, Ho-Foster, Mitchell, Scheepers, & Goldstein, 2007; Counts & Brown, 1992; Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2002). It is defined as "intimate partner abuse, family violence, wife beating, battering, marital abuse, and partner abuse" (Andersson et al., 2007, p. 1). Roberts (2002) stated that some definitions of domestic violence recognise male to female violence, while others have included female to male violence and same-sex relationships. What is central to these

definitions is that domestic violence is generally defined as “abuse by intimate partner” (Berrios & Grady, 1991, p. 133).

The Western definition of domestic violence also highlights abuse in non-marital intimate relationships including same-sex partnerships. Conversely, the Eastern perspective of domestic violence does not recognise the same-sex or unmarried intimate relationships. The Western conceptualisation seems to describe domestic violence within a nuclear family structure, whilst the Eastern definition sees it as a problem that exists within an extended family structure. In a South Asian context, domestic violence may also be perpetrated by members of the husband's extended family. However, according to the Western perspective domestic violence takes place between married or unmarried partners.

The following definitions have been provided for domestic violence:

- The American Medical Association constructed domestic violence as “a pattern of coercive behaviours that may include repeated battering and injury, psychological abuse, sexual assault, progressive social isolation, deprivation, and intimidation...perpetrated by someone who is or was involved in an intimate relationship with the victim” (Women, Yawn, Yawn, & Uden, 1992, p. 5).
- Abraham (1998, p. 221) defined domestic violence within a South Asian cultural context as “any form of coercion, power and control – physical, sexual, verbal,

mental or economic – perpetrated on a woman by her spouse or extended kin, arising from the social relations that are created within the context of marriage”.

- According to Pakistan’s current domestic violence Act “domestic violence includes but is not limited to, all acts of gender based and other physical or psychological abuse committed by a respondent against women, children or other vulnerable persons, with whom the respondent is or has been in a domestic relationship...” (“Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act ”, 2012; Qureshi, 2012).

The following domestic violence definitions include the same sex relationships:

- “Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse” (*Home Office*, 2013).
- Hart (1986, p. 173) defined lesbian battering as a “pattern of violent (or) coercive, behaviours whereby a lesbian seeks to control the thoughts, beliefs, or conduct of her intimate partner or to punish the intimate for resisting the perpetrator’s control”.

### **1.7.1 Selection of Terminology and Definitions**

The feminist researchers such as R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) argued that neutralising the terms used to describe the practice of wife beating obscures the inequality that exists in a marriage further contributing to the oppression of women. They argued that the terms like 'marital violence' or 'spousal violence' suggest that it is the husband who is most likely to be the perpetrator of domestic violence, which according to them is a true reflection of a woman's experience of abuse in the home. However, the observations made in the study have demonstrated that women in Sohan village were not only victimised by their husbands, but also by their mothers-in-law. Therefore, it was important to select a term that would account for these women's unique experiences of domestic violence. Family violence was another popular term that appeared in the domestic violence literature (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2007). Nevertheless, the term family violence was not adopted for this study because I did not want it to be synonymous with the Western understanding of violence within a 'nuclear family system'.

I selected the term 'domestic violence' because the term 'domestic' relates to all matters pertaining to family relations in the home. Within a Pakistani cultural context, these family relations include the sister-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law and brother-in-law. Most importantly, Pakistan's current Domestic Violence Act adopts the term 'domestic violence' (Qureshi, 2012) which makes it a more relevant term for a study conducted in Pakistan, such as this one.

In addition, as was mentioned earlier, empirical evidence suggests that in patriarchal societies women living in a joint family system also experience violence at the hands of their husbands' immediate family, especially the mother-in-law (Zakar et al., 2016). For this reason, I have selected Abraham (1998)'s definition of domestic violence for this study because it recognises the other potential perpetrators in the husband's home. This was an important consideration as most married women in Sohan village lived with their husbands' parents and siblings in a joint family setup. The second definition that I have selected is proposed by the Pakistan's Domestic Violence Act (Qureshi, 2012). This definition recognises the gendered nature of domestic violence in Pakistan. This was important because relationships in Sohan village are determined within the local patriarchal environment, in which men occupy a superior position, while women who hold a subordinate position in the home are subjected to various forms of violence and abuse.

### **1.8 Forms of Domestic Violence**

Andersson et al. (2007, p. 2) stated, "domestic violence is not a single behaviour but a mix of assaulting and coercive physical, sexual, and psychological behaviours". Riggs, Caulfield, and Street (2000, p. 1291) argued that "domestic violence encompasses a wide range of behaviours and behavioural patterns, ranging from a single incident of pushing or grabbing during an argument to an ongoing and pervasive pattern of severe battering and

coercion”. Table 1.3 presents different forms of domestic violence that have been reported across studies.

**Table 1.3:** A table to present different forms of domestic violence

<b>Forms of Domestic Violence</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Physical abuse	<b>Slapping and punching</b> (Abraham, 1998; Berrios & Grady, 1991; Carlson, 1984) <b>Suffocating, choking and strangling</b> (Felson & Outlaw, 2007; Kapadia, Saleem, & Karim, 2010; Schuler, Bates, & Islam, 2008) <b>Pushing, shoving and dragged by hair</b> (Fulu, 2013; Yoshihama, 2002)
Emotional abuse	<b>Intimidation and threatening with divorce</b> (Ali, Krantz, & Mogren, 2012; Bhat & Ullman, 2014) <b>Threatening with knife</b> (Berrios & Grady, 1991; Carlson, 1984) <b>Socially isolate and restrict mobility</b> (Lempert, 1996; Mitra, 2013; Taylor, Magnussen, & Amundson, 2001) <b>Desertion and neglect</b> (Fulu, 2013)
Verbal abuse	<b>Taunting, blaming, humiliating, degradation and blackmailing</b> (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Wilson, 2014)
Sexual abuse	<b>Forced sexual activity and unwanted pregnancy</b> (Boucher, Lemelin, & McNicoll, 2009; Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Loke, Wan, & Hayter, 2012) <b>Withholding sex or refusing to share bed</b> (Fulu, 2013; Mills, 1985)
Economic abuse	<b>Refusing to meet household expenses</b> (Flood & Pease, 2009; Rabbani, Qureshi, & Rizvi, 2008) <b>Restricting access to employment</b> (Shahzadi, Qureshi, & Islam, 2012) <b>Withholding income</b> (Bhat & Ullman, 2014)

## 1.9 Underlying Theoretical Framework

My research (epistemologically and theoretically) is underpinned by Foucault’s theory of power and the feminist perspective. However, a single theoretical approach was not sufficient to provide an understanding of the multifaceted issues related to domestic

violence in a patriarchal rural environment. I used Foucault's theory of power and control to understand relationship practices of a rural society. Foucault's theory was especially useful in understanding how women were transformed and overcome by hegemonic forces in a marital context. The observations made in this study reveal that patriarchal religious ideology was deeply rooted in the rural society of Sohan. Evidence from the participants' narratives demonstrate that patriarchal religious beliefs have a great deal of impact on how battered women in Sohan responded to domestic violence in their marriages. It is here that Foucault's theory of power and control is of value for understanding the role religion plays in shaping a Muslim woman's response to domestic violence in her marriage.

Foucault's view that individuals cannot get outside of power relations (Muckelbauer, 2000) allows me to understand the kind of power religion holds over Muslim women in regards to their marital conduct. The mechanism of disciplinary power within Foucault's Bentham's Panopticon (Alford, 2000; Danaher, Schirato, & Webb, 2000) bears a strong resemblance to the operation of religious discourse in a rural Muslim woman's life. Foucault's Bentham Panopticon is a hypothetical prison called Panopticon. The religious discourse seems to function as a Panopticon creating an impression that the Muslim women who are held within the Panopticon are constantly visible to God forcing them to conform.

This allows the researcher to analyse how a woman is subjugated in a marriage through her commitment to religious ideology. In addition, Foucault's focus on how power operates to dominate individuals within a relationship (Foucault, 1977; Schwan & Shapiro, 2011) informs my understanding of how women are controlled in their marriages through sexuality (Pylypa, 1998).

It was discovered through observations made during fieldwork that both men and women in Sohan village ascribed to patriarchal gender attitudes in their marriages, which necessitated the use of the feminist perspective in facilitating my understanding of women's experiences of domestic violence in a rural society. The feminist approach that sees gender as the main organising factor that shapes the experiences of women's lives (Creswell, 2007) is useful in understanding the position of a woman in a patriarchal society that limits her role by creating feminine identity that subjugates her (D. G. Dutton, 1994; Lundberg-Love & Marmion, 2006) by restricting equal access to opportunities and resources. The feminist theory provides a comprehensive explanation about the role of a woman in her husband's home (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; W. K. Taylor, Magnussen, & Amundson, 2001). This is especially useful because it allows the researcher to think through ways in which a woman can be victimised in her husband's home.

Together these theoretical perspectives inform the research design. The formulation of research questions was influenced by these theoretical perspectives. The analysis of the

findings was shaped by Foucault's theory of power and control and the feminist perspective. Along with the theoretical perspectives, the large body of literature available on domestic violence deepened my understanding of the subject area and shaped my analysis of the results obtained.

### **1.10 Thesis Structure**

This thesis contains seven chapters.

**Chapter One** explains the study rationale and identifies a number of aims and objectives of the research. It presents the main research questions. The chapter defines the term 'domestic violence' and ways in which women can be victimised in their marriages. It also provides an overview of the underlying theoretical framework.

**Chapter Two** provides a critical evaluation of the domestic violence discourse. The chapter will unravel the complexity of the issue of domestic violence, which demonstrates that a single theoretical approach is not sufficient to provide an understanding of domestic violence. This chapter intends to reveal the formation of the theoretical foundation, stemming from existing theory which best explains the experiences of female victims of domestic violence.

**Chapter Three** details the research methodology adopted for this research. Considering that this was a 'sensitive' research, the chapter outlines the procedure that allowed the researcher to overcome obstacles during fieldwork. The chapter presents the detail of the

sampling methodology including the target population, sample size and selection procedure. Rapport building was the central focus of the research methodology, which is thoroughly explained in the chapter. The data collection method was a multi-stage process which is described in detail. The chapter explains the analytic approach and comments on the ethical considerations in conducting research.

**Chapter Four** introduces the study site and shares the key demographics on Sohan. The chapter provides an overview of the rural life and poverty. It describes some of the findings of the Participatory Rural Appraisal Approach that helped to understand the women's condition in the village.

**Chapter Five** presents the findings of this thesis. Themes are identified from participants' narratives. Participants' responses are used to illustrate the identified themes. These themes are discussed according to the thematic analysis procedure. The chapter provides findings on sociocultural factors that contribute to domestic violence. It shares results in regards to attitudes and risk factors surrounding domestic violence. Findings on factors that influence the participants' decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage are also presented.

**Chapter Six** This chapter looked at a relationship between certain variables (not discussed in the findings chapter) that influenced and shaped the participants' experiences of domestic violence. It cleared up some issues and ambiguities associated with participants' experiences of domestic violence.

**Chapter Seven** re-addresses the aims of this research as set forth in Chapter One. The chapter also reviews the key features of the research and ends with recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter provides a critical evaluation of the domestic violence discourse. The chapter will unravel the complexity of the issue of domestic violence, which demonstrates that a single theoretical approach is not sufficient to provide an understanding of domestic violence. This chapter intends to reveal the formation of the theoretical foundation, stemming from existing theory which best explains the experiences of female victims of domestic violence.

### **2.2 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into six parts. The first part of the chapter examines the literature to identify different sociocultural practices of a patriarchal society that may contribute to the perpetration of domestic violence. The second part explores determinants that shape a woman's attitudes and beliefs towards domestic violence in her marriage. Third, it evaluates the potential risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of domestic violence. Next, the chapter looks at factors that influence a woman's decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage. The feminist perspective and Foucault's theory of power is used to understand the multifaceted issues related to domestic violence in a patriarchal society. The chapter lays the foundation for the development of an all-inclusive theoretical model that can be used to understand the experiences of domestic violence among rural Pakistani women.

### **2.3 Patriarchy and Domestic Violence**

The existing discourse on domestic violence supports the feminist perspective that tends to dismiss other explanations of domestic violence in favour of patriarchy as the main cause of violence against women (Cannon, 2015; R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993). Patriarchy is organised around the concept of male authority that promotes male dominance over females (Lundberg-Love & Marmion, 2006; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). In other words, “patriarchy may be thought of as having two basic components: A structure, in which men have more power and privilege than women, and an ideology that legitimises this arrangement” (Smith, 1990, p. 1).

There is evidence in literature that supports the feminist view that patriarchy is the main factor contributing to domestic violence (Abraham, 1998), while other studies (D. G. Dutton, 1994; Yllo & Straus, 2017) have found no direct relationship between structural patriarchy and domestic violence. Hunnicutt (2009) has criticised the feminist belief by pointing out that all men cannot be labelled as violent due to their patriarchal beliefs. She argued that the term patriarchy implies a “false universalism’ in which all men are viewed as a singular group. This argument is further reinforced by the suggestion that “if patriarchy is the main factor contributing to wife assault, then a large percentage, if not the majority, of men raised in a patriarchal system should exhibit assertiveness” (D. G. Dutton, 1994, p. 6). While Tracy (2007) agreed that there is evidence to suggest a causal relationship between patriarchy and domestic violence, he argued that a single factor is not sufficient to explain male violence against women. He emphasises that most of the studies conducted which assess the relationship between religion, patriarchal gender beliefs and

domestic violence do not support the feminist view that patriarchy is the main cause of all male violence towards women.

In addition, Tracy (2007) insisted that there are different forms of patriarchy that have different effects on domestic violence. For example, he suggested that the abuse of women witnessed in Afghanistan under an extremely patriarchal regime of Taliban had a different effect on domestic violence than that found in the less traditional 'soft patriarchy', which maintains distinctive gender roles but promotes shared authority in the marriage. Another source of support for the feminist belief comes from (Bettman, 2009; Smith, 1990) who found that men who adhere to patriarchal beliefs in the domestic context are more likely to perpetrate domestic violence toward their wives.

Despite evidence that gendered paradigm tends to rely only on women's accounts of domestic violence (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011; D. G. Dutton, 2006), feminist theory emphasises the position of wife as the victim and male as the perpetrator (Abraham, 1998; R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). L. E. Walker (1989) found that the feminist theorists used data collected from women who had been victims of men's violence as children or adults, which added support to the feminist 'gendered' approach to understanding domestic violence. In addition, Dixon and Graham-Kevan (2011) and D. G. Dutton and White (2013) suggested that an overwhelming majority of domestic violence research has been conducted with a sample of women from shelter homes, results of which reflect high rates of male to female violence supporting a feminist perspective of domestic violence. Findings from these studies produce results that are inclined towards women's version of

events producing a one-sided gendered account of domestic violence (Dixon, Archer, & Graham-Kevan, 2012; Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011; D. G. Dutton & White, 2013; Straus & Gelles, 1990). Hence, the results obtained from these studies reinforce the idea that men are the sole perpetrators of domestic violence, while women are the victims (R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; D. G. Dutton & White, 2013) supporting patriarchy as the main cause of domestic violence.

### **2.3.1 The Impact of Patriarchy on Women**

To understand the power held by the patriarchal discourse and its impact on women one must consider Foucault's claim that "discourses are created to regulate the everyday lives of individuals, operating as forms of constraint and norms" (Nicolson, 2010, p. 80). Foucault further explained that, "power is embedded in discourses and norms that are part of the minute practices, habits, and interactions of our everyday lives" (Pylypa, 1998, p. 23). In a patriarchal context, this implies that power is held by cultural discourses that ascribe an authoritative position to men and a subordinate position to women (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Towns & Adams, 2000). Critelli (2010) supports this assertion by noting that discourses of patriarchal values are deeply embedded in the local Pakistani culture. For example, the Pakistani cultural discourse maintains a belief in an 'inherent' male superiority (Rabbani et al., 2008; Shahzadi et al., 2012), which is reinforced by a local belief advocating that husband is *majazi-khuda*, which means embodiment of God (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Schuler, Bates, & Islam, 2008; Zakar et al., 2012). The notion of '*majazi khuda*' implies that if God had ordered a human being to prostrate in front of someone other than Him, then He would have ordered a woman to bow down before her husband because

of the extent of his religiously sanctioned rights over her (El Fadl, 2001; Majah, p. 62; Zakar et al., 2012).

Further support for Foucault's assertion comes from (Bhatti, Jamali, Phulpoto, Mehmood, & Shaikh, 2011; Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Jejeebhoy, 1998; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Schuler, Lenzi, & Yount, 2011; Tang, Wong, & Cheung, 2002) who found that according to the patriarchal discourse a woman is viewed as a form of property that is transferred from her father's ownership to her husband's and then over to her sons' in her old age. This view is consistent with the suggestion that "women are never independent; they are to be protected by their fathers when young, their husbands when married, and their sons in old age" (D. Rao, Horton, & Raguram, 2012, p. 1968). Usta, Farver, and Hamieh (2016) concur with these views and suggest that in a patriarchal society a woman's perceived position as a 'property' leads to legitimisation and acceptance of mistreatment of wife. This implies that the patriarchal discourse not only establishes a woman's position as a subordinate but also makes violence against her seem normal and acceptable. This is the kind of power Foucault is talking about when he says that power is embedded in discourses and norms that are part of our everyday lives (Pylypa, 1998) and that these discourses are created to regulate the lives of individuals (Nicolson, 2010). Hence, the patriarchal cultural ideology makes it very difficult for rural women to challenge their husband's authority by making the husbands more powerful and authoritative (Abraham, 1995; Zakar et al., 2012).

## **2.4 Gender Inequality**

The feminist theory advocates that there is an existing power imbalance between the male perpetrator and the female victim in an abusive relationship (Renzetti, 1992; Tenkorang, Owusu, Yeboah, & Bannerman, 2013). Kaye (2004) supports the feminist assertion by noting that unequal power relations increase a woman's vulnerability to exploitation and abuse by influencing attitudes towards domestic violence, practices and behaviour. Further support comes from D. Rao et al. (2012) who found that lower status of women in rural patriarchal societies leaves them without options and more vulnerable to domestic violence. However, Kaschak (2014) contends that violence also occurs within lesbian relationships, as well as between gay men where power differential implied by gender difference is not present. A gender-neutral approach taken by Tesch, Bekerian, English, and Harrington (2010) further suggested that domestic violence is about one partner exploiting the existing power differential, which can arise from a number of gender-neutral sources such as one partner who comes from a privileged background or makes higher income may occupy a higher position in a relationship.

The feminist understanding of domestic violence is entrenched in the belief that men occupy a superior gender position in a heterosexual relationship (L. B. Johnson, 2010), making them more likely to engage in abusive behaviour toward their female partners (Tesch et al., 2010). The support for this assertion comes from several studies. Evidence from Hayati, Emmelin, and Eriksson (2014) supports the feminist view by suggesting that a man's role as a provider upholds his position of authority in the home by providing him with exclusive right over household decision-making and legitimising his right to use

violence. The authors found that the higher status ascribed to men in the home is further reinforced by the cultural and religious ideologies that support the husband's right to control his wife. They found that marriages in which men occupied an authoritative position were those in which men were more likely to approve of the use of violence to resolve marital conflicts and correct the wife's behaviour (Hayati et al., 2014). T. S. Ali, Krantz, et al. (2011) add further support to the feminist belief and argue that women have an increased likelihood of experiencing all forms of oppression in marriages where the husbands enjoy a superior position in the household. However, Cook (2009) and Crawford and Unger (2004) raise the question that if a man enjoys an established sense of superiority making him more likely to perpetrate domestic violence towards his female partner, then how does a feminist paradigm explain the behaviour of a female who perpetrates domestic violence towards her male partner in an intimate relationship.

While Critelli (2010) agreed with the feminist stance that gender inequality embedded in patriarchal ideology often leads to domestic violence in marriages, she argued that using a gender inequality framework in understanding domestic violence in Pakistan is irrelevant. She emphasised that the Pakistani society views gender inequality as a natural phenomenon. Support for this argument comes from a study conducted by Zakar et al. (2013). They found that local people in Pakistan generally believe that a woman is religiously prohibited to become the head of state or lead the prayers, nor is she permitted to occupy the position of the head of a family. They argued that this analogy is often used to support the idea that a woman who holds a secondary position in all other areas of her life, cannot possibly hold an equal position in a marriage (Zakar et al., 2013). In view of

this, the feminist theory which is viewed as a Western attempt to erode local traditional family values is rejected as a secular construct (Critelli, 2010). Therefore, Critelli viewed the feminist idea of gender inequality as having a diminished compatibility with the local patriarchal society. This view is consistent with the observations made in this study which suggested that institutionalised gender inequality was accepted as a normal part of marital life by both men and women in Sohan village.

### **2.5 Dominance by a Male Partner**

It is suggested that domination is the central theme in the feminist theory and that men use violence to subjugate their female partners (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; D. G. Dutton, 1994, 2006; Tesch et al., 2010). This assertion is supported by early domestic violence researchers who identified one common theme in the stories of women affected by domestic violence – men used violence to oppress women and maintain the hegemonic masculinity (Goodman & Epstein, 2008). The findings of Karakurt and Cumbie (2012, p. 121) resonate with this argument but add that “ for both genders, a need for dominance is a crucial factor in the manifestation of relationship aggression”. Straus (2008, p. 254) provides further evidence to support the feminist view by asserting that “men appear to be motivated to use violence to dominate and control”. Straus elaborated further on this issue and argued that dominance by any partner, whether it is the male or female partner, is strongly associated with an increased risk of domestic violence in a relationship. She found that although the feminist theory does not include the discussion of dominance by a female partner, the findings of her study challenged the belief that when women engage in abusive

behaviour, the motives are different, while male dominance is viewed as the root cause of male violence toward female partners (Straus, 2008).

In contrast, Foucault denies that power is imposed by the dominant group (Pylypa, 1998), or in other words, 'men' in accordance with the feminist theory. In response to the idea that one person dominates another in a relationship, Foucault explained that power manifests itself in the form of daily practices and routines that individuals willingly conform to and engage in self-disciplinary practices leading to their own subjugation (G. A. Marshall & Furr, 2010). This implies that individuals are involved in their own oppression and domination (Pylypa, 1998) rather than one individual dominating another as implied by the feminist theory. Evidence from literature supports Foucault's assertion that power is not exercised by the dominant individual, but rather by means of internalisation of the external demands leading to one's own subordination (Sabanci, 2013). For example, literature has demonstrated that women in a patriarchal society identify with male interest and are involved in their own oppression (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). Haugaard (2010) provides further support for this argument by suggesting that a traditional patriarchal society has the support of local women which challenges the feminist belief that a patriarchal relationship is one where men dominate women.

Domination of women in a patriarchal society is further reinforced by a number of cultural practices that women willingly conform to providing additional support to Foucault's assertion. Practices such as dowry (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Schuler et al., 2008), acceptance of sexual coercion in marriages based on religious beliefs

(K. Ali, 2006; Dialmy, 2010; Hoel, 2013) and self-blaming practices (D. T. Miller & Porter, 1983; Towns & Adams, 2000) all contribute to domination of women.

In addition, in response to the feminist view that men use violence against women as a tool to establish dominance in a relationship, Stewart (1994) contended that women are capable of resisting male domination but we as researchers need to understand how women perceive their own gender role in a relationship. Foucault's gender-neutral account resonated with this argument suggesting that existing power relations are always subjected to resistance (Hekman, 1996; Lewandowski, 1995; Muckelbauer, 2000; Pickett, 1996; Said, 1986). Foucault argued that resistance is not just a matter of saying no to the authority, it is about challenging the dominant discourse and changing the system (Sabanci, 2013).

Stewart (1994) further argued that all women are different and that we cannot search for a unified voice, which implies that women react differently to oppression based on their self-perception leading some women to resist while others to submit. In contrast, Foucault assumed that individuals remain dominated by the oppressive forces, as power finds a way to re-assert itself when faced with resistance (Pylypa, 1998), which casts doubt on his assumption of resistance (Muckelbauer, 2000). This also means that contrary to (Stewart, 1994)'s view that all women respond differently to oppression, Foucault assumes that individuals gradually become docile bodies (Pickett, 1996) denying the possibility of a successful resistance (Pylypa, 1998).

## **2.6 Patriarchal Gender Role Socialisation**

Feminist researchers such as R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979, p. 44) believe that “the successful socialisation of men and women for their positions within marriage has provided a mechanism for both the legitimation and the reinforcement of the marital hierarchy”. In other words, the feminist perspective attributes male violence to rigid gender role socialisation (L. E. Walker, 1989). This implies that abusive men are a product of patriarchal socialisation (Abraham, 1995). However, Usta et al. (2016) found no direct relationship between male patriarchal gender role socialisation and violence against women or the wife. Nevertheless, it can still be inferred that control over women in a patriarchal society is institutionalised through enforcement of rigid gender norm attitudes and childhood socialisation process (Moghadam, 1992; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996; Usta et al., 2016).

Given the dearth of empirical research on relationship between patriarchal gender role socialisation and domestic violence, studies conducted by (Bhanot & Senn, 2007) and (Flood & Pease, 2009) provide some degree of support to the feminist belief that attributes male violence to rigid gender role socialisation. For example, Bhanot and Senn (2007) examined the acceptance of violence against women among men of South Asian ancestry currently residing in Canada. They found that higher level of acculturation to egalitarian gender norms was associated with lower acceptance of violence towards women, while lower acculturation to egalitarian culture was associated with higher acceptance of violence against women. This is consistent with the findings of Flood and Pease (2009) who suggested that male acceptance of domestic violence decreases with Western or egalitarian

acculturation of men who originally come from cultures that support conservative gender norms.

The feminist perspective recognises that women socialised into rigid gender role attitudes are indoctrinated to accept domestic violence in their marriages (Tayyab et al., 2017). While relatively few studies have been conducted which specifically assess the relationship between female gender role socialisation and acceptance of domestic violence, those that have been conducted support the feminist assertion that a woman raised in a patriarchal society is socialised into accepting her husband's abusive behaviour (Abraham, 1998; Haj-Yahia, 2000). The observations made in this study have shown that women in Sohan village are taught and conditioned from an early age to identify with their husbands' interests and accept domestic violence as a natural component of their marriages.

Evidence from literature has also shown that at a very young age, South Asian women are taught to accept their brothers' superiority over them (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008). Girls are taught to display self-constraint and obedience at all times (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013). Women are also placed in a subordinate position in relation to their fathers and husbands (Bersani & Chen, 1988; Madeline Fernandez, 2006; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Huisman, 1996; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Levinson, 1988). It can then be inferred from these findings that the early childhood socialisation process teaches a woman to be compliant with the demands of the male members in the family, and this is the sort of mind-set she takes with her to her husband's home (P. A. Ali, Naylor, Croot, & O'Cathain, 2014).

However, Foucault appears to have overlooked an individual's exposure to an early 'socialisation process', which may account for female subjection to male control. It has been suggested that the primary function of female childhood socialisation is to instil attributes such as submissiveness, passiveness, obedience, patience and forgiveness (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001). These attributes reflect an image of Foucault's docile bodies who are trained to show unquestionable obedience and conformity (Danaher et al., 2000; Foucault, 1977; Schwan & Shapiro, 2011). Foucault explains how constant coercion, control and surveillance (Fraser, 1981; Lacombe, 1996) is used as a means of transforming individuals into docile bodies (Foucault, 1977; Schwan & Shapiro, 2011; Zakar et al., 2013), while neglecting to take into account the period of early socialisation process that indoctrinates the women with subservient qualities, making them more likely to accept and experience domestic violence.

### **2.6.1 Female Socialisation**

Female early gender role socialisation process indoctrinates women with the following characteristics and attitudes.

#### **2.6.1.1 Wife and a Mother**

The feminist writers (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001) have suggested that marriage is conceptualised as the true legitimate role for a woman in a patriarchal society. They believe that socialisation process emphasises the primary value of a woman as a wife and mother (K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983). A woman in her role as a wife is expected to behave in accordance with the role expectations associated with her

position as a wife and accept the husband's authority over her (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). In a patriarchal society, a woman is described as being a good homemaker and a mother who is devoted to her family and is obedient to her husband (Usta et al., 2016), which is consistent with the feminist view that a woman is valued for what she can give as her personality is shaped in accordance with what the society expects of her (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Evidence from literature suggests that a woman in a patriarchal society who conforms to her role as a wife and mother enjoys a religiously and culturally sanctioned support and respect of her husband (Bruce, 1993). Hunnicutt (2009) points to a 'hidden' protective element in becoming compliant with the patriarchal gender roles. She stated that "women who 'violate' the normative standards of female behaviour may no longer benefit from the 'privilege' of male protection" (Hunnicutt, 2009, p. 566).

#### **2.6.1.2 Role Expectation of a Woman in a Patriarchal Society**

Wingood and DiClemente (2000) suggest that a woman is socialised to believe that her position in the society is defined by her relationship with the husband, while those who choose to work are consciously making a decision to fall outside of the acceptable societal norms. This argument resonates with the views of a widely recognised feminist researcher Friedan (1963) who in her book "The Feminine Mystique" pointed out that women who attempt to violate the societal expectations are discouraged by the negative labels the society ascribes to them. The society labels women who go outside the home to find work as the career-women or loveless women (Friedan, 1963), which forces them to return home where they feel they belong. R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) argued that a good wife and mother is expected to be bound closely to home as going out implies abandoning her

responsibilities. Consequently, the women find themselves in a society that discourages any role outside the home (Sabanci, 2013).

The argument presented by Friedan (1963) is supported by a wealth of literature that suggests that the women are victimised by a necessity to conform to the culturally approved standards for a female (Loseke, 1992). Evidence from literature demonstrates that the culturally prescribed role for a wife requires her to be an efficient homemaker, a good mother (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001; Zakar et al., 2013), an expert in cooking and a willing sexual partner for her husband (Abraham, 1998; T. S. Ali et al., 2012). A good wife is not only expected to submit to her husband's orders (Madeline Fernandez, 2006; D. S. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001), but also to the authority of her mother-in-law (Madeline Fernandez, 2006; Kapadia et al., 2010). She is expected to serve and take care of the husband's aging parents (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Zakar et al., 2013). Simply put, a woman's ideal role rests within the four walls of her husband's home (Zakar et al., 2013).

In accordance with the feminist belief, working outside the home is considered a secondary role for a woman, while mothering and homemaking is supported as a primary role for a woman in a patriarchal society (K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Zakar et al., 2013). This argument may be supported by a suggestion that a woman's gender identity is nothing more than the role she plays in her marriage as a wife and mother (Sabanci, 2013). A working woman is generally labelled as an insufficient mother because it is believed that it would be challenging for a career woman to find the time to look after her children (Zakar et al.,

2013). This adds further support to the feminist view (Friedan, 1963) that the society tends to ascribe negative characteristics to women who violate societal expectations. This argument is reinforced by a suggestion that the role that a woman adopts in her life can become a source of immense stress for her, especially if it violates the stereotypical assumption of gender roles (Crawford & Unger, 2004).

### **2.6.1.3 Dependency**

The feminists argued that a patriarchal society tends to socialise women to develop a sense of dependence on their spouses (Abraham, 1998; D. G. Dutton, 1994; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001). R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) suggested that inculcating attitudes of ‘dependence’ is conducive to maintaining marital hierarchy and female subordination. Support for this view comes from a number of different studies. It was found that women in patriarchal societies are indoctrinated into believing that they are incomplete, insecure and inefficient without a husband (Niaz, 2003; Rabbani et al., 2008). To enforce this philosophy, the unchecked empowerment of women through employment and education is discouraged and closely regulated (Zakar et al., 2013). This indicates that the society cannot envision a woman’s education and employment coexisting with her role in the home (Sabanci, 2013). Hence, it may be inferred that female education and empowerment leading to female independence may be seen as a threat to male authority in a patriarchal society (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013). It appears that patriarchal values are maintained not only through physical subjugation of women, but also by taking away any opportunity that might help women develop a sense of individual identity (A. Khan & Hussain, 2008).

Conversely, in their paper entitled “Men’s Beliefs and Attitudes toward Intimate Partner Violence Against Women in Pakistan”, Zakar et al. (2013) found that some male respondents favoured women’s empowerment. These men recognised that an educated and independent woman would contribute to the development of the society. Similarly, findings of a study conducted by Usta et al. (2016) suggested that a few male respondents from a patriarchal Lebanese society viewed women’s education and career advancement as a positive step towards a better society. This demonstrated that a certain faction of the patriarchal society aligns with the feminist call for women’s empowerment, while others consistently oppose the perceived Western cultural construct of women’s independence and empowerment.

## **2.7 The Role of Ethnicity in Understanding Experiences of Domestic Violence**

The core assumption in the feminist writings is that male gender is the major risk factor for domestic violence (Dixon et al., 2012). The feminists believe that gender is the root cause of domestic violence (D. G. Dutton, 2012), while (Abraham, 1995, 1998) pointed out that the feminist’s gendered perspective fails to recognise the role of ethnicity in understanding domestic violence. She explained that the feminist theory neglects to take into account the relevance of traditional and customary practices of different ethnic groups in understanding domestic violence. In her 1995 and 1998 papers, Abraham coined the term ‘ethno-gender approach’. She explained that gender and ethnicity interact to produce a lower status of a woman, making her vulnerable in a relationship.

Abraham found that recognising the beliefs and cultural practices associated with a woman's ethnicity aids better understanding of her domestic violence experiences. There is ample empirical evidence from literature that supports (Abraham, 1995, 1998)'s ethno-gender approach in understanding domestic violence. For example, Malley-Morrison and Hines (2007) suggested that domestic violence varies by ethnicity. They argued that culture-specific issues such as beliefs about domestic violence, normalcy, disclosure and privacy, and help-seeking behaviours must be considered to understand experiences of domestic violence of a particular ethnic group (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2007). Other researchers such as (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Madeline Fernandez, 2006; Kapadia et al., 2010) concur that the feminist theory ignores the family dynamics of ethnic minority groups. They argue that the feminist theory fails to recognise the existence of intergenerational violence and the victimisation of younger women in the family by senior women in the husband's home. Abrams (2015) supports this view by noting that the feminist perspective that views domestic violence as a gendered issue is deeply embedded in the patriarchal system but struggles to accept women as perpetrators.

In addition, Foucault believed that individuals "are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power" (Hartsock, 1990, p. 169). This assertion is supported by Marilyn Fernandez (1997) who found that patriarchal women's experiences of oppression change overtime, which implies that a woman in a patriarchal society goes from being a victim of domestic violence in her husband's home to becoming a perpetrator as she gets older and becomes a mothers-in-law. Evidence suggests that the young

daughter-in-law is not only subordinate to her husband but also to her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008).

The young daughter-in-law also has limited autonomous control over the distribution of food and resources for daily basic needs, as these remain under the control of the mother-in-law in an extended family setup (Acharya, Bell, Simkhada, Van Teijlingen, & Regmi, 2010; Madeline Fernandez, 2006; Visaria, 2000; Yoshioka, DiNoia, & Ullah, 2001). Hence, the findings of these studies seem to suggest that although gender may be used to subordinate women in a patriarchal society, certain ethnic practices further place women in a disadvantaged position and at a greater risk for domestic violence (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997).

It has been further suggested that a woman living in an extended family with her in-laws enjoys very little power and control (Acharya et al., 2010). This finding is consistent with Archer (2006)'s view who hypothesised that a woman from a collectivist society (i.e., a wife living with in-laws) would most likely experience higher rate of victimisation than someone living in an individualist society (egalitarian structure). This argument further reinforces the view that ethnicity is an important consideration in understanding domestic violence (Sorenson & Taylor, 2005), while the feminist stance only considers gender in its understanding of domestic violence (D. G. Dutton, 2012). The results from this study have demonstrated that ethnicity was an important consideration in understanding domestic violence in Sohan village because it encompasses values and norms that govern how people behave in a relationship and dictates what is acceptable.

## **2.8 Attitudes and Beliefs Towards Domestic Violence**

It is believed that individuals who are socialised into traditional gender roles or hold non-egalitarian expectations of marriage are more likely to develop attitudes justifying domestic violence (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2018; Bhanot & Senn, 2007; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Hindin, 2003; Tenkorang et al., 2013; Wilson, 2014; Yoshioka et al., 2001). Madhani et al. (2017) supported this assertion by noting that 50% of the battered women interviewed in a patriarchal society considered physical beating as domestic violence, 8% considered verbal abuse as domestic violence, while only 5% viewed sexual coercion as a form of domestic violence. These results could also be explained by the reasoning provided by (Schuler & Islam, 2008). They explained that women in patriarchal societies who are socialised into rigid gender role attitudes may feel shame in disclosing abuse in their marriages, or may not recognise some forms of behaviour as abuse because they might view it as the husband's prerogative.

Foucault's view aligns with the feminist belief that women's attitudes towards domestic violence are developed within a particular sociocultural environment (Flood & Pease, 2009). Foucault suggested that individuals get their cues from the 'strategic environment' (culture wide understanding of a particular phenomenon) and respond accordingly (D. Taylor, 2010). For example, one strategic environment can be described by a societal attitude that divorce is simply not a socially acceptable option for a good woman (Cash, 2011; Visaria, 2000). This particular strategic environment represents the societal attitude or a culture wide understanding of a marriage, even if it is an abusive marriage. In response

to this strategic environment (culture wide attitude towards marriages) it was found that women in Sohan village remained in their abusive marriages.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand attitudes and perceptions towards domestic violence because this plays a significant role in determining the general societal response to battered women (Boucher, Lemelin, & McNicoll, 2009; Monson, Byrd, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1996; Schuler & Islam, 2008). It is believed that attitudes justifying domestic violence contribute to a climate of tolerance towards violence against women (Gracia & Tomás, 2014; Hindin, 2003; Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005). The widespread societal acceptance of violence against women also influences how battered women view and respond to their own victimisation (Gracia, 2014; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Schuler & Islam, 2008; Yount & Carrera, 2006). This idea is consistent with evidence suggesting that acceptance of domestic violence among Pakistani women does not arise from their own justification of domestic violence, but rather from the societal expectation that they tolerate the abuse (Madhani et al., 2017).

In what follows, I will examine a number of specific attitudes that are often used to understand the perpetration of domestic violence in a marriage.

### **2.8.1 The Impact of Cultural Discourse**

The feminist writers R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) argued that legal, historical, literary and religious writings contribute to the current position of women in the society. They explained that almost all writings discuss women in terms of their relationship with men.

These written discourses rarely describe a woman as an individual having her own identity, and define a husband-wife relationship based on marital hierarchy (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). The discourses of domestic violence and marriage are internalised by women and determine how the women would respond to abuse in their marriages (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Feminists have suggested that cultural discourses of perfect love and masculinity and its local interpretations are so deeply embedded in our culture that we become unaware of the influence it has on our actions, thoughts and feelings (Towns & Adams, 2000).

Towns and Adams (2000) posited that discourses of true love and masculinity emerge from popular cultural literature, poetry and local folktales. They explain that the story of 'Beauty and the Beast' is a great depiction of 'dual depiction of masculinity' and a woman's unwavering commitment to her man. In a 'Beauty and the Beast' story the beast appears as an angry and intimidating beast who gradually becomes a soft-spoken loving prince in response to a woman's unconditional love and care. Towns and Adams asserted that discourses such as these influence the way women respond and act in their abusive marriages.

In a patriarchal society, masculinity is constructed with a certain duality where discourses of masculinity position men as having the 'male privilege' characterising them as being aggressive and violent at times, with a softer side that appears when a man confesses his

love for a woman (Boonzaier, 2008; Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003). This implies that the husband's aggression is sometimes regarded as a sign of love, which can often be a little intimidating and coercive at times (Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001). There is evidence to suggest that the concept of dual depiction of masculinity may be adopted by women to interpret abuse as 'tough love' to justify domestic violence in their marriages (Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005).

The widespread understanding of domestic violence is based on the notion of patriarchal power and 'male privilege' (Kaschak, 2014). Haj-Yahia (1998) explained that cultures embedded in patriarchal ideology support female submission to the husband's orders and approve corporal chastisement by husbands of their wives whenever the need arises to discipline them. Haj-Yahia found that in response to the societal perception of domestic violence women find excuses for their husbands' violent outbursts and support the husband's right to punish them if their behaviour is considered unacceptable.

The following excerpts from literature demonstrate how the dual depiction of masculinity discourse shapes a battered woman's views surrounding domestic violence. These excerpts also help understand how women justify incidents of domestic violence in their marriages in response to the cultural discourses and narratives promoting 'male privilege'. The

following explanations provided by women reflect the cultural narratives about love and gender.

- *“Even if he beats me, he is after all my man”* (Visaria, 2000, p. 1749).
- *“Our husbands hit us but they also love us enough to correct our bad habits with some aggression”* (Tang et al., 2002, p. 968).
- *“It is a way a man shows his love for his wife. If he doesn’t correct her (through a beating), who else will”* (Jejeebhoy, 1998, p. 858).

### **2.8.2 Victim-Blaming Attitudes and Perception of Domestic Violence**

The victim-blaming attitudes in a domestic violence context which hold a battered woman responsible for incidents of domestic violence (Abraham, 1995; Henning & Holdford, 2006; Tang et al., 2002) resonate with Foucault’s view that “those who fall outside the norm are marked as deviant and targeted with disciplinary strategies designed to neutralise their deviances” (Pylypa, 1998, p. 24). The victim-blaming attitudes in this case may represent Foucault’s disciplinary strategies. For example, battered women are often criticised for provoking anger and failing to obey their husband's orders (W. K. Taylor et al., 2001; Yamawaki et al., 2012; Zakar et al., 2012). In addition, a man's disappointment with his wife is viewed as a woman's failure to provide the care and attention needed to keep the husband feel content with the marriage (Towns & Adams, 2000). The observations made in Sohan village demonstrated that women subjected to victim-blaming attitudes make

changes in their behaviour becoming more socially acceptable, conforming to Foucault's assertion.

In response to the societal victim-blaming attitudes a battered woman tends to overemphasise her responsibility for her husband's behaviour and may engage in self-blaming (D. T. Miller & Porter, 1983). A woman's self-blaming strategy resembles Foucault's argument that individuals not only regulate their own behaviour, but also confess any deviances and express their disappointment in failing to meet expectations (Pylypa, 1998). Mj (1980) suggested that self-blaming arises in response to an individual's need to believe that people are in control of their lives (Mj, 1980). This implies that the victims hold themselves accountable for negative events in life to remain confident in their ability to control life's outcomes by regulating their own behaviour (Mj, 1980). This view aligns with the 'just world view concept', which suggests, "the world we live in is a predictable world, or a controllable world" (Mj, 1980, p. 9). The following section demonstrates how the 'just world view' influences a battered woman's perception of domestic violence.

### **2.8.2.2 The Just World Concept**

Valor-Segura, Expósito, and Moya (2011) asserted that attitudes towards domestic violence are often linked with the 'just world concept'. The just world concept implies that the world is an impartial place where people get what they deserve (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Correia & Vala, 2003; Dharmapala, Garoupa, & McAdams, 2008; Hafer, 2000; Hafer & Olson, 1989; Mj, 1980; Pargament & Hahn, 1986). The idea is that the outcome of an event is contingent upon individual behaviour where positive behaviour leads to positive outcome and negative behaviour leads to negative outcome (Mj, 1980; Pargament & Hahn, 1986). This means that fate is self-inflicted and outcomes are well deserved (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Correia & Vala, 2003; Correia, Vala, & Aguiar, 2001; Dalbert, 2009; Dharmapala et al., 2008; Lerner & Matthews, 1967).

One can also infer from this that belief in the just world concept reinforces the desired skills and qualities needed to become Foucault's docile body. For instance, the believers of the just world concept assume that adverse events cannot occur without provocation (Pargament & Hahn, 1986) and can be attributable to individual behaviour (Correia & Vala, 2003; Dharmapala et al., 2008; Hafer & Begue, 2005; Hafer & Olson, 1989; Latta, 1976; Lerner & Matthews, 1967). Accordingly, the just world believers then act like Foucault's docile body who engages in self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices by conforming to cultural norms, thereby participating in their own subjugation (Pylypa, 1998).

The just world concept is reinforced by a suggestion that negative events in life are outcomes of individual behaviour (Pargament & Hahn, 1986). This idea is related to the view that a battered woman is blamed for failing to obey her husband making her punishment look well deserved (Tang et al., 2002; Yoshioka et al., 2001). The view that someone's suffering is fair results in a lack of social support for victims of domestic violence (Correia & Vala, 2003; Lerner & Matthews, 1967; Valor-Segura et al., 2011; Yoshioka et al., 2001). It is believed that a stronger adherence to the 'just world view concept' indicates that victims are less likely to complain about their ordeal and view their own lot as fair (Bulman & Wortman, 1977).

### **2.8.3 Link Between Muslim Religious Discourse and Attitudes Towards Domestic Violence**

This analysis is informed by Foucauldian understanding of power which indicates that power is exercised through hegemonic discourses that are part of cultural practices, traditions and interactions of everyday lives (Bordo, 1989; Foucault, 1977). These discourses are internalised by individuals leading to self-monitoring practices and conformity (Pylypa, 1998). This idea is linked with Foucault's assertion that individuals cannot get outside of power relations (Muckelbauer, 2000), which seems to describe the kind of power religious discourse exercises over Muslim women in regards to their marital conduct. This became evident from examining religious literature which indicated that male dominance over women is given moral legitimacy through patriarchal interpretation

of religious scriptures (Abraham, 1998; T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Flood & Pease, 2009; Shahzadi et al., 2012; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007; Zakar et al., 2011).

The Islamic law gives man a right to polygamy, unilateral divorce, double share of inheritance and guardianship over wife and children (Sayem, Begum, & Moneesha, 2012). Hence, the subservient role of a woman is endorsed by the combined effect of patriarchal norms and religious interpretation of Islamic teachings (Zakar et al., 2013). However, this argument challenges Foucault's suggestion that power is exercised by virtue of one's strategic position (Hartsock, 1990). Evidence from literature implies that the husband exercises power over his wife by means of authority conferred upon him by religion (Haj-Yahia, 1998), not simply by virtue of his position as a husband. It is believed that the wife in a patriarchal Muslim society is compelled by religion to submit herself to the husband and accept his authority (Zakar et al., 2013). However, Foucault refused to envision a possibility that individuals may be bound by attitudes and normative beliefs that gradually allow them to be dominated by others (Fraser, 1981; Hekman, 1996; Pickett, 1996).

### **2.8.3.1 Islamic Scriptures**

The review of the Islamic religious discourse on marriage has demonstrated that the patriarchal religious narrative operates like Foucault's Bentham's Panopticon (Alford, 2000; Danaher et al., 2000; Fraser, 1981), in which individuals are ready to be dominated by the hegemonic forces (Hekman, 1996; Jameson, 1981; Muckelbauer, 2000). Foucault's idea of disciplinary power and its mechanism of constant gaze practiced in the Panopticon

prison to keep its prisoners in line (Muckelbauer, 2000) seems to resemble the mechanism of religion, whereby *hadith* used as a tool of the disciplinary power that controls women's behaviour in a marriage. The hegemonic discourse in this case is represented by the *hadith* to which a Muslim woman is willing to submit.

The '*hadith*' seems to adopt the structure of Foucault's Panopticon prison. According to Foucault's account the prisoners in the Panopticon assumed that they were being watched at any given moment but were not completely sure when and by whom as the observers were invisible to them (Danaher et al., 2000; Fraser, 1981). Correspondingly, the patriarchal Muslim wife seems to believe that she is incessantly visible to God and that her actions are constantly being judged against the *hadith*, even though God is not visible to her. This idea is consistent with the view that the Panopticon prisoners are not really constrained by the Panopticon, but by the manipulation of their own thought process which tells them that they are being monitored (Muckelbauer, 2000). In the same way, in response to the belief that God is watching, the Muslim wife engages in self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices, thereby subjugating herself in a marriage, which aligns with Foucault's perspective. This analysis illustrates the power *hadith* generally holds over a Muslim wife and the way in which it influences her attitudes toward domestic violence in her marriage.

#### 2.8.3.1.1 *Hadith*

Muslim religious scriptures encourage the husband to subject the wife to punishment and disciplinary measures to obtain conformity (Ammar, 2007). The relationship between

husband and wife advocated by the Muslim scriptures called *hadith* resembles the parent and child relationship described by (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) in their book “Violence against Wives” detail that corporal punishment inflicted on a child by a parent is considered a natural and acceptable part of a parent and child relationship. The parent who is in a position of authority has a responsibility and a right to discipline the child if he or she misbehaves or violates parental demands (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Similarly, the husband who holds an authoritative position in the marriage is generally held accountable for his wife’s behaviour (Madeline Fernandez, 2006). Domestic violence is acceptable in circumstances in which the husband has identified a need to discipline the wife (Abraham, 1995; Chandra, Deepthivarma, Carey, Carey, & Shalinianant, 2003; Jejeebhoy, 1998; Lundberg-Love & Marmion, 2006). In addition, parental chastisement for the purpose of correcting deviant behaviour is considered beneficial for the child (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). This resonates with the view that physical punishment by the husband is considered useful for a woman’s own good and long-term reform (Haj-Yahia, 1998; Jejeebhoy, 1998).

Evidence from literature suggests that Muslims evaluate their marital conduct in view of the literature produced by the conservative religious leaders (Zakar et al., 2013). The *hadith*, believed to be the sayings of Prophet Mohammad, but compiled a few centuries after his death, raise a number of questions about its authenticity (Ammar, 2007). Despite questionable accuracy of *hadith*, it remains the main organising factor in a Muslim individual’s life (Ammar, 2007; I. A. Khan, 2010). This argument is consistent with the idea presented by Pickering (2009) that people are forced to accept the principles of religion

in which they are raised without questioning its reasoning or accuracy. Adhering to religious doctrine (*hadith* and Quran) is perceived as a sign of piety and good moral character in a Pakistani society (Zakar et al., 2012).

The role that '*hadith*' plays in a Muslim individual's life conforms with Foucault's view suggesting that disciplinary power does not need to be verbalised or explained, it is carried out without question (G. A. Marshall & Furr, 2010; D. Taylor, 2010). This implies that the individuals get their cues from the 'strategic environment' (culture-wide understanding of a particular phenomenon) and regulate their own behaviour accordingly, without being asked to do so (D. Taylor, 2010). In this case the strategic environment is created by the '*hadith*' that Muslims respond to without question. The next few paragraphs examine the '*hadith*', which constitute the major source of guidance for a Muslim wife. The following *hadith* describe how hegemonic religious discourse is used to influence women's attitudes towards domestic violence.

#### 2.8.3.1.1.1 Enforced Obedience of a Wife through *Hadith*

Pakistani society has had a long history of being dominated by the patriarchal interpretations of the Islamic teachings that contribute to the repressive state of women in the society (Kapadia et al., 2010; King, 2009). For example, some Muslim scholars advocate that men are inherently superior to women and enjoy a religiously sanctioned authority over them (Haj-Yahia, 1998). According to the dominant religious discourse the man is considered the guardian of his wife holding him responsible for her actions (Zakar et al., 2013). This ideology seems to be influenced by a *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet

Muhammad) that explains, “*A ruler is a guardian and responsible for his subjects, a man is a guardian of his family (wife) and is responsible (for her)...*” (Al-Bukhari, 1996). Discourses such as these that reflect male supremacy as part of a natural order have become deeply embedded in Pakistan’s cultural ideology (Zakar et al., 2013). Hence, the patriarchal discourse such as the one discussed here shapes the society’s views in a way that does not see domestic violence toward a wife as a deviant behaviour (Felson & Outlaw, 2007; Flood & Pease, 2009; Gracia & Tomás, 2014; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001).

A popular view that resonates throughout the Muslim Pakistani society advocates that an obedient wife is not only successful in this life but also triumphant before God on the Day of Judgment<sup>1</sup> (Zakar et al., 2013). The following *hadith* supports this idea, “*Any woman who dies when her husband is pleased with her, will enter Paradise*” (Majah). Another *hadith* emphasises a wife’s unconditional obedience to her husband, “*If a man were to command his wife to move (something) from a red mountain to a black mountain, and from a black mountain to a red mountain, her duty is to obey him*” .... “*No woman can fulfil her duty towards Allah until she fulfils her duty towards her husband*” (Majah). Clearly, religious scriptures help perpetuate control of husbands over their wives (Potter, 2007).

#### 2.8.3.1.1.2 Role of *Hadith* in Punishing the Disobedient Wife

The Quranic verse permitting the beating of the disobedient and disloyal wife with an aim to discipline her (Ammar, 2007) is consistent with Foucault’s view that body is the target and object of domination (Pylypa, 1998). It also draws attention to Foucault’s disciplinary

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<sup>1</sup> The hereafter or the afterlife

power that targets an individual's mind and behaviour to produce a 'docile body' (Foucault, 1977; Lewandowski, 1995; Pickett, 1996; Zakar et al., 2013). The docile bodies are trained to show unquestionable obedience (Foucault, 1977).

The following excerpt from the Quran describes the religiously sanctioned authority of a man to physically discipline his wife if she goes out of line, with the intention of repairing the relationship and only as a last resort (Ammar, 2007). The chapter 4, verse 34 of Quran states, "*Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them*" (M. M. Ali, 2011). The idea is that in response to this particular *hadith* a woman will engage in self-monitoring practices and become a conforming individual, much like Foucault's docile body that is trained to show unquestionable obedience (Foucault, 1977).

#### 2.8.3.1.1.3 Role of *Hadith* in Establishing Superiority of the Husband

There are two specific Muslim narratives that hold a strong social circulation in the Pakistani society and influence individuals' attitudes towards domestic violence. In one narrative Prophet Muhammad is believed to have said, "*When a woman dies while her husband is pleased with her, she enters paradise*" (Majah, p. 64). This implies that a wife is expected to serve and submit to her husband in order to seek God's approval and

blessings (T. S. Ali et al., 2012). As alluded to earlier, another religious narrative advocates that the husband is '*majazi khuda*' (embodiment of God, impersonate God) (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; El Fadl, 2001; Schuler et al., 2008; Zakar et al., 2012). The notion of '*majazi khuda*' implies that if Allah had ordered a human being to prostrate in front of someone other than Him, then He would have ordered the women to bow down before their husbands because of the extent of their religiously sanctioned rights over them (El Fadl, 2001; Majah, p. 62; Zakar et al., 2012). Resultantly, the gendered understanding of religion allows men to justify domestic violence, while women feel compelled to accept it as a religious imperative (Bhatti et al., 2011; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003).

## **2.9 Societal Perception of Marital Sex**

The feminist scholars advocate that domestic violence is a gendered act that establishes male control over women (Lempert, 1996). There is a large body of literature to attest to the fact that sex is used as a tool to control and subordinate women in a patriarchal marital context. Sex is understood as a 'wifely-duty', inherent in the marriage contract (Basile, 1999, 2002; Finkelhor & Yllö, 1987; Mitra, 2013; L. E. Walker, 1983). A husband who coerces wife into having sex is perceived to be socialised in a 'masculine' role (Monson et al., 1996). Men are socialised into believing that a wife's refusal of sexual access poses a challenge to their authority and constitutes a violation of their marital rights (Santhya, Haberland, Ram, Sinha, & Mohanty, 2007; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001). Hence, marital sex is used as a tool to establish husband's control over the wife by advocating that sexual coercion is a normal part of any marriage (Madhani et al., 2017), providing support to the feminist assertion.

To further strengthen the husband's control over wife, women in patriarchal societies are taught to sexually satisfy their husbands regardless of their own desires and needs (Chandra et al., 2003; Santhya et al., 2007; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001). Oyediran and Isiugo-Abanihe (2005) stated that upon marriage a woman surrenders her sexual rights to the husband. This makes it acceptable for a man to demand and exercise various rights and privileges in his position as a husband (Abraham, 1998). A woman is socialised into believing that sexual aggression is a husband's matrimonial right that should not be viewed as abuse (Bhatti et al., 2011). As mentioned earlier, Madhani et al. (2017) supports this assertion by noting that only 5% of the battered women interviewed accepted that sexual coercion was a form of domestic violence.

However, P. A. Ali et al. (2014) challenge the feminist belief that domestic violence is perpetrated in a marriage with an intention to establish male control, as they provide a cautionary note regarding a patriarchal woman's sexual consent in a marriage. P. A. Ali et al. (2014) found that women in a Pakistani society might underreport their consent for sexual activity because within a patriarchal culture a woman may not feel comfortable revealing her willingness to have sex. Conversely, a man may not hesitate in revealing that he engaged in sexual activity with his wife without her consent because being sexually aggressive is considered a sign of masculinity and shows a man who has control over his wife (P. A. Ali et al., 2014). The observations made in this study have also demonstrated that the women in Sohan village were hesitant to reveal that they wished to participate in sexual activity with the husband nor were they comfortable sharing that they derived pleasure from the activity. In light of this evidence, although the support for the feminist

view seems to weaken, there are genuine cases of sexual coercion and non-consensual sexual activity in patriarchal marriages as demonstrated through literature and participant accounts in this study.

In addition, Zakar et al. (2013) argued that men in patriarchal societies legitimise sexual control over their wives through cultural rationalisation. The sex-role socialisation being culturally specific, influences beliefs about marital rape versus stranger rape (Monson et al., 1996). Hussain and Khan (2008) found that the term ‘marital rape’ generally does not resonate among Pakistani men and women. There is a misconception that rape cannot happen within a marital context because of an existing sexual relationship between a married couple (F. A. Ali et al., 2009; Bhat & Ullman, 2014). Coercive sex is generally seen in the context of a stranger, not a husband (Basile, 1999, 2002). It is suggested that a couple’s previous consensual sexual engagement also minimises the perceived seriousness of forced sexual activity between husband and wife (Monson et al., 1996).

### **2.9.1 Role of *Hadith* in Understanding Marital Sex**

Foucault argued that in order to achieve conformity, power constructs concepts of normality and deviance that make the norms appear ‘positive’ or ‘good’, thereby creating a desire in individuals to conform (Pylypa, 1998). This implies that conformity to norms is achieved through a creation of desire, rather than coercion. This can be illustrated by explaining the mechanism of *hadith* pertaining to a wife’s sexual availability to her husband. The *hadith* attaches a positive value with conformity when it says, “*Any woman who dies when her husband is pleased with her, will enter Paradise*” (Majah). Conversely,

the *hadith* constructs nonconformity as a deviant behaviour when it explains, “*When a man calls his wife to bed and she refuses, and he spends the night being angry with her, the angels curse her till morning*” (K. Ali, 2006; El Fadl, 2001; Hoel, 2013; M. M. Khan, 1997). Through this mechanism the *hadith* makes conformity to the husband’s sexual demands appear ‘positive’ or ‘good’, thereby creating a desire in the wife to submit to the husband’s demands, just as Foucault’s theory suggested.

Foucault suggested that sexuality is the focus of power through which individuals can be controlled (Pylypa, 1998). This view finds support in religious scriptures that promote marital sex as a man's right and a woman's duty (K. Ali, 2006; Basile, 1999, 2002; Chandra et al., 2003; Finkelhor & Yllö, 1987; Hoel, 2013; Mitra, 2013; L. E. Walker, 1983). Muslim scriptures stress the importance of a wife's sexual availability to her husband (K. Ali, 2006; Cash, 2011; Tenkorang et al., 2013) in return for a woman’s right to financial maintenance (Hoel, 2013). One version of *hadith* stresses, “*If a husband asks for his wife (sex), and she is on the back of a camel, she cannot refuse him*” (El Fadl, 2001; Majah, p. 63). Therefore, a Muslim woman who views marital sex as a religious duty might find it very difficult to resist sexual coercion in her marriage (Dialmy, 2010; Hoel, 2013).

In a traditional marriage when a wife refuses sexual accessibility she is thought to be violating her husband’s marital right (Cash, 2011). In one particular *hadith* Prophet Muhammad said, “*When a man calls his wife to bed and she fails to respond, then the God in the heavens is displeased with her until the husband is pleased with her*” (K. Ali, 2006;

Tabrizi, 1981). It is therefore clear that according to the Islamic philosophy denying sexual access to the husband is punishable by God (Hoel, 2013).

Consequently, a woman's difficulty in denying her husband's unwanted sexual advances can be summed up in a suggestion that in trying to explore one's own individuality a person may become overwhelmed with feelings of powerlessness and anxiety due to the realisation that he or she will be responsible for their 'individual' actions (Fromm, 1941). This view describes the feelings of a woman who may want to resist unwanted sexual activity in her marriage but soon realises that her actions will not garner any support making her solely responsible for the consequences of her individual actions. The consequences in this case are the religious ramifications for women who do not abide by the rules set forth in the *hadith*. This section clearly demonstrates how religious discourse influences women's attitudes towards domestic violence in their marriages.

## **2.10 Culture-Specific Risk Factors for Domestic Violence**

To understand the underlying causes and risk factors for domestic violence one has to examine the social context in which it occurs (Hindin, 2003). Research indicates that a single risk factor cannot account for domestic violence within a household (Worden & Carlson, 2005). The perpetration of domestic violence can be attributed to a number of domains – societal, family, relationship and individual (Carlson, 1984; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Worden & Carlson, 2005). Understanding the risk factors may be useful in identifying women at an increased risk for domestic violence (Riggs et al., 2000). Nevertheless, wife's acceptance and support of a husband's right to use force and violence

is found to be the strongest risk factor for domestic violence (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Worden & Carlson, 2005).

### **2.10.1 Dowry**

Foucault (1980) has argued that power lies in the social processes and practices of everyday life, which leads individuals to internalise the dominant practices of the society (Sabanci, 2013). Dowry is one such social practice that is used to exercise control and power over a young daughter-in-law. Dowry is an ancient tradition with its roots in India and Pakistan (Nasrullah & Muazzam, 2009). It plays a critical role in triggering domestic violence against the new bride in a patriarchal South Asian household (L. M. Bates, Schuler, Islam, & Islam, 2004; Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Prasad, 1994; Rew, Gangoli, & Gill, 2013; Schuler et al., 2008). The function of dowry in a South Asian culture seems to be reminiscent of Foucault's unintended consequences of exercise of power (non-subjective function) that appeared to be beyond the control of any groups or individuals (Gallagher, 2008; K. J. Heller, 1996; D. Taylor, 2010). This is demonstrated through the tradition of dowry, which has permeated all social classes in Pakistan. The tradition of dowry does not depend on people to strengthen and supervise its mechanism because it operates on its own.

The significance of dowry is ingrained in the local culture and it continues to benefit the in-laws and subordinate the daughter-in-law, allowing the in-laws to exercise power over her. Dowry also appears to play a role of Foucault's disciplinary power with an objective to make individuals useful so they can serve the dominant group (Danaher et al., 2000;

Schwan & Shapiro, 2011). The daughter-in-law is made useful through the practice of dowry whereby the husband and in-laws benefit from the proceeds of the dowry.

The dowry typically includes gifts of property, sum of cash, household items, refrigerator, furniture, a television set, jewelry, and clothing for the groom's family (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001). The young bride is teased, harassed and sometimes subjected to extreme acts of violence for bringing insufficient dowry (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Bhatti et al., 2011; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Hunnicutt, 2009; Krishnan, 2005; Rew et al., 2013; Schuler et al., 2008; Shahzadi et al., 2012; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). Failing to meet specific demands of dowry puts the young woman at an increased risk for violence (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Nasrullah & Muazzam, 2009; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007), even death in certain circumstances (P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Niaz, 2003; Prasad, 1994; Rew et al., 2013; Visaria, 2000). There is evidence to suggest that in a patriarchal South Asian households a young woman's inability to bring money from her natal family can lead to relentless verbal abuse (Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007).

### **2.10.2 Delay in the Birth of First Child or Male Children**

Foucault suggested that "power is neither a structure nor an institution, but the name of a particular strategic situation in a particular society at a particular point" (Alford, 2000, p. 128). The 'strategic situation' in a patriarchal household is developed when a young bride joins the husband's family. The husband and the in-laws all join-in to exert power over the

young bride to control her reproductive choices (Kapadia et al., 2010), even though having a male offspring is beyond her control. This became evident through literature, which demonstrated that in a patriarchal society controlling the daughter-in-law's reproductive choices are used to dominate and subordinate the young woman in her husband's home (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997).

In a patriarchal South Asian society, a woman is subjected to taunts and immense pressure for a delay in conceiving a child right after marriage (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; Bhatti et al., 2011). This pressure continues if the first child is a girl and worsens if the second child is also a female (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). In a highly patriarchal society, a married woman who only gives birth to daughters is 'not living up to' the expectations that she will be a 'good wife and daughter-in-law' (Sheehan & Samiuddin, 1994). In fact, a woman is perceived as an inadequate wife if she fails to produce a son (Cash, 2011; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001). A desire to have a male child provides support to the feminist view that men occupy a superior position in a patriarchal society (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

### **2.10.3 Mother-in-Law as the Perpetrator**

The feminist theory, which is developed around the concept of patriarchy (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979), fails to recognise the domestic violence experiences of women who live in the extended family setup that normally exists in the patriarchal societies. It is believed

that while Western feminist theorists regard male violence as a consequence of patriarchy, female violence also has its roots in patriarchy that the feminists seem to overlook (White, Smith, Koss, & Figueredo, 2000). Dixon et al. (2012) suggest that the feminists seem to view female violence as a 'special case', unrelated to other forms of violence. It is suggested that although the feminist theory is anchored within a patriarchal structure, it explains domestic violence within a nuclear family setup which involves husband perpetrating violence against the wife (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). This may indicate that the feminist approach may not be entirely based on empirical observations about women's experiences of domestic violence in patriarchal societies.

Despite availability of empirical evidence that confirms the role of a mother-in-law in subjugating the daughter-in-law (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Mitra, 2013), the feminist approach refuses to accept the role of a woman in another woman's oppression. The feminist theory implies that men alone are engaged in the subordination of women (R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004), which does not reflect the reality of the experiences of battered women who live in the traditional extended family setup, such as that seen in Sohan village.

Hence, the literature challenges the feminist view that only depicts men as aggressors capable of abusing their female partners (Cannon, 2015; Cannon & Buttell, 2018; D. G. Dutton & White, 2013). It provides evidence to suggest that in Asian societies generally, parents tend to encourage their sons to manage the behaviour of their wives (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Haj-Yahia, 2000; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Visaria, 2000; Wahed &

Bhuiya, 2007; Zakar et al., 2012). The mother-in-law is often found to be a direct participant in the perpetration of violence against the daughter-in-law (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Mitra, 2013). Evidence suggests that the mother-in-law aligns herself against, rather than with the new bride who joins the family (Zakar et al., 2012). The young woman is also forced to surrender her reproductive rights under the rule of her mother-in-law (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Kapadia et al., 2010). There is now emerging realisation that domestic violence may fall outside of the conventional 'male-as-perpetrator' framework (Goodman & Epstein, 2008). The narrow gender-based focus on domestic violence has led researchers to overlook ways in which women may use violence to oppress their victims (Heyman & Schlee, 1997).

#### **2.10.4 Societal Pressure to Conform**

R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) suggested that in an early patriarchal society during the Middle Ages, a husband was expected to discipline his wife for violating her wifely duties and misbehaving. They explained that husbands who failed to chastise their wives were punished by the neighbours for failing to uphold their position of authority in the marriage. This idea can be applied to the contemporary patriarchal societies to understand the role society plays in triggering conflicts between couples by ensuring that men and women conform to their assigned roles (Zakar et al., 2013). For example, a study conducted by Usta et al. (2016) found that men who lack the culturally endorsed set of characteristics that identify them as providers, authority figures, and decision-makers are socially marginalised. They emphasised that men who do not use their power and authority to discipline their disobedient wives are treated as incapable and cowards by the society.

Further support for R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979)'s assertion comes from V. Rao (1997) who found that the risk of domestic violence increases when the cause of the abusive incident is considered 'legitimate' by the local community.

In a traditional society, a wife who engages in culturally and socially unacceptable behaviour is reprimanded for failing to meet expectations (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Bhanot & Senn, 2007; Chandra et al., 2003; Flood & Pease, 2009; Jin, Doukas, Beiting, & Viksman, 2014; Sayem et al., 2012; Schuler et al., 2008; Tang et al., 2002; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007; Zakar et al., 2012). Similarly, a husband in a patriarchal society who fails to control his wife is labeled a 'wimp' (Zakar et al., 2013). This demonstrates that both men and women in a patriarchal system are assigned responsibilities that they have to live up to and each face consequences if they fail (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Madeline Fernandez, 2006). This may imply that patriarchy does not make a distinction between individuals in terms of gender. This calls in question the gendered feminist theory that perceives women as the only target of patriarchal forces (Cannon & Buttell, 2018; Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011; D. G. Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). This also leads one to question the feminist idea of male dominance (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979) because in a study conducted by Usta et al. (2016) men simply appear to be bound by patriarchal rules and act in a manner that is socially and culturally recommended. Based on this analysis it can be inferred that engaging in domestic violence in a patriarchal society may just be a way of life and a necessary feature for the smooth running of a patriarchal society.

Nevertheless, evidence suggests that patriarchal cultural norms dictate a man to take control of his wife and children (Haj-Yahia, 1998). This adds support to the feminist view that men 'consciously' use violence against women as a tool to control them (Hunnicut, 2009). Further support comes from (Krishnan, 2005; Lateef, 1990; Schuler et al., 2011) who found that in a South Asian rural environment a man who does not beat his wife is ridiculed and considered less of a man, a coward, who is not in control of his wife.

Another source of support for the feminist view that men perpetrate violence with a control motive comes from a study conducted in a patriarchal society of Pakistan (Zakar et al., 2013). It was found that those who appear to fail at controlling the actions of their wives are labeled by the society as *run-mureed*, which means subservient to one's wife (Zakar et al., 2013). The societal labeling of an individual serves as a constant reminder that he is under observation and needs to conform to the external demands (Sabanci, 2013). The label of *run-mureed* stigmatises a man's reputation and renders him weak and powerless (Zakar et al., 2013). The labeling of a husband as *run-mureed* to obtain conformity seems to be consistent with Foucault's approach that the internalisation of cultural expectations is achieved not only through the feeling of being under surveillance, but also by positioning an individual in a place where he can compare himself with other conforming individuals and adopt similar behaviour (Sabanci, 2013).

In an attempt to avoid being labeled a *run-mureed*, the husband asserts his control and power through authoritative and commanding behaviour (Zakar et al., 2013). The husband's change in behavior towards the wife in response to the societal expectations to control her resembles a situation in which an individual has a strong need to relate to the world outside to gain some sense of belonging (Fromm, 1941). Fromm further explained that an individual's ability to relate to his surroundings gives meaning to one's life. Without establishing a connection with the prevailing social patterns an individual would lose his sense of self and direction in life (Fromm, 1941).

### **2.11 Numerous Risk Factors Identified in the Literature**

A number of researchers have identified risk factors that appear to trigger incidents of domestic violence between couples. The following table summarises a few risk factors that have been known to increase the likelihood of domestic violence:

**Table 2.1: Risk Factors for Domestic Violence**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Woman suspected of infidelity or talking with other men (Ammar, 2007; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Flynn &amp; Graham, 2010; Fulu, 2013; Jewkes et al., 2002; Krishnan, 2005; Sayem et al., 2012; Shahzadi et al., 2012; Smith, 1990; Worden &amp; Carlson, 2005; Yoshioka et al., 2001).</li><li>• Denying sexual access or failing to satisfy husband (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Cash, 2011; Flynn &amp; Graham, 2010; Fulu, 2013; Hotaling &amp; Sugarman, 1986; Sayem et al., 2012; Smith, 1990; Yoshihama, 2002).</li><li>• A woman threatening to terminate the marriage (Jewkes et al., 2002; Riggs et al., 2000; Worden &amp; Carlson, 2005).</li><li>• Being disrespectful towards husband and disobeying husband's orders (Ammar, 2007; Flynn &amp; Graham, 2010; Jejeebhoy, 1998; Smith, 1990).</li><li>• Wife enquiring about husband's extra-marital affairs (Mitra, 2013).</li><li>• Asking for money (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Visaria, 2000) and husband's low income or unemployment (Carlson, 1984; Hotaling &amp; Sugarman, 1986; Jewkes, 2002).</li><li>• Failing to properly perform household duties (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Mills, 1985; Sayem et al., 2012; Wahed &amp; Bhuiya, 2007; Yoshihama, 2002).</li><li>• Neglecting children (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Sayem et al., 2012; Wahed &amp; Bhuiya, 2007; Yoshihama, 2002).</li><li>• Going out without permission or meeting family and friends (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; Fulu, 2013).</li><li>• Failing to serve meal on time (Jejeebhoy, 1998; Mitra, 2013; Visaria, 2000).</li></ul>
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## **2.12 Factors Influencing a Woman's Decision to Remain in or Leave an Abusive Marriage**

Foucault suggested that conformity to norms and ideas emerge from creation of discourses that are internalised by individuals leading to self-disciplinary practices (Pylypa, 1998). It can then be argued that patriarchal women pay attention to discourses of divorce and

marriage forcing them to stay in their abusive marriages. These discourses are embedded in the traditional cultural philosophy that influences a woman's decision to stay in or leave an abusive marriage. Evidence from literature suggests that battered women in patriarchal societies are normally urged to maintain domestic harmony under all circumstances and by any means (Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Madeline Fernandez, 2006; Horton & Williamson, 1988; Lundberg-Love & Marmion, 2006). Despite evidence that women in patriarchal societies sometimes willingly accept domestic violence as part of their fate (Haj-Yahia, 2000; Naved, Azim, Bhuiya, & Persson, 2006; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007), women from marginalised rural societies generally have limited options available to them making it difficult for them to leave their abusive husbands (P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Visaria, 2000; Yamawaki et al., 2012). What follows is an examination of social and cultural impediments to recourse seeking.

### **2.12.1 Stigma Associated with Divorce**

Foucault suggested that an individual becomes a conformist through the practice of self-imposed psychological barriers and becomes a self-disciplined regulated body, which means that the disciplinary force lies within an individual (Sabanci, 2013). For example, evidence from literature shows that the internalisation of beliefs stigmatising divorce force patriarchal women to conform to societal expectations and remain in their abusive marriages. Conversely, the feminist theory asserts that the disciplinary force lies in the external space and that the women internalise what is expected of them and conform, which means that the individuals respond to external goals rather than engage in self-regulatory practices (Sabanci, 2013). This means that according to Foucault's theory the desire to

conform comes from (within) self-regulated practices, while the feminists believe that conformity comes from external pressures including the environment in which the person lives.

The support for both feminist and Foucault's views discussed above comes from literature on cultural discourse surrounding divorce in patriarchal societies (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Ellsberg, Winkvist, Pena, & Stenlund, 2001; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Loke, Wan, & Hayter, 2012; Mitra, 2013). For example, divorce although permitted, is considered a 'taboo' in a Pakistani society (P. A. Ali et al., 2014). Divorce tarnishes a woman's reputation in a patriarchal society (Chandra et al., 2003; Naved et al., 2006; Visaria, 2000; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007), while marriage determines a woman's social status and grants her certain rights and privileges (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Mitra, 2013; Sayem et al., 2012). In fact, the daughter of a divorced woman in a patriarchal society faces difficulty in finding a suitable partner because she is automatically assumed to be noncompliant like her divorced mother (D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; Naved et al., 2006). A woman in a patriarchal society is therefore constantly reminded of the social stigma associated with divorce, in response to which she engages in self-regulation (Foucault's assertion) and refrains from seeking recourse in response to external pressures (Feminist assertion) and remains in her abusive marriages (Madeline Fernandez, 2006).

### **2.12.2 Domestic Violence Being a Private Matter**

R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) found that the concept of domestic violence was shrouded in mystery prior to 1971. They stated that the problem of domestic violence was discovered

when women who originally came together to campaign against a hike in food prices in Britain began to share their experiences of domestic violence with others. Dobash and Dobash argued that even after the problem of domestic violence gained public recognition, the internalised belief in the sanctity of family made outside intervention appear unnecessary and was viewed as a breach of personal privacy. Support for this view comes from literature which suggests that domestic violence in patriarchal societies is considered a private matter (T. S. Ali, Asad, et al., 2011; Carlson, 1984; Haj-Yahia, 2000) and women are discouraged from speaking publicly about the details of their marriages (Abraham, 1998; Carlson, 1984; Wilson, 2014; Yoshioka et al., 2001). Empirical research suggests that when a young married woman attempts to share her experiences of domestic violence with others, she is met with severe reaction from her in-laws (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Spiegel, 1996).

The institutionalised shame in disclosing domestic violence inculcated during female socialisation wields a great deal of influence over women (Abraham, 1998). This is consistent with A. Heller (1982)'s suggestion who found that in response to feelings of shame, individuals conform to the cultural environment and discipline themselves accordingly. A woman subjected to domestic violence is essentially silenced for fear of tarnishing family's honour (Abraham, 1998; Haj-Yahia, 2000; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). This reinforces the 'culture of silence' surrounding family issues and discourages outside intervention (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Rabbani et al., 2008). A strong link has been identified between the 'culture of

silence' and prevalence of domestic violence in the patriarchal societies (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Madeline Fernandez, 2006).

### **2.12.3 Lack of Natal Family Support**

The availability of natal family support in a patriarchal society is considered a significant determinant in a battered woman's decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage (K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; Kapadia et al., 2010). The lack of natal family support is generally associated with a woman's decision to remain with her abusive husband (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; Bell & Naugle, 2006; Ellsberg et al., 2001; Yamawaki et al., 2012). As Foucault suggested, individuals get their cues from the 'strategic environment' (culture wide understanding of a particular phenomenon) and respond accordingly (D. Taylor, 2010). A patriarchal society's strategic environment can be described by a suggestion that divorce is simply not a socially acceptable option for a good woman (Cash, 2011; Visaria, 2000). Consequently, the natal family in a patriarchal society seems to be responding to this strategic environment that associates stigma with divorce.

The evidence in literature coincides with Foucault's belief that individuals get their cues from the 'strategic environment' and adjust their behaviour accordingly (D. Taylor, 2010). For example, to avoid being stigmatised as parents of a woman who wishes to seek divorce the natal family either withdraws or minimises their involvement in the matter (Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Rabbani et al., 2008; Yoshihama, 2002). The daughters in patriarchal societies are often advised by their own mothers to adjust themselves according to the

wishes of their husbands (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Carlson, 1997; Waldrop & Resick, 2004; Yoshihama, 2002). The natal family encourages the daughter to align herself with the husband and expect him to change gradually in response to her unconditional love (Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003). In most cases emphasis is placed on reconciliation, especially for the sake of children (Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Rabbani et al., 2008; Yoshihama, 2002).

#### **2.12.4 Institutional Barriers to Recourse Seeking**

The patriarchal legal system conforms to Foucault's theory suggesting that power is embedded in a network of practices and institutions that operate on all aspects of individuals' lives to maintain dominance (Pylypa, 1998). The empirical evidence concurs with this suggestion and demonstrates how the legal system holds power over battered women in patriarchal societies (Critelli, 2012). Researchers have found that battered women are provided with substandard institutional support when they reach out for help (Carlson, 1997; Ellsberg et al., 2001; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Horsburgh, 1995; Horton & Williamson, 1988; Jejeebhoy, 1998). The institutional unresponsiveness adds to a battered woman's inability to leave her abusive marriage (Horton & Williamson, 1988; Hutchison & Hirschel, 1998; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983).

Kapadia et al. (2010) confirms that Pakistan currently does not have any specific legislation against domestic violence, which indicates a lack of societal commitment toward preventing domestic violence (Hunnicut, 2009). Women with children are especially vulnerable to the patriarchal legal system (Carlson, 1997). There is evidence to suggest

that in Pakistan women are more likely to lose custody of their children if they seek divorce (Critelli, 2012; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008).

#### **2.12.5 Financial Dependency as a Deterrent to Seeking Divorce**

R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) suggested that subordination of women is institutionalised in the structure of the patriarchal family and further reinforced by the local economic and political institutions. Support for this view comes from Kaye (2004) who found that unequal power relations render women powerless to protect their position in the society and home. This makes them socially and financially dependent on men, a problem which is further compounded by limited access to resources, finances, employment, education and healthcare in a patriarchal society (Kaye, 2004). It is suggested that economic dependency is considered one of the main reasons for staying in an abusive marriage (Bornstein, 2006). Given a woman's limited earning potential in a patriarchal society, marriage is expected to provide her with economic security (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). Research has shown that battered women express their inability to leave their husbands, especially if they are good providers (Davis, 2007; Loke et al., 2012). Financial dependency is further exacerbated by the presence of children in the marriage (Bornstein, 2006; Yount & Carrera, 2006). Women with poor job prospects are found to be even more committed to their abusive marriages because this leads to increased dependency on the husbands (Rusbult & Martz, 1995).

### **2.13 Formation of a New Theoretical Framework**

I used the feminist perspective and Foucault's theory of power and control to understand the relationship practices of a rural society. Although these two theoretical perspectives offered valuable insight into how women responded to abuse and oppression in their marriages, the theories were inadequate in addressing several important aspects of domestic violence experience. In what follows I will note the limitations of the theoretical framework I have chosen.

The feminist theory regards patriarchy as the major cause of domestic violence (E. A. Bates, Graham-Kevan, Bolam, & Thornton, 2017; Dixon et al., 2012; D. G. Dutton, 1994). It has been recognised that not all men batter women and that not all male perpetrators are the same but the primary cause of domestic violence is still viewed as gender-based (Pence, Paymar, & Ritmeester, 1993). In contrast, Foucault has not made a reference to gender in his analysis of power and control (King, 2009), while the feminist theory allowed me to examine domestic violence from a gendered perspective. This was important because the villagers in Sohan subscribe to a patriarchal ideology that keeps the women subordinated in the husband's home, often through domestic violence.

The feminists suggested that domestic violence is a reflection of unequal status of women in a marriage (Abraham, 1995) and that the risk of domestic violence in a marriage can be reduced by addressing issues related with gender inequality (Tenkorang et al., 2013). Critelli (2010) argued that in a patriarchal society the feminist theory is viewed as an attempt to erode local family values and promote individualism and anti-Islamic ideas.

Critelli suggested that in a Pakistani society 'gender inequality' is viewed as a natural and 'necessary' component in a marital relationship. Therefore, any idea that is perceived as a 'Western construct' is not only viewed as a threat to the local culture but is also met with a great deal of resistance. The observations made in the study have suggested that trying to understand domestic violence in a patriarchal Pakistani rural society from a 'gender inequality' perspective of the feminist theory would be irrelevant as 'gender inequality' is accepted as a natural feature in a marriage by both men and women. This also indicates that the feminist perspective does not support the idea that women could be actively involved in their own oppression as it sees men and the patriarchal setup as the only oppressive force (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). This idea seems to be rooted in the feminist belief that a woman is never placed in an autonomous environment giving her the power to make her own decisions (Sabanci, 2013).

Another limitation of the feminist theory is that it does not recognise the variability in women's experiences of domestic violence due to cultural and regional differences. Abraham (1998) argued that the feminist theory uses the 'white' woman's experiences of domestic violence to understand experiences of domestic violence among patriarchal women. Abraham pointed out that the feminist perspective fails to recognise the role ethnicity plays in shaping the experiences of domestic violence. Ethnicity defines one's cultural and religious values, local customs and attitudes towards domestic violence (Abraham, 1998). The feminist theory does not recognise that in a patriarchal South Asian society, marriage is viewed as a union between two families, not just between man and woman (T. S. Ali, Krantz, et al., 2011; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). This was a reality for

the majority of women in Sohan who lived in a joint family setup. Ethnicity was an important consideration for this study because living in an extended family setup shaped the participants' experiences of domestic violence. For example, Ruby who lived in a joint family system was subjugated by both her husband and the mother-in-law. In contrast, Jannat who lived in a nuclear family setup with her husband and children was victimised only by her husband. This poses a challenge to the cross-cultural applicability of the feminist perspective.

The feminist view which regards male violence as a consequence of patriarchy neglects to consider that female violence may also have its roots in patriarchy (White et al., 2000). The findings of this study suggested that the feminist perspective does not explain the existence of intergenerational violence or the victimisation of younger women by senior women in the husbands' home. One possible explanation is that the feminist theory neglects to take into account the relevance of traditional and customary practices of ethnic minority groups in understanding domestic violence (Abraham, 1995) as explained earlier. The feminist theory advocates that men alone are responsible for female subordination (D. G. Dutton, 1994), while this does not reflect the reality of women's experiences who live in the traditional extended family system in Pakistan. As I alluded to earlier, the feminist theory fails to recognise that the young daughter-in-law in a patriarchal society is not only subordinate to the husband, but also to her mother-in-law (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997).

This chapter has demonstrated that the widespread acceptance of the feminist perspective has created a perception that violence in marriages is unilateral designating men as the

perpetrators. The existing predominant gendered understanding of domestic violence fails to explain all other types of violence that occurs in relationship scenarios that fall outside the feminist domestic violence framework (Tesch et al., 2010). Nevertheless, Hunnicutt (2009) revealed that the feminists stopped developing their theory in the face of criticism.

While the feminist perspective talks about the role of patriarchal norms and values in subjugating women (Zakar et al., 2013), Foucault refused to envision a possibility that individuals may be bound by attitudes and normative beliefs that allow them to be dominated in their relationships (Hekman, 1996; Pickett, 1996). Foucault tends to overly generalise the behaviour of individuals in response to oppression. Foucault's assumption of resistance remains deeply ambiguous (Muckelbauer, 2000) as he argues that individuals remain dominated by the oppressive forces in a relationship (Pylypa, 1998). Foucault does not account for a situation in which norms are not equally adhered by individuals in the society (Pylypa, 1998) resulting in different outcomes in response to oppression. This is an important consideration because we need to understand how individuals transform in power relationships by challenging the prevailing norms and standards. In his book entitled "Discipline and Punish", Foucault (1977) seems to make an assumption that power transforms individuals into docile bodies, which is not a true reflection of what was found in the participants' accounts. Pickett (1996, p. 458) criticised Foucault's assertion by arguing that, "power may form disciplined individuals, who are rational, responsible, productive subjects, yet that is in no way an expression of a human nature".

Although a single cause theory can explain the phenomenon of domestic violence to some degree, it fails to consider other sources of domestic violence in the family (P. A. Ali, O’Cathain, & Croot, 2019). The inability of the chosen theoretical framework to explain certain aspects of the domestic violence experience creates a need to develop an all-inclusive theoretical approach. This is consistent with D. G. Dutton (1994)’s view that a single-factor theoretical framework is not sufficient to understand domestic violence. Therefore, I have proposed a multi-layered approach which sees domestic violence as a product of interactions between different variables. This approach would look beyond an individual’s gender as an explanation for domestic violence, as well as identify other obstacles or support systems that may help understand a woman’s response to domestic violence in her marriage. Rather than look for a unified voice in understanding the experiences of battered women, it would recognise and acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual case of domestic violence under investigation.

This theoretical approach would allow the researcher to examine multiple variables within a single framework, rather than examine each variable independently or in isolation. This is an important feature because it allows the researcher to deduce a relationship between a number of variables to understand which variables work together to create a distinctive domestic violence experience for a woman. For example, stigma associated with divorce and being part of a socially isolated community would make it even harder for a woman to seek help. In addition, the absence of women’s shelters in the community along with a lack of natal family support might make it difficult for a woman to consider leaving her

husband's home. Next, the vague domestic violence laws coupled with general societal tolerance towards domestic violence places a woman at a greater risk of domestic violence.

There are numerous other combinations that either exacerbate or create the conditions for domestic violence to occur. To establish a more comprehensive picture of a woman's domestic violence experience I have developed a new ecological model that can be used to understand domestic violence in any patriarchal or even in an egalitarian society. The goal is to cultivate a better understanding of the conditions that can potentially create an environment conducive to domestic violence and understand a woman's response to her victimisation. The idea is that the researcher picks variables from each level of the ecological model that may be relevant to the domestic violence case being studied and examine how the variables interact to create a unique domestic violence experience for a woman.

#### **2.14 The Social Ecological Model**

Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological nested model of human development has been used to understand the problem of domestic violence (Carlson, 1984). Ecological nested model offers a multidimensional theoretical framework with an embedded set of constantly interacting variables that may influence individual behaviour contributing to the incidents of domestic violence (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011; Terry, 2014). Dasgupta (2002) argued that the ecological model considers the full context in which domestic violence takes place, as oppose to considering gender as the most significant factor for understanding domestic violence (E. A. Bates et al., 2017; Dixon et al., 2012). Critelli

(2012) asserted that ecological model is a useful tool to assess the likelihood of domestic violence in developing societies. She asserted that within each nested level of the ecological model lie different factors that either protect or put women at a greater risk of domestic violence.

It is suggested that data collection approach based on a detailed life history account allows a researcher to effectively use the ecological model to understand the context in which domestic violence takes place (Dasgupta, 2002). The ecological model accounts for the effects of broader socioeconomic and individual factors that could potentially trigger domestic violence in the home (D. G. Dutton, 2012). Terry (2014) stated that the advantage of an ecological model is that it also integrates the gender inclusive framework in addition to other variables that impact individual behaviour.

#### **2.14.1 Understanding Domestic Violence in a Patriarchal Society through a New Ecological Model**

The social ecological model shown in Figure 2.1 consists of the following levels: Individual, Relationships, Neighbourhood and Community and Societal. The levels presented in the ecological model constantly interact with each other to influence the domestic violence experiences of women in a patriarchal society. The levels also influence the women's response to domestic violence.

The interaction of women in a patriarchal society with various institutions determines how they might respond to violence in their marriages. For example, according to the ecological

model shown in Fig 2.1, a woman in a patriarchal society may be faced with a religious leadership that encourages her to keep the family together under all circumstances. She may also be faced with a legal system that favours the allocation of the sole child custody to the father. In addition, weak sanctions against the perpetrators of domestic violence and the normalisation of domestic violence in a patriarchal society make it even more difficult for a woman to protest against abuse in her marriage. The lack of natal family support, rigid gender role socialisation, lack of employment opportunities and financial dependency further add to her inability to leave an abusive marriage.

#### **2.14.2 Limitations of the Social Ecological Model**

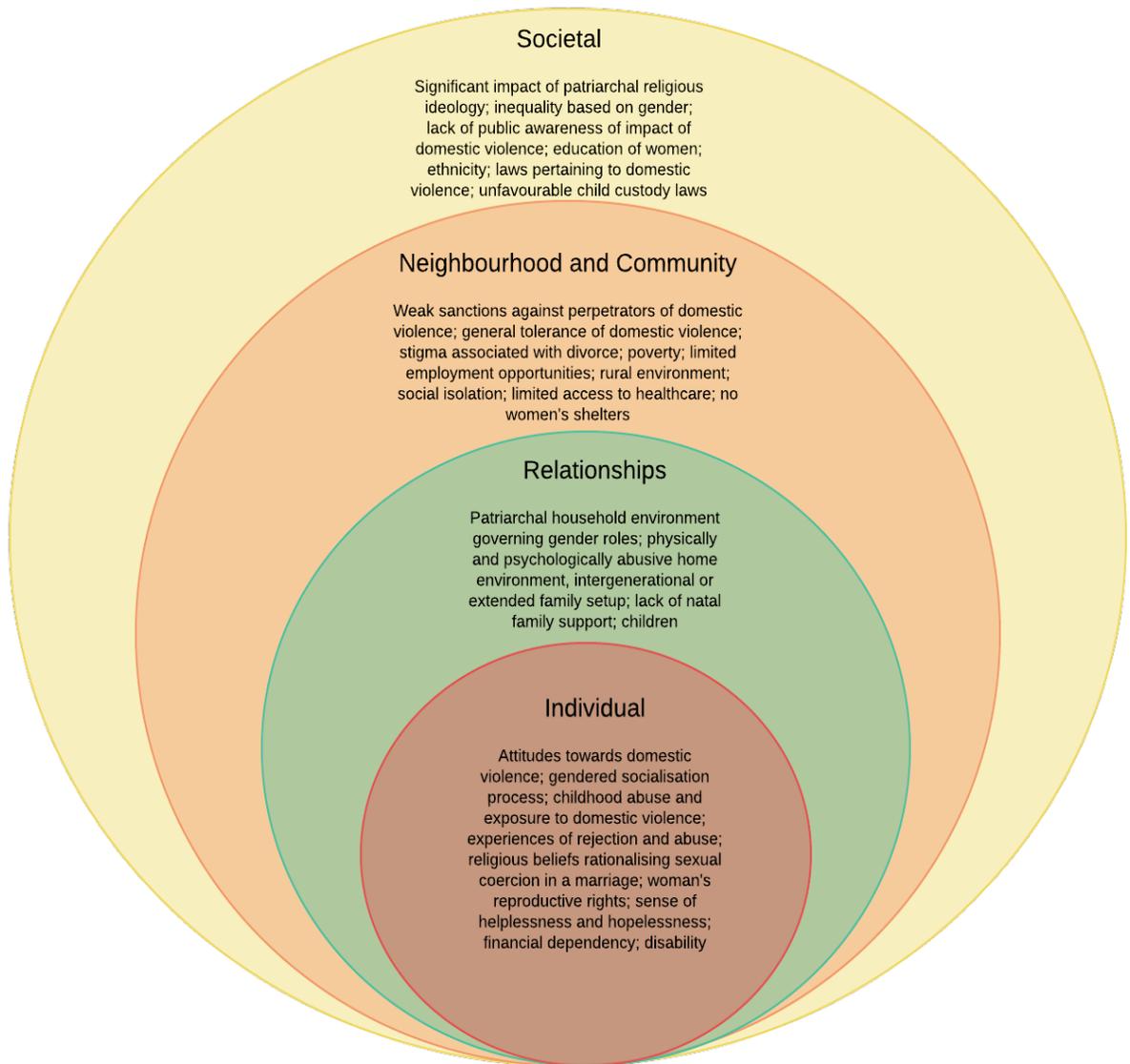
There are a number of limitations of the ecological model in understanding domestic violence in a rural or patriarchal society. First, the ecological model may not be able to capture the possibility of substance abuse among individuals in a patriarchal rural environment. There is generally widespread lack of awareness surrounding substance abuse in Sohan village. The local residents may not have the knowledge about what substance they may be addicted to or how it impacts their brain function and behaviour. Due to lack of education, the families and wives of these individuals may not be in a position to respond to their husbands' addiction. Therefore, the ecological model may not capture the impact of substance abuse on an individual's behaviour and the way it impacts others in the home.

Second, it is not possible to account for mental health issues in a rural environment. Much of the mental health conditions remain undiagnosed and carry a great deal of social stigma

in patriarchal societies. For instance, if a person in Sohan village suffers from hallucinations or epilepsy then the family would most likely seek treatment from a 'shaman', rather than take the patient to a qualified mental health professional in the city. Hence, the effect of an undiagnosed mental health condition and a possible history of mental health issues cannot be captured by the ecological model in a rural patriarchal society.

Third, the presence of depression and the inability of a woman to leave an abusive marriage may go hand in hand. The ecological model cannot account for the existence of depression among women in a rural environment due to the absence of mental health professionals in the village. The women in Sohan village generally never get the chance to see a mental health professional. Any abnormality in an individual's behaviour in Sohan is dismissed as 'God's wrath' or 'test of faith'.

Figure 2.1: An ecological model for understanding domestic violence in a patriarchal society



## **2.15 Conclusion**

This chapter provides an overview of ways in which a woman is victimised in her husband's home in a patriarchal society. It focuses on the role of a patriarchal socialisation in inculcating culturally desirable characteristics among women. Factors that are known to increase the likelihood of justifying incidents of domestic violence have been highlighted. The chapter has cited patriarchal religious discourse as playing a significant role in shaping battered Muslim women's views towards domestic violence. A number of patriarchal practices were identified as potential risk factors for domestic violence. These included cultural practices such as dowry, a desire for male offspring, involvement of in-laws in family matters and societal pressure forcing men to keep their wives' in line. It was determined that social, cultural and institutional constraints keep women trapped in their abusive marriages. I attempted to demonstrate how the feminist perspective and Foucault's theory of power explain relationship practices in Sohan village.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter provides detailed information about the research methodology adopted for the study. It outlines the difficulties encountered in researching sensitive topics followed by a discussion of sampling methodology. It examines the process of rapport building and data collection procedure. The chapter explains the analytic approach and comments on the ethical considerations in conducting research.

### **3.2 Introduction**

Chapter One has clarified the study rationale. In summary, the aspiration has been to investigate how battered women in a Pakistani rural village of Sohan experience domestic violence in their marriages in light of the existing domestic violence literature. The following research aims were identified earlier in Chapter One:

- To explore sociocultural practices in Sohan village that contribute to domestic violence in the home
- To understand participants' attitudes and beliefs towards domestic violence
- To identify the underlying causes and risk factors for domestic violence in the husbands' home
- To investigate factors that influence the participants' decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage
- Inform the development of theory which would make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge

My understanding of domestic violence among Pakistani women was essentially based on the literature, my interaction with the Pakistani community in Canada and tacit knowledge derived from my own personal experiences and observations growing up in a Pakistani household. This research attempted to seek a more accurate understanding of domestic violence by gaining entry and exploring the world of the participants. I adopted the naturalistic qualitative approach to study the culturally diverse and secluded group of women in rural Pakistan. Qualitative approaches are especially appropriate in studying experiences of hard-to-access vulnerable groups who are normally kept silent by the dominant forces (Liamputtong, 2007). The in-depth and flexible nature of the qualitative research uses the voice of its participants as a source of knowledge (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach does not make prior assumptions about the participants' experiences, rather, it allows the participants to define the problem in their own terms (Lee, 1993).

Qualitative research is rooted in a phenomenological paradigm which assumes that reality is socially constructed and presented as it is experienced by the participants (Few, Stephens, & Rouse-Arnett, 2003). Phenomenology is an interactive process that seeks to understand the phenomena experienced by the participants and the way in which it is experienced (Creswell, 2007). To explore the lived experiences of the participants in the village it was important to consider domestic violence within the local context of poverty and deprivation, which reinforces the idea that to understand individuals it is important to observe them within the social environment that shapes their views and perceptions (Fromm, 1941). The qualitative research approach not only allowed me to contextualise

the data (Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995), it also offered the flexibility to mould itself to the emerging needs of the research and the fluid nature of fieldwork.

### **3.3 Anticipated Difficulty in Accessing Female Participants**

When I was about to embark on this study I was informed that the concept of shame which was an integral part of female socialisation in a traditional Pakistani society (T. S. Ali, Asad, et al., 2011) discouraged women from speaking publicly about their marital problems (Abraham, 1998; Carlson, 1984; Yoshioka et al., 2001). In addition, as a researcher I was uncertain if I could gain access to the *pardah*<sup>2</sup> clad female participants in rural Pakistani village who were mainly confined within the four walls of their husbands' home (Zakar et al., 2013), restricting their activities outside the home. I felt that the women in the village who had very little exposure to the outside world might be reluctant to trust, let alone share intimate details about their marital relationship with a stranger.

Based on my tacit knowledge of the Pakistani village environment, I viewed this study as a 'sensitive' research considering that the subject under investigation could have potential implications (i.e., intrusive, family/community disapproval, trespassing domain of male power) for the participants (Dickson-Swift, James, & Liamputtong, 2008; McGarry, 2010). Hence, the selection of the research methodology was influenced by the anticipated difficulties accessing female participants for the interviews in a conservative rural village in Pakistan. Through the methodology employed I intended to carefully create an

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<sup>2</sup> *Purdah* refers to loose garment worn by women to cover their bodies. In Sohan village the women even covered their faces in front of men they were not related to. Since I did not get permission to take pictures of the participants in their burqas, I have attached an image taken from gettyimages to describe the term *pardah*. An image showing burqa clad women in Pakistan is shown in Figure 3.1 in appendix IIA

environment that was culturally sensitive and appropriate for the target population. The sensitive nature of the research necessitated spending sufficient time in the village building rapport with the local community before delving into the research interviews. This technique helped me to reduce the perceived threat of the research. The literature emphasises the importance of developing strong relationships with those being studied for the success of sensitive research (Oakley, 1981).

### **3.3.1 The Gatekeeper as a Means to Gain Entry**

To overcome the 'stranger' factor I used a gatekeeper to help me gain entry into the village. A gatekeeper is usually an individual who has an 'insider' status with the group being studied (Creswell, 2007). The gatekeeper in this study was a social worker who distributed free medication and health care pamphlets in the village. A professor of Political Science at the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad introduced me to the gatekeeper who was also a part-time student at the university. The gatekeeper was well trusted by the community in Sohan village as he had been working with the village families for several years. He introduced me to the host family and the potential participants in the village during one of the free medical camps that were held at Sohan village. The medical camp gave me an opportunity to introduce myself to the villagers and engage them in friendly conversations. The gatekeeper accompanied me to the village three times a week for the first month of the fieldwork. The gatekeeper explained the purpose of my research to the villagers and outlined the tremendous contribution they would make to the understanding of domestic violence. The presence of the gatekeeper during the initial stages of my research helped diminish any suspicions the villagers might have had about the research.

This process helped me build trusting relationships with the families in the village. Section 3.5 describes in detail the rapport building process and outlines ways in which I developed trusting relationships in the village.

### **3.4 Sampling Methodology**

#### **3.4.1 Target Population**

The target population was the women in Sohan village who were or had been married. To be eligible to participate in the study the women had to have experienced some form of domestic violence in their marriages. The study included women who were over 18 years of age and resided in the Sohan village. As it was mentioned earlier, Sohan village was chosen due to its close proximity to Islamabad. I had friends and family in Islamabad who could come and get me in case I needed to quickly evacuate the area due to an unforeseen event. Hence, in light of the recent terrorist threats in the country, safety was the foremost concern when choosing my research site.

#### **3.4.2 Sample Size**

Qualitative research draws from a smaller group of participants to understand intimate details about their lives (Ambert et al., 1995). The goal of the qualitative sampling approach is to draw a representative sample from the target population, so that the findings of the study can be generalised to the population being studied (M. N. Marshall, 1996). Another consideration in determining the sample size was the time availability and cost of completing the fieldwork. The idea was to obtain sufficient data to effectively address the research question. Based on my conversations with the women at the village, I did not

believe that adding more participants in the study would result in additional or new information on domestic violence. M. N. Marshall (1996) and Mason (2010) suggested that a qualitative sample must be large enough to assure that all or most of the perspectives related to the research questions are uncovered.

A small sample size was also used because of the nature of the data collected. The participants were asked to share their life story accounts, which involved in-depth intimate details of each participant's life. It was determined that a sample size of four women would be manageable, and large enough to provide sufficient data. The sample was obtained with ease as I had spent abundant time at the village building rapport with the potential participants prior to conducting the actual interviews.

### **3.4.3 Research Process**

In August 2014, interviews were arranged with the four women selected to participate in the study. During the preliminary conversations with the potential participants the issue of confidentiality and anonymity was raised. The right of the participant to decline involvement in the study at any time was recognized. The following paragraphs describe the research process of this study.

#### **3.4.3.1 Selection Procedure**

The participants for the study were selected after a discussion with the host family who was introduced to me by the gatekeeper upon gaining entry into the village. The host family acted as an informant or guide (Fontana & Frey, 1994) who not only looked after my safety

in the village, but also interpreted some of the cultural jargon I came across in the village. The host family who had been a long-time resident of Sohan, was trusted and well connected with the other families in the village. Figure 3.2 in appendix IIA shares a picture of the host family. Upon regular trips to the village I visited the homes of several women who had expressed a desire to meet me for a chat. When the news of my research reached women in the village, I was invited over to their place for tea. This gave me an opportunity to get to know these women and develop a trusting relationship with them.

As noted earlier, the gatekeeper was instrumental in identifying potential participants for the study. Since the gatekeeper was a social worker who distributed free medication and health care information to the villagers, he was often consulted by battered women in the area regarding injuries they had sustained as a result of beatings at home. During some of his visits the gatekeeper introduced my research to the battered women and asked if they were interested in participating. The women who voluntarily wished to speak about domestic violence in their marriages were invited to participate in the study. The aim was to recruit three to four women to participate in the research. After discussion with the host family a number of women were identified as the potential candidates for the study. Some women showed resistance as they were concerned about how others in the family might react to the research. The four women who came forward and provided their voluntary consent to participate in the study were selected.

### **3.4.3.2 Participant Profile**

The study involved the participation of four women aged between 24 and 50 years old. All four women were residents of Sohan village. Ethnicity of the participants was reported as being Punjabi. The participants belonged to the Muslim faith. Their education level ranged from no schooling to a Bachelor's degree. All four participants belonged to the low-income households. Low-income households/families in Pakistan are characterised by poverty which constitutes the family's inability to fulfil its basic needs (Jali & Islam, 2018). In Pakistan, families whose total monthly income falls in the range of PRs. 4000 (approx. GBP 22) – PRs. 20,000 (approx. GBP 133), or lower, are considered part of low-income group (Subohi, 2006). Only one participant had a personal source of income and earned a living by catering for small private weddings and teaching Quran recitation to local children. The participants reported to have come from very poor natal families. As far as their marital status was concerned, two were married, one participant was divorced and one was separated. All participants had children. Table 3.1 summarises the participants' profile. To maintain anonymity pseudonyms have been used.

**Table 3.1:** Participant profile

Participant	Age	Education	Marital status	Occupation	Children	Husband's employment status	Age of marriage
Ruby	24	Primary	Married	Housewife	2	Plant nursery (scarce income)	20
Najma	40	No schooling	Married	Housewife	6	Contractor (Stable income)	14
Shaheen	42	Elementary	Separated	Cooks for weddings and teaches Quran recitation	4	Unemployed (prior to separation)	18
Jannat	50	Bachelors	Divorced	Unemployed	2	Retired (no other source of income)	28

Primary Education	(grade 5)
Elementary Education	(grade 8)
Bachelors	(B.A.)

### 3.5 Rapport Building

The entire study in Sohan was carried out over a period of 28 months from December 2012 to February 2015. The actual interviews with the four participants were conducted over a seven-month period between August 2014 and February 2015. The period from December 2012 and July 2014 focused on building rapport with the women in the village as part of the participant observation approach described in 3.7.1. The women and I developed a strong connection with each other over a period of 21 months through multiple visits to the village as part of the fieldwork. I visited different homes in the village with the host family as a daily routine. The villagers were engaged in 'informal' friendly discussions about their lifestyle, family life and challenges. Engaging individuals in unstructured conversation is important in establishing rapport and immersing oneself in the local culture

(Fontana & Frey, 1994). The interviews were conducted only after gaining an in-depth understanding of the rural culture and society. I remained mindful of the following elements when building trusting relationships with the women.

### **3.5.1 Researcher's Ethnicity or Gender**

Galam (2015) and Berger (2015) discovered that being a female researcher offers a greater flexibility in exploring intimate issues with female participants. Few et al. (2003) contended that gender is not enough to negotiate an insider status in the research group as other identities such as social class, ethnicity and nationality of the researcher can pose barriers. For this study gender was an important consideration for successfully negotiating access to the participants. It would have been ethically questionable to have a male researcher ask for access to women in the village. In a gender-segregated society such as that of Sohan village, the gender of the researcher significantly impacts the interview process (Fontana & Frey, 1994).

Secondly, numerous women at the village inquired about my ethnic background. I believe that they were trying to identify me in their own terms and wondered if we could connect culturally. In a qualitative study it is difficult to access participants from a culturally diverse group if the researcher is perceived as a cultural outsider (Casado, Negi, & Hong, 2012). It is suggested that having a similar racial identity between the researcher and the participant is an important component in gaining an insider status in a qualitative study (Few et al., 2003). The participants in the study were Punjabi, while I came from a Pathaan

background. However, the ethnic difference did not pose a challenge to the research since I was perceived as a member of the mainstream Pakistani society.

### **3.5.2 Appearance and Use of Language**

On my first day at the village, the gatekeeper informed me that I was expected to follow a certain pattern of behaviour and conform to the norms of the village. I was expected to dress down to reduce the social difference and follow a specific dress code with my head covered. Wearing pants or short shirts was not acceptable. Figure 3.3 (appendix IIA) shows my picture in appropriate attire while chatting with a community member in Sohan village. Paying attention to personal appearance was important to allow me to integrate into the local community and reduce social differences (Few et al., 2003; Fontana & Frey, 1994). In addition, I used the terms of respect when speaking to the participants. It was not acceptable to call out the names of the older women out of respect. It was required of me to say words like *baji* (older sister), and aunty when engaging older women in conversation. I would have been perceived as highly disrespectful if I had not used these terms of respect.

In addition, my ability to speak in the participants' language allowed me to interpret words and expressions that carried certain cultural, social and religious meaning. Pelzang and Hutchinson (2017) suggested that a researcher's inability to speak the local language could pose a threat to the accuracy of the qualitative research because the true meaning of certain cultural expressions may get lost in translation and can easily be misinterpreted. Language

was also one way by which I negotiated my relationship with the potential participants in the village.

### **3.5.3 Tackling Hierarchical Position**

Evidence from qualitative studies suggests that in an interview situation the researcher is typically in a hierarchical position in relation to the participant (Fontana & Frey, 1994). A researcher's failure to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship inhibits the formation of a non-hierarchical relationship (Oakley, 1981). Keeping these ideas in mind, I adopted strategies to reduce my perceived hierarchical position. I was often offered tea and sometimes a meal during my visits with the women in the village. Eating together in a Pakistani culture is considered almost like a ritual that serves to strengthen bonds between those who share food out of the same dish. Sharing a meal with the women helped me form trusting relationships with them (Liamputtong, 2008). I perceived the hospitality as a sign that the women saw me more than a researcher and wanted to connect. The gatekeeper had also advised me earlier that my refusal to accept hospitality from the participants would be considered an insult. It was also important for me to reciprocate and occasionally share food with the women during my visits. I would sometimes take a cake with me, which often became a reason to celebrate because the villagers were too poor to afford a cake. Sitting around together on a floor mat sharing food with each other reduced the perception of inequality and created a non-hierarchical relationship between myself and the women.

### **3.5.4 Self-Disclosure and Reciprocity**

The preliminary conversations with the women in the village focused on ‘shared experiences’ between myself and the potential participants. Sharing common experiences with the women facilitated communication between us. The women expressed a strong desire to learn about personal care products. They enjoyed listening to me talk about shampoos, various hygiene and cosmetic products. The village women used locally made soaps to wash their hair, which made their hair thick and dry. The women, especially younger girls would touch my hair and tell each other how soft it is. They would also touch my hands and ask me to recommend a good skin cream. Even though the women and I were worlds apart, we shared common interests in beauty products and found it intriguing enough to have a discussion about it. This was an excellent conversational icebreaker which helped me establish some common ground with the women.

I felt that investing myself in the research by responding to the women’s questions was instrumental in building a trusting relationship. The use of ‘self-disclosure’ is a key feature in creating a non-hierarchical relationship with the marginalized and secluded groups who may fear being exploited (Few et al., 2003). As (Oakley, 1981, p. 253) points out, there is “no intimacy without reciprocity”. This implies that the researcher should be ready to respond to the participant’s questions and express feelings (Corbin & Morse, 2003). This approach reduces status difference between the researcher and the participants and allows the researcher to gain a deeper insight into the life of the participant (Oakley, 1981). I believe that self-disclosure also became a source of empowerment for the participants as it gave them the power to lead the discussion to explore various issues in the domestic

violence research. Although self-disclosure was offered with caution, withholding information about myself would have compromised reciprocity in relationship building with the women.

The participants asked me whether I was married. I felt that the participants were trying to find common ground between us. My marital status at the time of the fieldwork and being a mother of two young boys helped me gain an insider status in the group. It also allowed the women to open up to me about the sexual aspect of their marriage. In a Pakistani culture it is generally unacceptable to speak to an unmarried woman about sexual matters, hence, my marital status at the time of the fieldwork facilitated the process of rapport building. In addition, sharing some details about my life with the women was also a form of reciprocity.

### **3.5.5 Cautious Self- Disclosure**

I was cognisant of the fact that once the participants' trust is gained, it can be quite fragile (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Recognition of this reality made me re-consider the information I disclosed to them. I became careful in sharing aspects of my life because I did not want to say anything that could have 'jeopardised' the research. However, I shared enough to demonstrate that I valued and respected their questions. I drew on my tacit knowledge of Pakistani rural society to decide which information to reveal as part of 'self-disclosure. The gatekeeper's advice and my own understanding of the religious intolerance in Pakistan indicated that challenging their core religious beliefs could have devastating implications for the research. Sharing my religious views could potentially have altered the participants' perception of me in a negative manner. For example, I could not challenge the women's

religious beliefs concerning marital relationships. This could have resulted in participants withholding information about their marital lives. Therefore, I made a conscious decision to refrain from participating in religious discussions. However, I carefully listened to their religious narrative to understand how it had shaped their marital experiences.

### **3.6 Interview Process**

The interviews in Sohan village took place between August 2014 and February 2015. The participants were informed that each interview would take between two to three hours and will be conducted at a time and place most suitable to them. The interviews were scheduled in advance by the host family. I had several visits with each participant after the initial interviews to allow me to fully understand their perspective. The subsequent meetings (interviews) with the participants were also arranged by the host family. Prior to the interviews, the option of audiotaping the interviews was discussed with the host family. I was advised that the participants would become extremely uncomfortable by having their voices audiotaped. It was suggested that having an audiotaped version of the interviews would make the participants fear for their safety, despite assurances to maintain confidentiality. Consequently, audiotaping was not something that could be considered. However, I sought permission from the participants to take down some notes during the interviews.

During the preliminary conversations with the participants the issue of consent, confidentiality and anonymity was discussed again. The right of the participants to decline involvement in the study at any time was also recognised. Prior to each interview, these

issues were raised once again even if it meant repeating the same information that was presented earlier to the participants (Corbin & Morse, 2003). The interviews were conducted separately with each participant. The meetings with the participants were always closed-door. No individual other than the researcher and the participant was ever present during the time of the interview. The interview meetings were held at the participants' homes, unless otherwise specified. The host family accompanied me to these interviews but sat outside while I conducted the interviews with the participants. Most interviews took place either in the morning or early afternoon.

To echo the earlier point, the interview process was based on the concepts of reciprocity and mutual self-disclosure (Oakley, 1981). I engaged the participants in small talk before posing some general questions. Gradually I moved onto more personal issues. The adoption of reciprocity and self-disclosure as strategies to achieve equality in my relationship with the participants led to interactive conversational interviews such as those described by Brannen (1988). In an interactive conversational interviews the participants are given a great deal of control over the interview process allowing them an increased flexibility in telling their story (Corbin & Morse, 2003). In this study the participants' answers did not have to fall within the scope of the questions. With the interactive conversational format, the participants had the freedom to share as much detail as they desired and felt comfortable sharing.

### **3.6.1 Data Collection**

The data collection process included open-ended unstructured interviews with the four women described in section 3.4.3.2 (including table 3.1), to obtain their life story accounts. Unstructured interview format was adopted for a number of reasons. The researcher was unfamiliar with the participants' lifestyles, personal perceptions and beliefs regarding domestic violence (Berg, 2001). The researcher wanted to allow the participants to select their own set of vocabulary to define their experiences, rather than use the terminology associated with domestic violence in the literature. The idea was that the participants be allowed to shape their own stories in ways they deemed appropriate. The unstructured interview format enabled the participants to conceptualise domestic violence in their own terms. The researcher wanted the questions to naturally arise from conversations with the participants during the interview process (Berg, 2001).

The participants provided narratives describing their childhood, adolescence, early adulthood and older adulthood years, including their exposure to domestic violence. The participants openly talked about their fears, challenges, and incidents of domestic violence experienced in their husband's home. The interviews covered question areas related to the major themes that emerged from literature review and informal discussions with the women in the village. The researcher began with more general questions about family life and issues facing rural Pakistani women. The participants were also asked about their relationships in the rural community. They were then asked to talk about their experiences outlining their relationship with the husband and in-laws. An interview schedule for the participants is presented in appendix IA. The interview schedule was used as a guide for the researcher. The themes (patterned responses) that emerged from the interviews were

further refined and verified with the help of the participants during multiple meetings with them.

In addition, after the first interview meeting with each participant, the women expressed an eagerness to meet me again to share more details about their experiences of domestic violence. This seemed to conform with the suggestion that sharing one's story with someone who is genuinely interested in understanding your perspective is a highly rewarding experience for the participants (Corbin & Morse, 2003). In fact, the in-depth interviews served as a catharsis for the participants (Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2017). The in-depth interviews gave participants the opportunity to recall traumatic experiences and express emotions associated with events that had never been expressed or revealed before. At times after an emotional release I would see a smile and relief on the participants' faces. This indicated to me that perhaps the participants were seeking validation that they had never received from those close to them.

It was recognised that the participants often shared painful and emotionally distressing experiences, which led to a realisation that sometimes I needed to take a break to let the participant recompose herself. During these little breaks I would focus my attention back on relationship building and reciprocity. This involved preparing a meal together, sharing a recipe, learning henna applying techniques or simply sharing an interesting story with the participant. It was ensured that the participant's wellbeing was never ignored during the interview process. The interviews normally resumed after a short tea break. If the participant did not want to continue the interview after the tea break then we would spend

an hour or so chatting about unrelated things. This also demonstrated to the participant that she was not simply a source of answers for my research questions, she was also valued as an individual. The participants retained the power over how much they wanted to reveal and when. The participants were never required to explain why they did not want to continue.

The interviews were conducted in Urdu, which was the preferred language of the participants. Each participant verified the written narratives of their life story accounts and got an opportunity to confirm and improve the details of their experiences. For one participant who could not read or write in Urdu, the written narrative was read back to her for approval. The narratives were later translated into English for the purpose of this study. Pseudonyms were used as an additional safety measure.

### **3.7 Additional Data**

As alluded to previously, the actual interviews with the four participants were conducted between August 2014 and February 2015. The period from December 2012 and July 2014 focused on building rapport with the women in the village and making observations about their lifestyle. Liamputtong (2008) suggested that developing a trusting relationship with the participants should be done before any interviews are conducted to ensure the quality of the data collected. While the interviews provided all the data for this study, it was important to gather more information to contextualise that data.

### **3.7.1 Participant Observation**

I engaged in participant observation (from December 2012 – July 2014), which is considered a valuable data collection method (Taylor-Powell & Steele, 1996). It is suggested that ‘listening’ and ‘watching’ is a powerful technique to understand social behaviour of a particular group (Taylor-Powell & Steele, 1996). Participant observation was conducted prior to carrying out actual interviews between August 2014 to February 2015.

As alluded to earlier, the gatekeeper helped me gain entry into the village. On December 5, 2012 the gatekeeper had arranged to meet with the host family at the village entry way. The host family- the husband and wife, greeted me with a big smile. The wife gave me a hug as if we were old friends who had not seen each other in a long time. The villagers watched me with curious eyes as we walked through the village. One of my first observations included the strong odour in the air most likely caused by the open sewage that ran through the village. There were young children playing in the streets and waste dumps without any adult supervision, which caught my attention. The toddlers were sorting through trash, perhaps in an attempt to find an object to play with. Figure 3.4 in appendix IIA shares a picture of young children playing in a waste heap in Sohan.

As we walked together through the streets of the village, I noticed that there were rows of dwellings built along the crooked and narrow streets each sharing a wall with a neighbouring unit. Many of the dwellings did not have a door. To cover the door opening the villagers hung a curtain over an open doorway to gain some sense of privacy. I noticed

that the barbershops and tea rooms in the village seemed to be popular all-male hang-out places. I could hear men talk about current events and politics. The host family pointed out that these were popular gathering places in the village where men came together to socialise and engage in discussions about various issues. Along the route there were several small convenience stores that could barely accommodate two people. I approached the store cash counter to see the items in the stores. The stores sold stationary, soaps, matches, cigarettes, sugar, salt, candles, hairclips, chips, candies, etc. On my first day at the village, the host family took me to their home and introduced me to their seven children. The host family and I got to know each other and had tea and biscuits, while having a pleasant conversation.

#### **3.7.1.1 Insights from Fieldwork**

The observations made in the village gave me a useful insight into the practices of the villagers within their community. During the course of my fieldwork a number of women repeatedly invited me to their homes for conversations and socialising. Sometimes women from the neighbouring areas would also come and join in. Our conversations covered a wide range of subjects, including family planning, complications associated with pregnancy to sharing local myths and folklores. I also had an opportunity to attend funerals and celebratory events in the village. These activities taught me how the villagers dealt with loss and reacted to happiness.

This approach not only enabled the formation of close relationships, it also exposed me to community attitudes towards domestic violence. Watching young women interact with

their mothers-in-law provided a deeper look into what was considered acceptable in the husband's home. When I visited families in the village, I observed that the daughters-in-law were always busy taking care of the household duties, either cooking food or serving the guests. They looked after the needs of their in-laws and husband while the sisters-in-law comfortably sat and chatted with me. Hence, the role of a daughter-in-law appeared to be of a caregiver and a server who was responsible for making sure that everyone's needs were met on a daily basis. The following paragraphs share some insights and experiences from my fieldwork.

#### 3.7.1.1.1 Status Conscious

My conversations with the women revealed that the villagers were status conscious. The families who became financially stable withdrew their children from the local school in Sohan village because they did not want to have their children studying alongside poor village children. In addition, some women whose husbands were unemployed suggested that they would rather go hungry than have their husbands work in a junior role or as a subordinate. The idea was that the family's position in the community was determined by the occupation of the head of the household. Those who possessed attributes associated with higher status enjoyed greater access to resources and enhanced marriage prospects for their daughters.

Moreover, the mothers-in-law encouraged their daughters-in-law to flaunt their jewellery and clothing in social gatherings to influence community's perception about them. Valuable material possessions were taken to indicate a person's wealth and status. The

villagers made an effort to put on display the best of what they owned, i.e., dishes, bed sheets, brass pots, wall clock, etc. During a visit, a woman in the village expressed a desire to have a picture taken of her neatly stacked valuables in her home, as shown in Figure 3.5 (appendix IIA). She proudly exhibited all the items that took years to collect. The women in the village believed that ‘if you got it, show it off’.

#### 3.7.1.1.2 Relationship with the Neighbours

My conversations with the women in Sohan suggested that the villagers put a great deal of emphasis on developing a close relationship with their neighbours. The villagers claimed to go out of their way to help out a neighbour in need. They participated in the sorrows and joys of their neighbours. In some instances, the villagers arranged marriages for their children to somebody from their neighbourhood community. Considering that Sohan village was an extremely religious society, the need to look after one’s neighbour seemed to be entrenched in the Islamic teachings (Syamsiyatun, 2015), which the villagers strongly adhered to.

Conversely, excessive involvement in the neighbour’s personal affairs sometimes led to disputes between the neighbours. The women seemed to develop feelings of animosity toward each other, especially over disagreements among children. The conversations revealed that forgiveness was scarce among villagers. Forgiveness was understood as a sign of weakness, while maintaining hostility was considered a sign of family honour and pride. In addition, the accusations of extra marital affairs and allegations of elopement dominated the conversations among village women. They seemed to be concerned with the

activities of other women, especially in the absence of their husbands. This type of unwarranted meddling into the personal affairs of one another often resulted in confrontations between women.

#### 3.7.1.1.3 Festivities

Friday was the day of the week which would put the villagers in a celebratory mood. It was celebrated as a festive occasion by people of all ages in Sohan. Women in the village would prepare warm water for bathing. I saw the children's excitement as they would get to bathe and change their outfit. It was customary in the village to wear the same clothes for a week and change on Fridays. The host family suggested that Friday was considered a holy day of the week. Men would get ready for Friday prayers, which took place in early afternoon at the local mosque. After Friday prayers, the families would get together and have a nice meal. I ensured that on Fridays I brought special food to share with the villagers and ended my day early to give the villagers an opportunity to engage in their special prayers.

I also had an opportunity to participate in a 'circumcision ceremony' of a young boy in the village, in which other village families were invited. Circumcision was considered a major event in a male child's life and a cause for celebration for the family. The young male child who was going to be circumcised was dressed up as a little groom on that occasion. The female cousins of the child gathered around the beat of a drum. They clapped, sang and danced around the child. The family had invited neighbours and relatives to the occasion. The guests brought gifts for the child, including cash. One relative was

responsible for bringing a brand-new bed sheet while another for buying a new bed for the young child. I dressed up in a fancy outfit suitable for the event. I helped the host family serve tea and food to the guests and participated in singing and dancing with the women. This helped me further strengthen my relationship with the villagers.

#### 3.7.1.1.4 Other Interesting Observations

I also came across other interesting practices in the village that seemed to have an impact on the local peoples' lives. I discovered that the villagers relied on shamans for their health care needs. The villagers believed that shamans had control over good and evil spirits, which supposedly had a direct impact on a person's wellbeing. It was determined that superstitions dominated the villagers' thinking about death and disease. Anyone suffering from a skin condition in the village was believed to be under an 'evil' shadow which could not be cured by medication. It was recommended that the patient consult a shaman for guidance and healing.

I had an opportunity to accompany the host family to a patient consultation session with a shaman in Sohan village. The shaman appeared to incessantly scribble on a blood-stained paper during the consultation session. The host family suggested that shamans used owl blood to stain paper to ward off evil spirits. The patient was ordered to make an offering to the shaman in the form of cash, goat or chicken. The patient was advised to gather up some special herbs, leaves, soap, soil and wood. These items would be burned in an outdoor fire burning ceremony. The patient would sit close to the fire pit chanting words provided by the shaman. The chants would call upon the spirits to heal the ailing person,

while the smoke would cure the skin condition. Another patient with diabetes was advised by the shaman to consume 'castor oil' each morning to reduce the 'sweet effect' of diabetes, as it was understood by the shaman. A few days later I visited the diabetes patient to enquire about his health. I was informed that he became sick with severe diarrhea and that his sugar level became dangerously high.

Nevertheless, throughout the participant observation process I reminded myself of the fact that without establishing a relationship based on mutual trust and reciprocity the chances of conducting a successful study were dismal (Oakley, 1981). I adopted a number of strategies to develop a better relationship with the potential participants. I never went empty handed to the women's homes in the village. I often took sweets or toys for the children. The host family accompanied me to all my visits during the participant observation process. Men were never part of the meetings with the women because the local women covered themselves up in front of other men. At times stories were shared while doing the dishes or preparing a meal. I would often join in to help with meal preparation. The questions about the research and myself were answered as honestly as possible to maintain a reciprocal position.

### **3.7.2 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

It was important to consider domestic violence within the local context of poverty because it has been suggested that poverty and associated stress can contribute to incidents of domestic violence (Hamby, 2000; Jewkes, 2002). Research has demonstrated that growing up and living in a particular economic condition has an impact on people's attitudes and

social behaviour (Manstead, 2018). Therefore, it was recognised that true understanding of the villagers can be gained by entering and exploring the world of the villagers. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was one approach that has aided in the understanding of the relationship between people and their environment (Binns, Hill, & Nel, 1997). Hence, the decision to use PRA was essentially made from the standpoint that very little was known about the nature of poverty and its impact on the lives of people in the village. However, to deal with the lack of statistical data on poverty and unemployment in the village, I used the PRA approach (Chambers, 1994b; Mosse, 1994). The next few pages will describe the PRA approach and the ways in which it was incorporated in the study.

PRA is known as “an approach and methods for learning about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people” (Chambers, 1994a, p. 953). It is described as “a family of approaches and methods to enable rural people to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan, and to act” (Chambers, 1992, p. 1). This approach has been used since the 1970s, as a tool to represent the views of the marginalised and excluded groups of the society (Özerdem & Bowd, 2016).

The PRA has evolved from Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) which emerged in the late 1970s (Chambers, 1994a; Leurs, 1996). RRA approach focused on the use of secondary sources, such as data collected by other researchers, existing reports and publications as a source of knowledge (Campbell, 2001; Chambers, 1994b). PRA arose out of a realisation that rural development planning was being carried out without consulting those who would be most impacted by the development efforts (Stadler, 1995). For that reason, PRA makes use of

the data obtained from local people who are considered to be experts in their own domain (Campbell, 2001). Hence, the local rural people are seen as the primary source of knowledge, rather than mere respondents to study questions (Özerdem & Bowd, 2016).

The PRA approach which grew out of NGO fieldwork can be applied to a community, a particular group of people within a community or an organisation (Robinson, 2002). PRA was conducted in the marginalised village community of Sohan to identify their existing economic and development issues. In addition, PRA can best be used to understand homogenous communities (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999). My observation in Sohan suggested that it was an extremely homogenous community in terms of its socio-economic status, educational attainment, access to resources, housing, cultural and religious beliefs.

### **3.7.2.1 The PRA Process**

The PRA process took approximately four weeks to complete and was carried out during the second month of the fieldwork from January 13, 2013 to February 8, 2013.

#### **3.7.2.1.1 Participant Selection and Maintenance of Rapport**

Given that different people construct their lives differently and have different interests, it was ensured that participants were drawn from a wide range of backgrounds (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999). The PRA process involved the participation of villagers from different educational and social backgrounds. The participants in the PRA included four females and four males who were all residents of Sohan village. The two female participants were homemakers, while one was a teacher and another was self-employed. One male

participant was a seasonal labour, another was a property dealer, while others were a driver and a cattle herder. It was determined that four men and four women were sufficient number of participants to explore diverse opinions and that they would be easily manageable. As alluded to earlier, the host family who helped me gain entry into the village identified potential participants for PRA. The PRA process was explained to the potential participants and were asked if they wished to participate. The villagers were informed that the PRA process would take approximately four weeks to complete. The participation was completely voluntary and required full consent of the participants. The villagers who voluntarily consented to participate in this process were selected. Table 3.2 presents interviewee codes for each person who participated in the PRA process.

**Table 3.2:** A table to present interviewee codes assigned to participants in PRA

Gender	Age	Number of children	Education level	Employment status	Sector	Interviewee Code
Female	27	5	Grade 5	Homemaker	-	A11
Male	45	7	No formal education	Seasonal/temporary	Labour	A22
Female	35	8	No formal education	Homemaker	-	A33
Female	23	0	B.A. degree	School teacher	Education	A44
Female	54	6	No formal education	Self-employed	Home-based retail	A55
Male	42	5	Grade 8	Property dealer	Housing	A66
Male	38	3	Grade 5	Driver	Transport	A77
Male	37	5	No formal education	Cattle herder	Livestock	A88

Needless to say, strengthening rapport was an integral and ongoing part of this study, including the PRA process. The term rapport “describes a relationship between outsiders (researcher) and the community, and implies the trust, agreement and co-operation

necessary for the pursuit of participatory approaches to development” (Mosse, 1994, p. 503). Developing a trusting relationship between the facilitator and the villagers is a precondition for conducting a successful PRA, by the same token, PRA process is known to further strengthen rapport with the villagers (Chambers, 1994b). The questions about the PRA process and myself were answered as honestly as possible to maintain a reciprocal position (Chambers, 1994b). I began developing a relationship with the villagers the moment I gained entry into the village in December 2012. Section 3.5 explains a number of strategies that I used to develop a close trusting relationship with the villagers. I remained mindful of these strategies and focused on maintaining rapport throughout the PRA process.

#### 3.7.2.1.2 Handing Over the Stick

The PRA technique allows local people to dominate the process, determine what is important, share knowledge, analyse information and make recommendations (Chambers, 1994b). In other words, the villagers assume an active role in developing the process, analysing and presenting the information (Cornwall & Pratt, 2011). This implies that the researcher must recognise that reflection and analysis are skills not solely held by academics, as indigenous people are also capable of effectively engaging in PRA process and reflecting upon their own condition (Binns et al., 1997). Consequently, the researcher learns directly from the villagers in a face-to-face scenario without interrupting the process, much like the concept of ‘handing over the stick’(Chambers, 1992). The concept of ‘handing over the stick’ implies that the researcher lets the participants make their own observations, ask questions, conduct their own investigations and analyse the information

(Chambers, 1994b). The researcher's activities are to "establish rapport, to convene and catalyse, to enquire, to help in the use of methods, and to encourage people to choose and improvise methods for themselves" (Chambers, 1992, p. 18).

#### 3.7.2.1.3 A Typical Day in the PRA Process

Ample time was allocated to complete the PRA process, considering that a rushed PRA process is known to compromise the quality of the information obtained (Chambers, 1994b). The PRA process took about four weeks to complete and was carried out during the second month of the fieldwork starting January 13, 2013. The participants and I would agree upon a meeting place and time in the village. From there the villagers would identify their priorities for the day and determine which route to take.

Our day usually began around 9 a.m. in the morning and ended at 2 p.m. We would take a 'village walk' together and stop to engage in conversations with the households falling in our route (Mosse, 1994). I also took along some food and snacks to share with the participants during our walks as maintaining rapport was an integral part of this process. It was ensured that flexibility was maintained throughout the PRA process as the participants were continuously allowed to discuss and identify their own development needs (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999). If a participant was absent from a meeting, I would update them during the next meeting and seek their feedback on issues identified in their absence. This also ensured that none of the participants were ever excluded from the PRA process due to not being able to make it to the meeting on a particular day. It was stressed that any participant could leave in the middle of a meeting to attend to personal matters.

No explanations were sought. Nevertheless, the PRA process was made as comfortable and flexible as possible for the participants.

A transect walk along a defined path across Sohan village together with the villagers allowed the villagers to make their own observations, ask questions, discuss identified problems and seek answers (Chambers, 1992). During these walks we visited pharmacies, doctors' offices, local girls' school, construction sites, vocational centre, shrines and a factory. The villagers assumed a leadership role in developing a plan, deciding upon a village route and prioritising the issues. They also took a lead in gathering information and interviewing others in the village. For example, the villagers interviewed the doctors and the other staff during our visit to the doctors' offices in Sohan. I was impressed by the villagers' intelligent questions as they were trying to identify what health care services were available, and what was still needed to improve healthcare in the village. We also visited the office of the rural management but upon inquiry, the security guard informed us that the person in-charge has left without notice. We visited several times after but had no luck finding him in the office. We then decided to change our route.

In addition, the villagers took the initiative to interview the pharmacists at the local pharmacies visited during our walks together. They formed their own questions probing further into the prices of the medications, its quality and availability in the village. The villagers' interest and eagerness to find out more about the availability of health care and other services in the village demonstrated their willingness to take responsibility for their own health and overall wellbeing. Hence, the goal of PRA process was to empower the

villagers, which was achieved by allowing the participants to take control of the process (Robinson, 2002). As a result, the “role of the researcher is reduced to that of a listener, learner, catalyst and facilitator” (Binns et al., 1997, p. 3).

The villagers pointed out what they felt was important during our walks and drew a detailed sketch map as part of the PRA process. The areas covered during the ‘village walks’ were mapped by the villagers (Mosse, 1994). The map was sketched entirely by the villagers. I made use of the sketch map so that the non-literate participants could also fully contribute in the PRA process (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999). I ensured that none of the PRA participants felt excluded due to their inability to read or write. Four out of eight participants presented in Table 3.2 had no formal education and could not read or write. However, I was immensely impressed by the villagers’ map drawing skills. The villagers’ ability to identify and locate important places and landmarks on the map, their perception of distance between different places, and awareness about the village was praiseworthy. My observation here was consistent with Chambers (1994b)’s view that villagers have better mapping skills than they are given credit for. The PRA practitioners working in developing countries have discovered that “villagers have a greater capacity to map, model, quantify, and estimate, rank, score, and diagram than outsiders have generally supposed them capable of” (Chambers, 1992, p. 18). I added labels in English wherever it was appropriate. One of the villagers who could write in Urdu also helped me label important landmarks in Urdu writing. The sketch map is presented in appendix IIB.

At the end of each day, we would all get together at the host family's house. During this time, I would focus my attention back on relationship building. We would talk about our day-to-day experiences and share a good laugh. I would take biscuits, tea-cake and salty snacks with tea to share with the participants. I would inform the participants what we had achieved and what needed to be explored. I then let the villagers engage in discussions and present the achievements, see what remained to be done and set new goals for the next day. The participants were allowed to engage in unstructured discussions on a variety of issues related to the village (Binns et al., 1997). The villagers also identified and discussed any potential barriers to the achievement of our objectives. For example, not being able to get a hold of important people in the village such as community elders, teachers, doctors, etc. As a facilitator I actively listened to the discussions that took place without taking sides in the arguments. I would then go over some of the issues raised during the group discussions and allow the villagers to provide answers and explanations for them. I wrote down the answers in English, which was later compiled in a report. The detailed results of the participatory rural appraisal are presented in appendix II. The written draft was revised several times with the villagers to make sure that all areas were covered and that it was a true reflection of their needs and expectations.

#### 3.7.2.1.4 Why PRA Worked So Well for this Study

The reason PRA approach worked so well for this study was that it facilitated the process of rapport building with people of Sohan village because the PRA approach itself has evolved in a multi-cultural environment (Chambers, 1994c). It was recognised early on that building a close trusting relationship with the villagers was instrumental to the

successful completion of this study. In addition, the knowledge gained from this process provided a detailed and useful understanding of the villagers' environment and needs in a short period of time (Chambers, 1994c). Time was an important consideration for this study because a significant amount of time had to be allocated to understanding domestic violence among rural women, which was the main focus of the study. Hence, it was found that PRA was a time efficient and cost-effective process.

Moreover, it is suggested that rural needs should be understood within the local cultural and social context (Stadler, 1995). It was this approach that allowed me to accomplish this by aiding my understanding of poverty faced by the villagers through their eyes, rather than focusing on my own perception of the social and economic inequalities that existed in Sohan village. Nevertheless, the PRA process not only helped me contextualise the data, but it also helped me further strengthen my relationship with the villagers and gain a better understanding of their condition.

#### 3.7.2.1.5 Ethical Considerations for PRA Process

Attention was paid to ethical issues that might arise during the PRA process and steps were taken to address them. First and foremost, participation in the PRA process was voluntary and required full consent of the villagers. The right of the participants to decline involvement at any time during the process was recognised. Fortunately, all eight participants remained part of the PRA process until the end.

There was a possibility that the participants would conform to the popular view about a particular issue without disclosing their personal opinion (Özerdem & Bowd, 2016). To prevent this problem from occurring, the PRA process which included the involvement of eight participants encouraged each participant to share their perspective on different issues identified in the process. During the revision stage the written draft of the PRA results was read back to them and each participant was asked to provide their approval. The report was finalised only after all the participants had reached a consensus.

There was concern that some of the participants in the group may dominate the process. To prevent this situation from arising, participants from different educational, occupational and social backgrounds were selected. Each participant was given an equal opportunity to participate in the process and provide their input. They were all given an opportunity to develop their own ideas, participate in interviewing others in the village and make their own observations during the ‘walks’ around the village. However, none of the participants were ever forced to form an opinion or participate in an activity they did not wish to participate in. Moreover, given that Sohan was a patriarchal society, it was ensured that women were equally represented in the PRA process and that their opinions were given equal importance. As mentioned earlier, the PRA participants included four men and four women giving women equal opportunity to participate in the process.

It was considered important to eliminate the thought that the researcher was more knowledgeable and dominant in the PRA process. It was recognised that the participants’ confidence in their ability to conduct the PRA process was essential to its success.

Özerdem and Bowd (2016) argued that PRA is an approach that challenges the dominance of the researcher and gives more power to those being researched by enabling them to take charge of their own investigation in the process (Chambers, 1992). Hence, allowing the villagers to take control of the PRA process suggested that the researcher had confidence in their ability to fully understand their own environment (Robinson, 2002). This placed the villagers in a better position than outsiders to evaluate their own needs, dismissing the idea that the researcher was more knowledgeable or dominant in the process.

Chambers (1994b) identified another ethical concern which dealt with sharing of information collected through the PRA process. He stated that information shared by the local people can be potentially exploited by outsiders, examples of which have not appeared in research as yet but precautions need to be taken to safeguard the information. To avoid any misuse of information, no personal information was collected during the PRA process. The knowledge gained through this process was strictly used for the purpose of gaining a more in-depth understanding of the villagers' economic condition and to contextualise the data collected in the study. The participants were told that the information will not be shared with outsiders, even though none of the participants objected to keeping the information confidential because it did not involve the use of sensitive or personal information, nor did it infringe upon anyone's personal privacy.

### **3.8 Reflective Journal**

The field notes were maintained in a journal throughout the study. My journal entries included information on my observations, feelings, emerging patterns and themes. The

entries also recorded descriptions of the places visited in the village and the daily learnings. The reflective journal also recorded my initial impression of the village life and comments on the effectiveness or limitations of the techniques employed during the fieldwork (Shenton, 2004). The journal writing provided an opportunity to generate ideas about the research process, acknowledge difficulties and explore new ways of accessing information (Borg, 2001). I also reflected on my status as an insider and outsider and how each position was embedded in my interpretation of the data collected during the research process (Arber, 2006).

### **3.9 Ethical Practice**

#### **3.9.1 Ethical Considerations**

The request for ethical clearance addressed the five major ethical issues including informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, right to withdraw anytime, physical or mental distress and handling of the research data. The research proposal satisfied the requirements of the University's Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Research involving Human Participants. The University of Cumbria Ethics Advisory Panel granted ethical approval for this study on April 13, 2012.

Participation in this study was completely voluntary. The participants were given sufficient information about the study and its purpose, which allowed them to make informed decisions in regards to their involvement in the research. It is suggested that a full disclosure of the study helps build rapport with the participants (Creswell, 2007). The participants were advised that the information collected from them would be used to

understand the experiences of domestic violence among rural Pakistani women. They were also informed that this research was part of a degree requirement, the findings of which will contribute to the existing domestic violence discourse. One participant expressed a concern over the research findings being published in the local newspapers. She was assured that none of the research findings will ever be published locally. She was reassured that the participants' privacy and comfort was of utmost importance and all the necessary steps were taken to safeguard the participants and the information they provided.

A verbal consent was then obtained from the women who wished to participate in the study. The first reason for obtaining verbal consent was that literacy was an issue for one participant. Second, the participants did not feel comfortable providing a written consent as a safety measure because they did not want to provide a written proof of their involvement. This is consistent with the finding that participants from ethnic and marginalised groups can be reluctant to provide a written consent (Liamputtong, 2008; T. Miller & Bell, 2002). Any activity involving the participants included their full consent. The participants' questions and concerns were addressed until they were satisfied with the answers and had no further questions. This was an open research that involved full consent of the participants with a free will to withdraw from the study at any time. It is important to note that the participants were given ample time to make the decision regarding their involvement and they were allowed to make that decision privately without any pressure from the researcher or the host family. Assurance of privacy, anonymity, confidentiality and trust was central to the success of this study.

The participants' comfort level was never violated while talking about the intimate or hurtful aspects of their marriage. Extra care was taken to ensure that the participants did not experience any feelings of depression, embarrassment or regret as a result of the conversations. The participants were made aware of their right to share as much information as they liked. They were never forced to form an opinion about something they did not feel comfortable talking about and were never pushed to divulge any specific information. If the participants had experienced feelings of discomfort, depression or stress the interview process would have been stopped to immediately address the reasons behind such feelings. The need for participants to decline or alter involvement at any time was fully recognised. For example, after several visits to one participant's house I was requested to meet her at her friend's house for further interviews to avoid facing objections raised by the in-laws. Her request was immediately considered. The participant in this case confirmed that she felt safe continuing the interviews at her friend's house. In addition, the participants could talk to the gatekeeper afterwards if they had any concerns about the research process. They could also speak to the host family if they needed to talk about any issues concerning their safety or wellbeing in the research.

Special attention was given to preserving the participants' dignity and privacy. None of the research activities involved placing the participants at risk for physical or mental harm. The participants were interviewed when their husbands were at work to eliminate the possibility of any negative outcome. However, the researcher made sure that the husbands did not feel that their authority was being violated by this research. I had an opportunity to meet with the husbands of the two participants and personally explained the purpose of

my research. I also met with the in-laws of one of the participants. The husband of one participant was also involved in the PRA process. The participants' husbands were fully aware that I would be conducting interviews with their wives about family conflicts. The husbands did not object to the interviews because as a female researcher I did not violate any cultural norms. The reason why the interviews were conducted in the absence of the husbands was because although the husbands approved of the interviews, the participants felt that they would be reluctant to share the information with ease in the presence of their husbands.

The interviews were never conducted in presence of other family members, as this was also important to the participants. However, only two participants were married and lived with their husbands at the time of the research, the other two were separated from their husbands and only one participant lived with her in-laws. As an additional precaution, the host family accompanied me to all the visits and interviews. They stayed with me to ensure the safety of the participants and the researcher. The host family was always prepared to intervene and deal with any unforeseen circumstances and unpleasant situations. Hence, I considered safe guarding as much as I could during the research process in the village.

The meetings with the participants were always closed-door. No individual other than the researcher and the participant was ever present during the time of the interview. As mentioned earlier, the host family accompanied me to all the visits but sat outside during the interview process. Although the interviews were always scheduled in advance, if an unexpected visitor appeared at the participant's place of residence, the interviews were

suspended and rescheduled for a later date. Information about any one participant was not shared or discussed with another participant. Information about the participants was never sought from a third party.

Participant identity remained hidden during the course of the study. Any published material based on my dissertation will not identify any participant. At the write-up stage the data will not be linked back to any participants and pseudonyms will be used to protect the anonymity of the participants. The identities of individuals and their relationships in the community remained hidden and confidential. Any information collected during this study was stored safely with a password-restricted access. The participants were assured that the data collected will not be accessible to anyone but the researcher, and that confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

### **3.10 Thematic Analysis**

The following section will detail the analytic procedure, which consisted of familiarising oneself with the data, generating codes and themes, refining and labelling themes, and subjecting them to analysis.

#### **3.10.1 Defining Thematic Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to understand the data set collected for this study. Thematic analysis is a widely used method in qualitative research (Jill, 2015). It is used for identifying themes and analysing recurring responses in the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008). The

concepts that reoccur in the data set can be identified as a theme (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Themes that emerge from the participant narratives are pieced together to form a picture of their collective experience (Aronson, 1995). Thematic analysis is substantiated by the actual data collected as part of the research (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011). The findings are interwoven with evidence from literature (Aronson, 1995) and evaluated in light of the dominant domestic violence discourse.

Several advantages of using thematic analysis have been identified. Thematic analysis is flexible in allowing the researcher to choose any theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Jill, 2015). Second, thematic analysis can be applied to a large data set (Guest et al., 2011). It is suitable for analysing different types of narratives: interviews, life story accounts, focus group discussions and written documents (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Riessman, 2008). It can also be used to study a wide range of research questions (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Guest et al., 2011). Thematic analysis involves six steps that are applied to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Jill, 2015). Appendix IB describes the six steps involved in thematic analysis.

The following section presents a summary of each data item. Data item is an individual piece of data identified by a particular analytical interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which in this case is a single narrative of each participant. However, a detailed life story account of each participant is included in the appendix I. The raw data set presented in the appendix I is thoroughly revised multiple times and potential themes (pattered responses) are coded (highlighted) as per step 1 and 2 of the thematic analysis. All names associated with the

narratives are pseudonyms. The following few pages present a brief participant account summary.

### **3.10.2 Participant Account Summary (data item)**

The age of the participants is an approximation because none of them were able to determine the exact year of their birth. I was informed that families in the village generally do not register their children. There is no system in place in Pakistan to make birth registration mandatory. The PRA process revealed that Sohan did not have access to registration services in Sohan. To maintain anonymity pseudonyms have been used to conceal the identities of the participants.

#### **3.10.2.1 Participant Profile 1: Ruby**

Ruby got married at the age of twenty with her cousin whom she was engaged to as a child. She had two young children. Most of the domestic violence incidents at home erupted over arguments involving food and limited household resources. Ruby's in-laws were equally involved in perpetrating domestic violence against her. Ruby clearly stated that she wanted some respect and recognition at her husband's home. As a child, Ruby enjoyed decision-making autonomy at her parents' home.

Ruby's husband withheld his income subjecting her to financial deprivation while giving a bigger share of income to his parents. Ruby also had limited control over her reproductive choices. Her movement was restricted and she was under constant watch by her mother and sisters-in-law. She was forbidden to reveal her marital problems to family and friends.

Ruby had left her husband once but returned for her daughter whom she was forced to leave behind. Ruby was the only participant in the study who enjoyed unconditional support of her parents. Ruby has desperately been trying to find a way to leave her abusive marriage.

### **3.10.2.2 Participant Profile 2: Najma**

Najma got married when she was only fourteen years old. Najma had six children. She was subjected to sexual and physical violence on the first night of her wedding and it continued throughout her marriage. She tried to live up to her husband's idea of a good wife but has failed repeatedly, resulting in her feeling helpless and weak. She could always confide in her mother-in-law when she was alive but now, she has no one to turn to for help. Najma's husband was a good provider and she brought this up a number of times during the interviews.

Najma grew up in a household where men made all the important decisions. In her natal home women's education and independence was discouraged. Najma endorsed and accepted the socially and culturally ascribed subservient role of a woman in her marriage. She believed that a wife should submit to her husband's wishes. Najma's own mother had cautioned her against severe religious implications if she failed to properly serve and sexually satisfy her husband. There was resignation and acceptance of her fate.

### **3.10.2.3 Participant Profile 3: Shaheen**

Shaheen got married to her fiancé at the age of eighteen while he was thirty-five years old. She had four children. Shaheen was subjected to domestic violence over insufficient dowry

soon after the wedding. Her husband was unemployed and refused to find work, even though he was capable. Shaheen and her three children lived in extreme economic deprivation. She was also subjected to extreme sexual violence. Shaheen feared going to hell for denying sexual access to her husband. Shaheen also faced domestic violence for giving birth to two girls.

Shaheen's mother was too poor to extend any support to her. Shaheen eventually found work and supported her family while her husband remained unemployed. She ultimately separated from her husband but refused to seek legal divorce for a number of reasons. These included having the security of being attached to a man's name, religious implications of a divorce, losing custody of children and being stigmatized as a divorced woman. Shaheen said that she was now much happier in her life.

#### **3.10.2.4 Participant Profile 4: Jannat**

Jannat got married in her late twenties, which was considered very late according to the cultural standards. She had two children. Jannat's husband was twenty years older than her. She was also much more educated than the majority of men and women in the village. Jannat's husband subjected her to sexual violence. He made her perform sexual acts, which she considered humiliating and degrading. She experienced several unwanted pregnancies and forceful abortions. Jannat and her husband constantly fought over money issues. He questioned her fidelity and subjected her to verbal and physical abuse. Jannat eventually divorced her husband. Jannat's own brothers beat her up for ending her marriage, which left her crippled for life. Due to Jannat's poor health condition she was not able to secure

employment. She took a lover who supported her financially. This was perceived as risky behaviour in the rural society because she could have faced devastating consequences if caught.

### **3.10.3 Identified Themes**

A thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2008) was used to identify recurrent themes from the data set. The thematic maps that illustrate the identified themes from participants' narratives are presented in the results chapters 5. The thematic maps are created with the help of steps 3,4 and 5 of the thematic analysis. Each theme will then be discussed in turn according to step 6 (appendix IB describes the six steps involved in thematic analysis).

### **3.11 Reflexivity**

Berger (2015) stated that reflexivity seeks to understand how researcher's experiences and characteristics play a role in the creation of knowledge. It allows the researcher to reflect upon one's own values during the research (Arber, 2006). A reflexive researcher does not simply report facts, he or she actively constructs the interpretation of the data collected in the process (Hertz, 1996). Providing details about the number of interviews, its content and days spent in the field is not sufficient to enhance the quality of research. The richness of research comes from the researcher's personal reflections consisting of the researcher's expectations and thought process during fieldwork (Malaurent & Avison, 2017). Berger (2015) approaches reflexivity in three different ways: reflexivity when there are common experiences between the researcher and the participant; when the researcher moves from

an outsider to insider position and reflexivity with limited familiarity with participants' perspective. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggested that reflexivity is not only focused on the creation of knowledge, but also on the research process including the choice of participants, methodology, research questions as well as questions that were omitted.

I examined how my positioning helped me negotiate access to the participants (Pelzang & Hutchinson, 2017) and facilitated my understanding of the participants' narrative. I constantly reflected on how my own experiences and beliefs shaped my perception of the participants' perspective. I not only incorporated my reflexive observations in the actual analysis of the data, but also engaged in reflexive thinking throughout the study. There were incidents in the domestic violence research where I found myself to be unfamiliar with the experiences shared by the participants. This happened when the participants shared their religious views surrounding marital conduct, an area with which I was not familiar. In this case, I viewed the participants as experts in their understanding of religious influence on their marital conduct (Berger, 2015; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). My unfamiliarity with the certain aspects of the research gave me an opportunity to examine the new information with a fresh perspective.

Throughout the study I reflected upon my status as an insider or outsider. I saw myself both as an insider and an outsider in this research. The participants perceived me as a Pakistani female but still saw me as a foreigner – a Canadian. However, being a Canadian researcher worked to my advantage. My understanding of the domestic violence literature suggested that the local rural culture discouraged women from expressing disappointments

surrounding their marriages, and those who did were viewed as violating the local norms. Had I been a local researcher the participants might have felt uncomfortable sharing the intimate details of their lives with me for fear of being judged or stigmatised. Secondly, the participants assumed that as a Canadian I was unfamiliar with their struggle with poverty and deprivation. They saw an opportunity to educate me about rural life in Pakistan. The women demonstrated how they cooked and collected water for daily household use. They also shared how they managed to fulfil their needs with limited electricity, gas and clean running water.

As far as my understanding of domestic violence was concerned, I must admit that I could not have anticipated the impact of religion on how the participants responded to domestic violence in their marriages. I consider myself to be moderately religious and tend to interpret religious discourse based on my own understanding. I generally do not use religious rationalisation to make decisions about my wellbeing. My religious understanding positioned me as an outsider. As mentioned earlier, in a Pakistani rural society, engaging in a religious debate is frowned upon. One is expected to accept the literal meaning of religious scriptures without question. Hence, I did not question the participants' religious understanding of a marriage. I placed them in an expert position so I could step back and learn how religion influenced their decisions in the marriage. Nevertheless, I feel that my status as a Canadian researcher positively influenced the production of knowledge in this study. I feel that if this research was conducted by a local Muslim woman, she might have interpreted the results differently based on her adherence

to religious scriptures. I made no prior assumptions with respect to how one should examine their marital role within a Muslim religious framework.

I believe that had there been another female researcher conducting this research, she might have focused on other aspects of domestic violence according to her research needs and interests. I also feel that the participants would have responded differently to a different researcher depending on that researcher's trust building skills and research design. This all would have led to slightly different results and analysis. Hence, more or less similar features would emerge if this research was replicated but the focus and analysis of findings might differ from mine. This would happen because of the other researcher's data gathering skills, personal experiences, educational background, research interests and the nature of relationship with the participants. It is difficult to say how the participants might have reacted to a Caucasian or an African woman or how they might have reacted to a non-Muslim female researcher. Nevertheless, someone else conducting this research would have definitely influenced the data collection and findings of the research.

### **3.12 Concluding Reflections**

One significant limitation of this study is the degree to which the results are generalisable, as this study constitutes a small group of rural Pakistani women. However, the findings of this study to a large extent may be applicable to women in urban Pakistan. Despite differences between the urban and rural divide in Pakistan, there are undeniable commonalities in terms of the values attached to family's structure and the role of women in the household. The findings of this study may also to some extent be applicable to

women from the patriarchal Muslim societies because the participants' narratives contained strong religious undertones.

In addition, I have made an effort to translate the participants' narratives, which originally were conveyed in Urdu to reflect its true meaning. However, despite my best effort I feel that some flavour may have been lost due to translation. Certain cultural expressions, such as, "*mother said that I was going into this marriage alive and will come out dead*", can easily be misinterpreted by a cross-cultural researcher. What this expression means is that a woman should be so dedicated and committed to her husband that she spends her entire life with him from the time she steps into his house until the time she dies. I contextualised the content in my translations to provide the best possible interpretation.

### **3.13 Conclusion**

This chapter detailed the research methodology adopted for this research as well as the analytic procedure. Considering that this was a 'sensitive' research, this chapter outlined the procedure that allowed the researcher to overcome obstacles during fieldwork. The chapter presented the detail of the sampling methodology including the target population, sample size and selection procedure. Rapport building was the main focus of the research methodology, which was thoroughly explained in the chapter. The interviews and data collection process was a multi-stage process which was described in detail. Ethical issues were considered throughout the research process.

## **Chapter Four: Context and Study Site**

### **4.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter introduces the study site, its location and demographics. It gives an overview of rural life and poverty in the Sohan village. The chapter shares the findings of the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) that was employed to create a better understanding of the participants' local environment.

### **4.2 Introduction**

To understand the current experiences of women in Sohan it is necessary to have a comprehension of their environment. The chapter provides a brief overview of the available demographics on Sohan, including population composition, average household size, religion and villagers' access to resources. However, the available demographics were collected in 1998 and provide very little information about the villagers' condition. To deal with the lack of statistical data on poverty and unemployment in the village, I used the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach (Chambers, 1994b; Mosse, 1994). PRA is a holistic approach that looks at the relationship between people and their environment (Binns et al., 1997). The decision to use PRA was essentially made from the standpoint that very little was known about the nature of poverty and its impact on the lives of people in the village. The results obtained from PRA not only helped me contextualise the data, but the process also helped strengthen my relationship with the villagers and gain a better understanding of their condition.

The PRA process also illuminated some of the issues that were conducive to my understanding of the possible reasons that can potentially lead to conflicts within rural families in Sohan. For example, through the PRA approach I found that irregularity of income was a major source of family conflict in Sohan. Irregularity of income in Sohan implied that the employees were paid wages at the end of a working day, while there was no guarantee that they would find work the next day. The participants in the PRA approach reported that irregularity of income placed a great deal of financial constraint on families, which often contributed to stress and incidents of domestic violence in the home. The typical extended family structure in Sohan further compounded the financial crisis.

Additionally, another important contribution of the participatory rural appraisal was to aid my understanding of what it was like for the women in Sohan to grow up in a marginalised and economically deprived community. I believe that failing to understand the impact of poverty in the lives of these rural women would have only provided me with a fraction of understanding of their experiences. The interaction with the villagers as part of the PRA process offered an insight into the constraints and challenges faced by the villagers that seemed to have affected all aspects of their lives. The PRA gave me an opportunity to understand the ‘insider’ perspective by observing the villagers’ daily routine in their natural setting.

### **4.3 The Study Site**

This study was conducted in Sohan village, which is located 5 km from Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan and 3 km from Rawalpindi, which is another large city center. The

Google map (Figure 4.1) indicates the location of Sohan along the main highway through Islamabad. Sohan village was chosen due to its close proximity to Islamabad. I had friends and family in Islamabad who could come and get me in case I needed to quickly evacuate the area due to an unforeseen event. Hence, in light of the recent terrorist threats in the country, safety was the foremost concern when choosing my research site. Nevertheless, Sohan was an ideal place to observe rural life and gain rural perspective on domestic violence. From a research standpoint, it was comparable to the other villages in the country in terms of its environment. The peri-urban nature of Sohan village will be discussed in section 4.5.1.2.



**Figure 4.1** Location of the study site, A = Sohan. Sohan village is located along Islamabad expressway (the main highway) Source: Google map 2018

## **4.4 Demographics**

### **4.4.1 National Statistics**

The last official census across Sohan village was conducted in 1998 (*Pakistan Bureau of Statistics: Sohan Dehati*, 1998; *Pakistan Economic Survey*, 2014-2015). According to a recent Pakistan Bureau of Statistics report the estimated population in Pakistan has reached 194.63 million in 2016 (*Social Indicators of Pakistan*, 2016). The rural population in Pakistan is estimated to have reached 108.37 million in 2016 (*National Institute of Population Studies*, 2016). The rural population accounts for approximately 55 percent of Pakistan's total population (*Social Indicators of Pakistan*, 2016).

### **4.4.2 Demographics of Sohan**

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics has not collected any demographic data on Sohan for a period of over 18 years due to perpetual political unrest in the country (*Pakistan Bureau of Statistics: Sohan Dehati*, 1998). Personal conversation with Muhammad Riaz, who was the Assistant Census Commissioner at Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, revealed that the current population estimates for Sohan village were not available (September 26, 2016). However, Muhammad Riaz said that the population of Sohan must have increased many folds since 1998 due to migration and urbanisation. He suggested that based on an estimated population growth rate of 3.5, the projected population in Sohan may be around 24,328 villagers in 2016 ("Personal Communication with Assistant Census Commissioner Pakistan Bureau of Statistics," 2016). The villagers felt that the actual population figure was much higher than 24,328. They believed that the population estimate provided by the Assistant Census Commissioner did not take account of the migrant influx into Sohan after

the countrywide floods of 2011. However, in the absence of recent population estimates for Sohan, it was safe to say that the population figure provided by the Assistant Census Commissioner based on a projected growth rate may be closer to reality. Therefore, the population figure selected for this study was 24,328, which was provided by Muhammad Riaz ("Personal Communication with Assistant Census Commissioner Pakistan Bureau of Statistics," 2016). According to Muhammad Riaz, the population size of 24,328 takes account of the movement of people in and out of Sohan and the growing urbanisation due to poor agricultural sector development in Sohan village.

In what follows, I will discuss the available 1998 demographics of Sohan village. Table 4.1 shows the selected population and housing statistics for Sohan village, collected in the year 1998 by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics only reported on a few variables listed in the table.

**Table 4.1:** Selected population and household statistics of Sohan Village from 1998

Population and Housing Statistics	Demographics of Sohan Village in 1998
<b>Population</b>	
Total population	6,951
Male	3,719
Female	3,232
Literacy Rate	55%
<b>Education Attainment*</b>	
Primary Education	Male: 972 Female: 626
Elementary Education/or including grade 10	Male: 548 Female: 207
<b>Religion</b>	
Muslim	6,920
Other	31
<b>Age</b>	
18 and above	3,552
<b>Housing</b>	
Total houses	991
Houses with accessibility to potable water	533
Houses with an electricity connection	955
Average household size	7

\*There is no data available on residents in Sohan who might have had a college education

**Source:** Pakistan Bureau of Statistics: Sohan Dehati<sup>3</sup>, 1998

Primary School Education (grade 5)
Elementary School Education (grade 8)

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<sup>3</sup> *Dehati* means a villager.

Table 4.1 explains the following population and housing demographics (*Pakistan Bureau of Statistics: Sohan Dehati, 1998*):

#### **4.4.2.1 Population**

Based on the 1998 statistical data, the population of Sohan was 6951 residents with 53 percent males and 46 percent females.

#### **4.4.2.2 Average Household Size**

According to the 1998 demographic data the average household size in Sohan was seven, which is consistent with my observation in the study. The type of family structure observed in Sohan conformed to the extended family system in which the in-laws and the husband's siblings generally all lived in the same house.

#### **4.4.2.3 Religion**

Approximately 6,920 people were Muslims, which is about 99% of the total population in Sohan, while only 31 people were reported to belong to other religions.

#### **4.4.2.4 Education**

In terms of education attainment, the literacy rate in Sohan was estimated to be 55 percent with 45 percent of the population that could not read or write. In 1998, about 26 percent of the male residents had a primary school education (fifth grade), while only 19 percent of the females had a primary school education. In addition, 14 percent of the male residents in 1998 had elementary school (eighth grade) education (some having finished tenth grade), while only 6 percent of the females had elementary school education (some having finished tenth grade).

#### **4.4.2.5 Access to Potable Water**

There were estimated 991 households in Sohan in 1998. Only 53 percent of the total households in Sohan had access to potable water.

#### **4.5 Rural Life and Poverty in Sohan**

It is important to consider domestic violence within the local context of poverty and deprivation. In Pakistan, rural life and poverty<sup>4</sup> are intimately bound together. In the 1990s, poverty increased in the rural areas further exacerbating the income gap between urban and rural areas of the country (Anwar, Qureshi, Ali, & Ahmad, 2004; G.-M. Arif & Ahmad, 2001; M. Arif, Nazli, Haq, & Qureshi, 2000; *Pakistan Planning and Development Annual Plan, 2012-2013*; *Social Indicators of Pakistan, 2016*). A survey carried out by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics found that the national rural monthly average income per household was PRs. 26,452 (162 GBP), while the national urban monthly average income per household was PRs. 38,923 (238 GBP) (*Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey, 2013-2014*). Another research study suggested that 42 percent of the population in rural Pakistan, and 26 percent of the population in urban areas was poor in 2000 (see footnote 2) (M. Arif et al., 2000).

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4 A family is identified as poor when available resources fall short of their needs (Foster, 1998). Jali and Islam (2018) developed a definition of poverty which best describes poverty faced by people in Pakistan. The author stated that poverty not only constitutes the people's inability to fulfil their basic needs, but also includes their inaccessibility to government facilities and exclusion from social and economic activities (Jali & Islam, 2018).

#### **4.5.1 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

As noted earlier, to deal with the lack of available statistical data on poverty and unemployment in Sohan, I used the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach (Chambers, 1994b; Mosse, 1994) to create a better understanding of the villagers' condition. This explorative approach helped me make inferences about the population density, languages and ethnicity, access to healthcare, education level and other aspects such as water collection and sanitary conditions, prevalence of unemployment, poverty and child labour in Sohan.

The participatory rural appraisal (PRA) is a useful tool to explore women's perceptions on their reproductive and overall health, access to resources and violence against women in the community (Aziz, Shams, & Khan, 2011). It includes multiple perspectives of the local community members and may utilize a variety of techniques such as interviews, tour of the study site, and production of a sketch map (Quigley, Che, Achieng, & Liaram, 2017). Through the PRA process the participants identify and describe critical features in their lives that impact their relationships and well-being (Bar-On & Prinsen, 1999).

My role as a PRA facilitator consisted of guiding a collective discussion among the participants. I took a neutral stance and purely focused on the knowledge that was gained from listening to the discussions of the participants. The villagers were allowed to identify problems and opportunities in the village. They assumed an active role in analysing their own vulnerabilities and offered solutions to the problems. Table 4.2 presents interviewee codes for each person who participated in the PRA process. This collaborative exercise

also served another purpose. It helped me build a rapport with the villagers and gain a better understanding of life in a rural community. This information allowed me to observe the daily stressors among rural women and its impact on their relationships in the family. The PRA process was explained in detail in section 3.7.2 of the methodology chapter. The detailed results of the participatory rural appraisal are presented in appendix II.

**Table 4.2:** A table to present interviewee codes assigned to participants in PRA

Gender	Age	Number of children	Education level	Employment status	Sector	Interviewee Code
Female	27	5	Grade 5	Homemaker	-	A11
Male	45	7	No formal education	Seasonal/temporary	Labour	A22
Female	35	8	No formal education	Homemaker	-	A33
Female	23	0	B.A. degree	School teacher	Education	A44
Female	54	6	No formal education	Self-employed	Home-based retail	A55
Male	42	5	Grade 8	Property dealer	Housing	A66
Male	38	3	Grade 5	Driver	Transport	A77
Male	37	5	No formal education	Cattle herder	Livestock	A88

#### 4.5.1.1 Languages and Ethnicity

Although the available demographic data does not report on the ethnic composition of the population in Sohan, my observation through the PRA process suggested that Sohan was a multi-ethnic society. The two main ethnic groups in Sohan were classified as Punjabis and Pathaan. There were a number of Punjabi dialects spoken in Sohan, as well as the Pushto language. The official language of the people in Pakistan is Urdu, which was widely understood and spoken by the villagers in Sohan. Urdu was also the language of instruction in local schools. Despite being an ethnically diverse community, no single cultural tradition

was dominant. The village society in Sohan could be characterised as being hierarchal, highly religious, male dominated and traditional.

#### **4.5.1.2 Peri-Urban Influence**

Sohan village can be classified as a peri-urban area. Although the origin of the term peri-urban is unclear (Jimu, 2012), the concept of peri-urban was first used by the Anglo-Saxon and American geographers in 1940s and 1950s (Khorasani & Zarghamfard, 2018). Peri-urban is defined as “the space that extends between the margins of the city and the boundaries of rural space” (Larcher, 1998, p. 12). It may be considered an extension of the urban area surrounding it (Hudalah, Winarso, & Woltjer, 2007). According to Beaujeu-Garnier (1983, p. 7) the term peri-urban is shown “to be very useful in order to grasp a new reality, a place of contacts where two worlds interpenetrate and clash: rural and urban”. Damon, Marchal, and Stébé (2016, p. 429) explained that “the peri-urban areas constitute a diverse socio-economic, cultural, political, landscape whole”. The Peri-urban zones in developing countries are generally excluded from the social and economic activities of the surrounding cities (Lynch, 2004).

The close proximity of a peri-urban area to urban zones gives rise to spatial features that make peri-urban different from other rural areas (Iaquinta & Drescher, 2000; Khorasani & Zarghamfard, 2018). The residents of a peri-urban village have an advantage of being close to the major roads linking the rural area to the major urban centers (Doan & Oduro, 2012). This gave the residents of Sohan, which can be characterised as a peri-urban area, access to government offices, hospitals and educational institutes. Improved roads had allowed

some residents in Sohan to commute to nearby cities for jobs. Close proximity to the main highway linking the village to the urban centers had also allowed some families from Rawalpindi and Islamabad to move into the village for affordable housing. In addition, peri-urban areas provide cheaper land for industrial site and housing (Lynch, 2004). There were two manufacturing plants located in Sohan. Proximity of Sohan village to the cities significantly reduced the transportation cost allowing the management to hire skilled labour from outside the village, while taking advantage of the affordable land lease and property taxes in the village.

The peri-urban areas are characterised as having both rural and urban features (Lynch, 2004). The peri-urban is believed to have two or more different systems in place (Lynch, 2004). For example, self-built temporary accommodation versus built development (Doan & Oduro, 2012). The observations made during the PRA process demonstrated that there in fact were two different systems or lifestyles that existed in Sohan village. The participants in the PRA process pointed out that the lack of affordable housing was a crisis in the village. As a consequence of this, some villagers had set up temporary shelters inside vacant buildings or open construction areas in the village. Others erected homes from mud, bricks, rags, cardboard and cheap construction wood. Most villagers did not own the land they lived on and lacked access to basic services like water, sewerage and electricity. There were a few residents in Sohan who had a gas connection, while most of them used wood fuel for cooking and heating. In addition, some constructed homes had the facility of Indian latrines, while other peri-urban residents were mostly reliant on self-built pit latrines built

outside the accommodation, preferably in the backyard (Simon, 2008), which was consistent with the observations made during fieldwork in Sohan.

The PRA participants explained that accommodation in the village was not considered a basic human right, but rather a source of profit for the renters. Renting accommodations to migrant workers and urban people was a good source of income for those who owned a property in Sohan. The PRA participants stated that paying rent meant less money for food, clothing, healthcare and education. There was no availability of subsidised housing for the villagers. The government had invested in building subsidised housing in Sohan but it was only available for government employees who worked in the nearby urban centers. Therefore, none of the villagers could take advantage of the available subsidised housing in Sohan. It seemed that most of the social programs were directed toward urban poor rather than the rural poor in the peri-urban areas.

In developing countries, peri-urban settlements lack provisions for basic services such as sanitation, drainage, removal of waste and safe drinking water (Kulabako, Nalubega, Wozzi, & Thunvik, 2010; Lynch, 2004). Waste disposal problems are most acute in peri-urban areas despite rapidly growing population in these areas (Adam-Bradford, McGregor, & Simon, 2006). Most urban waste also finds its way into the peri-urban areas including residential and industrial waste (Tacoli, 1998). In the absence of waste disposal services in Sohan, the local residents had designated garbage dumping sites in the village where waste was allowed to accumulate. There were several open waste dumping sites in Sohan which had contributed to the deterioration of air quality in the village (S. M. Ali, Pervaiz,

Afzal, Hamid, & Yasmin, 2014). Figure 4.1 (appendix IIA) shows a designated garbage dumping site in Sohan village.

It is suggested that the governments lack proper planning to deal with these newly urbanising areas, while rural management perceives peri-urban as an extension of urban areas, failing to accept responsibility for its development (Jimu, 2012). The urban dwellers who hold an advantageous economic and political position over the rural dwellers have a considerable influence on the resource allocation and funding decisions (Adell, 1999). This further diminishes the ability of peri-urban dwellers to affect the process of resource allocation in their favour (Adell, 1999). The observations suggested that the residents in Sohan often blamed the government for their own lack of economic success. This led them to believe that they were on their own and that they were completely responsible for their own survival.

In addition, Lichter and Brown (2011) argued that despite close physical proximity, urban residents generally have limited interactions with peri-urban communities, as a result of which both communities often remain disconnected (Lichter & Brown, 2011). There are several possible explanations for this. For example, it was determined that although Sohan was a multi-ethnic society (as explained in section 4.5.1.1), it was still an extremely homogenous community in terms of its socio-economic status, educational attainment, access to resources, cultural and religious beliefs. This lack of diversity and exposure to different people and perspectives in Sohan may have not only led to fear of ‘what is considered different’, but also to social isolation of the rural community. There was also a

sense in Sohan that the urban community does not truly understand rural life and its challenges. As expected, the urban stereotypical ideas about rural people and their condition had led to a failure of political parties and urban communities to establish effective communication with the rural people of Sohan. The PRA participants revealed that the representatives of different political parties come for a visit only before an election. Nevertheless, findings from the PRA process have suggested that there is a wall of mistrust between rural and urban residents despite being separated only by a single highway.

Furthermore, it is believed that decades of social and cultural isolation of rural areas have given rise to suspicions of outsiders (Lichter & Brown, 2011). The observations made in Sohan village have suggested that the rural residents often viewed their religious and cultural values as superior, whilst urban lifestyle as a threat to the local traditional way of life. There were several examples of how the residents in Sohan rejected urban ideas and practices. For example, gender segregation in educational institutes was the only culturally viable option in Sohan, while almost all modern educational institutes in the cities provided a co-ed learning environment. Moreover, the urban women who freely socialised with men and refused to cover their head in public were criticised for being influenced by un-Islamic Western practices. The rural people in Sohan also took immense pride in their strong commitment to family values. They believed that the traditional family system was disintegrating as nuclear family system was gaining more popularity in the cities (P. A. Ali et al., 2019).

### 4.5.1.3 Irregularity of Income and Unemployment

The PRA approach revealed that the irregularity of income<sup>5</sup> was a major issue for the villagers in Sohan. A22 and A77 were paid wages at the end of a working day, while there was no guarantee that they would find work the next day. A22 suggested that he would leave home every morning looking for work. He would visit construction sites, loading-docks, or stand along the main highway hoping for someone to offer work. Sometimes he would find work offloading bricks from a truck on the side of the highway for a contractor. Through the PRA process the villagers helped identify two manufacturing plants (furniture and crockery) in Sohan that generally hired skilled workers from the city. A22 and A77 explained that the villagers were excluded from full-time employment opportunities at the village because they neither had the skills nor the training that the manufacturers demanded. The villagers were only hired for seasonal or contract-based unskilled menial jobs such as brick making, cement mixing or lifting heavy construction material.

The absence of regular full-time work had further diminished the villagers' condition as it made it difficult for them to meet their household budgets. A22 explained, *"We get paid on a daily basis. If the contractor has work for us, we get paid but if he doesn't, we don't get paid which leaves us scrambling for food. Our employment is not secure; he (contractor) can fire us anytime without notice. If we get injured at work, we get fired"*

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<sup>5</sup> Irregular income from employment is earnings that may vary on a weekly, monthly, or seasonal basis depending on the type of income. This income is not guaranteed, nor received on a regular basis. Irregular income includes over-time, bonus, second job, part-time, and seasonal income (*Key Concepts for Income Determinations: Income Definitions*, 2008).

*without compensation*". This observation is consistent with the suggestion that vague government policies leave residents of peri-urban communities with little income and an inadequate safety net for the poor (Kulabako et al., 2010).

The participants in the PRA process suggested that unemployment<sup>6</sup> in Sohan was endemic among the local residents. There is no available national data on labour force characteristics or employment in Sohan to directly support this view. However, according to a current labour force survey the 'national rural' unemployment rate has risen to 31.84 percent (*Labour Force Survey, 2014-2015*), which seems to be reflective of what the local villagers believed unemployment looked like in Sohan. A66, who recently had his house broken into stated that the lack of employment opportunities in Sohan have led many of the local youth into criminal activities, homelessness and drug use. He further said that the absence of secure and full-time employment adds to the stress level at home. A22 and A55 explained that sometimes it becomes difficult to feed the children because there is no money. They stated that a common feature of the community was its large families, which often contributed to ongoing conflicts over money issues.

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<sup>6</sup> A person is unemployed if he or she is a) not working b) currently available for work c) seeking work. Individuals who fall under the category of 'not working' can be further classified into two groups: One group comprises people who are regarded as unemployed while they are actively searching for work and the other includes those who are not searching for work but are willing and able to work (Byrne & Strobl, 2004). Research suggests that many unemployed people in rural areas of developing countries do not search for work because they are either 'discouraged' as a result of financial constraints experienced during work search or simply lose hope of finding any work as they might have repeatedly failed in finding work in the past (Byrne & Strobl, 2004).

#### **4.5.1.4 Landless Villagers**

Research has shown that the lack of ownership and access to agricultural land is a major contributor to rural poverty in Pakistan (Anwar et al., 2004). The agricultural sector faces constraints in peri-urban areas mainly due to loss in agricultural land (Adam-Bradford et al., 2006). The loss of cultivable land reduces local food self-reliance (Simon, 2008). According to the recent demographic data only 51 percent of employed persons in rural Pakistan work in the agricultural sector (*Labour Force Survey, 2014-2015*). Consequently, the unemployment in the rural agricultural sector has risen to 56 percent in 2014 (*Pakistan Economic Survey, 2014-2015*). Rural poverty is often linked to non-farm income (Tacoli, 1998). One study has suggested that poverty in Pakistan is highest among landless rural population at 58.89 percent (Anwar et al., 2004). Jimu (2012) has argued that landlessness among peri-urban residents makes them vulnerable to poverty as other sources of income also remain limited.

Unlike the conventional farming villages in Pakistan, the villagers in the peri-urban Sohan village did not derive their income from agricultural activities. A88 has revealed that there was some government owned agricultural land available for farming in Sohan but lack of resources and limited financial incentives have discouraged the villagers from participating in agricultural activities. Only a handful of village families in Sohan, including A88, owned livestock, which was mainly used for subsistence and profit. If land was made available to the villagers in Sohan, the women in the village would wish to participate in agricultural activity, which is the norm of rural life in Pakistan (Khorasani & Zarghamfard, 2018). Due to lack of government attention in this regard the women in Sohan are

prevented from playing a role in improving their economic circumstances and well-being, which directly impacts their home life.

#### **4.5.1.5 Limited Water Supply**

The government has paid little attention to improving sanitation and water quality in rural communities of Pakistan (*South Asian people's perspective on sanitation: Synthesis review*, 2011). According to the demographic data only 13 percent of the total number of 'rural' households in Pakistan have access to tap water (*Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey*, 2014-2015).

The villagers in Sohan did not have access to safe drinking water<sup>7</sup> or proper sanitary<sup>8</sup> facilities in their homes. A22, A55 and A77 revealed that they did not have taps installed in their homes. A33 advised that even tap water was not safe to drink unless it was boiled prior to consumption. According to the 1998 demographic data on Sohan only 53 percent of the total households in Sohan had access to potable water (*Pakistan Bureau of Statistics: Sohan Dehati*, 1998).

A22, A55 and A77 said that they had to walk to the local mosque to collect water for daily use. Figure 4.2 (appendix IIA) shows how A55 stored water collected from the mosque in rusty metal containers for daily personal use and consumption. A11 and A22 reported that

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<sup>7</sup> Water for drinking, cooking and essential personal and household use (*Public Health Guide for Emergencies*, 2008).

<sup>8</sup> The term sanitation refers to the proper disposal and drainage of excreta and solid waste (*Public Health Guide for Emergencies*, 2008; *South Asian people's perspective on sanitation: Synthesis review*, 2011).

equal distribution of water among family members within an extended family household was quite challenging, often resulting in loud arguments, especially between women in the family. It is especially difficult when some quantity of water has to be set aside for drinking, cooking and washing. In these circumstances, family disputes often arise over who controls the distribution of water in the family.

#### **4.5.1.6 Insufficient Health Care**

A detailed sketch map<sup>9</sup> (appendix IIB) produced as part of the PRA process identified the health care facilities at the village. The sketch map identified two pharmacies in Sohan for a projected population of 24,328 ("Personal Communication with Assistant Census Commissioner Pakistan Bureau of Statistics," 2016). The sketch map also showed a total of four single doctor clinics<sup>10</sup>. It is suggested that the absence of leadership and inaccessibility to government offices renders peri-urban dwellers incapable of challenging health care inequalities (Adell, 1999). A33 who recently had a baby stated that there was only a single female doctor available for the entire female population in the village. She said that the women in the village sometimes have to find a way to see a female doctor in the nearby city for medical intervention. Those who do not afford to consult a doctor in the city have to hire a midwife in Sohan to assist in child birth. I have had an opportunity to meet the midwife in Sohan during my fieldwork. The midwife had no formal education

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<sup>9</sup> The sketch map was drawn entirely by the participants who were part of the participatory rural appraisal team. I added labels in English wherever it was appropriate. A22 helped me label important landmarks on the map in Urdu writing. The sketch map is presented in appendix IIB.

<sup>10</sup> According to the estimates of (*Country Case Study: Pakistan's Lady Health Worker Programme*, 2006) there is one physician for a population of 1225 people in Pakistan. Another survey (*Pakistan Economic Survey*, 2014-2015) reported that doctor-patient ratio has improved with one physician per 1073 patients, but none of these figures correspond to the doctor-patient ratio observed in Sohan village.

or professional training in the labour and delivery process. A33 revealed that the midwife knew very little about reproductive health and had often failed to handle serious medical situations.

Based on one research there were only 184,711 registered doctors for an estimated population of 194.63 million in Pakistan (*Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, 2015*). Another estimate suggested that there were only 684 rural health centers for a national rural population of 108.37 million (*Social Indicators of Pakistan, 2016*). The health centers located in Sohan could only treat minor aches and pains, stitch wounds and administer certain vaccinations.

To deal with insufficient health care workers comprising physicians, nurses, paramedics and qualified midwives the Ministry of Health in Pakistan introduced the 'lady health workers' force in 1994 (*Pakistan Nursing Council, 2015*). The aim of the lady health worker was to provide primary health care in rural and urban slum communities (*Country Case Study: Pakistan's Lady Health Worker Programme, 2006*). A22 and A33 stated that Sohan village was not assigned a lady health worker, which seemed plausible because according to Pakistan Nursing Council's estimates, for the current population of 194.63 million in Pakistan there were only 16,448 registered lady health workers in Pakistan (*Pakistan Nursing Council, 2015; Social Indicators of Pakistan, 2016*). A44, a school teacher, said that numerous women in the village suffer from diabetes, kidney stones and complicated pregnancies but there is no proper health care facility available in Sohan for

treatment. A number of women who suffered from kidney related issues in the village said that sometimes they cry through the night and wait for the kidney stones to pass on their own.

#### **4.5.1.7 Education**

The sketch map (appendix IIB) identified two schools in Sohan. Boys and girls in the village attended separate schools since co-education was unacceptable in Sohan. There was an elementary school for boys, which went up to eighth grade. There was also a private school for girls, which only provided primary school education (fifth grade). There was no high school (beyond eighth grade) or a post-secondary institute in Sohan. However, there was a vocational center in the village (indicated on the sketch map) that offered English and math classes to men, women and children. It also taught other skills to the local villagers including sewing, embroidery, cooking, hairdressing and makeup. A44 stated that the center paid each student 250 rupees (less than two GBP) per month to maintain enrolment but as the Ministry of Education terminated their funding in 2014 the center could no longer maintain their enrolment. Resultantly, the center lost almost all of its students including staff members.

I was informed that most children in Sohan were either never enrolled in school, or had been removed from school after finishing elementary education (eighth grade). Like A44, only a handful of young men and women had some college education, which they completed as distant students since there was no high school or college in the village. An economic survey found that the school enrolment in Pakistan was just 57 percent, which is

the lowest in South Asia (*Pakistan Economic Survey*, 2014-2015). In rural Pakistan, the current literacy rate among men was 65 percent, and that for females was 38 percent (*Academy of Educational Planning and Management*, 2014-2015; *Labour Force Survey*, 2014-2015).

#### 4.5.1.7.1 Girls' Education in Sohan

According to the 1998 demographic data (Table 4.1) the estimated literacy rate in Sohan was 55 percent, without making a distinction between males and females. Correspondingly, the 'national rural' literacy rate in 1998 among men was 46 percent, while that for females was 20 percent (*Population Census Organization*, 1998). Nevertheless, there are several factors that could account for lower literacy among females in rural Pakistan, as per current statistics. The consistently lower female literacy in Sohan can be explained by poor educational opportunities for girls in the village. Only 6 percent of the females in Sohan had elementary school education (eighth grade). A44, a schoolteacher, suggested that there was no progress made with respect to access to education in Sohan since the 1998 demographics. There was still a single primary school and no elementary school for girls in the village. A44 argued that the distance of schools from home and early marriages also prevented girls from obtaining education in the village.

In addition, the girls in Sohan were generally married off around the age of 14 or 15. The parents in Sohan seemed less interested in their daughters' education. I found that cultural constraints affected female participation in education. A33 explained, "*We don't send our*

*daughters to school because education would corrupt their minds and they wouldn't pay attention to household duties". A55 asserted, "Education will give her a big head, she will refuse to work at her husband's home".* The observations made in Sohan suggested that the older female siblings were generally expected to look after younger children in the household. It was not uncommon to see a ten-year-old girl looking after younger siblings at home, while the mother took care of other household responsibilities. Young girls in Sohan were also encouraged to begin cooking for the family from an early age. The idea was to prepare young girls for housekeeping responsibilities, while sending them to school was not a priority. Hence, the lack of education and employability skills among young women in Sohan naturally added to their financial dependency on their husbands later in life, making them vulnerable in their marriages.

#### 4.5.1.7.2 Deterrent to General School Enrolment in Sohan

It is estimated that in rural Pakistan the school dropout rate among male children is 23.7 percent, while among female children is 24.6 percent (Gulbaz Ali Khan & Shah, 2011). The findings suggested that poor economic conditions served as a major deterrent to educational attainment in Sohan. The children were expected to work as soon as they were physically able in order to meet the family's subsistence needs on a daily basis. A77 said that when children in Sohan are between the ages of six and eight years old they begin contributing to their household income by collecting empty bottles and plastic bags from trash heaps around the village to sell in the market for some cash.

Another factor that emerged as a deterrent to school enrollment in Sohan was the prevalence of corporal punishment in schools. One child explained, *“I want to help my parents with household expenses but our teachers beat us up for wearing torn and dirty uniform. My parents don’t afford a new uniform”*. In addition, the PRA participants suggested that the limited educational and work opportunities in Sohan had failed to meet the hopes and expectations of the parents in Sohan. A33, a mother of eight explained, *“I took my son out of elementary school, what is the point of education when he won’t find a decent job?”* Figure 4.3 (appendix IIA) shows school-age children sorting through trash in a garbage-dumping site in Sohan for empty bottles and other scrap material. Figure 4.4 (appendix IIA) shows a 12-year-old boy who dropped out of school to help his parents meet the monthly household expenses by selling firewood.

Although according to the local culture, husbands and fathers were perceived as providers in the family, it appeared that even young boys in Sohan were expected to support the family. Nevertheless, the observations made in the village during the PRA process suggested that the job prospects in Sohan were fairly poor. The parents did not feel that it was worth investing in the kind of education that was available in the village. Given the villagers’ immediate household needs, it was understandable why the local villagers had developed such negative attitudes towards education.

One inference that could be drawn from the existing educational scenario in Sohan is that segregation of boys and girls in school in the village may inhibit them from developing communication skills to effectively interact with the other gender. I believe that when

children are given an opportunity to interact with each other in a school setting, it allows them to learn from each other and develop an understanding. It is suggested that gender segregation at school may lead to gender stereotypical beliefs and attitudes towards the other gender later in life (Hanish & Fabes, 2013), which may shape their treatment of women in their adult relationships.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has attempted to describe the study site and the challenges faced by the villagers, including lack of educational opportunities, insufficient health care, prevalence of unemployment, etc. The chapter provided an overview of rural life and poverty in the village. The PRA process aided my understanding of the women's condition in Sohan and filled the data gap. This approach has also helped me understand how poverty and lack of resources may exacerbate domestic violence in the home.

## **Chapter Five: Findings on the Domestic Violence Experiences of Women in a Rural Pakistani Village of Sohan**

### **5.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter presents the findings of the thesis. It provides an insight into the lives of the participants with an emphasis on their marital life and experiences of domestic violence. This chapter is divided into parts that focus on the identified research theme areas related to the aims of this research. The chapter provides findings on the sociocultural factors contributing to domestic violence. It shares the observations made concerning the attitudes and risk factors surrounding domestic violence. Findings on the factors that influence the participants' decision to leave or stay in abusive marriages are also presented.

### **5.2 Introduction**

This study does not make prior assumptions regarding participants' experiences of domestic violence. Rather, the participants were allowed to define domestic violence the way in which they experienced it. The information collected from the participants was used to understand different aspects of the domestic violence experience including local sociocultural practices, attitudes and beliefs, risk factors and obstacles to escaping an abusive marriage.

The thematic maps presented in the chapter illustrate the themes associated with different aspects of domestic violence among women in Sohan. These themes are identified from participants' narratives. As alluded to earlier, the participant narratives were provided as

part of the data collection process including open-ended unstructured interviews. The participant narratives addressed the research questions defined in the study. The reoccurring concepts that emerged from the participants' accounts are identified as themes that piece together to form a comprehensive picture of their domestic violence experience. Note that several key theme areas were identified. It is acknowledged that other theme areas may also be relevant to the lives of the participants. However, those that are discussed in this chapter are considered to be most significant.

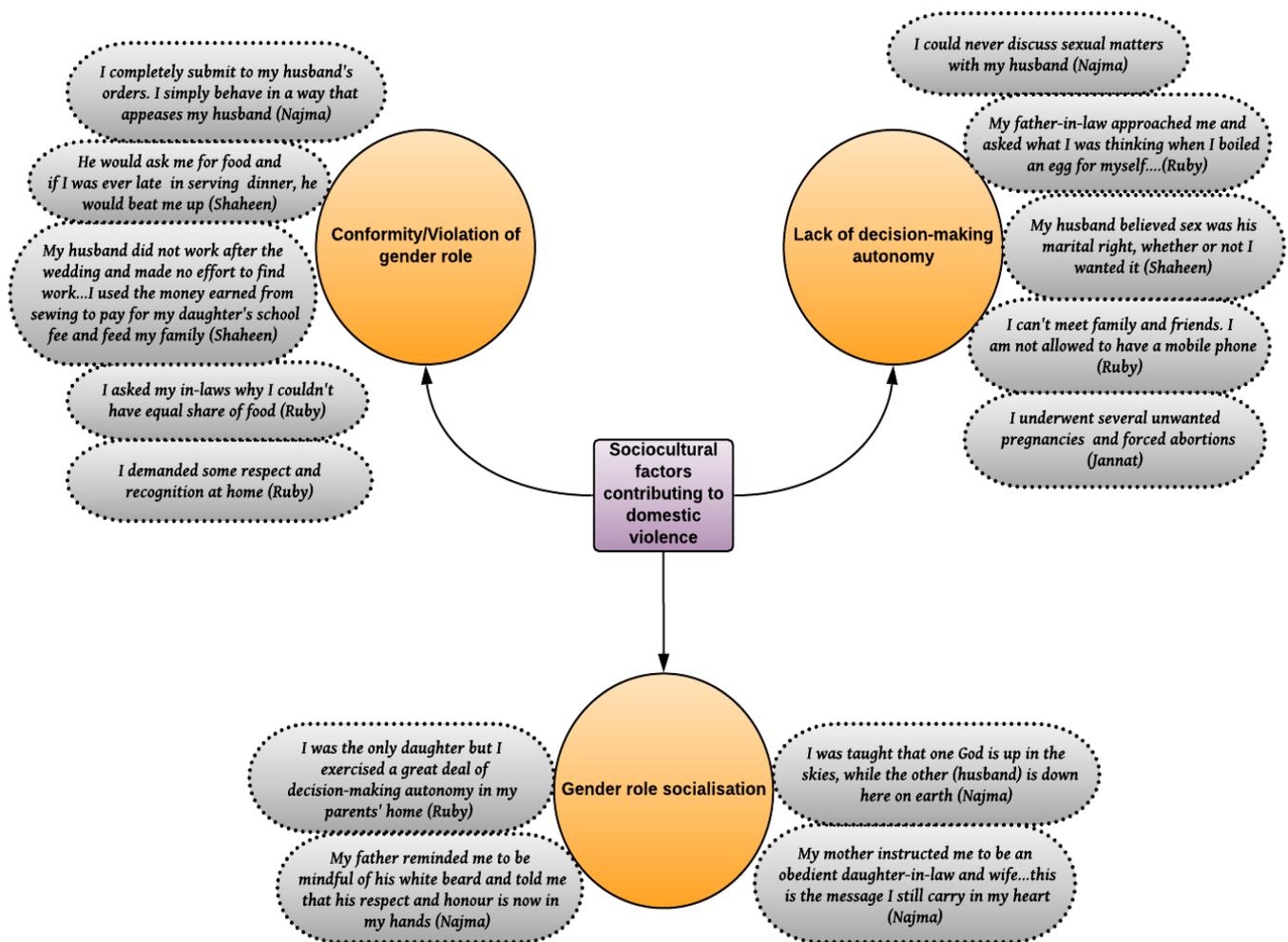
The quotations in *italics* represent participants' responses to illustrate the identified themes. The findings are then interwoven with evidence from literature. Note that the themes will be discussed according to the thematic analysis procedure described in section 3.10. Appendix IB summarizes the six steps involved in thematic analysis. The summary of the participant profiles is provided in section 3.10.2 for reference.

Just to reiterate, the findings do not reveal the identities of the participants or their relationships in the community. To maintain anonymity pseudonyms have been used. I have attempted to translate the participants' narratives, which originally were conveyed in Urdu, to the best of my ability. I have contextualised the content in my translations to provide the best possible interpretation of the participants' experiences. Please note that certain cultural expressions included in the quotations are explained in the footnotes.

## 5.3 Findings on the Sociocultural Factors Contributing to Domestic Violence

### 5.3.1 Thematic Map

**Figure 5.1:** A thematic map to illustrate the identified themes associated with sociocultural factors contributing to domestic violence



### 5.3.2 Key Observations

Three major themes from the interview content analysis are presented in this section.

#### *Theme One: Lack of Decision-Making Autonomy*

The findings of this study revealed that all four participants were excluded from household decision-making within their homes. A woman's decision-making autonomy is defined in the literature as "the control women have over their own lives – the extent to which they have an equal voice with their husbands in matters affecting themselves and their families, control over material and other resources, access to knowledge and information, the authority to make independent decisions, freedom from constraints on physical mobility, and the ability to forge equitable power relationships within families" (Jejeebhoy, Sathar, & review, 2001, p. 688). The observations made in this study showed that the participants' household decision-making autonomy included decisions concerning their reproductive choices, sexual availability to the husband, access to household resources and family income, purchases of daily household needs and visiting family and friends.

After careful analysis of Ruby's account, it became evident that she exercised limited control over household resources and lacked equal access to food. Ruby stated, "*My father-in-law approached me and asked what I was thinking when I boiled an egg for myself without being mindful of the limited supply of gas. I responded that everybody had breakfast in the morning and used up a little bit of gas then why can't I use some to boil an egg for myself. As soon as I said that I was slapped across the face*". Evidence from

literature resonates with this observation suggesting that the young daughter-in-law has limited autonomous control over the distribution of food and resources for daily basic needs, as these remain under the control of the in-laws in an extended family setup (Acharya et al., 2010; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). Ruby's account also revealed that her freedom of movement was severely constrained. She recounted, *"I can't meet family and friends. I am not allowed to have a mobile phone"*. These findings are supported by a suggestion that Pakistani women living in extended family structure have restricted mobility and are unable to retain their decision-making power and autonomy (Acharya et al., 2010; Kapadia et al., 2010).

Moreover, the observations made in the participants' accounts revealed that they were coerced into sex and prevented from using birth control. Shaheen recalled, *"My husband was ecstatic because getting me pregnant against my wishes was a big accomplishment for him"*. Similarly, Jannat underwent several forced abortions resulting in mental and physical health issues. Jannat explained, *"I underwent several unwanted pregnancies and forced abortions. Having an abortion conflicted with my religious beliefs, but my husband didn't care"*. These observations are consistent with the suggestion that a young married woman in a patriarchal Pakistani society is expected to surrender her reproductive rights (T. S. Ali et al., 2012).

Najma, Shaheen and Jannat's accounts further revealed that they were not even in a position to negotiate sexual matters in their marriages. Najma stated, *"I could never discuss sexual matters with my husband"*. She continued, *"my husband always pressurised me for*

*sex when I didn't want it because he believed that it was his right*". Shaheen said, "My husband believed sex was his marital right, whether or not I wanted it". Jannat responded, "He kept demanding that I satisfy (sexually) him in whatever way he wanted". These observations are consistent with the view that upon marriage a woman is expected to submit herself to her husband's desire (Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005).

It seems that women in Sohan are systematically prevented from establishing personal goals, making choices and becoming self-determined individuals. It almost appears as though these women are regarded incapable of making decisions about their lives. They are forcefully moulded into what the husband and the in-laws believe is acceptable. It can then be argued that a woman with constrained decision-making autonomy can become increasingly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in the husband's home.

### ***Theme Two: Gender Role Socialisation***

Both Jannat and Shaheen were raised by single mothers. Jannat's father did not provide for the family and passed away when Jannat was only eight years old. Shaheen's father was very abusive towards her mother and abandoned the family when Shaheen was ten years old. Both participants were raised in a single-parent family where their mothers were often away from home struggling to make ends meet. Part of their childhood socialisation process seemed to have included an awareness about what it was like growing up in a household with an absent father. They also seemed to be socialised to develop strategies to overcome oppression and enhance their survival skills. Even though Jannat and Shaheen

experienced feeling isolated and helpless in the absence of a father, they seemed to have learned to make connections with the outsiders to seek the support needed to survive. It can be argued that the lessons learned during childhood gender role socialisation process led Shaheen to become independent and create her own catering business in the absence of a man or a provider in her life.

Similarly, with the support network building skills Jannat developed during her childhood, she formed a relationship with a man outside of her marriage who supported her after she left her abusive husband. It can then be rationalised that being raised by a single mother in a patriarchal society helped Jannat and Shaheen to become stronger on their own. It may have also allowed them to get used to the idea of raising their children without a father, just as they were raised.

In contrast, growing up in a home with both parents, Najma was provided an opportunity to witness the relationship between her parents. Najma's mother was an active participant in her gender role socialisation process. The observations made here have revealed that Najma underwent a rigid gender role socialisation process as a child. It was during this period that Najma internalised a particular set of norms and values surrounding a woman's role in her husband's home. Najma recounted, "*My mother instructed me to be an obedient daughter-in-law and wife and to serve and submit. My mother advised me to learn to accept and tolerate my husband's atrocities and ignore his shortcomings. This is the message I still carry in my heart*". She continued, "*I was taught that one God is up in the skies, while*

*the other (husband) is down here on earth<sup>11</sup>*". Najma further explained, "*my father reminded me to be mindful of his white beard<sup>12</sup> and told me that his respect and honour is now in my hands*". This particular quotation implies that Najma's father directly associated his respect and honour with Najma's good behaviour in her husband's home.

The observations made here clearly indicate that subordination to the will of her husband was deeply ingrained in Najma's nature. These findings are supported by evidence from literature suggesting that in a patriarchal society the internalisation of a female subservient role is achieved through a process of childhood socialisation (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013; Chandra et al., 2003; Moghadam, 1992; Visaria, 2000; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). The observations also reinforce the idea that women socialised into rigid gender role are indoctrinated with subservient qualities making them more likely to accept victimisation in their marriage (Carlson, 1984; Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986; Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). This became evident when Najma stated, "*My mother advised me to learn to accept and tolerate my husband's atrocities ..... this is the message I still carry in my heart*".

Conversely, Ruby's childhood socialisation process was comparatively much more tolerant. She was valued as a daughter at home and her wishes were respected. Ruby's parents encouraged her to express her views on family matters. Ruby explained, "*I was the only daughter but I exercised a great deal of decision-making autonomy in my parents' home, contrary to the local cultural norms*". The tolerant childhood socialisation process

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<sup>11</sup> This quotation implies that in a patriarchal Pakistani culture husband is regarded as 'Godlike'.

<sup>12</sup> White beard in a Pakistani cultural context symbolises one's respect and honour.

seemed to have shaped Ruby's response to her abusive marriage. She challenged repression and abuse at her husband's home by standing up for her rights. Ruby stated, "*I demanded respect and recognition at home.....I asked my in-laws why I couldn't have equal share of food*". It can then be concluded that female gender role socialisation may be a strong predictor of a woman's response to abuse in her marriage.

### ***Theme Three: Conformity/Violation of Gender Role***

Gender role violations from a female perspective in Sohan include wife seeking greater decision-making autonomy which may involve participating in financial decisions, expecting equal treatment at home (and marriage), establishing personal goals, seeking higher education or employment opportunities.

The participants' accounts revealed that both Ruby and Shaheen engaged in gender role transgressions that appeared to have triggered acts of domestic violence against them. Ruby demanded respect, recognition and equal share in the household resources, which challenged the patriarchal imperative that seeks to subordinate women by minimising their needs over family's collective interests (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Madeline Fernandez, 2006; Pick, Contreras, & Barker-Aguilar, 2006). Ruby said, "*I asked my in-laws why I couldn't have equal share of food*". She continued, "*I demanded some respect and recognition at home*".

Similarly, Shaheen had a personal source of income, which challenged the culturally prescribed role for a wife that required her to be an efficient homemaker and a good mother (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001; Zakar et al., 2013). Shaheen explained, “*My husband did not work after the wedding and made no effort to find work*”. She continued, “*I decided to set up an independent source of income for myself and the family. I used the money earned from sewing to pay for my daughter’s school fee and feed my family, including my husband*”. This observation not only challenged the social construct of masculine identity that emphasises male role as a provider and breadwinner (Ambreen & Mohyuddin, 2013; R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Jewkes, 2002), it also challenged the desired image of a wife or a good mother in a patriarchal household, whose ideal role rests within the four walls of her husband’s home (Zakar et al., 2013). The observations made in Shaheen’s account are consistent with evidence from literature suggesting that a marriage in which a wife is a breadwinner can generate conflicts as she expects to assume a greater household decision-making role, which is primarily viewed as a male domain (Carlson, 1984).

In addition, evidence from Shaheen’s account is consistent with the view that working outside of home is considered a secondary role for a woman, while homemaking is supported as her primary role (Zakar et al., 2013). The violation of this has led to beatings from her husband as Shaheen explained, “*My husband would come home late after spending time with friends. He would ask me for food and if I was ever late in serving dinner, he would beat me up*”. It became evident that Shaheen’s husband expected her to

be an efficient homemaker and his behaviour towards her seemed to be influenced by his perception of what Shaheen's role in the marriage ought to be.

In addition, Shaheen seems to represent a woman who realised that she could be more than a housewife - a realisation that came from a thought that she could depend on herself for protection and finances (Sabanci, 2013). Shaheen stated, "*I live life like a man in the harsh and male dominated Pakistani society without any male support and I am proud of that*", which reflects the idea that despite societal disapproval a woman may realise that she can have her share of the world and become a contributing member (Sabanci, 2013). The observations made in Shaheen's account support the idea that women react differently to oppression based on how they perceive their own gender role and that we cannot search for a unified voice (Stewart, 1994). Shaheen's account is also consistent with Foucault suggestion that resistance is not just a matter of saying no to the authority, it is about challenging the dominant discourse and changing the system (Sabanci, 2013). Shaheen is a great example of how a woman in a patriarchal rural society of Pakistan can challenge the local gender norms and recognise her right to self-determination, even though she lives in a society that could not imagine the roles of a 'working woman' and a 'homemaker' to co-exist.

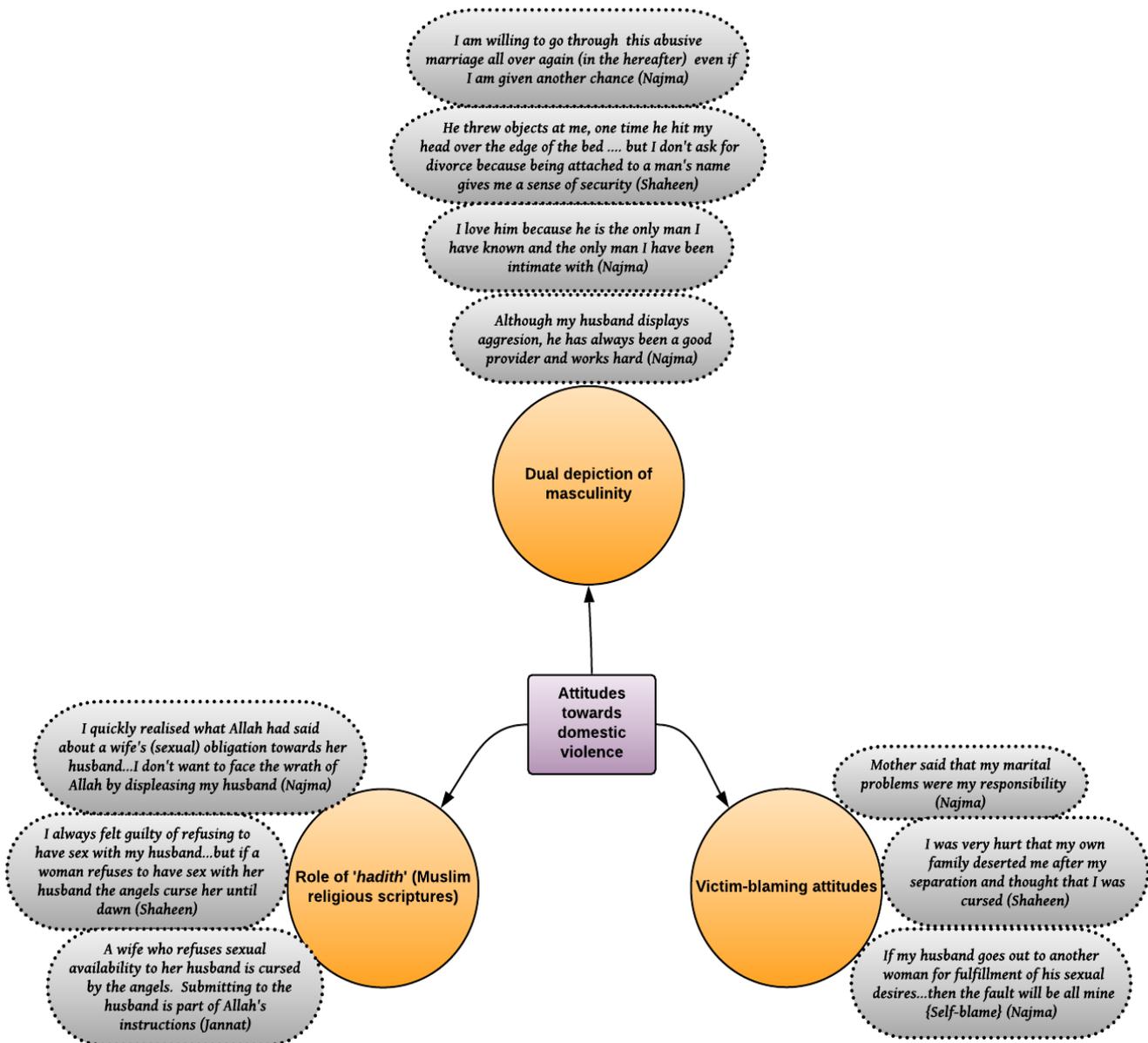
Nevertheless, Ruby and Shaheen's accounts clearly reinforce the idea that women are victimised by a necessity to conform to the culturally approved standards for a wife (Loseke, 1992). The observations also support the idea that a wife engaged in violation of norms associated with female role is placed at a greater risk of domestic violence (Fulu,

2013; Rani & Bonu, 2009; Yoshioka et al., 2001). However, Najma who was also forced to endure domestic violence did conform to the culturally prescribed role for a wife which required her to be an efficient homemaker, a good mother, an obedient and submissive wife (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001; Zakar et al., 2013). Najma confirmed, *“I completely submit to my husband’s orders. I simply behave in a way that appeases my husband”*. The observations made in Najma’s account suggest that although violations of gender norms may lead to conflicts at home, conformity does not protect women from being subjected to abuse in their marriages.

## 5.4 Findings on Attitudes Towards Domestic Violence

### 5.4.1 Thematic Map

**Figure 5.2:** A thematic map to illustrate the identified themes associated with attitudes towards domestic violence



### 5.4.2 Key Observations

Three major themes from the interview content analysis are presented in this section.

#### ***Theme One: Role of ‘Hadith’ (Muslim Religious Scriptures)***

The observations have demonstrated that Najma, Shaheen and Jannat’s beliefs about marital life were embedded in patriarchal religious scriptures. Conversely, Ruby did not use religious ideology to explain her experiences of domestic violence, nor did she rationalise any form of abuse based on religious principles. It is important to note that the three participants discussed under this theme viewed themselves as devoted Muslim wives who fulfilled their husbands’ sexual needs as part of their ‘wifely duty’. However, Ruby’s account did not present any evidence of sexual coercion in her marriage either. The literature presents strong evidence of a Muslim woman’s adherence to religious ideology in terms of her sexual availability to the husband. Had Ruby been subjected to sexual coercion in her marriage, there is a possibility that she would have justified it based on religious beliefs but this cannot be concluded with sufficient certainty. This theme, however, was not relevant in Ruby’s case.

Najma, Shaheen and Jannat all expressed immense fear of being subjected to severe religious implications for denying sexual access to their husbands. The observations made in this study have illustrated the impact of religious beliefs on participants’ attitudes towards sexual coercion in their marriages. Najma explained, "*I quickly realised what Allah had said about a wife's (sexual) obligation towards her husband and imagined that*

*one day I would face Allah and immediately stopped resisting... I don't want to be cursed by the angels". Najma continued, "I don't want to face the wrath of Allah by displeasing my husband".*

Shaheen recounted, *"I always felt guilty of refusing to have sex with my husband because of its religious significance. Sometimes I would have a dialogue with Allah justifying my refusal based on our poor financial condition and my inability to raise more children, but if a woman refuses to have sex with her husband the angels curse her until dawn".* Similarly, Jannat stated, *"If being sexually available and satisfying husband's sexual needs was not religiously enforced, I would have refused to have sex with my husband. I am terrified of being cursed by the angels for refusing to have sex with him".* She further argued, *"a wife who refuses sexual availability to her husband is cursed by the angels. Submitting to the husband is part of Allah's instructions".*

These observations are supported by a particular *hadith* (sayings of Prophet Muhammad) that stresses the wife's sexual availability to her husband. The *hadith* narrates, *"When a man calls his wife to bed and she refuses, and he spends the night being angry with her, the angels curse her till morning"* (K. Ali, 2006; El Fadl, 2001; Hoel, 2013; M. M. Khan, 1997). What struck me the most about this particular *hadith* was the kind of power it held over the women in Sohan. During the interview process I observed that the religious significance of *hadith* dominated the participants' thinking about sexual coercion in a marriage. It appeared that the *hadith* alone was enough to transform married women in Sohan into Foucault's docile bodies.

The participants' fear of religious implications in regards to their marital obligations resonates with another *hadith* that quotes, "*When a man calls his wife to bed and she fails to respond, then the God in the heavens is displeased with her until the husband is pleased with her*" (K. Ali, 2006; Tabrizi, 1981). Nevertheless, the evidence from data has demonstrated that patriarchal religious beliefs have had a great deal of impact on how battered women in Sohan responded to sexual coercion in their marriages. Their adherence to patriarchal religious beliefs about marital sex seemed to have put them at a greater risk for sexual coercion, which conforms with a suggestion that a Muslim woman who views marital sex as a religious duty might find it very difficult to resist sexual coercion in her marriage (Dialmy, 2010; Hoel, 2013).

The participants' reluctant conformity to the religious doctrine with respect to their sexual availability in their marriages can be compared with an analogy used by (Fromm, 1941), who stated that despite expressing a vague defiance, a child eventually submits to his strict father and gradually ends up becoming a good boy. It appears that the participants put up a weak resistance to the husbands' sexual advances but eventually give in to their demands based on their religious beliefs. The observations made here seem to conform to Foucault's suggestion that individuals engage in self-imposed conformity to the prevalent norms, especially in regards to sexuality (Pylypa, 1998). However, I believe that the participants' inability to prevent sexual coercion in their marriages led to their complete submission. The religious ideology may have simply been used to justify their compliance.

In addition, the Muslim scholars suggest that denying sexual access to the husband is considered punishable by God (Hoel, 2013), whilst Foucault viewed punishment in a positive light and emphasised that punishment awakens a righteous person in an individual who then naturally conforms to the rules (Schwan & Shapiro, 2011). This implies that punishment seeks to strengthen and restore an individual's 'inherent' but weakened resolve to adhere to the prevailing norms. However, this study has demonstrated that although Najma, Shaheen and Jannat appeared to have conformed to their husband's sexual needs, conformity did not arise from a dormant and inherent need to conform to their husband's sexual demands, as Foucault might expect. Rather, it arose from fear of religious consequences if they did not conform. This argument is supported by the following quotation from Jannat's account. She stated, "*If being sexually available and satisfying husband's sexual needs was not religiously enforced, I would have refused to have sex with my husband*".

### ***Theme Two: Victim-Blaming Attitudes***

Ruby was the only participant who did not talk about the societal victim-blaming attitudes, nor did she hold herself accountable for incidents of domestic violence in her marriage. The reason may lie in the fact that she grew up in a loving close-knit family in which there was recognition of her rights, comfort and privacy. This seems to indicate that positive childhood experiences with the parents may have influenced how Ruby viewed abuse in her own marriage. Consequently, she did not blame herself for the abuse she experienced in her marriage and also seems to have dismissed the prevalent victim-blaming attitudes.

However, the observations made in this study presented strong evidence of participants' subjection to 'self-blaming' or 'victim blaming' attitudes. Najma was perpetually involved in blaming herself for problems in her marriage. She explained, "*If my husband goes out to another woman for fulfilment of his sexual desires because of my constant refusals, the fault will be all mine and I will be held responsible for his infidelity*". Najma's account indicated that she chose to blame herself for not being cooperative in response to her husband's sexual demands, while her inability to avert sexual violence in her marriage was clearly demonstrated through her account, as she explained earlier, "*I could never negotiate sexual matters with my husband*". The observations made in this study are consistent with the view that when individuals lack the power to correct the injustice or suffering (Correia & Vala, 2003; Lerner & Matthews, 1967) they tend to engage in victim-blaming or take on excessive responsibility for the suffering (D. T. Miller & Porter, 1983).

Najma's tendency to hold herself responsible for the negative outcomes also aligns with the just world concept which implies that people get what they deserve (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Hafer & Olson, 1989; Mj, 1980). In her earlier account Najma suggested that if she continued to misbehave she would most likely be faced with the well-deserved outcome – husband's infidelity, which is a reflection of Najma's 'just world belief' suggesting that fate is self-inflicted and outcomes are well deserved (Bulman & Wortman, 1977; Correia et al., 2001; Dalbert, 2009; Dharmapala et al., 2008; Lerner & Matthews, 1967). It can be inferred from the observations made in Najma's account that the just world view which was identified as part of Najma's victim (self)-blaming attitude might have provided Najma with some sense of control in her marriage by making her believe that she

can improve the outcome of her marriage if she responded positively to her husband's sexual demands. Nevertheless, given the observed pattern of Najma's response to her husband's atrocities, it can be argued that her tendency to self-blame diminishes the accountability for her husband's actions and minimises his responsibility to co-create a healthy marital relationship.

The review of observations revealed that Najma's belief in the just world concept reinforced the desired skills and qualities needed to become Foucault's docile body. For instance, the believers of the just world concept assume that adverse events cannot occur without provocation (Pargament & Hahn, 1986) and can be attributable to individual behaviour (Correia & Vala, 2003; Dharmapala et al., 2008; Hafer & Begue, 2005; Hafer & Olson, 1989; Latta, 1976; Lerner & Matthews, 1967). Accordingly, the just world believer then acts like Foucault's docile body who engages in self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices by conforming to cultural norms, thereby participating in her own subjugation, much like Najma. Najma explained, *"I now remain silent in response to my husband's aggression. I make sure that I don't behave in a way that bothers him"*. Hence, this study contributes to the current body of knowledge by demonstrating that a battered woman's belief in the just world concept facilitates her transition into Foucault's docile body.

Next, Shaheen's account suggested that her siblings perceived her as a cursed woman because she could not keep her marriage together, even if it was an abusive marriage. Shaheen explained, *"I was very hurt that my own family deserted me after my separation and thought that I was cursed and would bring bad luck to others in the family"*. This

observation concurs with the literature suggesting that victim-blaming attitudes hold battered women responsible for creating undesirable circumstances in their marriages (Abraham, 1995; Henning & Holdford, 2006; Tang et al., 2002; Yamawaki et al., 2012).

Furthermore, Najma's account also revealed that the victim-blaming attitudes increased her own family's insensitivity towards her. This was demonstrated when Najma's family refused to extend any support and held her accountable for her own subjection to domestic violence. Najma recalled, "*Mother said that my marital problems were my responsibility*", which is consistent with a suggestion that a man's disappointment with his wife is viewed as a woman's failure to provide the care and attention needed to keep the husband calm and satisfied (Towns & Adams, 2000). Similarly, when Jannat's brothers found out that she was planning to divorce her abusive husband, they beat her up for dishonouring family honour. The observations made here also support the victim-blaming attitude suggesting that the onus falls on the woman to resolve problems resulting in her husband's violent outbursts (Gracia & Tomás, 2014).

### ***Theme Three: Dual Depiction of Masculinity and Perfect Love Discourse***

Najma's view of her relationship with the husband seems to be rooted in the social construct of masculinity and perfect love discourse. Najma asserted, "*I love him because he is the only man I have known and the only man I have been intimate with*". Najma also expressed a desire to be with her husband in heaven. She narrated, "*I am willing to go through this abusive marriage all over again (also in heaven) even if I am given another*

*chance and a free will to choose another spouse*”, conforming to Boonzaier and de La Rey (2003) ‘perfect love’ discourse emphasising a woman’s complete dedication to her marriage. Najma further reinforced the social construct of ‘dual depiction of masculinity’ by asserting, *“Although my husband displays aggression, he has always been a good provider and works hard”*. The dual depiction of masculinity represented Najma’s husband as an aggressor or a batterer one minute, while the next minute as a good and responsible provider, which is consistent with the dual depiction of masculinity concept described by (Boonzaier, 2008; Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Towns & Adams, 2000).

Next, Shaheen’s account revealed that she saw her husband as a violent man who beat her up until she was bruised, while also as someone who provided her with a sense of security. Shaheen explained, *“He threw objects at me, one time he hit my head over the edge of the bed, I was injured and bruised for days”*. Shaheen further said, *“a woman is incomplete and insecure without a husband.”* She continued, *“I don’t ask for a divorce because being attached to a man’s name gives me a sense of security”*. She further said, *“I will never ask for a divorce because I want to be awakened as his wife on the Day of Judgment<sup>13</sup>”*. The statements made by both Shaheen and Najma in regards to their afterlife seem to demonstrate that the perfect love discourse has shaped their views about life after death, in which they see themselves partnered up with their current abusive husbands. This aspect of perfect love discourse has not been explored in the existing literature.

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<sup>13</sup> Day of Judgement is a Muslim religious ideology which means afterlife or the hereafter.

The observations made in Najma and Shaheen's accounts support a suggestion that battered women adhere to the notion of dual depiction of masculinity and perfect love discourse in understanding their experiences of domestic violence (Boonzaier, 2008; Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001; Towns & Adams, 2000). It also reinforces the idea that women in a South Asian society are indoctrinated into believing that they are incomplete, and insecure without a husband (Niaz, 2003; Rabbani et al., 2008).

However, the observations made in this study challenge the suggestion that socially constructed discourses about masculinity and perfect love govern how women respond to domestic violence in their marriages (Towns & Adams, 2000). The current evidence from data provides no imminent support for this particular argument. The observations have rather illustrated that other factors such as not being employed outside of the home and possessing no other source of funds greatly influenced Najma's response to her abusive marriage. Her options were further limited by the presence of six dependent children. Similarly, among other important factors such as forced impregnation and husband's refusal to work, Shaheen's husband's secret marriage and infidelity greatly influenced how she responded to her abusive marriage. The social construct of masculinity and perfect love discourse seemed to have simply helped the participants view their husbands in a new light and cope with the abuse.

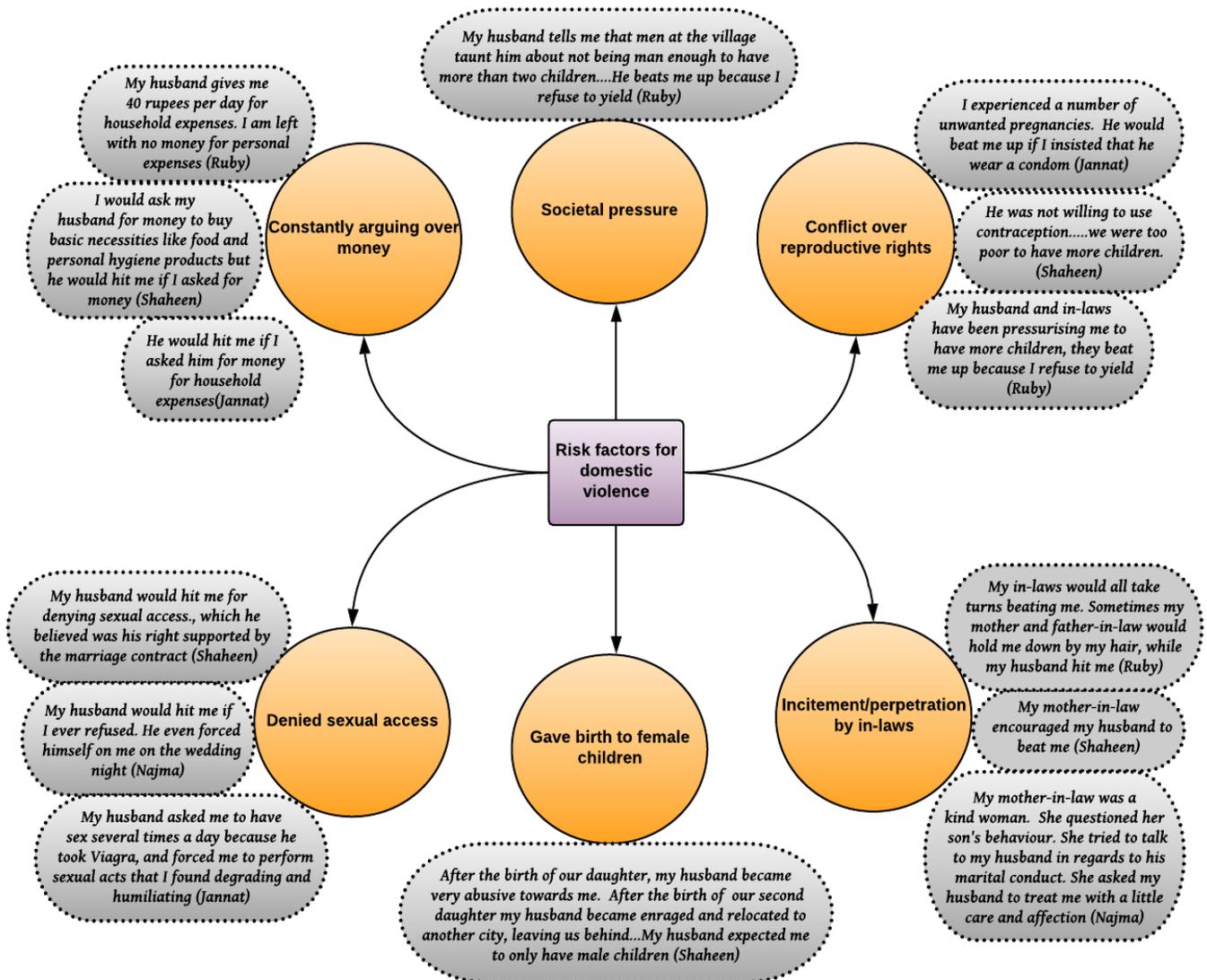
Moreover, the current literature presumes that battered women adopt the social narrative of masculinity and perfect love to facilitate the acceptance of domestic violence in their marriages (Boonzaier & de La Rey, 2003; Oyediran & Isiugo-Abanihe, 2005; Towns &

Adams, 2000). However, there is no direct evidence in the observations to completely support this suggestion. There are other possibilities that the literature does not consider that could have explained why Najma and Shaheen might have adopted the social construct of masculinity and perfect love discourse to understand their relationship with their husbands. First, they might have adopted the dual depiction of masculinity and perfect love discourse as a way to redefine their experiences of domestic violence to make their current situation appear more bearable than it really was. Second, these discourses may even have been used to mask the embarrassment and disappointment of not being able to stand up for themselves in an abusive marriage. Third, dual depiction of masculinity may also have been used as a coping tool to deal with their abusive marriages rather than as a way to accept the violence in their marriages.

## 5.5 Findings on Risk Factors for Domestic Violence

### 5.5.1 Thematic Map

**Figure 5.3:** A thematic map to illustrate the identified themes associated with risk factors for domestic violence



### 5.5.2 Key Observations

Six major themes from the interview content analysis are presented in this section.

#### ***Theme One: Incitement/Perpetration by In-Laws***

Please note that Jannat is not included in this theme because her husband's parents had already passed away when she got married. She lived in a nuclear family setup with her husband and two children. Her sisters-in-law were not involved in their family matters.

Ruby's account revealed that her in-laws were directly involved in the perpetration of violence against her. She explained, "*My in-laws would all take turns beating me. Sometimes my mother and father-in-law would hold me down by my hair, while my husband hit me*". Ruby's in-laws also appeared to encourage their son to maintain control over her. She recounted, "*my husband never called or came to see me or our daughter (for an entire year that Ruby had temporarily separated from her husband) because his parents forbade him from contacting me or to come and get me without their approval*".

Similarly, Shaheen's mother-in-law was also directly involved in perpetrating and inciting violence against her. Shaheen recalled, "*My mother-in-law constantly humiliated me over the small amount of dowry I had brought and took away all my possessions*". She continued, "*my mother-in-law encouraged my husband to beat me*". The observations made in Ruby and Shaheen's accounts have found a great deal of support within the literature. It conforms with evidence suggesting that the in-laws in a South Asian society

are often found to be direct participants in the perpetration of violence against the daughter-in-law (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Mitra, 2013).

The review of Shaheen's account has also identified 'dowry' as another risk factor for the perpetration of domestic violence. The evidence presented in Shaheen's account revealed that dowry played a critical role in triggering domestic violence against her, as the mother-in-law relentlessly humiliated her over insufficient dowry. These observations seem to resonate with evidence suggesting that the young South Asian bride is teased, harassed and sometimes subjected to acts of violence for bringing insufficient dowry (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Bhatti et al., 2011; Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; Hunnicutt, 2009; Krishnan, 2005; Niaz, 2003; Schuler et al., 2008; Shahzadi et al., 2012; Visaria, 2000; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007). It is worth noting that dowry only appeared as a risk factor in Shaheen's account. None of the other participants were subjected to violence over dowry related issues, even though all participants were from poor families who could only afford limited dowry.

However, news about dowry related violence is occasionally reported on the Pakistani television. One particular story that recently emerged from a small district in the Punjab province of Pakistan reported the tragic death of a newly wedded bride who was forced to drink acid for bringing insufficient dowry (News24, 2015). Although dowry related domestic violence did not appear as a significant risk factor in this study, the review of literature heightens the need to further understand the impact of dowry on young Pakistani women in their marriages. While there is a wide range of research available on dowry

burning in India (P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001), the current literature on domestic violence in Pakistan provides very little discussion surrounding dowry related violence in Pakistani households.

Conversely, Najma revealed that her mother-in-law was a protective influence in her marital life. Najma recalled, “*My mother-in-law was a kind woman. She questioned her son’s behaviour. She tried to talk to my husband in regards to his marital conduct. She asked my husband to treat me with a little care and affection*”. This observation is supported by evidence suggesting that the in-laws sometimes play a protective role against serious acts of domestic violence (Schuler & Islam, 2008; Zakar et al., 2012). The observations made in Najma’s account have demonstrated that living in an extended family system may not always be a risk factor for domestic violence, as Najma’s mother-in-law functioned as a loving parent rather than as an authoritative figure.

### ***Theme Two: Conflict over Reproductive Rights***

Najma is excluded from this theme because she never expressed dissatisfaction with her reproductive freedom. Najma’s account revealed that she strongly adhered to the primary role of a woman as a wife and mother. In addition, male children were considered highly desirable according to the local rural culture in Sohan. Consequently, Najma may have received some sense of recognition in knowing that she had given birth to six sons. Therefore, she never complained about having her reproductive freedom violated.

The other three participants expressed immense dissatisfaction over having limited reproductive autonomy and unintended pregnancies. Ruby's account revealed that she was denied access to birth control and healthy reproductive choices. Ruby explained, "*My husband and mother-in-law had been pressurising me to have more children, they beat me up because I refuse to yield*". Jannat's account illustrated that she had serious disagreements with her husband over her inability to make reproductive decisions. She explained, "*I experienced a number of unwanted pregnancies. He would beat me up if I insisted that he wear a condom*". Likewise, Shaheen's account revealed that she was denied the right to make independent decisions about her reproductive choices. She recounted, "*He was not willing to use contraception ..... we were too poor to have more children. He said that getting me pregnant makes him feel like a real man*". Jannat and Shaheen's accounts find support in the argument that there is a greater likelihood of unwanted pregnancies when sexual coercion is present in the marriage (Kapadia et al., 2009)

Evidence from literature supports this particular observation by suggesting that patriarchal perceptions define a woman in terms of her reproductive capacity (Abraham, 1998; W. K. Taylor et al., 2001; Zakar et al., 2013). The observations also find support in the suggestion that the reproductive rights of a young woman in a patriarchal society rest with her husband and the mother-in-law which can become a source of on-going conflict in a marriage (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Kapadia et al., 2010).

### ***Theme Three: Constantly Arguing over Money***

Another risk factor that appeared in Ruby, Shaheen and Jannat's accounts was insufficient funds for household expenses. Najma was the only participant whose husband had always been employed and was a good provider. Ruby explained, "*My husband gives me 40 rupees per day (less than one GBP per day) for household expenses. I am left with no money for personal expenses*". Ruby's narrative also uncovered her in-laws' control over their son's income as a risk factor for domestic violence. She reported, "*My husband gives a bigger share of his income to his parents*". This study has identified the in-laws' control over their son's income as an important feature of the Pakistani culture (and possibly South Asian) and a potential risk factor for conflict in a marriage, while this did not appear as a risk factor for domestic violence in the literature.

Likewise, Jannat explained, "*He would hit me if I asked him for money for household expenses*". To make matters worse, Jannat's husband retired just 12 years after their marriage. She explained, "*When my husband retired from work, we had absolutely no other source of income, we constantly fought over lack of funds*".

In contrast, Shaheen's husband willingly remained unemployed and refused to work, while Shaheen was the sole earner. She said, "*I would ask my husband for money to buy basic necessities like food and personal hygiene products but he would hit me if I asked for money*". Overall, these observations have demonstrated that financial hardship and insufficient household income is a strong determinant of conflict in the women's lives in

Sohan. These observations are consistent with evidence from a large body of published research indicating that financial pressures arising from husband's low-income or unemployment provide a reason for constant arguments between couples, increasing the likelihood of domestic violence (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; Carlson, 1984; K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Finkelhor, 1983; Hunnicutt, 2009; Jewkes et al., 2002; Loke et al., 2012; Visaria, 2000; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007; Worden & Carlson, 2005).

#### ***Theme Four: Denied Sexual Access***

Wife's denial of sexual access in a marriage is identified as another risk factor for the perpetration of domestic violence. Please note that apart from Ruby, the other three participants reported sexual coercion in their marriages. Ruby expressed satisfaction with the sexual aspect of her marriage, which excluded her from this theme. Shaheen said, *"My husband would hit me for denying sexual access, which he believed was his right supported by the marriage contract"*. Jannat explained, *"My husband asked me to have sex several times a day because he took Viagra and forced me to perform sexual acts that I found degrading and humiliating. He would hit me if I refused"*. Jannat continued, *"My husband would beat me up one minute and the next minute he would ask for sex. He said that sex and beatings are two separate activities which should not be tied together as both are need-based"*. Najma explained, *"My husband would hit me if I ever refused. He even forced himself on me on the wedding night and forcibly had sex with me"*.

The participants' denial of sexual access in their marriages appeared as a significant risk factor that almost always led to incidents of domestic violence. This observation seems to resonate with evidence suggesting that denying sexual access or not being able to sexually satisfy the husband is a strong risk factor for domestic violence (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Flynn & Graham, 2010; Fulu, 2013; Sayem et al., 2012; Smith, 1990; Yoshihama, 2002). This illuminates another important point. The fact that three out of four participants in this study were subjected to sexual coercion indicates the prevalence of sexual violence in the marriages of women in rural Sohan.

It appears that sex in Sohan is defined in terms of male sexual gratification. It is not perceived as a mutually fulfilling experience in a marriage. Based on the responses provided by the participants there appears to be no evidence of healthy sexual communication in their marriages. This also became evident during the interview process. Custom dictates that women in Sohan remain passive receptors of husband's sexual activity. During the interview process it was revealed that expressing interest in sexual pleasure was culturally inappropriate for women in Sohan. The idea was that women with good moral values are not interested in sex. However, they were expected to submit to the sexual needs of their husbands as part of their 'wifely duty'. It seems that the wives were expected to participate in sexual activity on demand, without having their psychological needs met. The observations made here suggest that the concept of 'male sexual entitlement' dominates the thinking about marital sex in rural society of Sohan. The wife seems to be treated as a sex object, not as an equal participant in sexual activity in a marriage. The idea of seeking sexual consent does not appear to be an option here. The

assumption was that upon marriage the woman has consented to sex with her husband for the complete duration of the marriage.

The observations made here resonate with Foucault's view that sexuality is the focus of power through which individuals can be controlled (Pylypa, 1998). Bordo (1989) suggested that body is the object and target of disciplinary power. She further said that any resistance to power must come from the woman's body since verbal expressions are suppressed. The results obtained here are congruent with these views as it appears that the participants were controlled through sex in their marriages and any verbal refusals were followed by a beating. The participants' responses suggested that sexuality is one aspect of their married lives they seem to have no control over.

#### ***Theme Five: Societal Pressure***

The participants' accounts revealed that they experienced the pressure of 'societal expectations' to conform in their marriages. Najma explained, "*Women in my society are not valued the same way as men.... a woman is not expected to have the desire for intimacy or love*". This may have forced Najma to behave in a way that appeases the society even if it meant suppressing her desires and needs in the marriage. Likewise, in response to the pressure from friends and family, Shaheen stopped dressing up or using cosmetics after separating from her husband. She said, "*I am constantly reminded that it is a sin to show off my beauty to men other than my own husband*". This study has demonstrated that societal pressure elicits conformity in a marriage and forces women to silently endure abuse

in their marriages. However, here I want to share how challenging societal pressure to conform can lead to incidents of domestic violence at home, as in the case of Ruby.

In Ruby's marriage the societal pressure triggered conflicts in her marriage as Ruby was the only participant who posed a challenge to the societal pressure to conform to her expected role of a mother. Ruby reported that her community's views about acceptable family size became a source of conflict in her marriage. She explained, "*My husband tells me that men at the village taunt him about not being man enough to have more than two children*". She continued, "*He beats me up because I refuse to yield*".

Ruby's husband's perpetration of domestic violence in this situation aligns with the societal expectations of a man who is in control of his home and surroundings (Wilson, 2014). The husband's violent outburst in reaction to public shaming over his inability to convince his wife to have more children reiterates the notion that societal pressures stemming from cultural norms function as a trigger for instigating violence between couples (Bell & Naugle, 2006; Carlson, 1984). This observation also highlights the role of community and friends in shaping the attitudes of rural Pakistani men towards female reproductive choices. Evidence from current literature falls short of explaining the role of community and neighbours in inciting violence in patriarchal households.

This study has demonstrated that battered women in Sohan not only had to live up to the expectations of their husbands, but also to the expectations of their local community. It is important to note that neighbours or local community members in Western societies may

not influence how individuals view their marital role in a marriage. However, in Pakistan people generally live in close-knit neighbourhoods where individuals are expected to conform to the community standards. During the fieldwork I observed that people in Sohan expressed a strong sense of connection with their neighbours. Therefore, societal pressure appearing as a risk factor came as no surprise to me.

### ***Theme Six: Gave Birth to Female Children***

Despite limited observations made in the participants' accounts on this theme, it was important to share my findings about women's experiences of abuse over their failure to produce male offspring. My conversations with the women in Sohan village during fieldwork suggested that families in Sohan had a strong preference for sons over daughters. I discovered that in Sohan, a wife's failure to bear male offspring was accepted as grounds for divorce or husband's second marriage. Having sons was viewed as a sign of masculinity, while having female offspring was considered a sign of weakness. The desire to have male offspring seemed to be embedded in the local cultural ideology that men occupy a superior position in the society. Sons were also viewed as a source of economic security for aging parents, making this theme increasingly relevant for this study.

Since this study used a small sample size, this particular theme only appeared in one participant's account. It just so happens that the other three participants had sons. Ruby's account revealed that she already had one son but was being forced by the husband to have more children. Jannat had two sons and Najma was a mother of six sons. Even though this

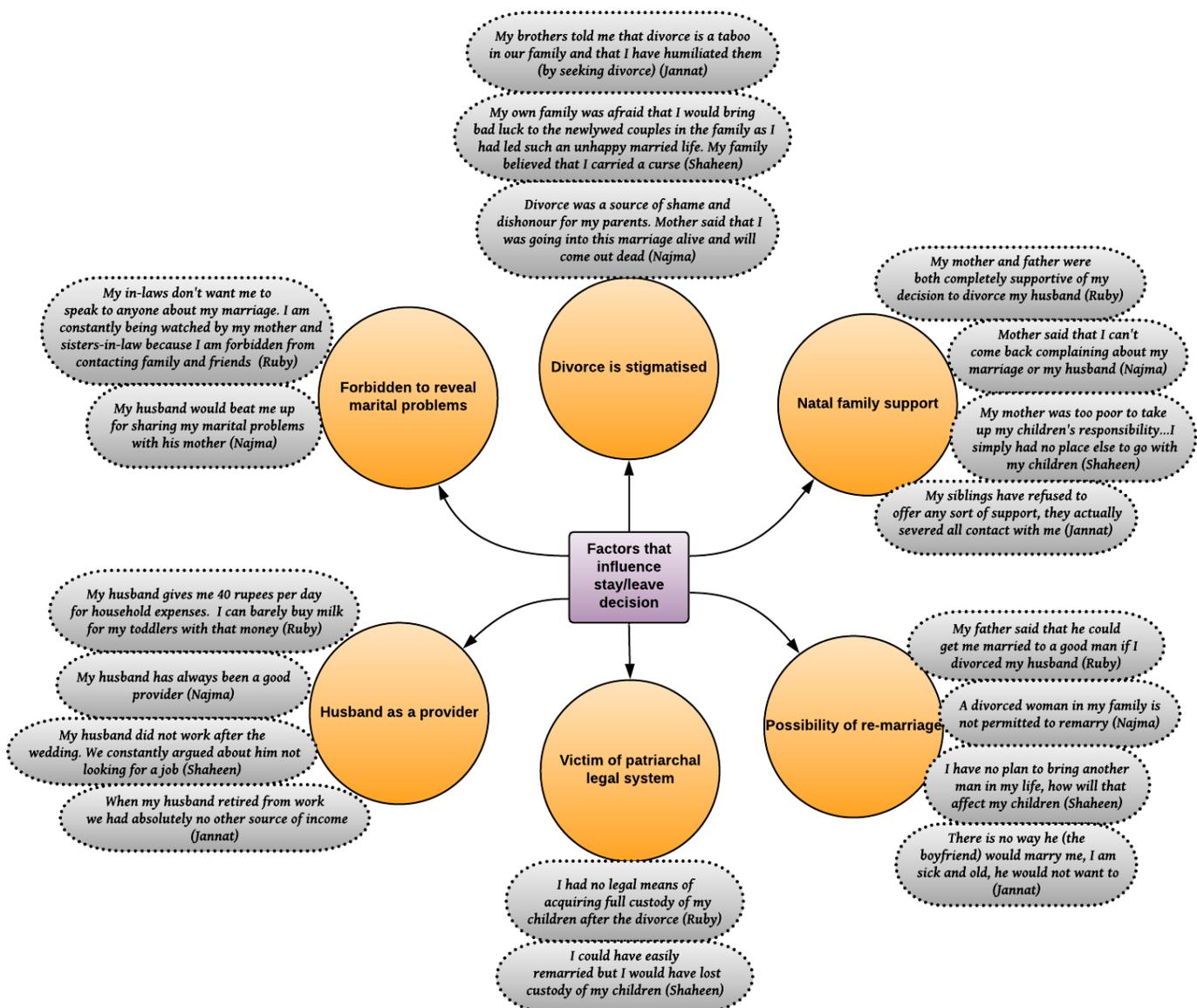
theme appeared only in Shaheen's account due to the fact that other participants already had sons, the observations made in Shaheen's account suggested that her failure to produce male child subjected her to abuse in her marriage.

Shaheen's account revealed that she faced constant taunts and humiliation for giving birth to three girls. Shaheen's husband blamed her for her inability to produce male offspring. He felt disappointed, emasculated and ashamed of having female children. Shaheen explained, "*After the birth of our daughter, my husband became very abusive towards me*". She continued, "*after the birth of our second daughter my husband became enraged and relocated to another city, leaving us behind*". This observation is supported by evidence suggesting that women in the patriarchal Pakistani society are generally subjected to taunts and pressure if the first child is a girl and worsens if the second child is also a female (P. A. Ali et al., 2014; T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Bhatti et al., 2011). Shaheen further explained, "*My husband expected me to only have male children*", which is consistent with the view that a woman who only gives birth to female offspring is not living up to her expectation of a good wife (Sheehan & Samiuddin, 1994). The disappointment of Shaheen's husband over gender of their baby daughter also reinforces the idea that in patriarchal societies males occupy a privileged position in relation to females (Hindin, 2003; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007).

## 5.6 Findings on Factors that Influence Leave or Stay Decision in an Abusive Marriage

### 5.6.1 Thematic Map

**Figure 5.4:** A thematic map to illustrate the identified themes associated with factors that influence stay or leave decision in an abusive marriage



### 5.6.2 Key Observations

Six major themes from the interview content analysis are presented in this section.

#### *Theme One: Natal Family Support*

Ruby was the only participant in the study who enjoyed both financial and moral support of her parents, in the event that she leaves her husband. Ruby said, “*My mother and father were both completely supportive of my decision to divorce my husband. They offered me to live with them along with my two children*”. She continued, “*although my parents were very poor, they could not let me go through so much abuse and torture at my husband’s home*”. The observations made here seem to demonstrate that the availability of natal family support is a critical factor in determining a battered woman’s decision to leave her abusive marriage, which is consistent with the view presented by (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; Kapadia et al., 2010).

By contrast, Najma was instructed by her natal family to accept the abuse in her marriage and remain with her husband under any circumstances. Najma explained, “*Mother said that I can’t come back complaining about my marriage or my husband*”. She further said, “*mother advised me to learn to accept and tolerate my husband and his shortcomings*”. The observations made in Najma’s account may be supported by evidence suggesting that the mothers in patriarchal societies often advise their daughters to mould themselves according to the wishes of their husbands (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Carlson, 1997; Waldrop & Resick, 2004; Yoshihama, 2002). Similarly, Jannat’s account revealed that she provoked an

undesirable reaction from her siblings when she tried to abandon her abusive marriage. Jannat recounted, *“My brothers beat me up so savagely that it fractured my leg, I still walk with a limp. My siblings have refused to offer any sort of support, they actually severed all contact with me”*. The observations made here are reminiscent of the view that when battered women from patriarchal societies decide to seek divorce they may not always be accepted by their natal families (A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Lateef, 1990; Schuler et al., 2008).

In addition, evidence from literature also suggests that sometimes natal families are too poor to support their divorced daughters with children and are therefore left with no other choice but to send them back to their abusive husbands (A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Lateef, 1990; Schuler et al., 2008). This can be illustrated by Shaheen’s account. Shaheen explained, *“My mother was too poor to take up my children’s responsibility...I simply had no place else to go with my children”*.

The participants’ responses obtained here demonstrate that women in Sohan viewed their families as the ‘first line of defence’ in responding to their abusive marriages. Ruby viewed her family as the main pillar of support, whilst Shaheen and Jannat lacked that support. However, Shaheen and Jannat eventually left their abusive marriages despite lack of natal family support. One possible explanation the literature appears to have overlooked is that in the absence of natal family support, battered women tend to explore and identify personal resources they can rely on. For example, both Shaheen and Jannat drew motivation and emotional support from their adult children. Shaheen could also rely on

her personal source of income, while Jannat depended on her intimate partner for financial aid. The support that was available from other sources enabled them to leave their abusive husbands, which demonstrates that while natal family support is viewed as the 'first line of defence' – in the absence of which other sources of support can be identified.

### ***Theme Two: Husband as a Provider***

Najma was the only participant who claimed that her husband was a good provider and that he had never been unemployed. She explained, "*My husband has always been a good provider*". Unlike the other three participants, Najma's account contained no evidence of conflicts over money issues. The review of observations revealed that Najma's husband had complete control over the family finances. Not being employed outside of the home and possessing no other source of funds made it more likely for Najma to remain in her abusive marriage. Her options were further limited by the presence of six dependent children. Hence, to avoid experiencing a decline in her living standard and financial security for herself and the children, Najma seems to have decided to remain with her abusive husband. Evidence from literature resonates with this observation suggesting that battered women are less likely to leave their marriages, especially if the husband is a good provider (Davis, 2007; Loke et al., 2012) and the woman is completely dependent on him, as is the case here.

Conversely, Ruby's husband worked but withheld his income from her. Ruby explained, "*My husband gives me 40 rupees (less than one GBP) per day for household expenses. I*

*can barely buy milk for my toddlers with that money*". The observation made here revealed that Ruby's husband failed to provide for the family. It seems that Ruby's financial needs remained unmet in the marriage. Similarly, Jannat's husband was a low-wage worker who retired during the last few years of their marriage. Jannat recounted, "*When my husband retired from work, we had absolutely no other source of income, we constantly fought over lack of funds*". Ruby's account revealed that she had already made one unsuccessful attempt to leave her husband, while Jannat had already terminated her abusive marriage. These observations conform with evidence suggesting that battered women whose husbands are inefficient earners appear dissatisfied with their marriages and are more likely to leave their husbands (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Davis, 2007; Lesser, 1990; Loke et al., 2012).

The observations made in Shaheen's account challenge this view. Although Shaheen remained dissatisfied with her marriage, the decision to separate from her abusive husband was not contingent on her husband's refusal to find work. Shaheen's account illustrated that her husband willingly remained unemployed throughout their marriage. She said, "*My husband did not work after the wedding. He slept, ate, socialised with friends or wanted sex. We constantly argued about him not looking for a job.*" However, Shaheen still remained committed to her abusive husband for 19 years. One possible explanation could be that unlike other participants who relied solely on their husbands' income, Shaheen had her own personal source of income making her financially independent. This seems to imply that a woman's financial dependency on her husband is a far more significant

predictor of a woman's decision to stay in her abusive marriage, as oppose to her husband's ability to provide for the family.

### ***Theme Three: Divorce is Stigmatised***

With the exception of Ruby, all three participants were subjected to views stigmatising divorce. The discrepancy may lie in the possible relationship between the availability of natal family support and the diminished sensitivity towards social stigma associated with divorce. The observations made in the participants' accounts suggested that unlike other participants, Ruby enjoyed complete support of her parents in the event that she decided to seek divorce. Ruby's account also showed no evidence of being affected by the prevalent social stigma associated with divorce.

Although there is no previous study that establishes a relationship between strong natal family support and a diminished sensitivity towards social stigma associated with divorce, evidence from this study supports a possible link between these two variables. The literature does not consider why the support of natal family might desensitise battered women to social stigma attached with divorce. However, it can be rationalised that the feeling of being understood by the natal family might help a battered woman separate herself from the social stigma associated with divorce. This means that with the support of a natal family the battered woman may realise that the stigma associated with divorce does not define her identity or image in the society. Secondly, the feeling of being

understood by the natal family may also help a battered woman view divorce as a challenge that can be overcome.

Third, the natal family support during the time of divorce challenges the traditional social norms that expect parents to discourage their daughter from seeking divorce. Hence, it can be inferred that battered women who have the availability of the natal family support become desensitised to the social stigma and shame associated with divorce as they begin to redefine their role in the society with the support of their natal families.

However, the findings suggested that Najma, Shaheen and Jannat were all subjected to different views stigmatising divorce. Through a childhood socialisation process Najma internalised a set of values stigmatising divorce. She said, *“Divorce was a source of shame and dishonour for my parents”*. She continued, *“mother said that I was going into this marriage alive and will come out dead<sup>14</sup>”*. It appears that the idea that divorce carries a stigma was learned early in Najma’s childhood, and was carried through to adulthood. The observation made here seems to conform with evidence suggesting that the social stigma associated with divorce may keep battered women in a patriarchal society from leaving their abusive marriages (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Ellsberg et al., 2001; D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Loke et al., 2012; Mitra, 2013; Naved et al., 2006). Moreover, the observations made in Najma’s account have uncovered the limitation of existing literature in understanding the extent to

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<sup>14</sup> Cultural ideology which means that a woman’s life and death should all take place in her husband's home. This is synonymous with the idea - ‘Till Death Do Us Part’.

which a battered woman's childhood socialisation process surrounding marital life and divorce influences her decision to remain in an abusive marriage.

Shaheen's account demonstrated that after separation Shaheen's natal family saw her as a curse and kept her from participating in family wedding rituals, lest she passes on the curse onto other young women in the family. She explained, "*My own family was afraid that I would bring bad luck to the newlywed couples in the family as I had led such an unhappy married life. My family believed that I carried a curse. I was asked to stay away from participating in the wedding rituals. Divorce is a major source of shame and dishonour for a woman in our community*". She continued, "*being perceived as a married woman will protect me from taunts and unwanted attention of other men*", which is reinforced by a suggestion that in a South Asian culture marriage determines a woman's social status and grants her certain rights and privileges (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2004; Mitra, 2013; Sayem et al., 2012). Although the observations made in Shaheen's account support the suggestion that divorce tarnishes a woman's reputation and image in a patriarchal society (Chandra et al., 2003; Naved et al., 2006; Visaria, 2000; Wahed & Bhuiya, 2007), it did not deter Shaheen from seeking separation from her abusive husband. However, the observations made in Shaheen's account reinforce the idea that in patriarchal societies women are constantly reminded of the price they might have to pay for breaking up the marriage (Madeline Fernandez, 2006).

Similarly, Jannat's brothers accused her of disgracing the family by seeking divorce. She explained, "*My brothers told me that divorce is a taboo in our family and that I have*

*humiliated them*”, which is consistent with the finding that divorce is considered unacceptable in a Pakistani society (P. A. Ali et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the observations made in Shaheen and Jannat’s accounts are irreconcilable with the view that the social stigma associated with divorce keeps battered women in a patriarchal society from leaving their abusive marriages (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Ellsberg et al., 2001; D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Loke et al., 2012; Mitra, 2013; Naved et al., 2006).

As Foucault suggested, individuals get their cues from the ‘strategic environment’ (culture wide understanding of a particular phenomenon) and respond accordingly (D. Taylor, 2010). Sohan’s strategic environment can be described by a suggestion that divorce is simply not a socially acceptable option for a good woman (Cash, 2011; Visaria, 2000). Consequently, the husbands in Sohan seem to be responding to this strategic environment that associates stigma with divorce. This might encourage a potentially abusive husband in a patriarchal rural society to continue to perpetrate violence against his wife due to the cultural understanding that the wife will be reluctant to divorce him.

#### ***Theme Four: Possibility of re-marriage***

Ruby was the only participant in the study whose parents supported the idea of ‘remarriage after divorce’. She stated, “*My father said that he could get me married to a good man if I divorced my abusive husband, but it would entirely be my choice*”. Conversely, Najma, Shaheen and Jannat could not envisage the possibility of remarriage after divorce. In fact,

Najma's family traditions forbade remarriage for divorced women. Najma explained, "*A divorced woman in my family is not permitted to remarry*".

Similarly, Shaheen narrated, "*I have no plans to bring another man in my life, how will that affect my children*". Jannat's account revealed that she had an intimate partner but there was no possibility of re-marriage. She explained, "*There is no way he (the boyfriend) would marry me, I am sick and old, he would not want to*". Nevertheless, Shaheen and Jannat with no future prospect of re-marriage left their abusive husbands, while Ruby who was given the freedom to remarry did not appear to be motivated by that possibility. Ruby's main concern was to get herself and the children to a less hostile and peaceful environment. This might suggest that the prospect of finding a future partner may not have a significant impact on a battered woman's decision to leave her abusive husband, unless she is looking for someone to either share or carry her financial responsibility. Hence, the observations made in this study stood in stark contrast to the suggestion that a woman's decision to leave an abusive relationship is influenced by the prospect of being able to find a suitable partner for re-marriage (Bell & Naugle, 2006; Krishnan, 2005; Schuler et al., 2008; Yamawaki et al., 2012).

#### ***Theme Five: Forbidden to Reveal Marital Problems***

Ruby and Najma's accounts revealed that they were both subjected to restrictions forbidding them to discuss their marital lives with others. Najma explained, "*My husband would beat me up for sharing my marital problems with his mother*". These observations

find a great deal of support in the view that patriarchal social and cultural norms strongly discourage battered women from sharing details of their marriage (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Wilson, 2014). The observations also resonate with the finding that domestic violence is considered a private matter and therefore women are encouraged to remain silent about their marital problems (T. S. Ali, Asad, et al., 2011; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Horsburgh, 1995). Hence, it can be inferred that in a patriarchal society of Sohan women will be less likely to report domestic violence due to cultural barriers, which to a great extent is responsible for rural women's perpetual subjection to domestic violence.

Similarly, Ruby's in-laws maintained constant supervision over her to make sure that she did not contact anyone about the issues surrounding domestic violence at home. Ruby explained, "*My in-laws don't want me to speak to anyone about my marriage*". She further said, "*I am constantly being watched by my mother and sisters-in-law because I am forbidden from contacting family and friends*". Ruby's account in particular conforms with the finding that a young woman in a patriarchal society is met with severe reaction from her in-laws if she attempts to share her experiences of domestic violence with others (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Spiegel, 1996).

Hence, the observations made in this study have demonstrated that in Sohan women could potentially bring shame upon their families (including the in-laws) by publicly criticising the husband, challenging his authority or by asking for a divorce. The evidence from data is further reinforced by a suggestion that the enforced secrecy surrounding family issues

discourages outside intervention (Bhat & Ullman, 2014; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983; Rabbani et al., 2008).

***Theme Six: Victim of Patriarchal Legal System (Child Custody Laws)***

Please note that Najma and Jannat are excluded from this theme. There was a considerable difference between Jannat and her husband's age. Jannat considered leaving her husband when he was over 65 years of age and had retired from work. Jannat's husband's poor health further contributed to his inability to claim custody of their sons. Due to these special circumstances, Jannat was not constrained by the existing child custody laws. In contrast, Najma never considered leaving her husband at any point in her marriage and so the patriarchal child custody laws were not relevant in her case.

However, Ruby and Shaheen appeared to be secondarily victimised by the patriarchal legal system in Pakistan. Fear of losing custody of children was one of the reasons Shaheen avoided seeking legal divorce from her husband, but remained separated from him. Shaheen explained, *"I was very young and could have easily remarried but I would have lost the custody of my children"*. Similarly, Ruby's account demonstrated that her decision to remain in an abusive marriage was greatly influenced by the patriarchal nature of Pakistani legal system. After a yearlong separation from her husband the inability to acquire child custody forced Ruby to return to her abusive husband. Ruby explained, *"My father even saw a lawyer to find out if I could obtain full custody of my children as I was considering divorce. The lawyer informed my father that Pakistan's legal system allows*

*the father to obtain full custody of the children in case of divorce*". She further said, *"I had no legal means of acquiring full custody of my children after divorce"*.

The observations made in this particular scenario are consistent with evidence from literature suggesting that in patriarchal South Asian legal system women are more likely to lose custody of their children which deters them from seeking divorce (A. Khan & Hussain, 2008; Schuler et al., 2008). It seems that Ruby's husband and in-laws may have used the children as leverage to get her to submit, which is exactly what was observed as Ruby returned to her abusive husband for the sake of her children. This situation is reminiscent of Bordo (1989)'s suggestion that hegemonic forces maintain their power through a network of practices and institutions. This observation is further reinforced by Foucault's view that power finds a new way to reassert itself when confronted with resistance. Foucault said, "power can retreat here, re-organise its forces, invest itself elsewhere...and so the battle continues" (Foucault, 1980, p. 56). Nevertheless, the result obtained here conforms with a suggestion that the institutional unresponsiveness serves as a major barrier to a woman's departure from an abusive marriage (Horton & Williamson, 1988; Hutchison & Hirschel, 1998; Mitchell & Hodson, 1983).

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined personal responses of the participants to the experiences of abuse and oppression in their marriages. The participants' feelings, thoughts and explanations regarding their marital lives were represented by direct quotations, which illustrated the identified themes. It was found that the participants who exercised limited household

decision-making autonomy at home became increasingly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in their marriages. The findings suggested that a woman indoctrinated with subservient qualities is more likely to accept domestic violence in her marriage. The observations made in the study demonstrated that religious beliefs and societal expectations dominated the participants' thinking about marital sex. Denying sexual access and conflict over reproductive rights were most commonly occurring risk factors in the participants' accounts. The chapter focused on a number of factors that influenced the participants' decision to leave or stay in their abusive marriages. The lack of natal family support and uncooperative legal system emerged as the most significant determinants of a woman's decision to stay in her abusive marriage.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

### **6.1 Chapter Overview**

The previous chapter has evaluated the participants' responses to understand their experiences of domestic violence. It looked at a number of factors that influenced and contributed to the women's experiences of oppression in the home. There are, however, still some issues and ambiguities that need to be identified and explained. This chapter explores and re-examines the relationship between certain variables that may influence how women experience domestic violence in their marriages.

### **6.2 Introduction**

It is important to mention that the existing domestic violence literature generally assumes that all women have common domestic violence experiences living under patriarchy and fails to address factors that set them apart from each other (Abraham, 1995). The literature seems to overlook the 'uniqueness' of each domestic violence situation. The observations made in this study have shown that it is important to identify the 'subtle differences' between the domestic violence cases because these differences will show how women might react differently to abuse in their marriages. The results obtained in this study have also shown that even if a group of women all live in the same patriarchal society, their experiences of domestic violence and oppression can vary. It was discovered that patriarchal women's experiences of domestic violence can differ based on their occupational status, availability of natal family support and other supportive networks including a reliable extra-marital relationship, abusive/supportive in-laws. The women

also responded differently to abuse in their marriages based on their own personal beliefs and expectations of a marital relationship. The domestic violence literature, however, attempts to understand a relationship between two or more variables to determine how a woman might respond to abuse but tends to ignore the less obvious factors that might make a significant difference in the battered woman's life.

### **6.3 Religion as a Framework for Understanding Domestic Violence**

The feminist theory situated the problem of domestic violence in the social context it occurred. The feminist theory was useful because it focused on dominance, gender and power (Hunnicut, 2009), features which were evident in all relationships in Sohan village. Foucault's theory of power was also used to understand domestic violence in rural Pakistan. Foucault's theory allowed me to see how power was exercised over rural women through a set of internalised cultural and religious beliefs. However, the examination of participants' accounts demonstrated that Islamic religious scripture was a tremendously useful framework for understanding experiences of domestic violence among rural Muslim women in Pakistan.

The common knowledge of religion among Muslims is often based on patriarchal interpretation of religious discourse (Ammar, 2007). The Islamic religious discourse seems to adopt the structure of Foucault's Panopticon prison. According to Foucault's account the prisoners in the Panopticon assumed that they were under the watchful eye of the prison guards but were not completely sure when and by whom as the guards were invisible to them (Danaher et al., 2000; Fraser, 1981). Correspondingly, the patriarchal Muslim wife

seems to believe that she is incessantly visible to God and that her actions are constantly being judged by God, even though God is not visible to her. This idea is consistent with the view that the Panopticon prisoners are not really constrained by the Panopticon, but by the manipulation of their own thought process which tells them that they are being monitored and therefore engage in self-disciplinary practices (Muckelbauer, 2000). Similarly, in response to the belief that God is watching, the Muslim wife engages in self-surveillance and self-disciplinary practices, thereby subjugating herself in a marriage, which conforms with a pattern of behaviour described by Foucault (Pylypa, 1998).

It is this idea of the ‘invisibility’ of God and the Muslim wife’s belief in being constantly ‘visible’ to God that holds tremendous power over a Muslim woman. This idea can be explained by Foucault’s view suggesting that “In discipline, it is the subjects who have to be seen. Their visibility assumes the hold of the power that is exercised over them. It is the fact of being constantly seen, of being able always to be seen, that maintains the disciplined individual in his subjection” (Foucault, 1977, p. 187). Foucault further said that “disciplinary power, on the other hand, is exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility” (Foucault, 1977, p. 187).

Foucault stated that conformity to norms emerges from creation of a discourse that depicts the norms as good and rewarding (Pylypa, 1998). Upon examination of the Islamic scripture, it was recognised that ‘religious discourse’ transforms the ‘religious norms and practices’ from coercive to a source of freedom and harmony in a marriage. For example,

the following Islamic scripture called *hadith* supports Foucault's view that discourses are created to regulate behaviour of individuals and achieve conformity (Nicolson, 2010): *"Any woman who dies when her husband is pleased with her, will enter Paradise"* (Majah). This particular *hadith* resonates throughout the Muslim Pakistani society and advocates that an obedient wife is not only successful in this life but also triumphant before God on the Day of Judgment<sup>15</sup> (Zakar et al., 2013). Consequently, Islamic religious discourses are internalised by women leading to self-monitoring and conformity (Pylypa, 1998). Therefore, it was determined through observation in this research that the participants' belief in the religious scripture was a great predictor of how they experienced and responded to abuse in their marriages.

### **6.3.1 Religion as a Coping Strategy**

The observations made in this study revealed that patriarchal religious ideology was deeply rooted in the rural society of Sohan. Conversations with the locals revealed that the life of a typical Muslim in Sohan was organised around the notion that what matters is what happens in the afterlife. This life was believed to be a temporary abode, which was simply viewed as preparation for the next life. The women in Sohan explained that when a woman is placed in a bad marriage, she is given an opportunity by God to prove herself worthy of heaven. My observation of Najma's account revealed that she viewed herself as someone who was actively working towards an ultimate goal – heaven and eternal bliss. She said, *"I have completely withdrawn myself from this life and now focus on what the afterlife would be like, my mind remains preoccupied with thoughts surrounding fate in the*

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<sup>15</sup> The hereafter or the afterlife

*afterlife*". This observation has demonstrated that Najma seems to use religious-based coping strategies to deal with abuse in her marriage.

Religious coping is considered useful when the individual has exhausted all other social and personal resources (Pargament, Ano, & Wachholtz, 2005), which is supported by evidence presented earlier in Najma's account demonstrating that when her only supporter, her mother-in-law passed away, she was simply left to choose from non-confrontational coping strategies to deal with her husband's violence. Najma's reliance on religious coping in the absence of any external support also reinforces the idea that God is perceived as a supportive partner (Pargament et al., 1990) and an only source for a solution (Grzymała-Moszczyńska, 1996; Pargament et al., 1988) lessening a woman's feeling of isolation in an abusive marriage (Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003). This was demonstrated when Najma said, "*I only have God to confide in*".

In addition, Najma's religious coping mechanism seemed to have given her some sense of hope and control, if not in the current life, then the next, as she emphasised that she now focuses on the peace she will find in the afterlife. This observation conforms with the suggestion that women who endure domestic violence expect to be compensated for their suffering in the afterlife (K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Hassouneh-Phillips, 2003; Hathaway & Pargament, 1991; Schuler et al., 2011). It can be argued that Najma's religious coping pattern may be an extension of her avoidant and passive cognitive coping approach with a focus on afterlife, which is consistent with the religious coping described

by (Grzymała-Moszczyńska, 1996; Pargament et al., 1988; Spilka, Shaver, & Kirkpatrick, 1985).

Religious coping also seems to have facilitated Najma to justify and accept violence in her marriage. She explained, *“It is my religious obligation to serve and submit to husband’s orders... after all it is my duty as a wife - I don’t want to face the wrath of God”*. The observation made here is consistent with evidence suggesting that religious coping helps the victim rationalise and accept the negative events in life rather than continually trying to find ways to alleviate them (Hathaway & Pargament, 1991). This idea seems to be related to a situation in which a battered woman develops a fatalistic approach as a coping strategy to help her accept domestic violence as part of her fate (Rabbani et al., 2008).

It seems that evidence from literature fails to recognise a relationship between religious coping and a fatalistic approach to life. However, this study contributes to the current body of knowledge by demonstrating that Najma’s dependence on religious coping may be rooted in her belief that there was nothing else she could do to prevent violence in her marriage (fatalistic thinking). She explained, *“I don’t know if I could have done anything different to improve my marriage. Women are ‘bebas’ (helpless). It’s not right how women are treated but that’s just how it is, what can you do?”* It can be rationalised that Najma’s dependence on religious coping may have increased after developing a ‘fatalistic’ approach to life. The review of observations seems to support this reasoning. The account revealed that Najma had exhausted all avenues of redress, especially after the death of her supportive mother-in-law (as discussed earlier). Only then did she accept that there was nothing else

she could do to prevent negative events in her marriage (fatalistic approach), and turned to religion as her primary coping tool. Hence, given the observed pattern of Najma's coping strategy, it can be concluded that the presence of a 'fatalistic belief' is a strong determinant of a battered woman's reliance on religion as a coping tool.

Moreover, Shaheen's religious coping approach resembled a belief in the 'just world concept' discussed earlier in section 2.8.2.2. Her account revealed that she wanted to be compensated for her suffering. Shaheen said, "*I want to be awakened as his wife on the Day of Judgment [afterlife] so that I can hold him [husband] accountable for my plight before Allah*". This reinforces the idea that a 'just world believer' expects to be compensated for his or her ordeal in the afterlife (Dalbert, 2009). Hence, this research also contributes to the knowledge about the 'just world concept' being an integral part of a battered woman's religious coping strategy that allows her to believe that happiness is inevitable, albeit in the afterlife. Hence, religious based coping was revealed as a very unique feature of the non-secular society of Sohan village.

#### **6.4 Learned Helplessness**

The concept of 'learned helplessness' is rooted in the idea that the victims of domestic violence experience a diminished sense of personal control that may lead to feelings of powerlessness and helplessness preventing them from leaving their abusive marriages (Umberson, Anderson, Glick, & Shapiro, 1998). The learned helplessness construct "helps one understand the psychological changes in battered women that partially account for their staying in abusive relationships" (L. E. Walker, 1989, p. 697). The concept of learned

helplessness was first discovered in a laboratory where it was found that in response to repeated electrical shocks the animals became passive and unable to escape the painful shocks, even when escaping the situation became possible (Seligman, 1972). Seligman likened the learned helplessness to a situation in which after repeated exposure to violence battered women appeared to lose the perceived ability to escape the abusive relationship (L. Walker, 1984).

The concept of learned helplessness became evident in observations made in this study. Najma's account revealed that she made several suggestions about feeling immense helplessness in her marriage. She expressed feeling incapable of controlling events and circumstances in her life. Najma repeatedly said, "*We women are 'bebas' [helpless]*". This observation resonates with the view that learned helplessness arises from the lack of motivation to emit new responses (Strube, 1988). She continued, "*I don't know if I could have led a different life or done anything different to improve my marriage. It's not right how women are treated but that's just how it is, what can we do?*" Najma also said, "*I have no choice but to deal with his anger...I simply behave in a way that appeases my husband*". This observation is consistent with the suggestion that "in the absence of a belief that responses will determine outcomes, the individual has no incentive to emit new responses in the future" (Strube, 1988, p. 243).

These observations present evidence of Najma's belief that the situation was beyond her control and that she gradually chose to become submissive in response to her husband's atrocities. This is consistent with evidence from literature suggesting that a battered

woman experiencing feelings of helplessness may appear passive in response to domestic violence and accept it as a fulfilment of her expectations as a wife (Fisher & Gondolf, 1988). Najma's learned helplessness may have also given rise to her feelings of inadequacy and resignation. It appeared as though Najma had given up trying to improve her relationship and silently endured the pain. Najma's account conforms with evidence suggesting that the diminished sense of control emerging from 'learned helplessness', makes it more difficult for a battered woman to leave her abusive partner (Umberson et al., 1998; L. E. Walker, 1989).

In addition, Najma spoke about the rigid gender role expectations instilled in her through the childhood socialisation process. Her account suggested that she was predisposed to a number of gender-oriented teachings as part of her childhood socialisation process that potentially bound her to her abusive husband. Evidence from literature supports this observation by suggesting that the rigid childhood socialisation and sex role stereotyping further reinforces a sense of 'learned helplessness' among battered women (Bell & Naugle, 2006; L. E. Walker, 1983).

### **6.5 The Relationship between Education and Risk of Experiencing Domestic Violence**

Jewkes (2002, p. 1425) found that "high educational attainment of women was associated with low levels of violence" in an intimate relationship. She explained that education becomes a source of empowerment for women by providing them with the ability to identity support networks and resources that they can use to protect themselves from abuse in their marriages. Simister and Makowiec (2008) argued that higher education contributes

to higher status of a woman, which may reduce her risk of experiencing domestic violence in the marriage. This is consistent with Tenkorang et al. (2013) and Brown (2014) who found that women with higher education are less likely to experience domestic violence compared to those with no education.

However, the researchers have emphasised that a relationship between education and risk of experiencing domestic violence is complicated (Simister & Makowiec, 2008). Simister and Makowiec pointed out that it would be less likely for an educated woman to view violence in a marriage as a reasonable or an acceptable option to resolve disagreements. This implies that there is some recognition that a woman's rejection of husband's aggression may reduce the risk of domestic violence in the marriage (Simister & Makowiec, 2008). However, the results obtained in this study have demonstrated that Ruby who only had a grade 5 education (primary school) rejected violence perpetrated against her in the marriage but she was still subjected to domestic violence in her husband's home. In addition, Jannat who was the most educated in the group with a Bachelor's degree also rejected her husband's use of violence against her, but she too was faced with severe violence in her marriage. This demonstrated that a woman's education level or her rejection of abuse are not significant determinants of the risk of experiencing domestic violence in a marriage.

Moreover, Simister and Makowiec (2008) found that 'both' husband and wife's education is an important factor in reducing the risk of domestic violence in a marriage, emphasising that a man's education level is also important. They argued that more educated households

may be less likely to experience stress due to poverty because education may allow them to secure better paying jobs. Tracy (2007) adds support to this view by pointing out that men who abuse women are generally less educated and fall in the low-income group. Smith (1990) also adds some support to this argument by suggesting that less educated men are more likely to subscribe to a patriarchal ideology and therefore are more often found to engage in abusive behaviour towards their wives. The observations made in this study have shown that Najma and her husband were both uneducated but were financially stable. However, Najma still experienced severe violence in her marriage. On the other hand, Jannat who was an educated woman, while her husband had no formal education frequently fought over lack of household income. Although Jannat was educated, she could not find regular full-time work due to her disability.

Nevertheless, there seems to be no direct connection between both husband and wife's education, their financial condition and the risk of experiencing domestic violence. Evidence from literature resonates with this observation suggesting that domestic violence is not limited to the poor and uneducated (Critelli, 2012). Further support comes from evidence suggesting that 93% of the urban educated couples interviewed in Pakistan reported experiencing some form of domestic violence in their marriages (Shaikh, 2003) which reinforces the idea that either partner's education level is not a significant factor in reducing the risk of domestic violence.

In regards to a woman's education level and her decision-making autonomy, the observations made in the study have revealed that Najma was the least educated participant

with no schooling, while Jannat received a Bachelor's degree from a local college. However, the education level did not appear to have any positive impact on Jannat's ability to participate in the decision-making process in the home or prevent incidents of domestic violence. This is consistent with Brown (2014) who found that a woman's lower decision-making autonomy in a marriage may lead to higher level of violence. Hence, the observations made in Jannat's account suggested that regardless of educational attainment, she remained vulnerable to her husband's abuse. She was subjected to sexual violence and experienced several unwanted pregnancies, a finding that stood in stark contrast to a suggestion that incidents of unwanted sex in a marriage decline as the number of years of schooling increases among women (Santhya et al., 2007).

The observations made earlier in Jannat's account also revealed that undergoing several forced abortions resulted in poor health and abortion related complications, which opposes the view that in patriarchal societies women with higher education are more likely to participate in decisions regarding their personal health (Acharya et al., 2010; Senarath & Gunawardena, 2009). Hence, Jannat's account seems to challenge the suggestion that added years of schooling give women an increased marital power to divert conflicts through enhanced decision-making autonomy and better skills of negotiating matters in their marriages (Jejeebhoy, 1998; Santhya et al., 2007; Shahzadi et al., 2012; Tenkorang et al., 2013; Yount & Carrera, 2006).

One possible explanation provided in the literature is that advancement in a woman's education may threaten gender norms giving rise to male insecurity culminating in

infringement of decision-making autonomy, thereby increasing the risk of domestic violence (Hornung, McCullough, & Sugimoto, 1981; Jin et al., 2014). This may be consistent with Jannat's account who had a college degree, while her husband was uneducated. However, Tracy (2007) argued that men do not need to be uneducated and low wage earners in order to be insecure. Conversely, Najma had no education and did not present any challenge to her husband's authority but still lacked decision-making autonomy and was subjected to domestic violence at home. It appears that education level hardly explains a woman's ability to participate in household decision-making or reduce the risk of experiencing domestic violence. This means that a number of other factors including social and cultural expectations, norms and personal circumstances must be considered to determine a woman's risk of experiencing domestic violence. Therefore, a woman's education level cannot alone determine whether she will gain a decision-making autonomy or reduce the risk of domestic violence in her marriage.

## **6.6 Possible Reasons for being Subjected to Domestic Violence**

The feminists believe that male violence is driven by a need for power and control (D. G. Dutton, 1994). The dominant domestic violence discourse suggests that men perpetrate violence in response to their feelings of diminished control in a marriage or in other aspects of their lives (Umberson et al., 1998). However, results obtained by Umberson et al. (1998) are inconsistent with the belief that men perpetrate domestic violence to enhance their sense of control. They found that perpetrating violence was not associated with a reduction in personal control. M. P. Johnson (1995) supported this view by suggesting that 'situation or common couple violence' is a form of violence in which conflict occasionally gets out

of hand, escalating into minor verbal abuse or a more serious form of violence. He argued that 'situational couple violence' is perpetrated in response to the need to control a specific situation, rather than controlling the wife. In addition, other researchers such as Kasian and Painter (1992) have found that women exhibited more controlling behaviours than men in a sample of 1625 dating couples.

Zakar et al. (2013) argued that men perpetrate domestic violence in response to their own patriarchal beliefs about male and female roles in a marriage. They found that boys internalise masculine and violent behaviours through patriarchal gender role socialisation process, which leads to acceptance and normalisation of domestic violence. Male internalisation of hegemonic masculine norms was manifested in an account of a participant in a study conducted by (Zakar et al., 2013). This particular participant seems to describe the need to reprimand or punish his wife based on how he viewed his role in the marriage. He stated, "Some women need sweet pill (persuasion through love), some need bitter pills (threat of violence), and in some cases you go for surgery (physical punishment)" (Zakar et al., 2013, p. 11).

However, Zakar et al. (2013) identified an important contradiction in how men perceived domestic violence in the patriarchal society of Pakistan. They found that some men viewed domestic violence as a 'cowardly act', while others viewed it as a necessary means to assert authority and control over the wife. This contradiction pointed to the fact that not all patriarchal men held attitudes accepting or justifying domestic violence (Zakar et al., 2013). Much of the domestic violence incidents described by the participants in my study

suggested that the domestic violence incidents occurred in response to the participants' inability to conform to their expected patriarchal gender role in a marriage. This implies that they were subjected to domestic violence whenever their husbands or in-laws felt that they failed to meet their cultural expectations of a good wife and daughter-in-law.

In addition, Hunnicutt (2009) proposed that weaker men resort to aggression and violence to restore their perceived loss in masculinity by reinforcing their position of power in a marriage. Umberson et al. (1998) provides support to this argument by suggesting that men may perpetrate violence in response to perceived threat to their masculinity. Hunnicutt (2009) also suggested that male violence may be linked to a man's inability to fulfil the role of an economic provider. However, the observations made in Najma's account challenged these views. Najma's husband appeared to have met the societal expectations of what it meant to be a man. Najma's husband was a good provider. He was a successful man who was well respected in the village community. He appeared to be in control of his marital life and was a father of six sons. Yet, he still used violence to resolve disagreements in his marriage.

Hence, the observations made in Najma's account indicated that domestic violence may not necessarily be used as a means to compensate for a man's inability to achieve the societal expectations of masculinity. In fact, domestic violence may also be used by men who appear to be successful and in control of their lives. One must look at other sources of discontent and hostility in the marriage. It can also be argued that Najma's husband may have had an excessive need to control individuals and events in his life or perhaps he

viewed aggression as the only effective way to resolve disagreements in his marriage. Findings for a study conducted by Hindin (2003) resonate with this argument suggesting that in a patriarchal society violence may be seen as an acceptable way to resolve disputes and maintain authority. There is also a possibility that Najma's husband exercised little self-restraint when dealing with conflicts in life, which is consistent with Umberson et al. (1998)'s view suggesting that men who exercise little self-control may perpetrate violence in their marriages. D. Dutton and Golant (2008) offered another explanation. They argued that most abusive male behaviour stems from feelings of powerlessness which may find its origin in the man's early childhood experiences.

### **6.7 Positive and Negative Reinforcements that Underpin a Woman's Leave or Stay Decision in an Abusive Marriage**

Researchers have identified a number of factors influencing a woman's decision to leave an abusive marriage. Among the many factors recognised, financial dependence on the husband is identified as a significant factor in determining a woman's decision to stay in or leave an abusive marriage (Bornstein, 2006). Findings from Schuler et al. (2008) indicated that lack of legal recourse and support networks force women to stay with their abusive husbands. Furthermore, women may also be influenced by societal norms and perceptions in addition to their own internalisation of rigid gender role attitudes discouraging them from leaving their abusive marriages (Krishnan, 2005). Other reasons such as stigma associated with divorce (Madeline Fernandez, 2006), lack of natal family support (P. A. Ali et al., 2014) and an increase in the frequency and severity of abuse (Gelles, 1976) also force battered women to remain in their abusive marriages. In addition,

L. Walker (1984) found that psychological factors such as low self-esteem and learned helplessness influence a battered woman's decision to leave her abusive husband. Hence, these study findings have demonstrated that a woman's decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage is influenced by a combination of situational, personal and environmental factors (K. B. Miller, Lund, & Weatherly, 2012).

In order to further aid understanding of a woman's leave or stay decision in an abusive marriage Bell and Naugle (2006) introduced a concept of 'negative and positive reinforcements'. They defined reinforcements as "the presentation or removal of a stimulus that results in an increase in the future frequency of a behaviour" (p. 30). Generally speaking, positive reinforcements strengthen the behaviour (Bell & Naugle, 2006). They suggested that when a woman returns to her abusive husband, she is praised for working out her marriage. She returns to a familiarity of her current relationship, gains the lost sexual intimacy and acceptance of family and friends. Conversely, negative reinforcements associated with leaving the marriage may include lost social support, loss of sexual intimacy, increase in frequency and severity of abuse upon return and possible isolation (Bell & Naugle, 2006).

The observations made in this study have demonstrated that the participants' lives were too complex to be fully explained within the positive and negative reinforcement framework described by Bell and Naugle (2006). However, these reinforcements might have had an emotional impact on the participants without having any significant effect on their leave or stay decisions. For instance, Shaheen's account revealed that she missed the lost sexual

intimacy with her husband after separation, while Jannat lost contact with her siblings after the divorce. Ruby on the other hand was faced with stricter restrictions upon returning to her husband, but none of these reinforcements appeared to have a significant impact on the participants' decision to leave or remain in their abusive marriages. The participants' stay or leave decisions were more likely guided by reality on the ground such as natal family support, alternative source of income, child custody issues, etc.

### **6.8 The Influence of Participants' 'Self-Talk' on their Response to Abusive Marriages**

Although published research has not considered a battered woman's 'self-talk' as a way to determine her response in an abusive marriage, this study has established that the participants' 'self-talk' provided significant clues about how they 'intended' to respond to their abusive marriages.

Theodorakis, Weinberg, Natsis, Douma, and Kazakas (2000, p. 254) described self-talk as "what people say to themselves either out loud or as a small voice inside their head". Hackfort and Schwenkmezger (1993, p. 355) defined self-talk as "a dialogue [in which] the individual interprets feelings and perceptions, regulates and changes evaluations and convictions, and gives him/herself instructions and reinforcement". Hardy, Gammage, and Hall (2001) further make a distinction between positive and negative self-talk. Hardy et al. (2001, p. 312) said that, "positive self-talk refers to encouragement or talk that one can be successful, while negative self-talk is self-critical or represents an inability to succeed". The idea is that an individual's focus on the desired thought may lead to the desired behaviour or outcome (J. J. Johnson, Hrycaiko, Johnson, & Halas, 2004).

This study has identified the participants' positive and negative 'self-talk', through which they expressed their thoughts and feelings surrounding their abusive marriages. It appeared as though through their self-talk the participants gave themselves instructions in regards to how they would respond to their abusive marriages. In doing so, the participants seem to reflect upon the situation at hand and their role in shaping their experiences. For example, Ruby's positive self-talk suggested that she sees a glimmer of hope despite being faced with obstacles in leaving her abusive marriage. Ruby drew strength and inspiration from her aunt's success as a single parent, and found comfort and relief in her parents' support. Ruby said, "*My aunt's example gave me a lot of confidence in a woman's ability to survive on her own, without having a man in her life*". She continued, "*although my parents were very poor, they could not let me go through so much abuse and torture at my husband's home*". By verbalising her thought process, Ruby is reassuring herself that she can make it on her own after the divorce. Ruby is also expressing her trust in her parents' support by suggesting that whatever happens her parents will be there to help her out. The words used in Ruby's self-talk are important because they give her the courage, she needs to survive the tough times she anticipates as a single parent.

Conversely, Ruby's negative self-talk suggested that she may have begun to second guess herself and that she may be considering an alternative in case she fails to leave her abusive marriage. Ruby's negative self-talk also indicated that perhaps she feels overwhelmed and defeated. She stated, "*Now I mostly keep my opinions to myself and refrain from participating in arguments. I have stopped protesting; I watch my words*".

Najma's account revealed that she did not engage in any positive self-talk. Her entire self-talk consisted of negative messages. Najma stated, "*It is not right how women are treated but that's just how it is, what can we do? I have no choice but to deal with his [husband's] anger*". She further explained, "*We women are bebas [helpless]. Patience is the key for a woman*". Najma's negative self-talk demonstrated that she had become non-confrontational in her marriage. She seemed to have lost all hope and may have concluded that the given situation will not change. The words used in Najma's negative self-talk emphasised her feelings of powerlessness and lack of control in the marriage.

It is important to note that the participants' 'self-talk' script seems to be shaped by their religious views, personal beliefs and circumstances, and existing obstacles and challenges faced by them in a rural patriarchal environment. Nevertheless, the participants' 'self-talk' suggested that there is a strong relationship between what individuals say to themselves and their behaviour, which is consistent with the view presented by (Burnett, 1996).

### **6.9 Number of Years of Marriage**

It is suggested that "the more time and effort the woman invests, the harder it becomes to give up without success and the less likely that a battered woman will leave the relationship" (Strube, 1988, p. 241). In addition, in a study conducted by Strube and Barbour (1984) it was found that among 177 women who left their abusive partners, the length of relationship became a significant influence on their decision to leave the abusive relationship. The participants' accounts revealed that Najma who had been married for 26 years made no indication of leaving her husband. In contrast, Shaheen and Jannat who

were married for 19 and 12 years respectively, had already left their marriages. Ruby, who had been married for four years, made an attempt to terminate her abusive marriage but was unsuccessful due to issues surrounding child custody. These observations appear to be consistent with the suggestion that the longer a woman lives in a marriage, the more she will be committed to making it work (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Bell & Naugle, 2006; Waldrop & Resick, 2004).

However, the observations made in this study have demonstrated that there are other factors that must be considered when analysing a relationship between number of years in a marriage and a woman's stay or leave decision. For example, as more time elapsed in Najma's marriage her sons grew up and got married. In addition to her other six children Najma gave birth to another son and became a grandmother adding to her personal responsibilities and economic dependency on the husband. These life changes seemed to have strengthened Najma's commitment to her marriage, rather than the number of years spent in the marriage.

It has been argued that economic dependency coupled with a commitment to saving a marriage makes it less likely for a woman to confront her abusive husband (Rusbult & Martz, 1995; Strube & Barbour, 1983). However, the literature has failed to provide an explanation of the factors that reinforce commitment in a long-term marriage and deter women from leaving their abusive marriages. Evidence from this study has shown that the changes and the new developments that occur as more time elapses in a marriage might influence a battered woman's level of commitment and the likelihood of remaining in an

abusive marriage. As far as Shaheen was concerned, as more time elapsed in her marriage of 19 years, she became financially independent and saw no other reason to continue the abusive relationship. By contrast, as more time elapsed in Najma's marriage adding to her personal responsibilities, it became even more unfavourable and difficult for her to leave.

## **6.10 Conclusion**

This chapter looked at a relationship between certain variables that influenced and shaped the participants' experiences of domestic violence. These factors were not examined in the previous chapter. The chapter also elaborated further and cleared up any ambiguities associated with the participants' experiences of domestic violence.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

### **7.1 Chapter Overview**

This chapter reviews the key findings of this study and addresses the aims of this research, as set forth in Chapter One. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and reflective comments.

### **7.2 Introduction**

This study makes original contributions to knowledge. The study has found that the women in Sohan village make statements about the sanctity of marriage, stigma associated with divorce and cultural and religious significance of keeping the family together but the decision to leave their abusive marriages was dependant on their ability to support themselves financially and secure custody of their children.

In addition, given the dearth of empirical literature on domestic violence in Pakistan, my study makes a significant contribution to the current body of knowledge and fills the knowledge gaps. This study may be the first to provide an in-depth understanding of domestic violence in a rural village and will contribute to the existing domestic violence discourse by highlighting the perspectives of rural Pakistani women on their experiences of domestic violence. This is also the first qualitative study of its kind on domestic violence that was conducted over a period of twenty-eight months in a rural community in Pakistan. In addition, the study adds to the limited domestic violence discourse that seeks to

understand the influence of religion on the experiences of domestic violence among Muslim women in Pakistan.

Moreover, the observations made during fieldwork that provided me with valuable information about the general perception of ‘violence against women’ in Sohan also led to another important realisation. For example, I had an opportunity to visit a family in Sohan whose daughter-in-law was accused of having an affair with another man and had recently eloped with him. The mother-in-law and the sisters-in-law revealed that they were in favour of honour-based violence to restore their family’s honour. The men in the family openly talked about their intention to hit or even kill the young woman to uphold their family values. I asked the women in the family whether they would support the men in their intention to harm the young woman upon her return. The women responded, “*Of course if this was one of us then we too would have deserved to be punished for running our family name through the mud*”. Other women from the neighbourhood who were present at the time of this particular visit nodded in agreement. This demonstrated that the women were not only aligned with male interest and supported patriarchy, but also participated in inciting violence against other women – an aspect of domestic violence that the feminists refuse to accept (P. S. Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Mitra, 2013).

It became quite evident that ‘violence against women’ was widely accepted in Sohan in situations where the community had identified a need to restore cultural superiority. The women in Sohan also appeared to participate in their own subordination by accepting the punishment for violating patriarchal rules. This particular observation made during

fieldwork is consistent with Hunnicutt (2009) who pointed out that in a patriarchal society both men and women are compliant. She further argued that both create an environment in which marital hierarchy and male dominance is maintained. Correspondingly, the patriarchal women not only make sure that they follow the norms, but also keep an eye on other women who dare to disobey, as suggested by the observation. Hunnicutt (2009) has identified an incentive for women in supporting the patriarchal ideology. She suggested, “there are numerous cultures where older women occupy some position of respect and status in their respective patriarchal family systems, creating an incentive to uphold their particular patriarchal ideology” (Hunnicutt, 2009, p. 564). However, the feminist theory does not reconcile with the idea that women could be actively involved in their own subordination. Nevertheless, the observations made in this study concur with Foucault’s assertion that individuals engage in their own oppression through the practice of self-surveillance and self-discipline (Pylypa, 1998).

This study has established a number of aims (Chapter One) in investigating how battered women in a patriarchal Pakistani rural village of Sohan experience domestic violence in their marriages. The subsequent sections will address each aim that was identified in Chapter One.

### **7.3 Research Aim One: To explore sociocultural practices in Sohan village that contribute to domestic violence in the home**

The study has identified three main sociocultural factors that contributed to domestic violence in Sohan village. The findings that correspond to Research Aim One are presented in section 5.3.2.

Feminists view ‘patriarchy’ as the main cause of domestic violence (Cannon, 2015; D. G. Dutton, 1994; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993). The feminist writers R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) described an early patriarchal society from the period of the Roman Empire. They stated that the husband had a legal and social right to punish the disobedient wife by whatever means necessary to obtain conformity. Dobash and Dobash said that in the early patriarchal society wife and her possessions became the property of her husband. The observations made during fieldwork demonstrated that the existing society of Sohan village resembled the early patriarchal society described by (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979), in which women were ascribed a lower status in the home, making them vulnerable to domestic violence.

In addition, when describing the practices of subjection in Panopticon prison Foucault explained, “the exercise of discipline presupposes a mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible (Foucault, 1977, p. 171). The patriarchal society of Sohan operates

like Foucault's Panopticon prison in which the prisoners were visible to the guards at all times. However, the prisoners were not certain when they were being watched as the guards were not visible to them (Muckelbauer, 2000). Consequently, in response to the idea that they were constantly visible to the 'gaze', prisoners engaged in self-disciplinary practices becoming conforming individuals (Alford, 2000). Likewise, the observations made in this study demonstrated that women internalise the 'disciplinary gaze' of their husbands, in-laws and the community. The women in Sohan village internalise what is expected of them forcing them to become self-disciplined bodies. This implies that Foucault's disciplinary gaze is not embedded in the actual act of watching but rather in the individual's internalised belief that she is being observed making her compliant with the external demands (Sabanci, 2013).

The findings of this study have identified three main features of the patriarchal society of Sohan village that are used as a means to oppress women in the home.

### ***Lack of Decision-Making Autonomy***

Feminists have emphasised that the primary objective of domestic violence is the gendered nature of control over women in their marriages (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979; D. G. Dutton, 1994; Lempert, 1996; L. E. Walker, 1989). The observations made in regards to the participants' limited decision-making autonomy is consistent with the feminist belief that domestic violence is perpetrated with the intention to control women. A woman's decision-making autonomy is defined as the control she has over all aspects of her life (Jejeebhoy et al., 2001), including her reproductive choices, freedom of mobility, access to

household income and sexual availability in a marriage. The observations made in this study have shown that the participants exercised very little control over all these aspects of their lives as this control was taken away from them in the husband's home. It was found that all four participants were excluded from household-decision making autonomy. They did not have the authority to make independent decisions regarding their reproductive choices and had little control over their sexual availability to the husband. They also had limited access to household resources. Their mobility and access to health information was also restricted. It appeared as though the participants were systematically oppressed by having their autonomy compromised at home.

The participants were also pressurised into making decisions in regards to their reproductive choices and other aspects of their lives that were not in line with their values, beliefs and desires. There seemed to be no recognition of the participants' innate decision-making authority in their husbands' homes. The findings suggested that the participants were coerced into making decisions that aligned with the interests of their husbands' families, through intimidation and physical beatings. Hence, the results obtained in this study have demonstrated that a woman's decision-making autonomy is used as a tool to control women in the husband's home providing support to the feminist perspective, and it may also be the strongest predictor of abuse and exploitation in the marriage.

### ***Gender Role Socialisation***

The feminist researchers such as R. E. Dobash and Dobash (1979) argued that women in patriarchal societies are socialised into accepting inequalities that exist in their marriages.

They suggested that this creates an environment in which challenging marital inequalities is considered 'unnatural' and any resistance is met with external pressure to conform. While relatively few studies have been conducted which specifically assess the relationship between female gender role socialisation and acceptance of domestic violence, those that have been conducted support the feminist assertion that a woman raised in a patriarchal society is socialised into accepting her husband's abusive behaviour (Abraham, 1998; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Tayyab et al., 2017).

The observations made in the study established a link between the participants' subjection to a rigid gender role socialisation and their acceptance of a subservient role in the husband's home. The findings suggested that Najma underwent a rigid gender role socialisation process as a child, indoctrinating her with a set of patriarchal beliefs about her role in a marriage. This kind of traditional gender role socialisation led Najma to accept abuse in her married life, rather than challenge the inequalities that existed in her marriage. The observations show that Najma had been cautioned by her mother against disobeying her husband, as part of her patriarchal childhood gender role socialisation. She was taught to accept domestic violence as her fate and wait for a reward in the afterlife. Najma's account illustrated that being neglected by her own mother seemed to have intensified her feelings of helplessness, especially after being told by her own mother that Najma had no place in her parents' home if she sought divorce. The observations made in Najma's account find a great deal of support in a suggestion that the rigid childhood socialisation and sex role stereotyping reinforces a sense of 'learned helplessness' among battered

women (Bell & Naugle, 2006; L. E. Walker, 1983), which in this case contributed to Najma's complete submission to her husband.

Conversely, Ruby's childhood socialisation process was comparatively much less traditional. Evidence from Ruby's account revealed that she was valued as a child at her parents' home and that her wishes were respected. Shaheen and Jannat were also subjected to a relatively less rigid socialisation process in comparison to Najma making them less likely to accept abuse in their marriages. This evidently led to several help seeking efforts on their behalf resulting in Shaheen and Jannat leaving their marriages, while Ruby still trying to find a way to escape her abusive marriage. Nevertheless, the observations made here support the feminist assertion that a woman's patriarchal gender role socialisation contributes to her accepting abuse in the marriage (Tayyab et al., 2017).

### ***Conformity/Violation of Gender Role***

Foucault stated that, "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault, 1977, p. 136). The observations made in the study revealed that the patriarchal gender norms seem to transform the women in Sohan village into Foucault's 'docile body' who can then become beneficial to others. Sabanci (2013) suggested that a woman may conform when she feels different from other women in her community who all seem to have a common goal such as marriage and motherhood, while Ruby and Shaheen were engaged in gender role violations trying to re-define their role in the home. The study found that a wife engaged in gender role violations in Sohan could face devastating consequences. The observations made in Ruby's account demonstrated that

she demanded respect and equal status at her husband's home, which challenged the very fabric of the patriarchal ideology.

Likewise, Shaheen decided to find work outside the home, which conflicted with the culturally prescribed role of a wife in Sohan village. In one instance, Shaheen was beaten up by her husband for being late in serving dinner because according to the husband she had failed in performing her household duties. Conversely, the study also demonstrated that Najma who conformed to what was expected of her was still the victim of beatings and abuse in her marriage. This indicated that while gender transgressions may lead to incidents of domestic violence at home, conformity does not guarantee protection from abuse. This was something the literature seemed to have overlooked in its analysis of women's experiences of domestic violence.

#### **7.4 Research Aim Two: To understand participants' attitudes and beliefs towards domestic violence**

The study has identified a number of attitudes towards domestic violence that seemed to have contributed to the participants' subjection to domestic violence. The findings that correspond to Research Aim Two are presented in section 5.4.2.

##### ***Victim-Blaming/Self-Blaming Attitudes***

According to Foucauldian approach, the patriarchal environment represents the disciplinary space, where the disciplinary force lies in one's own self-imposed, psychological barriers supported by the patriarchal environment (Sabanci, 2013).

Correspondingly, in response to the internalised set of beliefs individuals sustain their own oppression through self-disciplinary practices (Pylypa, 1998). Najma's tendency to blame herself for the abuse in her marriage was a response to her internalised beliefs about the subservient role of a woman in the marriage. This implies that cultural norms become so deeply ingrained in people's minds that they begin to reprimand themselves for failing to conform (Pylypa, 1998). The observations made in the study suggested that Najma's tendency to blame herself for the incidents of domestic violence in her marriage not only diminished her husband's culpability, but also contributed to her perpetual subjection to abuse. In addition, Shaheen's subjection to victim-blaming attitudes by her own natal family held her responsible for domestic violence in her marriage reducing any possibility of receiving family support. The observations made in the study supported the victim-blaming attitudes suggesting that the onus falls on the woman to resolve problems resulting in her husband's violent outbursts (Gracia & Tomás, 2014).

### ***Dual Depiction of Masculinity and Perfect Love Discourse***

Foucault suggested that power is exercised through hegemonic discourses that are part of everyday practices and interactions between individuals (Pylypa, 1998). He believed that cultural discourses are created to regulate individual behaviour (Nicolson, 2010). Feminists have suggested that discourses of perfect love and masculinity and its local interpretations are so deeply embedded in our culture that we become unaware of the influence it has on our actions, thoughts and feelings (Towns & Adams, 2000). Najma's perception of her relationship with the husband seemed to be rooted in the concepts of dual depiction of masculinity and perfect love discourse. In accordance with these concepts

Najma viewed her husband as a batterer one minute, while the next minute as a responsible provider. She also expressed a desire to be with her husband in heaven emphasising the undying commitment to her husband.

Likewise, Shaheen saw her husband as a violent man, while also as someone who provided her with a sense of security. She also expressed a desire to be with her husband in the afterlife which is consistent with the perfect love discourse. However, my research challenged the notion that attitudes associated with the dual depiction of masculinity and perfect love discourse govern how women respond to domestic violence in their marriages as other factors such as lack of natal family support and economic dependency greatly influenced their responses to abuse in the marriage. It was recognised that dual depiction of masculinity and perfect love discourse was essentially used by the participants to express their complete dedication to their marriages and to undermine the seriousness of violence perpetrated by their husbands. Therefore, I saw these attitudes as the participants' way of coping with abuse in their marriages.

### ***Role of Hadith (Muslim Religious Scriptures)***

Foucault (1977) believed that it is not the external pressures that the person responds to nor is it the fear of punishment that compels him to act in an acceptable manner. He asserted that it is the inner voice that the person responds to and conforms as expected. Correspondingly, the observations have shown that the participants responded to their 'inner voice' or the internalised religious belief that denying sexual access to the husband is considered punishable by God (Hoel, 2013), thereby adjusting their behaviours

accordingly. The research has found that religious scriptures had the greatest impact on the participants' attitudes towards domestic violence in their marriages.

My initial assumptions regarding rural women's attitudes towards domestic violence were inconsistent with what I found in the research. I especially could not have anticipated the impact religion had on the participants' views about domestic violence. Apparently, the religious scriptures seemed to have a strong role in the development of attitudes towards domestic violence and even a stronger adherence in a rural society of Sohan. I found that the participants strongly adhered to religious ideology concerning sexual availability to their husbands. Based on their belief in the religious scriptures the participants found it difficult to resist sexual coercion in their marriages (Dialmy, 2010; Hoel, 2013). The participants' acceptance of religious discourse concerning wife's sexual availability to the husband demonstrated that women play an active role in their own subordination by accepting the hegemonic discourse on wife's availability to the husband (G. A. Marshall & Furr, 2010), as Foucault might expect. The observations made in this study suggested that the participants might have felt compelled to justify sexual coercion in their marriages as part of their commitment to religion, even if they did not justify any other form of abuse in their marriages.

The study findings indicated that the participants may have developed attitudes justifying domestic violence in situations in which they were either not able to leave their abusive marriages or stop the abuse. This implies that the religious attitudes may have functioned as a 'coping strategy' to deal with the abuse in their marriages. The results demonstrated

that the participants sought ‘religious approval’ for their thoughts surrounding domestic violence, which emerged as a unique feature of this non-secular patriarchal society of Sohan. The villagers’ reliance on religion for justifying and coping with abuse in their abusive marriages correspond with Fromm (1941, p. 279)’s assertion that “different societies or classes within a society have a specific social character, and on its basis different ideas develop and become powerful”.

### **7.5 Research Aim Three: To identify the underlying causes and risk factors for domestic violence in the husbands’ home**

The study has identified a number of risk factors for domestic violence in the participants’ accounts. The findings that correspond to Research Aim Three are presented in section 5.5.2.

#### ***Incitement/Perpetration by the In-Laws***

The feminist theory implies that men alone are engaged in the subordination of women (Abraham, 1998; R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004), which does not reflect the reality of the experiences of battered women who live in the traditional extended family setup. The findings of this study challenge the feminist view and demonstrate that the mother-in-law is often found to be a direct participant in the perpetration of domestic violence towards the daughter-in-law. This research has revealed that the in-laws were directly involved in the perpetration and incitement of domestic violence towards Ruby and Shaheen, which was consistent with evidence found in the literature (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997; P. S.

Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Mitra, 2013). Ruby's reproductive choices were also regulated by her mother-in-law. Evidence presented in Shaheen's account revealed that dowry played a critical role in triggering domestic violence against her, as the mother-in-law relentlessly humiliated her over insufficient dowry. However, the study has also demonstrated that living with the in-laws may not always be a risk factor for domestic violence, as Najma's mother-in-law functioned as a protective influence in her marriage.

### ***Conflict Over Reproductive Rights***

The feminists suggest that in a patriarchal society a woman's role is conceptualised as a wife and mother (K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983). Within the context of Sohan village, this implied that a woman's desire to adopt another role or her attempt to re-define her role was viewed as a threat to the existing social order resulting in incident of domestic violence. This idea is consistent with Foucault's view that, "the body is the object and target in power relations, and the purpose is to discipline the body in order to ensure the continuity of society" (Sabanci, 2013, p. 59).

It is believed that women are confronted with two dominant roles in the society: a mother and a wife who remains by her husband's side (Sabanci, 2013). This became evident when the women in Sohan were forced to see themselves only as mothers and nurturers, and those who did not accept this were subjected to abuse. The study revealed that the participants were denied involvement in the decision-making regarding their reproductive choices because they were only viewed in the role of a mother. They were denied access to birth control and healthy reproductive choices. Ruby, Shaheen and Jannat, all endured

domestic violence for refusing to have more children. Shaheen was also expected to give birth to male offspring, failure of which resulted in being subjected to domestic violence. These observations find support in the suggestion that reproductive rights of a woman in a patriarchal society can become a source of ongoing conflicts in a marriage (T. S. Ali et al., 2012; Kapadia et al., 2010).

### ***Societal Pressure***

Foucault (1977, p. 195) said that, “Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere”. He suggested that power is not necessarily violence or a coercive force but an internalised set of beliefs, norms and expectations (G. A. Marshall & Furr, 2010). According to Foucauldian approach, internalisation of external goals is achieved by three steps: internalisation of ‘surveillance’ leading to self-disciplining, locating oneself in a place where an individual judges herself against other conforming individuals and remaining visible to the watchful eye of others so that power can be exercised over her (Sabanci, 2013). Correspondingly, the women in the village internalise what is expected of them and conform to the role of a wife and mother ascribed to them by the society.

The study revealed that Ruby was subjected to domestic violence because she refused to conform to her community’s expectations of a bigger family size. Sohan was a close-knit community where individuals remained under the watchful eye of the neighbours. Similarly, in response to pressure from friends and family, Shaheen stopped using cosmetics after separating from her husband. Shaheen was subjected to taunts and verbal abuse for using cosmetics on festive occasions. Hence, the women in Sohan were forced

to conform to the local norms as they were expected to live up to the expectations of the local community. Hence, societal pressure appearing as a risk factor came as no surprise. Evidence from current literature falls short of explaining the role of community and neighbours in patriarchal societies in inciting violence in the home.

### ***Denied Sexual Access***

Foucault asserted that disciplinary punishments are inflicted to function as a corrective measure and to address the deviances (Foucault, 1977). The Muslim religious scripture called *hadith* resonates with Foucault's assertion. The purpose of *hadith*, which functions as a 'disciplinary force' in a Muslim woman's life is to correct the behaviour of a disobedient wife. The *hadith* stated: "*When a man calls his wife to bed and she refuses, and he spends the night being angry with her, the angels curse her till morning*" (K. Ali, 2006; El Fadl, 2001; Hoel, 2013; M. M. Khan, 1997). The participants' denial of sexual access appeared as a significant risk factor that almost always led to incidents of domestic violence because their denial was viewed as a violation of this particular *hadith*. Research indicated that the participants were expected to submit to their husbands' sexual desires with an assumption that upon marriage the woman has naturally consented to sex with the husband (Hoel, 2013).

The observations made in this study revealed that three out of four participants experienced sexual violence in their marriages. It was determined that a participant was subjected to sexual coercion in her marriage when she reported one of the following three scenarios: When the participant reported being forced to engage in sexual activity without her consent,

she agreed to engage in sexual activity because she was afraid of what the husband might do and she expressed being forced to engage in sexual activity that she considered degrading and humiliating. All three participants reported experiencing these scenarios. In addition, during the relationship building process, prior to the actual interviews, my conversations with the women in the village revealed that sexual coercion was the most common form of domestic violence perpetrated towards them. They often shared stories about women in Sohan who suffered from some kind of physical or mental disability and could do nothing to prevent sexual violence in their marriages. In addition, the presence of sexual coercion in Shaheen and Jannat's marriages led to unwanted pregnancies. Jannat also experienced several forced abortions in her marriage. Najma claimed that she had been subjected to sexual coercion throughout her marriage. However, all three participants accepted sexual violence in their marriages based on their commitment to religious scriptures that viewed wife's sexual availability in the marriage as part of a woman's 'wifely duty'.

### ***Constantly Arguing Over Money Issues***

Feminists (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979) have suggested that subordination of women is institutionalised in the structure of the patriarchal family and further reinforced by the local economic and political institutions. This view resonates with Foucault's assertion that disciplinary techniques are institutionalised in all major institutions in the society (Pylypa, 1998). It was recognised through this research that cultural, economic and political systems all contributed to women's financial dependency on men in the village which led to their subordination in the marriage. The Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) process conducted

as part of this research (see section 4.5.1) demonstrated that poverty and unemployment was a significant source of stress in the family which contributed to incidents of domestic violence (Jewkes, 2002). Through PRA I found that the villagers were excluded from full-time employment opportunities at the village because they neither had the skills nor the training that the employers demanded. The absence of regular full-time work had further diminished the villagers' condition as it made it difficult for them to meet their household budgets. Ineffective government attention further prevented women from playing a role in improving their economic circumstances and well-being, which directly impacted their home life.

In addition, it was found that the 'national rural' literacy rate in 1998 among women was only 20 percent (*Population Census Organization, 1998*), while only 6 percent of the females in Sohan had elementary school education (eighth grade). Hence, the lack of education and employability skills among young women in Sohan naturally added not only to the financial stress at home, but also to their financial dependency on the husbands. This made the participants vulnerable to domestic violence in their marriages.

The observations showed that with the exception of Najma whose husband was a good provider, insufficient household income appeared as a significant risk factor for domestic violence in Shaheen, Ruby and Jannat's accounts. Financial pressures arising from husband's low income or unemployment frequently led to incidents of domestic violence. Ruby's account also identified her in-laws' control over her husband's income as a risk

factor for conflict in her marriage. Nevertheless, all three participants were subjected to violence for asking their husbands for money to buy basic necessities like food, diapers and personal hygiene products. There is a large body of literature that was consistent with the observations made here.

### ***Gave Birth to Female Children***

A desire to have only male offspring provides support to the feminist view that men occupy a superior gender position in a patriarchal society (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). The observations made in the study showed that villagers had a strong preference for sons over daughters. The failure of women to bear male children in Sohan village was not only accepted as grounds for divorce, but also as a reason to perpetrate violence towards the wife. The male children in Pakistani society are also considered a source of future income for aging parents (Lindholm, 1982) further strengthening the value of male children in the society. The observations made in Shaheen's account suggested that her failure to produce male heir subjected her to abuse in her marriage, which was supported by the local cultural ideology.

### **7.5.1 Further Discussion on Risk Factors**

It can be argued that the lack of natal family support and social unresponsiveness experienced by the participants served to support their husbands' use of aggression in the marriage. Lack of empathy exhibited by Shaheen, Najma and Jannat's natal families made them even more vulnerable to domestic violence, leaving them with a sense of rejection and isolation. This argument finds a great deal of support in the view that social isolation

of a woman is a strong risk factor for domestic violence (Carlson, 1984; Jewkes, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2002). This idea resonates with Foucault (1977, p. 237)'s assertion that "isolation provides an intimate exchange between the convict and the power that is exercised over him". Foucault implies that 'isolation' is an instrument of reform because it allows the individual to reflect upon his actions and engage in self-regulation (Foucault, 1977). The observations made in the study have demonstrated that the participants' inability to share their ordeal with others or seek help increased their sense of isolation, and this is when power worked upon them with maximum intensity because they had no one to help or influence their thoughts.

Moreover, it has been suggested that a wife's acceptance and support of the husband's right to use force and violence is found to be the strongest risk factor for domestic violence (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006; Worden & Carlson, 2005). The findings demonstrated that Najma, Shaheen and Jannat all provided justifications for their husbands' use of violence and sexual coercion against them. This is consistent with the view that a traditional patriarchal society has the support of the women (Haugaard, 2010). Consequently, by justifying various incidents of domestic violence, or justifying certain acts of violence the participants gave their husbands the permission to continue to behave in the same way. This allowed their husbands to continue to violate their sexual rights within the marital relationship. Hence, the participants' acceptance and support of their husbands' right to demand sex regardless of the participants' consent appeared as a strong risk factor for domestic violence.

## **7.6 Research Aim Four: To investigate factors that influence the participants' decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage**

The study has identified a number of factors that influenced the participants' decision to remain in or leave an abusive marriage. The findings that correspond to Research Aim Four are presented in section 5.6.2.

### ***Natal Family Support***

Foucault suggested that individuals get their cues from the 'strategic environment' (culture wide understanding of a particular phenomenon) and respond accordingly (D. Taylor, 2010). A patriarchal society's strategic environment can be described by a suggestion that divorce stigmatises a woman and tarnishes her reputation (Visaria, 2000). Consequently, the natal family in a patriarchal society seems to be responding to this strategic environment and withdraws its support. The study found that the availability of the natal family support was a strong predictor of a woman's decision to leave her abusive marriage (Anderson & Saunders, 2003; K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; D. Hassouneh-Phillips, 2001; Kapadia et al., 2010) in Sohan village.

Ruby was the only participant in the study who enjoyed her parents' support in her decision to terminate her abusive marriage. None of the other participants had the support of their natal families. By contrast, Najma was instructed by her natal family to accept the abuse in her marriage and remain with her husband under any circumstances. The participants' accounts suggested that women in patriarchal societies viewed their families as the 'first

line of defence' in responding to their abusive marriages, even if the families were unsupportive. However, in the absence of the natal family support, Jannat and Shaheen identified personal and external resources that eventually helped them leave their abusive husbands, while Najma had nothing to rely on and therefore remained in her marriage.

### ***Husband as a Provider***

The observations made in Ruby, Shaheen and Jannat's accounts revealed that they remained dissatisfied with their husbands' inability to provide for the family. Najma was the only participant who claimed that her husband was a good provider and had never been unemployed. Najma's husband had complete control over the family finances, while not being employed outside of the home and possessing no other source of funds made it more likely for Najma to remain in her abusive marriage. However, the study yielded mixed results and did not entirely conform with evidence from literature suggesting that women whose husbands are inefficient earners are more likely to leave their abusive marriages (Anderson & Saunders, 2003). The observations showed that a woman's complete financial dependency on her husband was a far more significant predictor of a woman's decision to leave or stay in an abusive marriage, as oppose to the quality of husband's income. This was demonstrated through Shaheen's account who became financially independent, while her husband willingly remained unemployed. However, Shaheen still remained committed to her husband for 19 years. The reason she finally left him was because she caught him having an extra-marital affair.

### *Divorce is Stigmatised*

Foucault suggested that individuals “internalise society’s control, through which they become docile, self-disciplined bodies” (Sabanci, 2013, p. 61). This implies that the women in Sohan internalise a set of beliefs that associate stigma with divorce and consequently remain in their abusive marriages (Madeline Fernandez, 2006). However, the observations made in the study demonstrated that unlike other participants, Ruby’s account showed no evidence of being affected by the prevalent social stigma associated with divorce. There might be one possible explanation for this. For example, there is no previous study that establishes a relationship between strong natal family support and a diminished sensitivity towards the social stigma associated with divorce. Nevertheless, evidence from this study seems to support a possible link between these two variables. It can be rationalised that the feeling of being understood by the natal family might help a battered woman separate herself from the social stigma associated with divorce.

On the contrary, Najma was indoctrinated with beliefs stigmatising divorce as part of her childhood socialisation process. Shaheen’s account demonstrated that her natal family saw her as a curse because she had been separated from her husband, while Jannat’s brothers accused her of disgracing the family by seeking divorce. Nevertheless, views stigmatising divorce did not deter Shaheen and Jannat from leaving their abusive marriages. This challenges evidence from literature suggesting that social stigma associated with divorce keeps battered women in a patriarchal society from leaving their abusive marriages (A. Khan & Hussain, 2008).

### ***Possibility of Re-Marriage***

D. Rao et al. (2012) found that in a patriarchal rural society, women are often ridiculed and criticised for remarrying even if they are widowed at an early age. The researchers indicated that there is a stigma attached to the concept of 'remarriage' for women in a patriarchal rural South Asian society (D. Rao et al., 2012). It can then be inferred from this idea that a woman in a patriarchal society is not envisioned in a relationship with another man even if the first marriage fails or the husband passes away. The observations suggested that in Sohan village it was uncommon for a woman to remarry after divorce especially if she had children from a previous marriage. However, Shaheen and Jannat with no future prospect of re-marriage still left their abusive husbands, while Ruby who was given the freedom to remarry did not appear to be motivated by that possibility. Hence, the study found that the possibility of finding a partner or re-remarriage did not appear to have a significant impact on the participants' decision to leave their abusive marriage, contrary to what other studies (Bell & Naugle, 2006; Krishnan, 2005; Schuler et al., 2008; Yamawaki et al., 2012) had suggested.

### ***Forbidden to Reveal Marital Problems***

The feminists suggested that the internalised belief in the sanctity of family creates an environment in which outside intervention is considered unnecessary and a violation of personal privacy (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). The observations made in this study resonate with the feminist view. It was found that domestic violence was considered a private matter in Sohan village forcing women to remain silent about their marital problems. The observations suggested that Ruby and Najma were both subjected to

restrictions forbidding them to discuss their marital lives with family and friends. The idea is that a woman challenges the 'sanctity of family' by criticising her husband openly and sharing details about her marriage, which provides support to the feminist perspective. It can be argued that enforced secrecy surrounding family matters discourages outside intervention and keeps the women trapped in their abusive marriages, as was demonstrated through Najma and Ruby's accounts. It was concluded that in a patriarchal society of Sohan women were less likely to report domestic violence due to cultural barriers, which to a great extent was responsible for their perpetual subjection to domestic violence, which was consistent with evidence from literature (T. S. Ali, Asad, et al., 2011; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Horsburgh, 1995).

### ***Victim of a Patriarchal Legal System***

The study found that the patriarchal legal system in Pakistan emerged as a major deterrent to seeking divorce in Sohan. This situation is reminiscent of Bordo (1989)'s suggestion that hegemonic forces maintain their power through a network of practices and institutions. This observation is further reinforced by Foucault's view that power finds a new way to reassert itself when confronted with resistance (Pylypa, 1998). Foucault said, "power can retreat here, re-organise its forces, invest itself elsewhere...and so the battle continues" (Foucault, 1980, p. 56). The participants' experiences with the child custody laws in Pakistan resemble Foucault's belief that when faced with resistance power finds a new way to re-assert itself (Foucault, 1980). This became evident when Ruby who had established a natal family support promising her financial assistance along with a place to live was pulled back by the patriarchal legal system that favoured allocating sole child custody to

the father. Hence, Ruby feared losing custody of her children and returned to her abusive husband. Likewise, Shaheen who became financially independent in her marriage also feared losing custody of her children following the divorce and therefore remained separated from her husband without filing for divorce. In accordance with Foucault's belief, just as the participants were ready to challenge their husbands' domination, power found another way to re-assert itself through the patriarchal legal system.

Hence, the study has demonstrated that the local patriarchal child custody laws in Pakistan impede all help seeking efforts of battered women. This particular deterrent receives very little attention in the media and research. I feel that more of domestic violence research in Pakistan and in other patriarchal societies should highlight this issue and suggest ways to create a favourable legal environment for women intending to escape their abusive marriages.

### **7.7 Research Aim Five: Inform the development of theory which would make a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge**

#### ***Feminist Perspective***

The feminist view emphasises that domestic violence is a gendered issue which is deeply embedded in the patriarchal system (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979). The feminist perspective views men as the primary perpetrators of domestic violence (Dixon et al., 2012; R. P. Dobash & Dobash, 2004; D. G. Dutton, 1994), while it struggles to accept women as perpetrators (Abrams, 2015). The feminist theory had certain limitations in terms of its

applicability to the rural Pakistani society. One major limitation of the feminist perspective was that it does not acknowledge the variation in the experiences of domestic violence among women from different societies. The feminist theory ignores the fact that the young daughter-in-law in a patriarchal society is not only subordinate to the husband but also to the older women in the husband's family (Marilyn Fernandez, 1997). This was an important consideration in understanding domestic violence experiences of rural women in Sohan village because a large majority of them lived in a joint family system.

The feminist theory overlooked 'ethnicity' which defines one's cultural and religious values, local practices and attitudes towards domestic violence (Abraham, 1998). Abraham suggested that it is important to recognise that in a South Asian society, marriage is not only considered a union between two people, but an alliance between two families who actively remain involved in the couple's life. Nevertheless, the feminist approach ignores the patriarchal women's experiences of subordination that are based on both their gender and ethnicity (Abraham, 1998). In addition, the feminists believe that domestic violence can be addressed by taking the necessary steps to reduce gender inequality, while gender inequality is accepted as a natural and necessary component in a traditional marriage (Critelli, 2010).

Feminist theory also assumes that women living in a patriarchal environment have common experiences of domestic violence (Abraham, 1995). The observations suggested that despite a number of cultural and religious similarities, the domestic violence experiences of the participants differ in many respects. For example, factors such as the participants'

economic status, gender role socialisation, education level, availability of natal family support and personal attitudes towards domestic violence shaped their experiences of domestic violence. Nevertheless, this study has also demonstrated that the feminist approach in understanding domestic violence cannot be entirely dismissed, especially when dealing with individuals that subscribe to a patriarchal or Asian culture. Critelli (2010) argued that domestic violence must be understood within the gendered-oriented context of the Pakistani society because the patriarchal ideology ascribes status to women in the husband's home which influences their experiences of domestic violence. Therefore, I do not believe that the theoretical framework used to understand domestic violence could be completely gender-neutral because culturally diverse communities ascribe different values and norms to males and females, leading to different perceptions of abusive behaviour in a marriage.

### ***Foucauldian View***

Foucault described the practices of subjection within the Panopticon prison which originally was an idea of a British reformer named Jeremy Bentham (Alford, 2000). Alford suggested that Foucauldian approach is useful in understanding ways in which individuals can be subjugated in a relationship; however, the focus of Foucault's theory remains on how individuals are transformed into docile bodies without any regard to the fact that not all individuals adhere to the norms equally. The observations made in this study have demonstrated that the participants responded differently to power exercised over them by their husbands and in-laws, while Foucault does not seem to consider differences in values, beliefs, personal experiences and characteristics that may allow women to respond

differently to oppression. This is demonstrated through Foucault's assumption that individuals remain dominated by oppressive forces (Pylypa, 1998) and gradually become docile bodies (Pickett, 1996). The observations, however, dispute this assertion.

Foucault's description of practices of subjection within Panopticon prison lacked applicability to individual cases in Sohan. Foucault's theory also fails to recognise the significance of the environment and other external factors that may be necessary in understanding the experiences of domestic violence. The observations made in this study have shown that every family had their own power dynamics, which shaped the violence that took place in the home. For example, Ruby lived with her in-laws, a situation where she was subjugated by both her mother-in-law and the husband. In contrast, Jannat lived with her husband and children where only her husband was the perpetrator of violence towards her. Hence, Foucault's theory of power fell short of explaining domestic violence in individual homes since all domestic violence situations are different as no two families are alike. Foucault asserted that power penetrates all relationships and interactions (D. Taylor, 2010), while it fails to consider the unique dynamics of individual relationships, which limits its understanding of individual domestic violence situations. One possible explanation is that Foucault looked at the impact of power and control in a very 'uniform' environment reducing the appropriateness of his idea to real life situations that are subject to constant change, new developments and uncertainty.

### ***Emergence of a New Theoretical Model***

D. G. Dutton (1994) suggested that a single factor explanation for domestic violence may not be sufficient. This necessitated a development of a theoretical model which would offer a framework for understanding the complex interplay of all the factors that influence the experiences of domestic violence. I proposed an ecological model that examines the interactive effects of different levels. The ecological framework incorporates all the factors, including gender, that influence a woman's experiences of domestic violence in a single model (Amir-ud-Din et al., 2018). This framework will not only identify a woman's risk of becoming a victim, but also the norms, beliefs and social and economic systems that interact to create a domestic violence experience. The ecological model is presented in section 2.14 to understand experiences of domestic violence in a patriarchal society. The ecological model shown in Figure 2.1 provides a framework within which a researcher can identify variables in a given domestic violence scenario that need to be addressed and exclude the ones that are not relevant in the analysis of the victim's situation.

## **7.8 Recommendations for Further Research**

### **7.8.1 In-Depth Study on a Woman's Childhood Socialisation Process**

This study has illustrated that one important source of protection against domestic violence is not necessarily a protective mother-in-law or a supportive natal family, but rather the participant's own response to the onset of domestic violence in her marriage. A battered woman's condemnation of domestic violence may be a significant factor in deterring incidents of domestic violence. The observations made in this study seem to indicate that

developing attitudes justifying domestic violence was in itself ‘an act of submission’ that allowed the husbands to continue to perpetrate violence against the participants.

The observations made in Najma’s account demonstrated that her subjection to rigid gender role socialisation shaped her attitudes towards domestic violence. This provided support for the feminist belief that patriarchal gender role socialisation contributes to battered women’s response to domestic violence in their marriages (L. E. Walker, 1989). From an early age Najma was socialised to accept her husband’s aggression and view abuse as a normal part of marriage. Consequently, Najma’s narrative demonstrated that she appeared passive in response to the incidents of domestic violence in her marriage. She was less able to see herself as a victim or as a battered woman. Najma seemed to conceptualise the perpetration of domestic violence less as a threat to her wellbeing and more as normative behaviour. Conversely, Ruby who experienced a much less traditional gender role socialisation at her parents’ home refused to justify any form of abuse in her marriage.

Given that gender role socialisation plays a critical role in shaping a woman’s response to domestic violence, further research is needed to gain a better understanding of a battered woman’s childhood gender role socialisation process. Since there is a dearth of empirical literature on this subject, further investigation will create a better understanding of a woman’s response to domestic violence in an abusive marriage, especially for women who operate within cultural frameworks.

### **7.8.2 Investigate Attitudes Normalising Domestic Violence**

One possible way to tackle domestic violence is to address attitudes normalising domestic violence in the home. The widespread prevalence of domestic violence in Sohan seemed to have created a ‘domino effect’ in the community. This means that the prevalence of domestic violence incidents in Sohan village provided support to regular acts of violence and abuse to settle conflicts in the home. This ‘domino effect’ had normalised domestic violence to the point that the community had grown to accept incidents of domestic violence. It had also elevated people’s approval of male aggression, while minimising the devastating impact domestic violence had on the families. This ‘domino effect’ also served to encourage men to use aggression towards their wives to resolve conflicts. The extent of normalisation of domestic violence in Sohan became evident when Ruby’s mother-in-law said, “*It is not a big deal, occasional violent outbursts in a marriage are quite normal here*”. This meant that domestic violence in a patriarchal society such as that in Sohan was considered a normal feature of a husband-wife interaction.

My findings suggested that normalisation of domestic violence in Sohan had diminished the societal sensitivity towards violence within families. The normalisation of domestic violence is reminiscent of Foucault’s idea that conformity to norms, which in this case the norm is to ‘resolve a conflict through aggression’, is achieved by creating a desire in individuals to conform to this norm (Pylypa, 1998). This implies that power constructs concepts of normality and deviance in a way that makes even the most controversial norms appear normal or positive, thereby creating a desire to conform (Pylypa, 1998).

Some studies suggest that acceptance and normalisation of domestic violence stems from an individual's acceptance of corporal punishment by parents to discipline children at home (Lansford, Deater-Deckard, Bornstein, Putnick, & Bradley, 2014). Others (Kohlman et al., 2014) suggest that humorous portrayal of domestic violence in social media and cultural literature often normalises male aggression toward females. The observations made in this study have demonstrated that religious literature, cultural and family traditions and exposure to domestic violence in the parents' home may all contribute to normalisation of domestic violence. This points to the need for further empirical research that seeks to understand the origins of attitudes that normalise violence in the home. This may help us identify women at risk of domestic violence and ways in which intervention can be carried out. Again, there is a shortage of empirical literature that seeks to understand attitudes normalising domestic violence.

## **7.9 Reflective Comment**

### **7.9.1 Women's Perception of Their Own Role in the Home**

The results obtained in this study have demonstrated that the participants' perception of their own role in the home offers an important clue as to how they might respond to abuse and oppression in their marriages. For instance, the participants were presented with a number of culturally endorsed gender expectations in their husbands' homes. The participants discovered that attributes associated with a 'good wife' expected them to be submissive, passive, obedient and patient (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996). Evidence from literature suggested that mothering and homemaking is supported as a primary role for a

woman in a patriarchal society (K. Ferraro & Johnson, 1983; Zakar et al., 2013). Hence, a woman's role in a patriarchal society is defined in accordance with what is expected of her (R. E. Dobash & Dobash, 1979).

However, the participants who failed to identify with the culturally endorsed female characteristics appeared to have redefined their roles in the marriage. The participants' self-defined roles were then used to negotiate their position in the marriage. This can be illustrated by Ruby's account who was expected to yield to pressure from the in-laws to have more children. Ruby, however, realised that she could be more than a mother and secretly underwent tubal ligation reclaiming her reproductive rights, thereby, redefining her role as a mother. Based on how she perceived her role in the marriage, Ruby negotiated her position as a mother. Ruby said, "*I try to make my husband realise that we as parents are responsible for our children's education and well-being. I told my husband that if we had more children it would not be fair to the two children we already have, considering our limited resources*". Based on her newly redefined role, Ruby gained back control of her reproductive choices and focused her attention on the two children she already had, defying her husband's authority.

Next, Shaheen's husband would beat her up for being late in serving food. He clearly perceived her role as a homemaker, while Shaheen redefined her role as a financially independent woman and a provider. Shaheen stated, "*I am proud of myself for putting my four kids through school. I am also proud of standing up for my children's right to education. I recently married off two of my daughters and have one daughter and a son*

*left to put through college. I managed to fulfil all my children's needs without any male help*". Based on her newly redefined role as a 'working woman', Shaheen refused to endure her husband's atrocities and separated from him.

Ruby and Shaheen's awareness of 'self' is best explained by Fromm (1941)'s suggestion that individuals remain closely connected with the social world they emerge from, but gradually become aware of themselves as a separate entity. He further explained that having strong ties with one's surrounding may imply lack of individuality, but it is a source of security. However, despite being faced with isolation in their struggle to redefine their roles, Ruby and Shaheen chose not to ignore their inner voices. This directly influenced how they responded to abuse and oppression in their marriages. This observation is consistent with a suggestion that all women are different and we cannot search for a unified voice, which implies that women react differently to oppression based on their self-perception (Stewart, 1994).

### **7.9.2 Refusing to Justify Domestic Violence**

The examination of the participants' accounts and their circumstances clearly demonstrated that they needed access to a combination of favourable conditions making it less likely for them to develop attitudes justifying and tolerating domestic violence. One favourable variable or condition alone may not be enough to provide a supportive environment for a battered woman to reject domestic violence. The results indicated that Ruby was the only participant in this study who had access to four favourable conditions; namely, young age, fewer children, unconditional natal family support and a supportive living father, all of

which made her least likely to accept domestic violence in her marriage. However, note that an absence of any one of these conditions may have had a different impact on Ruby's attitudes towards domestic violence.

In addition, Najma, Shaheen and Jannat all seemed to justify their experiences of sexual violence within a religious framework. By contrast, Ruby did not make any religious reference to explain her experiences of domestic violence. However, there is a possibility that if Ruby had also been victimised by sexual violence in her marriage, she might not have justified it based on religious principles like the other participants, but this cannot be concluded with sufficient certainty. The reason is that the literature has presented strong evidence of a Muslim woman's adherence to religious ideology in terms of her sexual availability to the husband. Hoel (2013) suggested that a Muslim woman engages in sexual activity with her husband if not for her husband's sake, then for the sake of fulfilling a religious duty, which makes it very difficult for a Muslim woman to reject her husband's unwanted sexual advances even in an abusive marriage.

In addition, conversations with Najma, Shaheen and Jannat gave me the impression that they might have developed attitudes justifying domestic violence as a 'coping strategy' to acquire the strength and reason to continue living in their abusive marriages. After all, they needed something to help them withstand the pain of domestic violence.

### **7.10 Limitation of the Study**

While I was analysing participants' accounts to determine what provoked the domestic violence incidents, I came across a few seemingly minor reasons provided by the participants for violence in their marriages. For example, Shaheen said that she was beaten up for asking her husband for 25 rupees (less than one GBP) and another time for being late in serving food. There does not seem to be a clear logical explanation as to what might have provoked her husband to respond aggressively, other than the fact that perhaps he felt that his authority was challenged or that Shaheen was perceived as violating her gender role expectations. This is where I identified one of the weaknesses of this research. This research collected data only on what the women thought the risk factors might have been for the perpetration of violence, but did not consider the husbands' views of what provoked them to exhibit violent behaviour. I believe that to obtain a complete understanding of the potential risk factors that trigger domestic violence, one needs to consider both sides of the coin – a woman's perspective on what caused the violent attack and the husband's explanation of his violent behaviour.

In addition, one drawback of this study was that it was an immensely expensive and time-consuming study. I made several visits to Pakistan for the purpose of the research. There was also a risk of one of the participants relocating to the city or another location. However, none of the participants moved to another location during the period of this research. Had there been a situation like that I would have had to identify another participant for the study and begin the rapport building and interview process from scratch.

Another disadvantage was that there was no previous data available on domestic violence in Sohan with which I could compare my results. However, this also made my study unique because it gave a voice to formerly unknown group of women. Despite difficulties, the friendly environment and the women kept me going. I was determined to get their voices heard and it was all worth it in the end.

### **7.11 Conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated that the study has met the key aims of this research. The chapter has also suggested areas that need to be researched. The published research generally relies on a large amount of data to make inferences about the women's experiences of domestic violence in their marriages. This study has provided an in-depth analysis of how different variables interact with each other to create a unique domestic violence experience for the participants. Although each domestic violence experience reported in the findings was unique, the participants experienced a similar pattern of abuse. For example, constrained decision-making autonomy, humiliation, psychological and physical abuse, denied access to birth control, deprived of a right to husband's income and support, etc. The study also found that women in Sohan village relied a great deal on prayers and religious scriptures to deal with abuse in their marriages which was a unique feature of the non-secular society of Sohan.

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## APPENDIX I

### DETAILED PARTICIPANTS' ACCOUNTS

#### PARTICIPANT PROFILE: RUBY

##### **What is the nature of victimisation?**

Ruby got married at the age of 20 with her cousin whom she was engaged to as a child. Ruby now lived with her husband, his parents and unmarried sisters-in-law. Her in-laws were extremely intolerant and controlling people. In the beginning, Ruby was a little opinionated and conveyed her personal views on all family matters involving her and the children. But petty arguments always seemed to erupt into fights and verbal abuse. Ruby reported: "*My in-laws were not tolerant of my views*". She soon learned to refrain from participating in family discussions and chose to remain silent in order to minimise conflicts.

During the next two years of her marriage Ruby had two children - a boy and a girl. Soon after the birth of her children the beatings started. Her in-laws and husband would beat her up over small disagreements within the family. As Ruby recalled: "*They would all take turns beating me. Sometimes my mother-in-law and father-in-law would hold me down by my hair while my husband hit me and my sisters-in-law cheered them on*". Most of the arguments generated from minor issues related to sharing food and resources between family members. Ruby's husband and in-laws had also been pressurising her to have more children. But Ruby took me aside and revealed that she had 'secretly' undergone a

sterilisation procedure and was surprised to see a few other women from the village at the maternity clinic who like her were undergoing the same procedure without the consent and knowledge of their husbands. Ruby said that no one knows about this, not even her own parents. As she explained: *"If my husband asks why I am not conceiving, I will tell him that its Allah's will"*.

As Ruby shared another incident: *"One morning I was making breakfast for my husband I decided to boil an egg for myself. One of my sisters-in-law saw me having an egg and called upon other family members to the kitchen area. My father-in-law approached me and asked what I was thinking when I boiled an egg for myself without being mindful of the limited gas supply. I responded that everybody had breakfast in the morning and used up a little bit of gas then why can't I use some to boil an egg for myself. As soon as I said that I was slapped across the face and then my mother-in-law joined in. I tried to reason with them but they would not stop. I only demanded some respect and recognition at home"*. She continued: *"I was constantly asked about my consumption of food"*.

Ruby reported, *"I am constantly being watched by my mother and sisters-in-law because I am forbidden from making a call [or contact] to family and friends"*. Her movement was restricted and she was forbidden from making a call to family and friends. Ruby said: *"I am not allowed to have a mobile phone. I can't meet family and friends"*. She was instructed to keep instances of abuse to herself because according to her in-laws: *"Who doesn't have marital problems.... every other household has fights"*.

Ruby also mentioned, *“My husband gives me 40 rupees per day for household expenses (which is about 50 cents Canadian, not even a dollar per day), even though he earns more than that but gives it all to his parents. I could barely buy milk for my toddlers with that money. I have no money left for personal expenses. My husband gives a bigger share of his income to his parents”*.

### **Support from natal family**

Ruby claimed to have grown up in a very loving close-knit family. *Contrary to her village culture where a daughter's wishes were regarded as of lesser importance than those of their brothers, Ruby was treated exceptionally well by her parents.* Ruby said, *“I was the only daughter but I exercised a great deal of decision-making autonomy in my parent's home, contrary to the local cultural norm”*. Ruby remembered telling her mother as a child to leave her father if he ever hit her again. *Though Ruby's parents were very poor, they could not let their only daughter go through so much abuse and torture at her husband's home.* After one particular violent incident, Ruby's parents came and took her with them but her in-laws would not let Ruby take her two-year-old daughter. *Ruby had no choice and left with her one-year-old boy thinking that somehow, she would come back for her daughter.* Ruby explained, *“My husband never called or came to see me or our daughter [for an entire year that I was away] because his parents forbade him from contacting me or to come and get me without their approval”*. She said, *“My mother and father were both completely supportive of my decision to divorce my husband. They offered me to live with them along with my two children.”* Ruby's father told her that he could also get her remarried to a good man if she wanted. *Her father related the example of his own younger*

sister who obtained education against all odds as I mentioned earlier and worked to support her kids. She was also separated but did better than a lot of households in the village headed by men. Ruby said: *“My aunt’s example gave me and my parents a lot of confidence in a woman’s ability to do something in life and survive her own, without a man’s help. This was a true anomaly in that rural society”*.

Ruby's father went to the courts to find out if Ruby could obtain full custody of her daughter after the divorce but Pakistan's legal system allows the father to retain full custody of the children especially when the mother has no source of income. Alas, Ruby had to return home to her husband because she could no longer stay away from her two-year-old daughter. Ruby concluded, *“I had no legal means to acquire custody of my children after divorce”*.

### **Attitudes towards marital violence**

Ruby refused to accept or justify violence perpetrated by her husband and in-laws.

### **Causes that trigger domestic violence**

Ruby got married at 20. After marriage Ruby lived with her husband, his parents and unmarried sisters-in-law. At first Ruby was a little opinionated and conveyed her point of views on all family matters. Then Ruby explained, *“Little arguments would frequently erupt into fights and violence. My opinions were not welcomed, as the situation at home would become fairly hostile afterwards”*. She continued, *“Now I mostly keep my opinions*

*to myself and refrain from participating in arguments*". Ruby explained, *"My in-laws were not tolerant of my views"*.

Ruby also mentioned that her husband gave her 40 rupees per day for household expenses which is about 50 cents Canadian, not even a dollar per day. Ruby said, *"We often have conflicts over household financial arrangement"*. She claimed, *"My husband gives me 40 rupees per day for household expenses (which is about 50 cents Canadian, not even a dollar per day), he earns more than that but gives it all to his parents. I can barely buy milk for my toddlers with that money. I am left with no money for personal expenses. He gives a bigger share of his income to his parents"*.

Soon after the birth of her kids the beatings started. Her in-laws and husband would beat her up over small disagreements within the family. Ruby explained, *"They would all take turns beating me. Sometimes my mother and father-in-law would hold me down while the husband hit me"*. She also said, *"My husband and in-laws had also been pressurising me to have more children, they beat me up because I refuse to yield"*. Ruby said, *"My husband tells me that men at the village taunt him about not being man enough to have more than two children"*.

But most of the arguments generated from minor issues related to sharing food and resources between family members. As Ruby shared another incident: *"One morning I was making breakfast for my husband I decided to boil an egg for myself. One of my sisters-in-law saw me take an egg and called upon other family members to the kitchen area. My*

*father-in-law approached me and asked what I was thinking when I boiled an egg for myself without being mindful of the limited gas supply. I responded that everybody had breakfast that morning and used up a little bit of gas then why can't I use a little to boil an egg for myself. As soon as I said that my father-in-law slapped me across the face and then my mother-in-law joined in. I tried to reason with them but they would not stop. I only demanded some respect and recognition at home".* She continued: *"I was constantly asked about my consumption of food"*.

*Ruby also said, "I asked my in-laws why I couldn't have equal share of food". Ruby retaliated and said, "I demanded some respect and recognition at home"*.

### **Reasons for staying in an abusive marriage**

Ruby grew up in an extended family system. Her family was poor but was supportive of each other. Ruby was first exposed to violence very early in her childhood. Her father was a drug addict. He would beat up her mother when he was high on drugs. He was not a good provider for the family because he did not work enough hours and he bought drugs with whatever little money he made. Her mother got married at 15 and her father was much older. Ruby recounted, *"As a child I remember telling my mother to leave my father if he continues to abuse [hit] her"*. Her mother would respond by saying that she has no place to go with all the children and that she will live and die here. Ruby said that she was too young to protect her mother. When Ruby reached adolescence, her father got rehabilitated and stopped beating her mother.

Ruby frequently looked out the door while speaking to me.

Ruby also mentioned, *“My husband gives me 40 rupees per day for household expenses (which is about 50 cents Canadian, not even a dollar per day), even though he earned more than that but gives it all to his parents. I could barely buy milk for my toddlers with that money. I had no money left for personal expenses. He gave a bigger share of his income to his parents”*.

After one terrible domestic violence incident she quickly **called her parents to come pick her up**. Ruby said, *“My parents immediately came after I called them for help and took me home”*. She continued, *“Last year I left my husband’s home and went back to my parents’ home but my in-laws would not let me take my 2-year-old daughter with me. I had no choice and left with my one-year-old boy thinking that somehow I would come back and get my daughter”*. Ruby asserted, *“Although my parents were very poor, they could not let me go through so much abuse and torture at my husband’s home”*. They gave her the choice to divorce her husband because they said that it was her life. Ruby explained, *“My father said that he could get me married to a good man if I divorced my husband, but it would entirely be my choice”*. She further said, *“My mother and father were both completely supportive of my decision to divorce my husband. They offered me to live with them along with my two children.”*

Ruby’s father related the **example of his own younger sister who got educated against all odds and worked to support her kids**. She was also separated but did better than a lot of

households in the village headed by men. Ruby said, *“My aunt’s example has given my parents a lot of confidence in a woman’s ability to survive on her own, without a man’s help. This is a true anomaly in this rural society”*.

Ruby recounted, *“My father even saw a lawyer to find out if I could obtain full custody of my children as I was considering divorce. The lawyer informed my father that Pakistan’s legal system allows the father to obtain full custody of the children”*. Alas, Ruby **had to return home** because she could no longer stay away from her 2-year-old daughter. Ruby said, *“I had no legal means of acquiring full custody of my children after divorce”*.

Ruby reported, *“I am constantly being watched by my mother and sisters-in-law because I am forbidden from making a call [or contact] to family and friends”*. Ruby said: *“I am not allowed to have a mobile phone. I can’t meet family and friends”*. She was instructed to keep instances of abuse to herself because according to her in-laws: *“Who doesn’t have marital problems.... every other household has fights”*. On the last day of the interview Ruby informed me **that she could no longer continue seeing me**. Ruby said, *“My in-laws don’t want me to speak to anyone about my marriage”*.

Ruby has been **married for 4 years**.

### **Ruby’s Self-talk**

Ruby explained, *“Little arguments would frequently erupt into fights and violence. My opinions were not welcomed, as the situation at home would become fairly hostile afterwards”*. She continued, *“Now I mostly keep my opinions to myself and refrain from participating in arguments”*.

Ruby also said, *“My husband and in-laws had also been pressurising me to have more children, they beat me up because I refuse to yield. I tried to convince my husband to use contraceptives but to no avail”*. Ruby said, *“I try to make him realise that we as parents are responsible for our children’s education and well-being. I told my husband that if we had more children it would not be fair to the two children we already have, considering our limited resources”*.

Ruby took me aside and started whispering while frequently looking out the door. She said, *“I 'secretly' got my tubes tied without the consent and knowledge of my husband and in-laws”*. She explained, *“if he asks me why I am not conceiving, I will say that 'it's Allah's will”*.

Ruby related the example of her aunt who obtained education against all odds and worked to support her kids. Ruby’s aunt was also divorced but did better than a lot of households in the village headed by men. Ruby said, *“My aunt’s example has given my parents a lot of confidence in a woman's ability to survive on her own, without a man’s help”*.

After one terrible domestic violence incident she quickly **called her parents to come pick her up**. Najma said, *“I only demanded some respect and recognition at home [husband’s home]”*. Ruby said, *“My parents immediately came after I called them for help and took me home”*. She continued, *“I left my husband’s home and went back to my parents’ home but my in-laws would not let me take my 2-year-old daughter with me. I had no choice and left with my one-year-old boy thinking that somehow I would come back and get my*

daughter". Ruby asserted, "Although my parents were very poor, they could not let me go through so much abuse and torture at my husband's home". They gave her the choice to divorce her husband because they said that it was her life. Ruby explained, "My father said that he could get me married to a good man if I divorced my husband, but it would entirely be my choice". She further said, "My mother and father were both completely supportive of my decision to divorce my husband. They offered me to live with them along with my two children."

Ruby recounted, "My father even saw a lawyer to find out if I could obtain full custody of my children as I was considering divorce. The lawyer informed my father that Pakistan's legal system allows the father to obtain full custody of the children". Alas, Ruby had to return home because she could no longer stay away from her 2-year-old daughter. Ruby said, "I had no legal means of acquiring full custody of my children after divorce". On the last day of the interview Ruby informed me that she could no longer continue seeing me. Ruby said, "My in-laws don't want me to speak to anyone about my marriage".

She continued, "I have stopped protesting, I watch my words".

### **PARTICIPANT PROFILE: NAJMA**

#### **What is the nature of victimisation?**

Najma was terrified on her wedding night as she did not know what to expect. She was only 14 at the time of her wedding and was too young to understand the concept of sexual relations between a husband and wife. She saw her husband for the first time on the wedding night. He was 18 years old. Najma said, "I was terrified and had no idea what to

*expect, I was too young at the time of marriage. He even forced himself on me and forcefully had sex with me on the wedding night".* Najma reported feeling extremely embarrassed and violated.

Najma says that her husband was a very strict man. He was verbally abusive and would beat her up over petty issues. She said *"I had no say in family matters". I was expected to keep the home a certain way and to be the perfect wife and follow orders exactly the way he likes it* (in accordance with his idealised version of a good wife). She said: *"He expected me to be efficient in household duties"*. She said that her husband's aggression towards her continued all through the marriage. Najma said, *"My husband always pressurised me for sex when I didn't want it because he believed that it was his right."* She said, *"He would hit me if I refused for any reason"*. Even the neighbours could hear Najma scream in pain when her husband hit her. Now she lets him have intercourse whenever he wants, *she stopped protesting.* She says: *"After all it was my duty as a wife - I don't want to face the wrath of God"*. She said *"Sometimes when my husband wants to have sex and I refuse I then quickly realise what God had said about a wife's obligation towards her husband and imagine that one day I would face God and immediately stop resisting"*. She further said *"If my husband goes out to another woman for fulfilment of his sexual desires because of my constant refusal, the fault will be all mine and I will be held responsible for his infidelity"*. She felt that she would have to bear the sin of him committing adultery. She said: *"It is my religious obligation to serve and submit to husband's orders"*. It seems that a rural woman shoulders the entire burden of upholding the sanctity of society's morals.

Najma explained that her movement was restricted. She said that since she was not allowed to go back to her parents or complain about his behaviour to her parents, she confided in her mother-in-law about her son's behaviour. Najma recalled, *"My in-laws were kind people. My mother-in-law always questioned her son's behaviour. She tried to talk to my husband in regards to his marital conduct and would ask him to treat me with a little care and affection"*. Najma added, *"my husband would beat me up for sharing my marital problems with his mother"*.

She said that divorce is largely stigmatised where she comes from. She explained *"Divorce was a source of shame and dishonour for my parents"*. Divorced women in her society are not permitted to re-marry. According to her narrative *"A divorced woman just needs to have her basic financial needs met and as long as the divorced woman's brothers or father are able to meet those needs, she is not expected to have a need for an intimate partner/husband in her life"*. She then said *"women in her society do not have the same value as men"*. Woman is not thought to have a need for companionship or intimacy. Hence, women's needs are marginalised and are put on the back burner in order to save a marriage or to salvage family's honour.

She said *"I am willing to go through my abusive and oppressive marriage all over again even if I am given another chance and a free will to choose another spouse because my deceased father chose him for me and I would not want to upset my parents in heaven by choosing another man for a companion"*. She actually seems to be afraid to claim her right

and follow her heart. She behaves in a way that appeases the society even if it means another oppressive life.

### **Support from natal family**

Najma said that those were simple times, girls did not go to school: *“sending girls to school was simply not done”*. Najma helped her stepmother with house chores and took care of her younger siblings. At the time of her wedding Najma's parents gave her a valuable advice which she held on to all through the years. Najma recalled her mother's advice: *“My step-mother told me that I will have to learn to accept and tolerate my husband's atrocities and ignore his shortcomings. This is the message I still carry in my heart”*. She said, *“My mother instructed me to be an obedient daughter-in-law and wife and to serve and submit to their orders”*. The mother further said that Najma cannot come back complaining about her marriage or her husband, she was to deal with her problems on her own with a great deal of patience as they were her responsibility- with *“saber' (patience)”* as Najma recalled. Najma was told that she was going into this marriage alive and will come out dead (cultural ideology meaning that her life and death will all take place in her husband's home). Najma described her mother's warning: *“My mother said that refusing to have sex with the husband is a grave sin, I should always be mindful that one God is up in the skies while the other is down here on earth (meaning the husband)”*. Najma shared her father's plea: *“My father reminded me to be mindful of his white beard (meaning his respect) and told me that their respect and honour is now in my hands”*. She was also reminded of her obligation to maintain and guard their honour before her in-laws and husband at all times. She believed that a man's honour rests solely in a women's hand. She also recommended that patience

(saber) is the key for a woman. She advocated that it is essential for a woman to be able to observe patience; she repeatedly calls it 'saber'.

### **Attitudes towards marital violence**

As Najma explained: "The *sexual relationship between my husband and I is normal, like it should be between a husband and wife*". Najma revealed being forced into sex by her husband countless times leaving her feeling violated and helpless but she asserted, "*It is my duty as a wife*". As Najma said: "*I do not want to face the wrath of Allah by displeasing my husband*".

Najma believes, "*A man's honour rests solely in a woman's hand*". She said, "*Patience is the key for a woman*". She emphasises that it is essential for a woman to be able to have patience, she repeatedly utters the word 'saber' (meaning patience). In accordance with Najma's belief system, "*It is more important for a woman than a man to be able to have 'saber' because a man works outside the home and puts food on the table*". As she asserted her idea: "*Mother said that if a woman tries to confront a man in the same way and demands equal rights and respect in a marriage then the society would lose its balance*". Foucault and willingly accepts Najma's mother instructed, "*I could not come back complaining about my marriage or my husband, my problems were my responsibility*".

Najma claimed that he almost always forced her for sex when she did not want it. She said, "*He would hit me if I refused for any reason*". Najma said "*I could never negotiate sexual matters with my husband*", while on the other hand, Najma asserted, "*Sex with husband is*

*part of a wife's duty*" - a marital obligation grounded in religious interpretation. Najma stated: *"My husband often pressurises me for sex when I don't want it but I quietly comply because of what my mother said, "A wife will be put through hell for refusing to have sex with her husband"*. Najma is constantly reminded of what her mother had said about a wife's obligation towards her husband. As Najma described her fear: *"I imagine that one day I will have to face Allah and I immediately stop resisting my husband's sexual demands - I don't want to be cursed by the angels"*. She further said, *"if my husband goes out to another woman for fulfilment of his sexual desires because of my constant refusal, the fault will be all mine and I will be held responsible for his infidelity"*.

As Najma declared her love for her husband: *"I love him because he is the only man, I have known my entire life and the only man I have been intimate with since I was a 14-year-old girl"*. She further explained: *"although my husband displays aggression, he has always been a good provider and works hard"*. She claimed: *"I am willing to go through this abusive marriage all over again even if I am given another chance and a free will to choose another spouse because my deceased father has chosen this man for me and I do not want to upset my parents in heaven by choosing another man for a companion"*.

### **Causes that trigger domestic violence**

Najma said that she was very scared on the wedding night and did not know what to expect. She was only 14 and he was 18 years old. Before her wedding night she was briefed a little bit about marital sex but was still too young to understand. She saw her husband for the first time on the wedding night. Najma said, *"I was terrified and had no idea what to*

*expect, I was too young at the time of marriage. He forced himself on me and had sex with me without my consent on the wedding night”.*

As a 14-year-old girl Najma was placed in a role of a wife and a daughter-in-law. Najma said that her husband was very strict. He was verbally abusive and would frequently beat her up. She said, *“he would lose his temper fairly quickly and expected me to keep the home a certain way and expected me to be the perfect wife and follow all his orders exactly the way he liked it”.* Najma continued, *“he complained that I have failed to meet his idea of an ideal wife”.*

Najma said, *“My husband always pressurised me for sex when I didn't want it because he believed that it was his right.”* But she quietly complied because she strongly believes that a wife will be put through hell in the grave if she refused to have sex with her husband.

### **Reasons for staying in an abusive marriage**

Najma remembers that her **stepmother was restricted to home**. Najma's parents gave her a valuable advice. She said, *“My mother advised me to learn to accept and tolerate my husband's atrocities and ignore his shortcomings. This is the message I still carry in my heart”.* She further said, *“my mother instructed me to be an obedient daughter-in-law and wife and to serve and submit to their orders”.* *“Mother further said that I cannot come back complaining about my marriage or my husband, I was to deal with my problems on my own with a great deal of 'saber' (patience)”.* She continued, *“mother said that I was going into this marriage alive and will come out dead (cultural ideology meaning that her*

life and death would all take place in her husband's home)". Najma shared her father's plea: "My father reminded me to be mindful of his white beard (meaning his respect) and told me that their respect and honour is now in my hands". She was also reminded of her obligation to maintain and guard their honour before her in-laws and husband at all times. Najma related, "Man's honour lies solely in the hands of a woman". Najma said, "I was told that patience (saber) is the key for a woman". She advocated that it is essential for a woman to be able to observe patience; she repeatedly called it 'saber'.

Najma explained that her movement was restricted. She said that since she was not allowed to go back to her parents or complain about his behaviour to her parents, she confided in her mother-in-law about her son's behaviour. Najma recalled, "My in-laws were kind people. My mother-in-law always questioned her son's behaviour. She tried to talk to my husband in regards to his marital conduct and would ask him to treat me with a little care and affection". Najma added, "my husband would beat me up for sharing my marital problems with his mother".

Najma said, "A divorced woman in my family is not permitted to remarry. Divorce is largely stigmatised where I come from". She explained "Divorce was a source of shame and dishonour for my parents". According to her narrative "A divorced woman just needs to have her basic financial needs met and as long as the divorced woman's brothers or father are able to meet those needs, she is not expected to have a need for an intimate partner/husband in her life". She then said "women in her society are not valued the same way as men". She explained, "women are not thought to have a need for companionship

or intimacy". Hence, women's needs are marginalised and are put on the back burner in order to save a marriage or to salvage family's honour.

Najma asserted, *"I now remain silent in response to my husband's aggression. I make sure that I don't behave in a way that bothers him."*

Something else Najma mentioned was that *"although my husband displays aggression, he has always been a good provider and works hard"*.

Najma described her sexual relationship with husband. She said, *"Relationship [sexual] between my husband and I is normal, like it should to be between husband and wife"*.

Najma explained, *"sex with husband is part of a wife's duty"* - a marital obligation grounded in religious interpretation.

Najma said, *"If my husband goes out to another woman for fulfilment of his sexual desires because of my constant refusal, the fault will be all mine and I will be held responsible for his infidelity"*. Again, Najma does not view this as sexual aggression and once again the woman is responsible not only for her wrongdoings or sins but also of her husband's.

Najma now has 6 boys - the oldest is 25 years old while the youngest is just 6. She is also a grandmother now. Her older sons are now married. One thing that Najma reasserted, *"Although my husband has been abusive, he has never been unemployed"*. Najma repeatedly said, *"we women are 'bebas' [helpless]"* (confessed learned helplessness).

She remains in constant fear of her husband and watches every word she says and frequently looks out the window when talking to me. The husband was at work at the time.

I asked her if she were to look back on her life today what would she want to have in life or what would she do differently? Najma said, *"I don't know if I could have led a different life or done anything different to improve my marriage. Women are 'bebas' helpless. It's not right how women are treated but that's just how it is, what can you do?"*.

As Najma declared her love for her husband, *"I love him because he is the only man, I have known my entire life and the only man I have been intimate with since I was a 14-year-old girl"*. She claimed, *"I am willing to go through this abusive marriage all over again even if I am given another chance and a free will to choose another spouse because my deceased father has chosen this man for me and I do not want to upset my parents in heaven by choosing another man for a companion"*.

Najma has been married for 26 years.

### **Najma's self-talk**

Najma's husband would beat her up over keeping the home a certain way and her inability to conform to his idealized version of the perfect wife. She said that since she was not allowed to go back to her parent's house or complain about his behaviour, Najma explained, *"I couldn't go back [parents' home] complaining about my marriage or my husband, I was told to deal with my problems on my own with a great deal of 'saber' (patience)"*. Najma related, *"A man's honour rests solely in a woman's hand"*

Najma said, *"patience (saber) is the key for a woman"*. She believes that it is essential for a woman to be able to observe patience; she repeatedly calls it 'saber'. In accordance with Najma's belief system, *"It is more important for a woman than a man to be able to have 'saber' because a man works outside the home and puts food on the table"*. Something else Najma mentioned was that *"although my husband displays aggression, he has always been a good provider and works hard"*. Najma reasserted, *"Although my husband has been abusive, he has never been unemployed"*. She said, *"I have no choice but to deal with his anger"* because she could not go back home to her parent's house. She sought help from her mother-in-law and remained confined at home.

Najma described her sexual relationship with husband. She said, *"Relationship [sexual] between my husband and I is normal, like it should to be between husband and wife"*. Najma said, *"My husband always pressurised me for sex when I didn't want it because he believed that it was his right"*. She explained, Najma stated: *"My husband often pressurises me for sex when I don't want it but I quietly comply because of what my mother said, a wife would be put through hell for refusing to have sex with her husband"*. "Najma explained, *"sex with husband is part of a wife's duty"*. She continued, *"After all it was my duty as a wife - I did not want to face the wrath of God"*. She said "Sometimes when my husband wants to have sex and I refuse I then quickly realise what God had said about a wife's obligation towards her husband and imagine that one day I would face God and immediately stop resisting". She further said *"If my husband goes out to another woman for fulfilment of his sexual desires because of my constant refusal, the fault will be all mine"*

*and I will be held responsible for his infidelity".* She reasserted, *"It is my religious obligation to serve and submit to husband's orders".*

When Najma's mother-in-law was alive, she confided in her about her son's behaviour towards her. Najma recalled, *"My in-laws were kind people".* She continued, *"I could always share my feelings with my mother-in-law when she was alive".* She continued, *"my mother-in-law always questioned her son's behaviour. She tried to talk to my husband in regards to his marital conduct and would ask him to treat me with a little care and affection".* Now Najma has no one to confide in. Her parents and in-laws have passed away. Najma asserted, *"I now remain silent in response to my husband's aggression. I make sure that I don't behave in a way that bothers him. I also let him have sex whenever he wants regardless of how I am feeling, what is the use of confronting him? I don't argue with him anymore".* Najma repeatedly said, *"we women are 'bebas' [helpless]".* She explains, *"I have completely withdrawn myself from this life and now only focus on what the afterlife would be like".* She continued, *"I spend most of my time playing with my grandchildren and praying. My mind remains preoccupied with thoughts surrounding fate in the afterlife".* She further said, *"I only have God to confide in ".* Najma is **passionate about religion.**

Najma has totally withdrawn - she remains in constant fear of her husband and watches every word she says and frequently looks out the window when talking to me. The husband was at work at the time. *The nature of her relationship with her husband seems to be guided by her religious values and her parent's advice, which was given at the time of her wedding.*

Her focus seems to have shifted from the worldly matters to what she thinks her life would be like after death. She said, *"I simply behave in a way that appeases my husband"*.

### **PARTICIPANT PROFILE: SHAHEEN**

#### **What is the nature of victimisation?**

Shaheen got married to her fiancé at the age of 18 while he was 35 years old. She met him on the wedding night for the first time. A few days after the wedding Shaheen's husband and in-laws started complaining about the small dowry she had brought with her. Shaheen said: *"They humiliated me over the amount of dowry I had brought and took away all my possessions"*. Shaheen revealed that the beatings started soon after the wedding. She explained: *"My mother-in-law incited arguments and violence and encouraged my husband to beat me"*. Shaheen was only 18 at the time and reported being shocked at his behaviour because she did not expect to be treated that way even though she had been exposed to violence between her parents as a child.

Shaheen said: *"My husband did not work after the wedding and made no effort to find work. He slept, ate, socialised with friends or wanted sex. He did not bring any income home and I had no money for household expenses"*. If Shaheen asked her husband for money to buy basic necessities like food and personal hygiene products he would hit her for asking. Shaheen said: *"He beat me up for questioning him"*. He would beat her with slippers, chairs, pots - anything he could get his hands on. As Shaheen described the beatings: *"He threw objects at me, one time he hit my head over the edge of the bed, I was injured and bruised for days"*.

Shaheen said: *“My husband wanted me to be sexually available, but I resisted because I did not want to risk getting pregnant again”*. She said, *“I tried to convince my husband that we were too poor to have more children”*. Her husband would force himself on her and refused to use contraceptives. Shaheen said: *“He would hit me if I refused to have sex, which he believed was his right as part of the marital contract, whether or not I wanted it”*. As Shaheen recalled: *“He would stay out for long hours at night and when he came home, he demanded sex. But I always thought about what Allah had said about women who denied constant sexual access to their husbands. I don't want to be cursed by the angels”*. She further said: *“I could not resist my husband's sexual advances for too long because of my fear of her in-laws”*. She further said, *“I am also religiously obligated to quietly serve and submit to husband's wishes”*. In a Pakistani culture the general view is that a wife is obligated to fulfil her husband's sexual desires - this view is further reinforced by personal religious beliefs.

Shaheen gave birth to two daughters in the first two years of their marriage. Her husband was extremely disappointed with Shaheen for giving birth to female children. He subjected her to constant verbal abuse over the birth of their daughters. Shaheen explained: *“He expected me to have male children”*. As Shaheen described her third pregnancy: *“When I got pregnant the third time I was very unhappy because we were already getting by with great difficulty but my husband was ecstatic because getting me pregnant against my wishes was a big accomplishment for him it made him feel like a real man, he told me that he won because he got me pregnant against my constant resistance”*. Shaheen had a baby boy this time. Shaheen recalled that when she had the baby boy her husband's behaviour

towards her changed entirely. She felt that this was the best time of her married life. He became much more affectionate towards her according to Shaheen. He would still hit her but the beatings got much less. Shaheen then got pregnant once again. This time Shaheen had a baby girl and her husband became extremely upset that she had given birth to a third daughter. He reverted back to his old behaviour. As Shaheen shared one particular incident: *"One night he came home really late at night from socialising with friends, I was late in serving dinner, he beat me up really badly and left me all bruised. He expected me to be a perfect homemaker"*

Shaheen's husband remained unemployed throughout the marriage and showed no interest in taking any financial responsibility for the family. Shaheen was forced to beg family and friends for money to buy food and other essential items. Shaheen described an incident which still hurts her: *"When the older daughter reached school-age I asked my husband for 25 rupees (less than one Canadian dollar) for her school entrance fee, he beat me up for asking him for 25 rupees"*.

At 27, Shaheen decided to separate from her husband after she found out that he had secretly married another woman. Now Shaheen is 42 years old but still refuses to seek divorce. Shaheen said: *"If I am raised as his wife on the day of resurrection, I will be able to hold him responsible for my miseries in this life and if I divorce him then I will lose the right to raise a finger at him on the Day of Judgment"*.

Shaheen stayed in the abusive marriage because remaining attached to a man's name protected her from taunts and unwanted attention of other men. Shaheen said that she was young and beautiful and if she was single, men in her society would consider her fair game and so she preferred living with a man who beat her, raped her and subjected her to verbal abuse. Shaheen said: "*A woman is incomplete and insecure without a husband*". She further explained: "*if I had remarried, my husband could have easily taken full custody of the kids*". Secondly, she feels the need to have a man's name attached to hers even if he does not live with her (as I mentioned earlier a divorced woman is stigmatised in that society). Shaheen confirmed: "*Divorce is a major source of shame and dishonour for a woman*".

Shaheen says that when she separated from her husband, she had to suppress her sexual urges because if she had followed her sexual desires then who would have taken care of her kids. She stopped dressing up and putting on makeup after separation because she believed that it was a sin to show off her beauty to men other than her own husband. When she did try to dress up nicely, her own family (brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts) began taunting her about her wanting to dress up without a husband in her life.

Another woman from the family asked her to get up and withdraw her participation because the family was afraid that she would bring misfortune to the newlywed couple as she had led such an unhappy life herself (the family thought that Shaheen carried a curse). Consequently, Shaheen was asked to stay away from participating in any of the wedding

rituals. She felt that her own family deserted her and thought that she was cursed and would bring bad luck to others in the family.

### **Support from natal family**

When Shaheen was 10 years old her father left the family, and her mother and siblings were left to fend for themselves. They spent the next few years on charitable contributions made by friends and family. Growing up Shaheen and her family had very little resources. Her family was the poorest among relatives. They did not even have a TV set and Shaheen recalled envying what other people had. When they received gifts from people, they did not use those gifts, instead they were put away for dowry. Shaheen lived a life of extreme deprivation. Her mother was too poor to take on the responsibility of Shaheen and her children.

### **Attitudes towards marital violence**

In accordance with Shaheen's religious interpretation, *"If a woman refuses to have sex with her husband the angels curse her until dawn"*. As Shaheen described her feelings: *"I always felt very guilty for refusing to have sex with my husband because of its religious significance. Sometimes I would have a dialogue with Allah justifying my refusal based on my poor financial condition and on my inability to raise more children on limited resources, but I fear being cursed by angels"*. Shaheen further explained, *"As a wife I am also [religiously] obligated to quietly serve and submit to husband's wishes"*.

Shaheen said, *"I don't ask for a divorce because being attached to my husband's name gives me a sense of security"*. As Shaheen explained: *"Being perceived as a married woman will protect me from taunts and unwanted attention of other men"*. Shaheen further said: *"I will never ask for a divorce because I want to be awakened as his wife on the day of judgement (religious ideology) so that I can hold him accountable for my plight (in this life) before Allah"*.

### **Causes that trigger domestic violence**

When Shaheen was 18 years old she got married to her fiancé who was then 35. She saw him on the wedding night for the first time.

A few days after the wedding Shaheen's husband and in-laws started complaining about the small dowry. Shaheen recalled, *"My mother-in-law constantly humiliated me over the amount of dowry I had brought and took away all my possessions"*. She further explained, *"my mother-in-law incited arguments and violence, she encouraged my husband to beat me"*. Shaheen said, *"My husband did not work after the wedding. He slept, ate, socialised with friends or wanted sex. We had constant arguments about him not looking for a job."* Shaheen further said, *"He did not bring any income home and I had no money for household expenses"*. She continued, *"I would ask him for money to buy basic necessities like food and personal hygiene products but he would hit me if I asked for money"*. She continued, *"We could not properly communicate with each other, he was not willing to understand me"*.

In the meantime, she got pregnant with their first baby. She had a baby girl and her husband was extremely unhappy that she had a daughter. She said, *“He didn't even distribute sweets among family and friends (which is a tradition in the Pakistani society to distribute sweets upon birth of a child) after I had a daughter”*. Shaheen confirmed, *“After the birth of a baby girl my husband became very abusive towards me. He taunted me and subjected me to verbal abuse. He refused to take responsibility for our baby girl”*.

Shaheen claimed, *“He was not willing to use contraception and I didn't want to risk getting pregnant again, we were too poor to have any more children”*. Shaheen said, *“My husband would force himself on me. He would start hitting me for denying sexual access, which he said was his right”*.

Shaheen then had her second daughter. This time around her husband was again extremely disappointed that she bore him another daughter and he decided to move to Karachi. She confirmed, *“After the birth of our second daughter my husband became enraged and relocated to another city, leaving us behind”*. She said, *“When the older daughter reached school age, I asked my husband for 25 rupees (less than a dollar, maybe 25 cents Canadian) for our daughter's school entrance fee. He beat me up for asking him for 25 rupees for our daughter's school fee”*. Shaheen said, *“This was the time I decided to set up an independent source of income for myself and the family”*. She recalled, *“I worked full time from home as a seamstress and supported my husband and children”*. She continued, *“I used the money I made from sewing to pay for my daughter's school fee and feed my family, including my husband”*.

Then Shaheen got pregnant with her third child. She was not happy about her pregnancy because they were already getting by with great difficulty. Shaheen's husband forcefully got her pregnant. She explained, *"But my husband was ecstatic because according to him getting me pregnant against my will was an accomplishment. It made him feel like a real man"*. Shaheen said, *"He said that he has won because he got me pregnant against my will"*.

Shaheen then got pregnant once again. This time Shaheen had a baby girl and her husband became extremely upset that she bore him a third daughter. *"He would come home late at night from socialising with friends"*. Shaheen said, *"If I was ever late in serving dinner, he would beat me up"*.

### **Reasons for staying in an abusive marriage**

Shaheen's parents constantly fought over money issues. Father was a 'charas' addict and did not give money to her mother for household expenses. He was very abusive and would hit her mother with a horsewhip. *When Shaheen was 10 years old her father left the family for good and her mother and siblings were left to fend for themselves.*

Shaheen's husband was not taking any financial responsibility for Shaheen and their 4 kids. Sometime later Shaheen discovered that her husband had secretly gotten married to another woman and kept her in a different city. Shaheen described her feelings, *"I felt betrayed and extremely hurt. I was in a state of shock and disbelief over the fact that I stood by my husband in the worst possible circumstances and worked day and night to feed him and the*

*children and this is what I get in return. This is when I decided to separate, I have had enough".* Shaheen was 27 at the time with 4 young kids.

Shaheen's husband willingly remained unemployed throughout their marriage. She said, *"My husband did not work after the wedding. He slept, ate, socialised with friends or wanted sex. We had constant arguments about him not looking for a job."*

Shaheen said, *"I don't ask for a divorce because being attached to a man's name gives me a sense of security".* As Shaheen explained: *"Being perceived as a married woman will protect me from taunts and unwanted attention of other men".* Secondly, Shaheen said, *"My mother was too poor to take up mine and my children's responsibility. I simply had no place else to go with my children".* Third, she explained, *"I was very young and could have easily remarried but I would have lost custody of my children".* She decided to sacrifice her own happiness for her kids because she could not bear losing them. She had lost all faith in men by now and was afraid that if she brought another man into her life, he might develop impure intentions for her daughters later on in life. Nevertheless, Shaheen confirmed, *"I have no plan to bring another man in my life, how will that affect my children?".* Shaheen further said: *"I will never ask for a divorce because I want to be awakened as his wife on the day of judgment (religious ideology) so that I can hold him accountable for my plight (in this life) before Allah".*

Shaheen said, *“When I tried to dress up nicely, my own family (brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts) began taunting me about wanting to dress up without a husband in my life”* (stigmatised divorced woman).

She shared a rather painful experience with me. She said that a few months after she had separated from her husband, she attended a family wedding. All the women in the family were asked to participate in a very special wedding ritual involving the bride. When it was Shaheen’s turn to participate she got up and sat next to the bride. Another woman from the family asked her to get up and withdraw her participation. Shaheen said, *“My own family was afraid that I would bring bad luck to the newlywed couples in the family as I had led such an unhappy married life myself. My family believed that I carried a curse. I was asked to stay away from participating in any of the wedding rituals”*. She explained, *“I was very hurt that my own family deserted me after my separation and thought that I was cursed and would bring bad luck to others in the family”*.

Shaheen had been married for 19 years.

### **Shaheen’s self-talk**

In accordance with Shaheen's religious interpretation, *“If a woman refuses to have sex with her husband the angels curse her until dawn”*. As Shaheen described her feelings: *“I always felt very guilty for refusing to have sex with my husband because of its religious significance. Sometimes I would have a dialogue with Allah justifying my refusal based on my poor financial condition and on my inability to raise more children on limited resources, but I fear being cursed by angels”*. She further said, *“I am also religiously*

*obligated to quietly serve and submit to husband's wishes*". But she was always mindful of the religious ramifications of refusing sexual access to husband.

Shaheen said: *"My husband did not work after the wedding and made no effort to find work"*. Shaheen described an incident which still hurts her: *"When the older daughter reached school-age I asked my husband for 25 rupees (less than one Canadian dollar) for her school entrance fee, he beat me up for asking him for 25 rupees"*. Shaheen said, *"This was the time I decided to set up an independent source of income for myself and the family"*. She recalled, *"I worked full time from home as a seamstress and supported my husband and children"*. She continued, *"I used the money I made from sewing to pay for my daughter's school fee and feed my family, including my husband"*.

Sometime later Shaheen found out that her husband had secretly gotten married to another woman and kept her in a different city. Shaheen described her feelings, *"I felt betrayed and extremely hurt. I was in a state of shock and disbelief over the fact that I stood by my husband in the worst possible circumstances and worked day and night to feed him and the children and this is what I get in return. This was when I decided to separate, I have had enough"*. Shaheen had already been stitching clothes for people as mentioned earlier and in addition to that *she decided to find more work*. Shaheen said, *"In addition to stitching clothes for people, I began teaching Quran recitation to neighbourhood children and cooked for private functions in the evening"*.

As Shaheen explained: *"Being perceived as a married woman will protect me from taunts and unwanted attention of other men"*. Shaheen further said: *"I will never ask for a divorce because I want to be awakened as his wife on the day of judgement (religious ideology) so that I can hold him accountable for my plight (in this life) before Allah"*. These are some of the reasons Shaheen never sought legal divorce.

She *sees herself as a much stronger and responsible individual*. Shaheen said, *"I am proud of myself for putting my four kids through school. I am also proud of standing up for my children's right to education. I recently married off two of my daughters and have one daughter and a son left to put through college"*. She continued, *"I managed to fulfil all my children's needs without any male help"*. *She put her children's needs before hers*. She said, *"I live life like a man in the harsh and male dominated Pakistani society without any male support and I am proud of that"*.

### **PARTICIPANT PROFILE: JANNAT**

#### **What is the nature of victimisation?**

Jannat got married at the age of 28 and met her husband for the very first time on the wedding night. He was much older than her - perhaps 20 years older. Unlike girls who generally get married at around 15 in rural societies, Jannat was much older and was aware of her sexual obligations towards her husband. Jannat admitted to having certain expectations surrounding intimate relationship between a husband and wife.

According to her narrative, Jannat's husband took Viagra (or something of that sort) and wanted to have sex all the time. She described her sexual experience with her husband as painful, unpleasurable, undignified and embarrassing. Jannat recalled her sexual relationship with her husband: "*He asked me for sex several times a day because he took Viagra and forced me to perform oral sex on him. I told him that I could not perform such impure act with the same mouth I use to recite Quran, but he kept insisting that I satisfy him in whatever way he wants,* as it was my duty towards him as his wife". According to her narrative sex was terrible and humiliating. She said that if being available sexually and satisfying one's husband's sexual needs was not enforced by religion, she would have refused to have sex with her husband. She argued: "A wife who refuses sexual availability to her husband is cursed by the angels, *submitting and satisfying husband is part of God's instructions*".

Jannat's husband refused to use a contraceptive. Jannat said: "*I underwent several unwanted pregnancies and experienced trauma. Having an abortion conflicted with my religious beliefs, but my husband didn't care*". As years went by Jannat's husband became physically abusive as well. She explained: "*He would regularly beat me up and blamed me for provoking him to raise his hand against me by arguing with him, mostly over money issues*". He was also suspicious that Jannat was having an affair or was seeing other men. He was extremely verbally abusive and even made rude sexual remarks about Jannat's mother which really hurt her. He called her names and humiliated her in front of the children almost on a daily basis. As Jannat explained: "*He would beat me up one minute and the next minute he would ask for sex. He said that that sex and beatings are two*

*separate activities that should not be tied together as both are need based"*. She continued:  
*"he beat me whenever he felt the need to get me to agree"*

When Jannat's husband retired from work (she would have been around 40 while he was between 60 and 65) the family experienced even greater financial hardship. The verbal, physical and sexual abuse all worsened and Jannat finally decided to seek divorce from her husband.

### **Support from natal family**

Jannat's mother was a widow who passed away before Jannat filed for divorce. Jannat remembers a life of poverty at her parent's home. She grew up envying others and wanting to have what others had. She never had enough to eat or appropriate clothing to wear - everything was scarce and hard to come by. Jannat went on to college and finished her BA. Her mother could not afford to send her to a good college and so Jannat got enrolled at a local government college where they had to pay very little fees.

When the abuse and beatings got too much to bear Jannat shared her ordeal with her married sister. Jannat recalled, *"My sister expressed her sympathy but there was little in terms of support that she could offer me other than a few kind words and a cup of tea"*.

When Jannat's brothers found out about Jannat's intention to file for divorce, they visited her place and beat her up for dishonouring the family by seeking divorce. Jannat shared her ordeal: *"They told me that divorce is a taboo in our family and that I have humiliated them. They beat me up so savagely that it fractured my leg and I still walk with a limp. My*

*siblings have refused to offer any sort of support, they actually severed all contact with me".*

### **Attitudes towards marital violence**

According to Jannat *if unconditional sexual availability was not enforced by religious teachings, she would have completely refused to have sex with her husband.* As she explained: *"I am terrified of being cursed by the angels for refusing to have sex with my husband". I felt degradation and disgust by being forced to perform sexual acts which he had watched in the porn movies. I could not do all that he saw in the [porn] movies, I was embarrassed and humiliated. I did it all because I did not want to anger Allah; it was my [religious] duty as a wife to satisfy him".* Jannat's also explained, *"My husband blamed me for provoking him to raise his hand against me. He also accused me of seeing other men in his absence".* After Jannat applied for a divorce, her brothers visited her place to show their disapproval. Jannat said, *"My siblings have refused to offer any sort of support, they actually severed all contact with me".* She further explained, *"They [brothers] told me that I have humiliated them by seeking divorce".*

### **Causes that trigger domestic violence**

Jannat got married when she was 28 years old. *Her husband was much older than her, at least 20-25 years older.* Jannat recalled, *"My husband would force me to have sex all the time and perform sexual acts that I found degrading and humiliating but he would hit me if I refused".* She would tell him that she could not perform such impure act with the same mouth she uses to recite Quran. Jannat said, *"He insisted that I satisfy him in whatever*

way he wanted and that it was my duty as a wife to satisfy him". She continued, "my pleas always fell on deaf ears". According to Jannat sex was dissatisfying and humiliating. She further explained, "Because of my husband's refusal to use a condom I experienced a number of unwanted pregnancies and underwent several painful abortions". She continued, "My husband never cared about having me go through painful abortions, mainly because we were poor and could not have more children. He would beat me up if I insisted that he wears a condom".

Jannat further explained, "He would regularly beat me up for arguing with him and blamed me for arguing with him causing him to raise his hand against me". She continued, "My husband accused me of having an affair and seeing other men in his absence". She said, "He was extremely verbally abusive and even made rude sexual remarks about my mother that really hurt me".

She continued to explain, "He called me names and humiliated me in front of the kids almost on a daily basis". She said, "He would beat me up one minute and the next minute he would be asking for sex. His justification was that sex and beatings were two separate activities and therefore should not be tied together, as both were need based".

In 2009, when Jannat's husband retired from work (she would have been around 40 while he was 65 at the time) they experienced even greater financial hardship. Jannat explained, "When my husband retired from work, we had absolutely no other source of income, we constantly fought over lack of money and the verbal, physical and sexual abuse all got

worse at that time". She continued, "he would hit me if I asked him for money for household expenses".

### **Reasons for staying in an abusive marriage**

Jannat does not remember much of what her parent's relationship was like with each other because when she turned 8 her father passed away. She does remember her parents arguing over money issues because her father refused to take financial responsibility for the family.

After the death of her father Jannat's mother started stitching clothes for the neighbourhood women and sold second hand clothing.

Jannat said, "I tolerated the abuse and torture because of financial reasons. Although my husband made very little money, he still worked as a security guard for a power company".

A lot of their arguments revolved around money issues which on most occasions led to violence. In 2009, when Jannat's husband retired from work (she would have been around 40 while he was 65) they experienced even greater financial hardship. Jannat explained, "When my husband retired from work, we had absolutely no other source of income, we constantly fought over lack of funds". Jannat asserted, "After his retirement the verbal, physical and sexual abuse got worse and I finally decided to divorce my husband, I could no longer bear the torture".

Jannat said, "When the abuse and the beatings got too much to bear, I shared the ordeal [marital problems] with my sister". The sister was also married and was expected to look after her own house and so there was not much, she could offer Jannat. Jannat explained,

*“My sister expressed her sympathy but there was little in terms of support that she could offer me other than a few kind words and a cup of tea”.*

When Jannat's brothers found out about Jannat's intention to file for divorce, they visited her place and beat her up for dishonouring the family by seeking divorce. Jannat shared her ordeal: *“They have told me that divorce is a taboo in our family and that I have humiliated them. They beat me up so savagely that it fractured my leg and I still walk with a limp”.* She further explained, *“My siblings have refused to offer any sort of support, they actually severed all contact with me”.*

Presently, Jannat has a man in her life. Jannat explained, *“My partner gives me 10,000 rupees per month and spends time with me. He works out of town and comes for a visit when he is in town. He is the only source of income I currently have”.* Jannat also pays her rent with the money her new partner gives her. Jannat said, *“There is no way he [the boyfriend] will marry me, I am sick and old, he would not want to”.*

Jannat was married for 12 years.

### **Jannat’s self-talk**

According to Jannat sex was terrible. She said, *“if being available sexually and satisfying one's husband's sexual needs was not enforced by religion, I would have refused to have sex with my husband”.* She said, *“I did it all because I did not want to anger Allah; it was my [religious] duty as a wife to satisfy him”.* She argued: *“A wife who refuses sexual*

*availability to her husband is cursed by the angels, submitting and satisfying husband is God's instructions".*

Jannat said, *"I tolerated the abuse and torture because of financial reasons.* Jannat also *confronted* her husband about his behaviour towards her and about inefficient income. However, Jannat explained, *"When my husband retired from work, we had absolutely no other source of income, we constantly fought over lack of money and the verbal, physical and sexual abuse all got worse at that time".* In 2009, when Jannat's husband retired from work (she would have been around 40 while he was 65) they experienced even greater financial hardship. The verbal, physical and sexual abuse all got worse and Jannat finally decided sought divorce from her husband. Jannat asserted, *"After his retirement the verbal, physical and sexual abuse got worse and I finally decided to divorce my husband, I refused to continue to bear the torture".*

Jannat said, *"When the abuse and the beatings got too much to bear, I shared the ordeal [marital problems] with my sister".* Her sister expressed her sympathy but there was little in terms of support that she could offer Jannat.

Jannat's sons who were teenagers by that time backed her decision as they witnessed the entire abuse. Jannat said, *"My sons were fully supportive of my decision to divorce my husband. They had witnessed the violence their father had perpetrated against me".* Another important detail about Jannat's account was that she had a man in her life who supported her financially in exchange for an intimate relationship. *"My partner gives me*

*10,000 rupees per month and spends time with me. He works out of town and comes for a visit when he is in town.* Apparently, Jannat got involved with this man after her husband retired from work.

## Appendix IA

### Interview Schedule for Participants

#### I. Opening

- A. Introduce self/study - Introduce the study including its purpose and contribution to the domestic violence discourse. Talk about my educational background and my interest in the subject area. Respond to participants' questions.
- B. Put the participant at ease – Inform the participant of the non-judgmental nature of the study. Address the issues of consent, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw anytime.
- C. Breaking ice – Talk about family life, issues facing rural Pakistani women and their relationships in the community. Respond to participant's questions about myself and the research.
- D. Gradually move into the interview – Explore the issue of domestic violence and experiences of participants in their husband's home.
- E. Explain study rationale – Explain the availability of limited knowledge about experiences of domestic violence among rural Pakistani women. Discuss the immense contribution they would make to the overall understanding of domestic violence.
- F. Time line – Each interview should take approximately two to three hours but more time will be rescheduled as needed. Inform the participants that if questions arise or the interview remains incomplete then more time will be scheduled.

**[Gradually transition into the next section]**

#### II. Body

- A. Collect demographic information – age of participant, age of husband, number of children, age at marriage, type of marriage (love or arranged), current marital status, educational level and employment status or source of income.
- B. Ask about participant's childhood experiences, including whether the participant's mother was also subjected to domestic violence.

- C. Ask about relationship with the husband and in-laws – probe into answers and adapt to the conversation that unfolds.
- D. Gradually move into the subject matter of domestic violence and now focus on the participant’s marriage and let her speak freely about her experiences beginning from the first day she moved into her husband’s home.
- E. Continue to probe into the answers or explanations given by the participant.

**III. Closing**

- A. Summarise what I have learned/understood.
- B. Ask whether the participant wants to add something else here. Anything she feels I have not covered or anything the participant feels might help me understand her situation better.
- C. Again, remind the participant that more interview time will be scheduled if needed. Thank the participant and let her know that she has provided very useful information and that I have learned a lot from the interview.

## Appendix IIA

### Pictures from Fieldwork



**Figure 3.1** Burqa Clad Pakistani Women (Mahmood, 2005)



**Figure 3.2** The researcher's host family



**Figure 3.3** The researcher dressed up in appropriate attire with a community member in Sohan village



**Figure 3.4** Young children playing in a waste heap in Sohan



**Figure 3.5** Personal possessions of a villager in Sohan



**Figure 4.1** The villagers in Sohan dumped garbage in the streets in the absence of garbage disposal or pickup facility



**Figure 4.2** Water collected from the local mosque stored in big metal containers by A55 for personal and domestic use



**Figure 4.3** School-age children scavenging through garbage dump for empty bottles and other scrap material to sell for food



**Figure 4.4** A 12-year-old boy in Sohan selling firewood to help provide for his family



**Figure 5.1** Vegetable/fruit vendor selling his produce in Sohan village

## Appendix IB

### The Six Steps of Thematic Analysis

Six steps of thematic analysis
<p><b>Step 1: Familiarization with the data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read the data corpus (data collected) multiple times to gain in-depth understanding and clarity of the data (Clarke &amp; Braun, 2013; Fereday &amp; Muir-Cochrane, 2008; Jill, 2015).</li><li>• It is suggested to highlight and make little notes to enhance further understanding of the information provided in the data (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006).</li></ul>
<p><b>Step 2: Generating initial codes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A number of potential themes are coded (highlighted) in the data set (selected data) (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Guest et al., 2011).</li><li>• The aim is to read and find text that represents the same idea and writing a code against it (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006).</li><li>• Encoding the data set organizes the information in a way that helps the researcher identify recurrent ideas in the data (Fereday &amp; Muir-Cochrane, 2008), as the researcher examines coded text in the data (Ryan &amp; Bernard, 2003).</li><li>• The codes also represent words, concepts, participants' own understanding of a phenomenon and so forth (Ryan &amp; Bernard, 2003).</li></ul>
<p><b>Step 3: Searching for themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sort a number of codes identified in previous step into potential themes (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Jill, 2015).</li><li>• Theme is defined as a pattern in the data set relevant to the original research question (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Clarke &amp; Braun, 2013).</li><li>• This step elucidates emerging re-curent themes and possible sub-themes supported by the evidence from the data (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Fereday &amp; Muir-Cochrane, 2008; Guest et al., 2011).</li></ul>
<p><b>Step 4: Reviewing themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refinement of the identified themes (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Clarke &amp; Braun, 2013; Jill, 2015).</li><li>• Ensure that the data supports the identified themes (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2011) and that the themes are representative of the data set (Fereday &amp; Muir-Cochrane, 2008).</li><li>• Upon revision of the themes it may be necessary to collapse a few themes into one or split a theme into parts (Clarke &amp; Braun, 2013).</li></ul>
<p><b>Step 5: Defining and naming themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Define the themes in a detailed description (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Clarke &amp; Braun, 2013; Jill, 2015).</li><li>• If the data set does not completely support the defined themes then further refinement of the themes may be needed (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006).</li><li>• A table or a thematic map presenting the themes is drawn at this point (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Clarke &amp; Braun, 2013).</li></ul>
<p><b>Step 6: Producing the report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The emergent themes are now subjected to analysis (Fereday &amp; Muir-Cochrane, 2008).</li><li>• Final analysis and write-up of the report which includes providing sufficient evidence from the data to support each theme (Braun &amp; Clarke, 2006; Jill, 2015).</li></ul>

## **Appendix II**

### **Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)**

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a short-cut method of data collection. This involves imparting knowledge and information from the local community who understands and experiences the local lifestyle and culture (Chambers, 1994b). Community's perspective is important in understanding the issues and problems the community is facing (Mosse, 1994). All rural communities including Sohan have resources that are under-utilised and immobilised in some cases. PRA also helps to identify problems, evaluates priorities and opportunities in a rural area (Chambers, 1994b).

I got together with some community members including my host family and answered four questions based entirely on their input. The answers to all these questions are based on the villagers' opinions and experiences. Some local women were also part of these meetings. This process also involved walking around the village with other villagers to visit the pharmacies, doctor's offices, construction sites, shrines and factories within Sohan. This process took me four weeks to complete and it was a really good opportunity to build rapport with the villagers. A detailed sketch map was produced as part of the PRA process. The map was sketched entirely by the villagers. I added labels in English wherever it was appropriate. One of the villagers who could write in Urdu also helped me label important landmarks in Urdu writing. The sketch map is presented in appendix IIB. Here is the result of the PRA process:

**QUESTION ONE: Who are the stakeholders in Sohan?**

Answer: I identified a number of participants for the PRA process who had a stake in Sohan. These participants were consumers of the available resources in the village. The stakeholders included both males and females. The women claimed a big share of the local resources as they were responsible for running the household. The individuals who were invited to take part in the PRA process participated in the labour, education, home-based retail, housing, transport and livestock sectors. Two women involved in PRA process were homemakers.

**QUESTION TWO: Describe or present the Spatial Analysis of Sohan.**

Answer: With the help of the villagers I drew a sketch map of Sohan indicating different places and important landmarks in the village. The sketch map included in appendix IIB shows residential areas, small farming areas, elementary schools, factory, village shopping areas, doctor's offices, pharmacies, shrine, etc.

**QUESTION THREE: What are the constraints and opportunities for improving the productivity in Sohan? What are the ways to better understand resource production in Sohan?**

➤ **Identify the products/resources in Sohan and their relative importance.**

Answer: In order to effectively answer this question, I identified the following products in Sohan. Some of these products were food items, some were used to earn an income, while others were used to build houses.

- 1) Scrap

- 2) Bricks/Blocks
- 3) Furniture Factory
- 4) Vegetables
- 5) Bakery Products
- 6) Embroidery on Clothing/Dressmaker
- 7) Raw Tobacco
- 8) Marble Blocks with carvings
- 9) Cattle Feed
- 10) Plastic Crockery Factory
- 11) Rose Gardens

➤ **Understand which of these products are used and/or sold. Understand the sources of these products.**

- 1) Scrap – plastic bags, papers, empty containers and bottles were collected by village children and adults from garbage dumps and waste heaps in Sohan. The scrap material was sold to the convenience store owners in Sohan who then sold the scrap material to scrap dealers outside of Sohan.
- 2) Bricks/Blocks – Made locally and used in building homes in and outside Sohan.
- 3) Furniture Factory – Furniture was made locally in Sohan but sold outside of Sohan. The employees at the factory were skilled workers that came from outside the village. The villagers could only fill low-skilled, low-wage positions.
- 4) Vegetable Vendor – Vegetable growers (farmers) in Sohan cultivated vegetables in Sohan but sold them in the big vegetable market outside of Sohan as they found it

- more profitable. The villagers expressed disappointment in their inability to access quality vegetables locally.
- 5) Bakery Products – Bakery products were made locally in Sohan and the villagers were consumers of these bakery products.
  - 6) Embroidery on Clothing/Dressmaker – The villagers revealed that the big brand stores in Islamabad and Rawalpindi hired dressmakers from Sohan at very low wages.
  - 7) Raw Tobacco – Target market was outside of Sohan. Tobacco was brought in from another province.
  - 8) Marble Blocks with Carved Designs – Contractors from the nearby cities hired cheap labour from the village to cut and design marble blocks. I had an opportunity to observe marble carving and painting in the village. The final product was sold in the cities.
  - 9) Cattle Feed – Local farmers in Sohan grew cattle feed and sold it locally.
  - 10) Plastic Crockery Factory – Employees at the plastic factory in Sohan were skilled and trained workers from outside the village. The factory products were sold in the bigger markets located in the nearby cities.
  - 11) Rose Gardens – There were a few flower growers in the village. The roses were sold in the major flower markets in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Flowers in Pakistan are used on a variety of occasions. Roses are used at funerals, grave sites, weddings, shrines, and sometimes when receiving guests at the airport.

➤ **Understand the seasonal yields of the different products.**

- 1) Scrap – Available full year.
- 2) Bricks/Blocks – Available full year.
- 3) Furniture Factory – Manufactured all year round.
- 4) Vegetable Vendor – Produced and sold all year round. Certain vegetables are seasonal.
- 5) Bakery Products – Available to the villagers all year round.
- 6) Embroidery on Clothing/Dressmaker – Made all year round.
- 7) Raw Tobacco – Available all year round.
- 8) Marble Blocks with Carved Designs – Produced all year round.
- 9) Cattle Feed – Produced only in April and May.
- 10) Plastic Crockery Factory – Produced all year round.
- 11) Rose Gardens – Grow roses all year round.

➤ **Assess labour cost associated with the collection, processing, and marketing of these goods.**

Note that 1 GBP is equivalent to 203 Pakistani rupees

- 1) Scrap – There is no labour cost associated with collection and processing of scrap material. Villagers were not paid to sort and collect scrap material from waste heaps in Sohan.
- 2) Bricks/Blocks – Crush machine operators were paid 700 rupees per day to make bricks. They were not paid based on how many bricks they made each day. They

- were just paid for the day's work. Price of a brick ranged from 17 to 23 rupees in Sohan. The villagers said that there should be more of this type of work because it gives them an opportunity to earn good income.
- 3) Furniture Factory – Factory workers were paid from 500 to 700 rupees per day depending on the difficulty of work. Labour was not hired from the village because factory hired skilled labour, which was not available in Sohan.
  - 4) Vegetable Vendor – Vegetable vendors sold vegetables on a wooden cart. They pushed the wooden cart in the streets of Sohan and went door to door to sell their produce. They made around 300 rupees (just over 1 GBP) per day on a good day selling tomatoes, onions, green coriander, spinach, peas, potatoes and turnips. Peas and potatoes were most popular among villagers since these were the cheapest vegetables available. Each season brought in different vegetables and fruits. Figure 5.1 in appendix IIA shows a vegetable and fruit vendor selling his produce in Sohan on a wooden cart.
  - 5) Bakery Products – Employees were paid between 500 to 1000 rupees per day to make bakery products such as cakes, bread, buns and so on. Cashiers were paid about 800 rupees per day. This line of work paid better but it required experienced and skilled labour. There were only a few bakeries in the village so it did not provide many job opportunities for the villagers.
  - 6) Embroidery on Clothing/Dressmaking – Dressmakers made about 500 rupees per day regardless of how many dresses they prepare each day.
  - 7) Raw Tobacco – Tobacco leaves came from a different province in Pakistan. Tobacco makers earned around 500 rupees per day.

- 8) Marble Blocks with carvings – Marble cutters and carvers made 800 rupees per day.
- 9) Cattle Feed – Cattle feed processors made 400 rupees per day.
- 10) Plastic Crockery Factory – Plastic crockery factory workers earned around 5000 rupees per month. This was the only place in Sohan that paid on a monthly basis and provided permanent positions. As mentioned earlier, the factory hired skilled labour from outside the village. The villagers could not take advantage of the positions available in the factory.
- 11) Rose Gardens – Labour that picked roses from the flower gardens made around 400 rupees per day. Rose garden owners earned their income from the sale proceeds of roses in the flower markets located in the nearby cities.

➤ **Rank each product in terms of its importance. Also comment on the availability of these goods.**

- 1) Vegetables take the first position in terms of its importance. It is a food product which is consumed on a daily basis by all the families in Sohan. Villagers do not afford to buy meat, chicken or fish. They generally eat vegetables and lentils on a daily basis. The staple dish in Sohan is potatoes with peas. Potatoes and peas are the cheapest vegetables available in Sohan. However, vegetable growers in Sohan do not sell their produce in Sohan. The villagers do not have access to the vegetables grown locally in Sohan.
- 2) Bakery products – The second most important product in Sohan are the bakery products such as eggs, bread/buns etc- items that are consumed on a daily basis. Most

villagers do not eat eggs or bread every day because they do not afford to buy these for daily consumption. Many villagers raise chickens at home for eggs and make their own bread at home. My host family could never afford to buy a cake from the bakery. Many others in Sohan had never bought a cake in their lives.

- 3) Blocks/bricks – Construction in Sohan uses bricks made locally in the village. There are people in Sohan who live in tents and sheds but most houses are made of bricks, whether they are loose or cemented. Again, quality and quantity of bricks depends on the affordability of the consumer.
- 4) Furniture – Furniture is made locally in a factory in Sohan but villagers cannot buy furniture from the factory owners as the finished product, which is expensive is shipped out to the cities for higher profit.
- 5) Plastic Crockery – Every household in Sohan needs crockery, pots and utensils but the local plastic factory owners do not sell crockery to the villagers. The finished product is shipped to the cities for higher profit.
- 6) Cattle Feed – Very few people in Sohan afford to buy farm animals. For those who have cattle are able to buy cattle feed in Sohan.
- 7) Roses – Roses are used for many occasions in Sohan. I have witnessed three funeral processions during my fieldwork in the village. I observed that the mourners threw roses over the deceased person's body. Roses are also used for other events such as weddings, birthday parties, childbirth and circumcision. The villagers cannot buy roses from the rose gardens that are located inside Sohan, they have to go out of Sohan to buy flowers. The reason they could not buy locally grown roses was because flower growers in Sohan ship the flowers to the nearby cities for better profit.

- 8) Marble Blocks – Marble blocks are used in home construction. Very few homes in Sohan had some kind of marble tile flooring installed. Most had unpaved front yards. Marble is cut and designed locally in Sohan and sold in the nearby cities.
- 9) Raw Tobacco – Generally men in Sohan used tobacco. Although it is available in Sohan, it is mostly sold to customers in the nearby cities.
- 10) Embroidered tailored clothing – Women in Sohan adore the embroidered tailored outfits but they do not afford to buy them. These embroidered tailored clothing are made for customers in the nearby cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Since labour is cheap in Sohan, some designers in the nearby cities hire cheap labour from the village. The individuals who do embroidery work in Sohan are only paid 200 rupees per outfit (almost one GBP) regardless of the amount of work on each outfit.

➤ **Identify areas where the production system could be improved.**

1 – The villagers agreed that the vegetable/fruit production in Sohan could be improved because there is abundant fertile land available in Sohan for cultivation. However, the villagers suggested that farming land is government owned. The land for farming is leased out for 100 years and the users of the land are required to pay an annual tax on the land. After 100 years either the lease is renewed or the land is leased out to another party.

The villagers complained about unfair distribution of farming land in Sohan. There does not seem to be clear rules and regulations governing the allotment of land in rural Pakistan. According to the villagers, an interested party has to pay a large

bribe amount to the district commissioner of police in Islamabad because he holds the land allocation rights for Sohan village. Barely anyone in Sohan affords the bribe amount and therefore acres of fertile land in Sohan sits vacant. If the government decides to invest in rural agriculture related activities, the villagers would see an increase in their household income. This could also create employment opportunities for the villagers, even the women.

2 – Block production in Sohan has a bigger margin for improvement than brick production. Brick production cost is much higher. Most villagers buy blocks for construction. The villagers explained that since blocks are bigger it takes less time to raise a wall with blocks, which also reduces labour cost. Sohan produces blocks and bricks on a very small scale. If the government decides to fund block/brick production in rural areas then more builders would invest in its production. There are many consumers of blocks/bricks in and outside of Sohan. With a little help and investment many people could benefit from the production of this product. I am told that this could also create employment opportunities in Sohan.

**Comments:** The villagers suggested that vegetable/fruit and brick/block production are areas that have a lot of potential for growth. If the government paid little attention to these two production areas it would not only create employment opportunities for the people of Sohan but also improve the quality of lives of the villagers as they would get an opportunity to earn regular income. As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, irregularity of income is a major issue as villagers are paid wages at the end of a working day, while there is no guarantee

that they would find work the next day. The PRA approach showed that it would be worth investing in agricultural activities, as there is a great demand for crops within the village. The government should lease out the vacant land to the villagers for farming. There are many in the village who are interested in farming but do not have the resources or land to do so.

**QUESTION FOUR: How do the current rules and regulations govern resource use in Sohan?**

Answer: To answer this question I have chosen the availability of four resources in Sohan; namely, water, gas, electricity and health care services. The villagers have provided the following responses in regards to the availability or lack of these four resources.

**WATER**

Before I begin to answer these questions, I would like to point out that there are five sources of water in Sohan. One source is well water. The second is through water boring - 200 feet below the earth surface. The third source is tap water that comes from Rawal dam (when ice melts on the mountains surrounding Islamabad the water flows into Rawal dam). The fourth source is ground water that comes up on the ground surface without digging or boring. This is stagnant water that creates shallow pools of standing water all over Sohan, which can become a breeding ground for insects and mosquitoes. Fifth and the last source is the water that runs into a large open drain. This water comes from melted ice on Margalla mountains surrounding Islamabad and runs into a river, while some of the water branches out into different tributaries. One of these tributaries flows into a large open drain that runs

through Sohan. This drain water gets mixed up with sewage and other waste material. The farmers in Sohan use the water from the upper drain (upstream) where the water is a little cleaner to water their crops.

❖ **Who has access to water in Sohan?**

Everyone in Sohan has access to all 5 sources of water.

❖ **When can it be collected? When is access forbidden?**

Access to water in Sohan is never forbidden but collection depends on the availability of each source. Water that comes up on the ground surface and that which runs into the drain is available all year round in a consistent quantity. The quantity of tap water, well water or boring water reduces significantly during the summer months. In summer months people and animals consume more water. Water consumption simply goes up in the summer months as it gets really hot in Sohan (40-50 degrees centigrade). The well water and water from boring almost dries up in the summer. Tap water supply also reduces because of lack of rains in the summer months. The tap water supply is controlled by the water connection department in Islamabad who simply cut off the supply of water to Sohan for a set number of hours each day in the summer to deal with the water shortfall in the nearby cities.

❖ **Where can water be collected? Are there areas where collection is restricted?**

There are no restrictions on water collection. It is collected anywhere it is available.

There are no restrictive areas.

❖ **How much water can be collected? Are there restrictions on volume?**

Anyone can collect as much water as they can from the local mosque depending on how much they can carry on their shoulders or how many trips they can make to the water source in a day. There is no restriction on the volume that each household can collect. The water allocation between families in Sohan is not fair. Which means that those in the village who can afford a powerful electric water pump can pull a good amount of water for daily use. But again, as I mentioned earlier, in the summer months water almost dries up from the wells (and through boring) and the electric water pumps in the summer months can only pull up little water. So, water pump owners in Sohan also have to look for other sources of water in the summer months. During the fieldwork, I noticed that some villagers had large amounts of water stored in metal tanks and buckets for the upcoming summer months. This water was collected from the local mosque in Sohan.

❖ **Are any technologies or methods of water collection restricted or banned?**

No, villagers can use any method or technology to collect water for daily use, if they can afford one.

**Tap Water**

Those with faucets installed in their homes have to get a tap water connection from the Water department called WASA, which is located in Islamabad. The consumer has to pay a one-time water connection charge of 3,800 rupees (approx. 18 GBP) with 200 rupees per month (approx. 1 GBP) for water usage, regardless of the volume used. Some families in Sohan had faucets installed in their homes but they

could not afford the one-time water connection charge of rupees 3,800. The villagers complained that tap water was contaminated and was unfit for drinking unless it was boiled for some time on high heat. I opened up a tap and examined the quality of tap water in Sohan. I bear witness to the fact that tap water was almost brown in colour with tiny soil particles floating around. Upon closer examination I could also identify tiny dead insects.

The villagers said that the underground water supply lines were fractured and worn-out so the contaminants from the sewer system could easily penetrate the water supply lines. The villagers reported that sometimes tap water carried a slight foul smell and they have also noticed tiny insects in the tap water supply. However, the villagers who had an access to tap water felt that they were luckier than others as they did not need to go out and look for other sources of water in Sohan. They got water directly at home from their faucets, regardless of its quality and quantity. The water was not only used for drinking and cooking, it was also used for washing and bathing.

### **Boring**

Boring is an ideal source of water as far as the villagers are concerned because as they dig 200 feet below the ground surface the water quality improves. But many at the village could not afford boring because the initial cost of digging was around 100,000 rupees (approx. 490 GBP). It also required an electric water pump to pull water up, this was an additional expense. However, no fee is assessed for accessing

water through boring. The local mosque in Sohan has this facility and a large number of villagers obtain their water at the mosque. People fill up their buckets and carry water home from the mosque. There is no fee associated with collecting water from the mosque but it is a long walk home carrying water buckets over their shoulders.

### **Open Drain**

As mentioned earlier, water from the open drain is used by farmers to water their crops. There is no fee associated with this collection. The farmers use the water from upstream or midstream as it appears to be cleaner there. Drain water seems to be highly contaminated. Midstream portion just appears cleaner than the 'cloudy' water in the bottom of the stream.

### **Well Water**

Well water is another source of clean water but digging a well is as expensive as boring. One can either pull water up from the well using an electric water pump or manually by throwing in a bucket attached to a long rope. Well water is cold and clean. A well is dug approximately between 100-200 feet below the ground surface. Sohan has had many accidents with children falling in the wells but thankfully they were all pulled up in time. The wells in Sohan are generally dug inside a house. This is not a very safe practice considering that there are young children playing around in the homes. Rental properties in Sohan that had wells were pre-dug by the owners of the house. The tenants generally do not afford to dig up a well.

Rental properties with wells are useful only if the homeowner provides an electric water pump, otherwise this source of water is useless. If the water level in the well is low then pulling water up manually would be hard. Renters in Sohan are generally very poor to be able to afford an electric water pump. There is no fee associated with accessing well water but if the homeowner provides his own water pump then he charges an extra fee for using electricity to run a water pump.

### **Ground Water**

Ground water has no fee associated with its collection. It does not have much usage either. It is water that comes up on the ground surface without digging. It stands in shallow pools in various spots in Sohan. This water is not clean because it gets mixed up with soil, dust, rainwater and other contaminants. Sometimes children play in these shallow pools in the summer. Stray animals drink this water. These standing pools of water are potential breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other insects that can carry all sorts of viruses.

### **Who in the community or local government is in-charge of monitoring local usage of water? How are they appointed? Who are they accountable to?**

Tap water is the only source of water consumption that is monitored by WASA, the water and sanitation department in Islamabad. The villagers advised that WASA regulates water supply to Sohan based on the water shortfall in the nearby cities. As I mentioned earlier, in summer months water supply to Sohan is significantly

reduced. WASA officials are either appointed by the government or hired from outside. They are accountable to the Ministry of Energy and Power.

## **GAS**

### **❖ Who has access to gas in Sohan?**

Villagers in Sohan who have a gas pipeline connection in their homes can have access to gas. Those who live in mud housing or tents do not have a gas pipeline connection and they burn wood for cooking (heating water) and heating in winters. My host family also used wood fuel for cooking and heating.

### **❖ When can it be collected? When is access forbidden?**

Access to gas is never forbidden. The villagers in Sohan can have access to gas whenever and wherever there is a connection available. The villagers stated that due to government corruption and mismanagement of resources the country has suffered an extreme gas shortage. The villagers who had a gas pipeline connection told me that in winters gas supply is completely cut off from 5am to 11pm (gas was available from 11pm to 5am only). Other than cooking, in winters gas is also used to turn on heaters and obtain hot water. In this situation, villagers would get up between 2am and 3am and prepare food for the next day. They used electric rods to heat up water during daytime, this is dangerous but they have no choice since they needed hot water for washing and bathing. Like many others, the host family has no gas pipeline connection so they used wood fuel for cooking and heating.

❖ **Where can gas be accessed? Are there areas where access is restricted?**

Villagers have access to gas wherever gas connections are installed. Access is never restricted as its availability depends on the gas shortfall in the nearby cities. The more it is in demand (triggering a shortfall), the less is supplied to Sohan village.

❖ **How much gas can be consumed? Are there restrictions on volume?**

Consumption depends on a family's need. There are no restrictions on volume used.

❖ **Are any technologies or methods of gas collection restricted or banned?**

Gas just comes through gas pipeline connections. This is the only method of obtaining gas.

**Are fees associated with access to gas?**

One has to get a gas connection installed by a gas company located in Islamabad. The gas installation fee is 6000 rupees (approx. 29 GBP). If one pays 15,000 rupees approx. 73 GBP) as a bribe amount along with the 6000 rupees installation fee then the gas connection can be installed within two months. Those who do not afford the bribe amount have to wait up to 6 months or longer to get a gas connection. There were many in Sohan who did not even afford the required installation fee of 6000 rupees. The villagers generally used wood fuel or shared a gas connection with a neighbour who had one. Cost/bill sharing was common amongst neighbours in Sohan who shared a gas connection, while those who owned a gas connection took advantage of those who did not.

However, the villagers agreed that once a gas connection is installed, the gas bill is quite affordable. Maximum bill that anyone in Sohan could pay for a large extended family with a maximum gas usage was believed to be 1000 rupees (approx. 5 GBP) per month. On average, for a family of 7 children with normal gas consumption the maximum one could pay in terms of gas bill was 200 rupees (approx. 1 GBP) per month, which is quite affordable even for a low-income family in Sohan.

❖ **Are fines assessed in terms of access to gas?**

No fines are associated with access to gas.

❖ **Who in the community or local government is in-charge of monitoring local consumption of gas?**

The gas company located in Islamabad is responsible for monitoring gas consumption and supply in Sohan. During the winter season the gas company reduces the supply of gas in rural areas to account for the shortfall in the cities. The company is technically accountable to the government. The villagers stated that some government officials are engaged in bribery but thus far no one has been held accountable for mismanagement of gas supply.

## **ELECTRICITY**

❖ **Who in Sohan has access to electricity?**

Whoever in Sohan had an electricity connection in their home had access to electricity. Those who lived in tents or mud housing generally shared a connection with a neighbour who had one.

**When can one have access to electricity? When is access forbidden?**

Access is never forbidden; however, there is a huge power shortage in Pakistan. Electricity shortfall increases in summer months as people turn on fans and air conditioners to fight off heat in urban centres. Power outages are longer in Sohan in comparison to the surrounding urban areas. Sohan experiences power outages of approximately 12-16 hours per day in the summer months.

❖ **Where can electricity be accessed? Are there areas where access is restricted?**

Electricity is accessed wherever connections are available. There is no restriction on access.

❖ **How much electricity can be used? Are there restrictions on quantity consumed?**

There are no restrictions on the quantity consumed. Villagers can use electricity according to their requirement and affordability. Electricity is expensive in Pakistan. Electricity is needed for lighting, heating, cooling, refrigeration, operating electric appliances etc.

❖ **Are fees assessed for access to electricity?**

To have an electricity connection installed one has to pay one-time charge of 5000 rupees (approx. 24 GBP) plus a bribe amount of 12000 rupees (approx. 59 GBP). This can get the villagers a connection within 15 days. If the bribe amount is not affordable then people have to wait months or even years for an electricity connection.

The villagers complained that the electricity bills are always high even with power outages. A typical village family of 7 children generally pays 2000-3000 rupees (10 GBP – 15 GBP) per month, which is not affordable by most villagers in Sohan.

❖ **Are fines assessed in terms of access to electricity?**

No fines are assessed related to access and use of electricity.

❖ **How are they appointed? Who are they accountable to?**

WAPDA, Water and Power Development Authority in Islamabad is in-charge of monitoring the local use of electricity. The supply of electricity to Sohan village is regulated in response to its shortfall in the nearby cities. WAPDA employees are hired from outside but senior positions may be filled by government officials. The villagers suggested that WAPDA is well known for corruption and mismanagement of resources.

## **HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

❖ **Who has access to health care resources in Sohan? What kinds of health care services are available?**

Everyone in Sohan has access to the pharmacies and physician's clinic; however, the quality of health care and medicines is highly questionable. There are two pharmacies in Sohan for a population of 24,328 residents based on the population estimates provided by the Assistant Census Commissioner in Islamabad. The quality of medications available in Sohan is very poor. There is a total of four doctors' clinics in Sohan with a single doctor in each clinic. There is only a single female doctor in Sohan for the entire female population in the village. These local

clinics can only treat minor aches and pains, stitch wounds, provide certain vaccinations and treat minor cold and flu. When I visited the clinics along with the villagers, I found that the doctors in Sohan were not qualified to practice. They worked as doctor's assistants in the nearby city for a few years before opening up their own practices in Sohan based on the experience gained from working with actual doctors in the city. None of them had a medical degree. Since health care system is widely unregulated in Pakistan, especially in villages, no one questions their qualifications. These individuals were 'quack doctors' who were essentially unqualified to engage in medical practice. The villagers said that they were aware of this situation but had no choice as they did not afford a real doctor in the city.

Only pregnant women in Sohan could get referrals from one of the local clinics in Sohan for a free treatment at the government hospital in Islamabad. However, due to cultural choices and practices most women in Sohan preferred home births, which were normally assisted by unqualified midwives. If other women, children and men needed better health care services than what was available in Sohan, they had to visit one of the government hospitals in Islamabad, which was very costly. Therefore, many villagers would come back without getting treated because they simply could not afford the treatment. The villagers generally resorted to treating illnesses themselves or with the help of spiritual leaders and shamans.

❖ **Are fees assessed for accessing health care services available at Sohan?**

The villagers are charged between 50-60 rupees (less than 1 GBP) per visit at a doctor's clinic in Sohan. This includes consultation, a few tablets and a cough syrup.

❖ **Who in the community or local government is in-charge of monitoring health care services in Sohan?**

The government does not monitor the lack or quality of health care services provided in Sohan village. Drug quality and expiry dates are not monitored at the pharmacies in Sohan. Various medicines that were being consumed by the villagers had gone past their expiry date. I visited the two pharmacies located in Sohan. I examined the packages of various medications and found that few of them had crossed their expiry date. I brought this to the pharmacist's attention and he suggested that even though the medicine had crossed its expiry date, it is safe to consume. They kept the expired medications on the shelves and sold it to the villagers. Again, there was no health care or drug regulation authority which monitored and regulated the quality of medications sold in Sohan.

➤ **Rank each product in terms of its importance. Also comment on the availability of these goods.**

This is how the villagers ranked the following resources, 1 being the most important and 4 being less important of all:

1 – Water: No alternative available for water.

2 – Electricity: Needed for electric water pumps. A significant number of villagers obtain their water from a nearby mosque, which has an electric water pump installed. There is no available alternative to electricity. Electricity was also needed to cook, heat water and turn on heaters in the winter.

3 – Health Care Services: Alternative is government hospitals in the nearby city but its costly. Ideally, villagers wanted a proper medical clinic in the village with qualified doctors.

4 – Gas: There is an available alternative for gas. Villagers used wood fuel for cooking and heating water.

